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**ARCHITECTURAL REFERENTS IN CANADIAN ART:
A QUESTION OF SPACE**

by

Susan J. Douglas

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

Carleton University

OTTAWA, Ontario

25 March 1991

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"Architectural Referents in Canadian Art:
A Question of Space"

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in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
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ABSTRACT

This thesis, titled *Architectural Referents in Canadian Art: A Question of Space* is a critical study of three-dimensional spatial theory as it applies to contemporary Canadian realism. The central concern of the thesis is to demonstrate systematically the similarities and differences between the projective -- or Italianate -- method of depicting illusory space during the Renaissance period and space as represented in the work of Alex Colville, Christopher Pratt, Christiane Pflug and Joyce Wieland. The thesis argues that representational space in the visual arts is an ideological construct and that its practice is gendered.

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis argues that representational space in the visual arts is an ideological construct and that its practice is gendered. *Architectural Referents in Canadian Art: A Question of Space* is a critical study of three-dimensional spatial theory as it applies to contemporary Canadian realism. The central concern of the thesis is to demonstrate systematically the similarities and differences between the projective -- or Italianate -- method of depicting illusory space in representational art during the Renaissance period and pictorial space as it is represented in the work of Alex Colville, Christopher Pratt, Christiane Pflug and Joyce Wieland. From this analysis is drawn a theory contending that contemporary representational praxis is not only governed by the rules of projective space but also conditioned by its hegemonic power which, although constructed as objective and neutral is, in fact, subjective and gendered. The line of argument will be sustained by means of two strategies: the first is a close examination of the instrumentality of 'Albertianism' (a rubric selected to refer to Italian projective space both for its allusion to its originary theoretical proponent and for its gender specific origin) by reference to the work of Colville, Pratt, Pflug and Wieland as representatives of Canadian contemporary realism; the second is by reference to the ideological institution of Albertianism as gendered. In

both these texts the window/door as a representational motif in art is foregrounded as both constituted by and constitutive of Albertianism.

The thesis is organized around three central questions. How is spatial representation constituted within western art? What evidence exists of a normative construction of space against which all representation is measured; how is this construction legitimated? And, how can this ideological construction be said to be 'gendered'?

A partial answer to these questions is mobilized by the first line of argument which centers on the instrumentality of Albertian discourse; this is understood as the first text voice. In chapter one, perspective will be exposed as a system capable of generating its own meaning. The work of Alex Colville will be discussed as expository of the means, traditions and procedures of Albertian perspectivalism in contemporary Canadian realism. This will be achieved by means of a brief history of perspectivalism in western art, a strategy which enables us to see Colville's work as part of a historical and ideological continuum. Albertianism will be therefore exposed as a legitimated and valued scopic regime (visual ordering) within western representational practice. *Nude and Dummy*, *June Noon* and *Pacific* exemplify Colville's classicism, drawing from and upon Alberti's theoretical foundation.

The work of Pratt and Pflug will be looked at in the second chapter as instances in which the artist has moved through Albertianism. The pairing of two

artists allows for the differences and similarities in their approach to Albertianism to be brought forward, making its mechanisms transparent. Christopher Pratt's paintings *Self-Portrait*, *French Door* and *Night Window* will be addressed through the distinction between Albertian window and the modernist grid. While the Albertian window and the modernist grid both structure the formal elements of pictorial composition, the grid situates the 'action' of the painting upon the surface plane, drawing attention to the mechanisms of representation. The Albertian window, on the other hand, presents the illusion of a seamless continuity between the spectator and the represented. This distinction is central to the argument for it not only confirms Albertianism as discrete, as a system within itself, but allows for a consideration of Pratt's figured window as a paradox, thus exposing its dependence upon the originary text. My argument is that, while calling into question the window by referencing the grid, Pratt's work nonetheless confirms slippage not departure from the norm. Similarly, Pflug's *Self-Portrait in a Window Pane*, *Kitchen Door and Esther* and *Interior at Night*, points to rupture rather than departure from the Albertian standard. While Pflug describes an alternate system of spatial notation to Alberti's rational order by recourse to an affective and social relationship to space, her work is nonetheless born of Alberti's constitutive control.

The last chapter looks at the work of Joyce Wieland in order to address the problematization, posed in chapter one by reference to Colville, of spatial

representation as 'masculine'. Norman Bryson's book, *Looking at the Overlooked: Four Essays on Still Life and Painting* is cited, following a brief consideration of its alternatives in Griselda Pollock's essay, "Modernity and the Spaces of Femininity" from her book, *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the Histories of Art* and Gaile McGregor's, *The Wacousta Syndrome*, as a model for interpreting and understanding gender in representation without recourse to essentialism. Following Bryson, gender will be understood here as a particular constitution of reality ideologically prescribed and inscribed, thus naturalized, in culture rather than biologically determined. Wieland's work then, will not be presented as proof of the presence of an alternate mechanism of spatial construction based on the sex of the author but rather as specific instance within Canadian contemporary art practice in which the author has moved across and away from the 'masculinity' of Alberti and Descartes. In taking this approach I avoid the pitfalls of allowing the work of one woman artist to stand for all women creators working within representation. Several new options for spatial representation will be seen to be mobilized by Wieland. The space of touch, of sensory experience, replaces the Albertian foregrounding of sight in the film *Water Sark*. Perspective is actively ruptured in 1933 through the visualization of space as reciprocal and dynamic rather than self-enclosed and fixed. The space of caesura marks the distance between subject and object in *Reason over Passion*, calling to mind the self-reflexivity of the grid yet engaging and then moving

away from perspectivalism. At first glance this may appear like the strategy employed by Pratt and Flug. However, where their resistance is localized in the window as representational site and their strategy is to elicit and suppress Albertian codes, in Wieland there is an unqualified abandonment of Albertianism as an ideological structure per se, brought to light by means of pointed references to its cadre.

The second text voice is by no means secondary. The intent of this second voice is to chart the sexual and aesthetic hierarchies of spatial representation. The question of gender will be introduced first as a mechanism for the problematization of Albertian perspectival hegemony. Susan Bordo's chapter entitled, "The Cartesian Masculinization of Thought and Seventeenth-Century Flight from the Feminine" in her book *The Flight from Objectivity* opens up a window of its own in anthropocentric epistemology through the examination of the Cartesian dualistic imperative that positions masculinity as normative and prior, being associated with the mind or *res cogita*, as opposed to the secondary and subsidiary, hence feminine matter or *res extensa*. Drawing from Bordo, the chapter on Colville will posit that, as Cartesianism is to philosophy, so Albertianism is to visual representation, a position recently adopted by Martin Jay.¹

¹ Martin Jay, "The Scopic Regimes of Modernity" in *Vision and Visuality*, Hal Foster, ed. (Seattle: Bay Press, 1988):3-23.

The chapter on Pratt and Pflug will take up the issue of gender and reformulate it in the light of gendered practice, posing the following question: does the subjectivity of the artist affect the treatment of Albertian discourse? The answer, strictly in relation to Pratt and Pflug, will be seen to be in the affirmative. Pflug proposes an affective, proximal and heterogeneous representational space in contrast to Pratt's rational, remote and homogeneous ordering of the picture plane.

Both artists are circumscribed, however, as the third chapter will make apparent, by Albertian perspectivalism and Cartesian dualism as both normative and legitimate. The question of feminine subjectivity and gendered practice, raised by authors as diverse as Pollock and Irigaray, must therefore be begged. In its stead must be foregrounded the gendering of space itself. Thus the last chapter will effect a consideration of Wieland, not from the standpoint of feminine subjectivity but from a position of intratextual gendering.

The interlocution and interlinearity of both text voices, that is, the institution that is Albertianism and the hegemonic interests it represents, in this thesis are illustrated by reference to Albrecht Durer. Albrecht Durer's *Draftsman Drawing a Nude* [Fig. 1], dated around 1527, can at first be witnessed to employ the figured window as a device for opening up representational space. The boundless space of

an exterior landscape is held in check by the architectural configuration of a pair of open windows. These windows, in turn, illuminate the interior scene.

But this is not the central theme of the picture. Durer's engraving vividly points to the mechanisms by which Albertianism has been codified as an ordering device for the picture plane and at once to the institution of Albertianism as a normative system of spatial projection. The engraving shows an artist and his model situated at either end of a platform. They are divided by a rectangular grid that screens the model; the artist appears to be re-presenting her on a sheet of paper before him. Durer's understanding of perspective is said to have stemmed from a trip to Bologna made as a young man; it is from this trip south that Durer is believed to have translated artificial or linear perspective to the north, where space was traditionally rendered descriptively rather than according to theoretical ideals as in the south.² By the time Durer arrived in Bologna, the fundamental principles of Alberti's treatise -- his practical guidelines to the painter, his observations on aerial and linear perspective -- were widely known. They were reflected, with varying degrees of fidelity to the original model, in the compositional schemes of the significant artists of the day including Masaccio, Piero della Francesca, Uccello and Leonardo. The import of Durer's engraving can be summarized in three points.

² For the distinction between descriptive and narrative space see Svetlana Alpers, *The Art of Describing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

First, it provides concrete evidence of the importance Durer accorded to the Italian understanding of compositional order; second, it provides proof of Italian spatial representation gaining normative value over northern interpretations of space; third, it points to the significance of planar means for reproducing mathematical, ordered schemas of spatial representation, again in keeping with Italianate and humanist norms and in contrast with alternate ocular mechanisms devised by northern painters.

The network of lines screening object from subject, model from draftsman in Durer's illustration, the *velo trasparente* or transparent veil prescribed by Alberti, operates as a visual equivalent for the planar extent of the pictorial surface. Its frame, on the other hand, is a threshold indispensable to the establishment of perceptual order; both are the tropes that codify and condition western visual representation. Yet it is possible to discern still another layer of meaning in the engraving, uncovered by feminist tools on the site of recent epistemological archaeologies. The particular historical relationship between the male artist and the female model -- the subject and object respectively -- in which the female is passive, disengaged, supine while the male is active, engaged and in control -- tells of the socio-cultural relationship between the sexes and of the male/female dichotomy now so graphically exposed. Male/female, culture/nature, mind/body: these dyads establish a series of hierarchical oppositions situating one group as normative and the

second as a variant on that norm. Thus, as the male artist is to the female, so the Albertian normative model was in the time of Durer, and continues to be, to alternate descriptions of space. The illustration, then, is particularly apposite. The artist views his model through a mechanical device of his own design. According to his scheme of projection, the woman/model is circumscribed, fragmented, shattered. Durer's engraving now illustrates the connection between androcentric perspectival theory and women's historic position in relation to male-defined ideology. Each of these layers of meaning resonates and operates upon the other. So too do the voices of the thesis.

Trinh T. Minh-ha has reasoned of clarity in western discourse:

Clarity is a means of subjection, a quality both of official, taught language and of correct writing, two old mates of power: together they flow, together they flower, vertically, to impose an order.³

A great number of voices have flowed and flowered together in the construction of this, now linear, text. Primary debt is owed to the discourses of revisionist art history, most notably Griselda Pollock's *Vision and Difference*, whose chapter "The Spaces of Modernity" is drawn upon throughout and especially in chapter 2 to exact the differentiation between Pratt and Pflug's spaces of representation. Since Pollock is

³ Trinh T. Minh-ha, *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989):16-17.

cited extensively in the text it is not necessary to summarize her argument here. Also crucial to this second chapter has been, as noted earlier, Rosalind Krauss' "Grids," from the book *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* since Krauss' definition of the grid locates precisely the nature of Pratt's representational difference vis-a-vis Pflug. Pratt's figured window is contextualized in the same chapter through Linda Hutcheon's explication of parody in modernist and postmodernist art practice developed in *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth Century Art Forms* and Pratt's parodic intent elucidated by reference to Michael Fried's *Realism, Writing and Disfiguration: On Thomas Eakins and Stephen Crane*.

Fried's text is one of a number of recent expositions on the subject of vision and visibility (space as visual phenomena and space as perception) to have been drawn upon here to a greater or lesser degree. Chief among them in chapter 3 is Norman Bryson's *Looking at the Overlooked: Four Essays on Still Life Painting*, whose essay "Still Life and 'Feminine' Space" furnishes the methodology for the examination of Wieland's films along gender lines. Bryson has also examined the metaphor of the window in *Vision and Visibility* where, following Lacan, he observes, "Between retina and world is inserted a *screen* of signs, a screen consisting of all the multiple

discourses on vision built into the social arena."⁴ In the same book Krauss reaffirms her earlier position that the modernist grid stems from a reflexive model, unlike the cartologic grid⁵, and Martin Jay singles out 'Cartesian perspectivalism' as the primary locus of western representation and the nexus of western ideology. The cracks and fissures of the figured window have also been chartered. Among others, John Berger has linked the window to the circulation of capitalist exchange, claiming that the Albertian "model is not so much a framed window open on the world as a safe let into the wall, a safe in which the visible has been deposited".⁶ And Stephen Melville has suggested that the metaphor of window is somewhat equivocal, a catechresis.⁷ Echoes of all of these will be found in the pages that follow.

The interest in windows to scholars also lies in their potential as illusory equivalents to the picture plane. Theorists since Alberti have characterized the nature of painting as a 'window onto space' and drawn attention to its isotropic, rectilinear order. But, as Trinh intimates, if surface appearance presents the aspect of valence, in reality knowledge is reflexive, doubling back the codes of its

⁴ Norman Bryson, "The Gaze in the Expanded Field", in Hal Foster, ed., *Vision and Visuality* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1988):87-108. Quote taken from p. 92.

⁵ See Hal Foster, ed., *Vision and Visuality*, op. cit.:83.

⁶ John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: BBC and Penguin Books, 1972):109.

⁷ Stephen Melville, "The Temptation of New Perspectives", *October*, 52 (Spring 1990):3-15.

construction. With other feminist theorists, Trinh has been instrumental in reconstituting epistemology along gender-aware rather than androcentric lines. "Neutral", "abstract" and "objective" truth has been reformulated along marxian, feminist, structuralist and psychoanalytic lines along with the consequent trend away from form and style towards ideology and social context already cited above. An awareness of the scope, methodology and limitations of my own work has been developed in relation to these demystifying critiques.

As Craig Owens has observed, "[F]eminist critique ... links the privileging of vision with sexual privilege."⁸ This is precisely the point of departure for Susan Bordo, whose revisionist *The Flight From Objectivity: Essays on Cartesianism and Culture* is drawn on extensively in the first chapter. Bordo argues that a male centered view of epistemology has ensured the preservation of male interests, privileging masculine values as normative. Known as androcentricity, its ramifications are currently being chartered as a legitimate area of analysis.⁹ Mary Hawkesworth,

⁸ Craig Owens, "The Discourse of Others: Feminists and Postmodernism" in Hal Foster, ed., *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture* (Seattle, Washington: Bay Press, 1983):57-82. Quotation cited from p. 70.

⁹ See Susan Bordo, "The Cartesian Masculinization of Thought," *Signs*, vol. 11, no. 3 (Spring 1986):439-456; Susan Bordo, *The Flight from Objectivity: Essays on Cartesianism and Culture* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1987); Estelle Dansereau, "Reassessing Interpretative Strategies in Literary Criticism" in Winnifred Tamm and Gordon Hamilton, eds. *Gender Bias in Scholarship: The Pervasive Prejudice* (Calgary, Alberta: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1988); Joan Gibson, "Man of Reason: 'Male' and 'Female' in Western Philosophy," review, *Canadian Woman Studies*, vol. 6, no. 3 (Summer/Fall 1985):104-105; Andrea E. Goldsmith, "Notes on the Tyranny of Language Usage," *Women's Studies International Quarterly*, vol. 3 (1980):179-191; Kathryn Jackson, "The Man of Reason: 'Male' and 'Female' in Western Philosophy," review, *Signs*, vol. 13, no. 1 (Autumn 1987):165-168; Helen E. Longino, "Feminist Critiques of Rationality: Critiques of Science or Philosophy of Science?," *Women's Studies International Forum*, vol. 12, no. 3 (1989):261-269;

for example, has taken on a study of its taxonomy, relating androcentricity to the "logic of identity"¹⁰ that, as these pages will demonstrate, is central to Albertianism. Svetlana Alpers draws on the same source, arguing that the primacy of Alberti's vision is culturally enforced at the expense of alternate scopic (visual) regimes. Alper's text is among a spate of new interpretations of thematics to have emerged in the postmodern period.¹¹ Alpers traces the institutionalization of Italianate or rationalized space within art history that has taken place at the expense of

Marian Lowe and Ruth Hubbard, eds, *Woman's Nature: Rationalizations of Inequality* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1983); Mary Briody Mahowald, *Philosophy of Woman: Classical to Current Concepts* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1978); Mary O'Brien, "Feminist Theory and Dialectical Logic" in Nannerl O. Keohane, Michelle Z. Rosaldo, and Barbara C. Gelpi, eds., *Feminist Theory: A Critique of Ideology* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982); Sherry B. Ortner, "Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?" in Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere, eds, *Woman, Culture and Society* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1974); Patricia Smart, "My Father's House: Exploring a Patriarchal Culture", in *The Canadian Forum* (December 1987):28-35; Carol Stoneburner, "Feminist Visions: Toward a Transformation of the Liberal Arts Curriculum," *Signs* (Winter 1987):398-399; Iris Marion Young, "Humanism, Gynocentrism and Feminist Politics," *Women's Studies International Forum*, vol. 8, no. 3 (1985): 173-183; Jill McCalla Vickers, "Memoires of an Ontological Exile: The Methodological Rebellions of Feminist Research" in Geraldine Finn and Angela Miles, eds, *Feminism in Canada* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1982); Petra von Morstein, "Epistemology and Women in Philosophy: Feminism is a Humanism" in Winnifred Tamm, and Gordon Hamilton, eds., *Gender Bias in Scholarship: The Pervasive Prejudice* (Calgary, Alberta: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1988); Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, "The Education of Women as Philosophers," *Signs*, vol. 12, no. 2 (1987):207-221 among others.

¹⁰ See Mary Hawkesworth, "Knowers, knowing, known: Feminist Theory and Claims of Truth", *Signs*, vol 14, no.3 (1989):533-557.

¹¹ Here I am thinking of such texts as Michael Fried's *Absorption and Theatricality: Painting and the Beholder in the Age of Diderot* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1980); Ann Bermingham's, *Landscape and Ideology: The English Rustic Tradition, 1740-1860* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1986); Christine Buci-Glucksmann's *La raison baroque: de Baudelaire à Benjamin* (Paris: Editions Galilée, 1984) and *La folie du voir: de l'esthétique baroque* (Paris: Editions Galilée, 1986), books dealing as much with the ideology that governs our understanding of the subject matter as with shedding new light on particular issues.

heterogeneity and variety in spatial aesthetics. Throughout the book, Alpers puts forward what is essentially a persuasive argument for the legitimization of descriptive or empirical space as it was understood by the artists of northern Europe during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a space presented without recourse to imposed readings of the (pictorial) text according to narrative or historical models or the formalistic symbolism of iconographers such as Panofsky.¹² She argues for an art history founded not in Italianate standards of rationality and order but on observable phenomena and immanence. The point of departure for Alpers' text is an earlier essay titled "Art History and its Exclusions: the Example of Dutch Art" (1982) in which the author traced the institutionalization of Italianate or rationalized space at the expense of descriptive space and spatial variety in western representation. But whereas the essay focussed on gendered practice as its *locus in quo*, positing the existence of a sexual hierarchy in cultural practices of representation which privileges the masculine or scientific over the feminine or empirical, in *The Art of Describing* Alpers extends the boundaries of this approach to distinguish between the primarily interpretative arts of the Netherlands in the seventeenth-century and the largely descriptive arts of the south during the same period without recourse to gender distinction. Alpers fails to problematize, and indeed hardly mentions, the question

¹² See Alpers, op. cit., esp. introduction.

of gender in relation to personal, as opposed to national, subjectivity. Under her advisement that I have reformulated the original premise of my argument (where I considered spatial representation in realism as constituted according to the subjectivity of the artist, hoping to contrast Colville and Pratt with Pflug and Wieland) and enunciate it in these pages instead in terms of gender (again, the cultural construct) and not sex.

Finally, I wish to draw attention to Naomi Schor's book, *Reading in Detail*, which must be credited for providing the methodological matrix for my own enquiry. Schor reconstructs feminist archaeology by reference to the texts of prominent male philosophers; she utilizes semantic strategies to expose the sexual hierarchy that assigns value to cultural artifacts on the basis of their association with gender. This, I feel, is the strength of her work. What I have derived from her book, *Reading in Detail*, is the formulation of a cohesive theorem linking aesthetics to the patriarchal paradigm of knowledge.

The structure of Schor's argumentation, replicated in the structure of the book, is synecdochic; each one of her five chapters stands independently while simultaneously forming part of an integral whole. This method of exposition will be used as a model for my thesis. The ideas I will be examining are not an attempt to provide a systematic history of spatial representation in the west but rather an

exploration of the ideological structures connoted by selected examples of contemporary Canadian art.

In her introduction, Schor references research by Svetlana Alpers in the field of Netherlandish painting and art history. In addition to the references to Alpers pointed to above, Alpers provides another source for my thesis in her crucial enquiries into hierarchical order as reflected in the discipline of art history. In effecting a critical examination of art history by reference to specific works of art, Alpers' working hypothesis on the intrinsic biases of art history duplicates my own reservations about the discipline with respect to the issue of spatial representation. My work will be similar to hers in its covert aim to name the exclusions made in patriarchal theory by direct reference to artistic practice. But it will differ significantly in two respects: 1) it will attempt to apply the 'art historical biases' hypothesis to contemporary Canadian art; 2) my own work will move away from broad historiographic formulations in its attempt to apply recent feminist theory to a specific category of images: the windows and doors of representation.

As far as I am aware, such a study has not been undertaken to date. Neither, to my knowledge, has Canadian art been examined in the context of its ideological problematic. In the work of Alex Colville, Christopher Pratt, Christiane Pflug and Joyce Wieland, windows and doors frequently appear as devices designed to literally

express the separation of opposing spatial planes or spheres. This literal usage corresponds to the actual function of windows and doors as frames between indoor and outdoor space. In the literature on the subject, windows and doors have been similarly interpreted according to their functional role. Whether ontological, iconographic or phenomenological in approach, art critics and theorists have tended towards formalism in their undertaking. Gaile McGregor, in the *Wacousta Syndrome*, for example, attempts to contextualize the window motif in Canadian art by reference to the psychological imperatives of place and the artist's psyche. McGregor sees all Canadian art as illustrating national and regional variations on the theme of the individual's response to nature; according to McGregor, this is evidenced not only in the artists' orientation towards the subject matter but more explicitly in their iconography. Citing existentialism, McGregor situates the Canadian artist according to a world view governed by polarized systems of knowledge; thus the representational window is to be understood in terms of the discontinuity it marks between inside/outside, enclosure/ wilderness, human/inhuman. The number of Canadian paintings in which the window and door motif appears viewed from the inside-out as a reference to a larger architectural scheme of supporting walls, floorboards and beams and hence, at least potentially, to the ideological structures of home, hearth and community, lend McGregor's text certain credence. McGregor's discussion of spatial relations is based upon the practical, psychological and

nationalistic implications of windows and doors. This thesis will not engage recent psychoanalytic discourse on feminine subjectivity in creative expression and subjectivity in relation to spectatorship except where it clarifies or elucidates upon the central argument. For the purposes of this thesis, a this approach is considered too reductive; while is certainly useful and valid it does not address the philosophical and epistemological implications of windows and doors. It is my contention that while the windows and doors in the work of Colville, Pratt, Pflug and Wieland may initially seem to function only as architectural referents in relation to enclosed space, they in fact articulate more complex social and cultural relations.

To summarize in conclusion, chapter one, "Ideology", presents a brief history of Albertian perspectivalism in the context of the work of Alex Colville and Canadian realism and in turn positions Colville within Albertianism. It looks at Albertianism through its means, mechanisms and procedures: how Albertianism is constituted, what purposes it serves and how its implementation as both a structure for representing spatial order and ideological order of representation takes effect. Albertianism is then considered as a visualization of the discourse of Descartes. Chapter two, "Play", examines the work of Christopher Pratt and Christiane Pflug for evidence of the normative value and legitimated status of Albertianism within Canadian realism. The chapter argues that Pratt and Pflug's practice registers Albertianism while effecting a resistance to it as a formal mechanism for constructing space and as an ideological

procedure for constituting reality. In a sense, the second chapter is a case study based on the premises of the first; the formal structure and ideological framework exposed in chapter 1 is then applied to particular test cases in order to confirm the validity of the originary hypothesis. The last chapter, "Gender", problematizes the gendering of space as 'masculine' by reference to Joyce Wieland's 'feminine' use of the Albertian paradigm in film.

CHAPTER 1

IDEOLOGY: ALEX COLVILLE AND THE WINDOW

This idea of the perfect state of nature, which the Artist calls the Ideal Beauty, is the great leading principle, by which works of genius are conducted. Sir Joshua Reynolds, *Third Discourse*.¹

One might say that order serves above all as a 'cartoon' of the mosaic that Joyce assembles, piece by piece, sometimes not in sequence but in such a way that the basic design guides his operation even if it is destined to disappear. But order is not only a departure point; it is also a point of arrival. Umberto Eco, *The Aesthetics of the Chaosmos*.²

In this chapter I will argue that the window in paintings by Alex Colville is both formed by and a formative element of the ideological construction of spatial representation. I will first define how visual space in realism is constituted (its means, mechanisms and procedures) by reference to three paintings -- *Nude and Dummy* (1950; fig. 2), *June Noon* (1963; fig. 3) and *Pacific* (1967; fig. 4) -- and draw parallels between them; this will be done by reference to the device of the window. The three paintings will then be positioned historically within the tradition of classicism in order to underscore the continued preponderance of Albertian

¹ Sir Joshua Reynolds, *Discourses on Art* (1769 - 1790) cited in Naomi Schor, *Reading in Detail: Aesthetics and the Feminine* (New York: Methuen, Inc., 1987):15.

² Umberto Eco, *The Aesthetics of Chaosmos: The Middle Ages of James Joyce*, trans. by Ellen Esrock (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982):51.

perspectivalism in western art not only as a formal ordering device but as a hidden code guaranteeing legitimacy and valuation. The implications of this code in terms of gendered practice will then be addressed in the light of Susan Bordo's book, *The Flight to Objectivity*.³

What is realism? Alex Colville is widely considered "the signal figure in Canadian high realism,"⁴ yet the meaning of the epithet remains unclear, not least because of the imprecise nature of its terminology. Colville has been variously described as a 'realist' a 'magic realist' and, more recently, as an 'active realist'. A realist, according to Colville himself, is one who is concerned with content, one "fundamentally interested in experience and giving voice to experience."⁵ He has claimed that his own style represents "observed reality metamorphosed by or blended with total experience."⁶ The term magic realism, on the other hand, defines a "precise rendering of realistic detail, with strange super-real elements presented in such a way that they give a dream-like or timeless quality."⁷ This would suggest a

³ Susan R. Bordo, *The Flight to Objectivity: Essays on Cartesianism and Culture* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1987).

⁴ Paul Duval, *High Realism in Canada* (Toronto, Vancouver: Clarke, Irwin and Company Limited, 1974):62.

⁵ Alex Colville in a talk at the Art Gallery of Hamilton (February 1973), published Duval, *ibid.*:73.

⁶ Helen Dow, "The Magic Realism of Alex Colville", *The Art Journal*, vol. XXIV, no. 4 (Summer 1965):326-7.

⁷ Elizabeth Kilbourn, *Great Canadian Painting* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1966):125.

combination of equanimity and emotion, yet this interpretation is tempered by the same author with the caveat: "The composition is usually extremely formal" which implies a rationalized overall order taking precedence over any expressive content, a definition which is strangely at odds with the implicit subjectivity of earlier definitions of the same term.⁸ Active realism, a more contemporary rubric, has been merely defined as an intensification and elaboration on the former two.⁹ None of these terms provide a concrete definition of what realism is yet all of them approximate it. Each definition implies an awareness of temporality in relation to realism: the sense of the brevity and impermanence connoted by the 'observed reality', the reality of the moment, subject to change. And each elicits a spatial

⁸ Elizabeth Kilbourn, *ibid.* Alfred H. Barr Jr coined the term "magic realism" in 1942 for *American Realism and Magic Realism* an exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art. Originally used by the German Franz Rohe in 1925 in relation to *Nach Expressionismus* or "post-expressionism" and describing a variety of styles ranging from "new objectivity" or *Die Neue Sachlichkeit* as it appears in the work of Max Beckmann through to Italian Metaphysical painters such as Giorgio de Chirico, Barr defined magic realism as applying to the work of "painters who by means of exact realistic technique try to make plausible and convincing their improbable, dreamlike and fantastic visions." He added: "Magic Realists try to convince us that extraordinary things are possible simply by painting them as if they existed. This is of course one of the several methods used by Surrealist painters...." Quoted from *American Realism and Magic Realism*, Dorothy C. Millar and Alfred Barr, Jr, eds. Museum Modern Art, New York, 1942, cited in Louise Marler Spence, *Alex Colville -- A Way of Working*, MA Thesis (Ottawa: The Institute of Canadian Studies, Carleton University, 1976):29. For a comprehensive study of magic realism in relation to Colville, see the exhibition catalogue by Nancy-Lou Patterson, *Magic Realism in Canada*, (Ontario: Guelph University, n.d..)

⁹ Arthur Perry, "Alex Colville's Art of the Seventies: New Brunswick Artist in Vancouver", *Artsmagazine*, vol. 9, no. 37 (March/April 1978):57.

dimension, one which appears to supersede time, expressed in the words "total experience" and "timeless quality."¹⁰ It is this sense of transcending time through space in contemporary realism that is at issue here.

The three terms cited above, realism, magic realism and active realism, share what Aristotle described as "occasions for recognition" -- an accurate record of observable detail, clearly discernable to the viewer as a representation of reality.¹¹ This links them in kind to all other forms of realistic endeavour, as Linda Nochlin has made clear, "All forms of realism, regardless of time or place, are marked by the desire for verisimilitude of one kind or another."¹² But the constitution of reality is associated with another tradition, this one aesthetic: the tradition of *mimesis* or imitation which in turn is indicative of the ideal rather than the real. This paper will argue that Colville's realism rest on the firm foundation of a tradition that dates back to antiquity: the intellectually ordered tradition of classicism and the ideal.

¹⁰ This is made even more explicit by Helen Dow when association Colville's style with that of De Chirico and Beckmann, "... all three have recognized the need for a *universal order against which individual forms must be set.*" (emphasis mine; Helen Dow, *The Art of Alex Colville* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1972):102). The idea of stationing figures in a vacuum of timeless order is central to classicism and to Colville, as I shall make clear. Dow's meaning is confirmed later, when she cites Beckmann as follows: "Height, width and depth are the three phenomena which I must transfer into one plane to form the abstract surface of the picture, and thus to protect myself from the infinity of space"(:103).

¹¹ See Rensselaer Lee, "*Ut Pictura Poesis: The Humanistic Theory of Painting,*" *Art Bulletin*, vol. XXII, no. 4 (December 1940):197-269.

¹² Linda Nochlin, *Realism* (Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books Ltd, 1971):51.

The foundation of the appearance of reality and its valuative status as truth in the visual arts rests, following the Middle Ages¹³ on the single space system known as perspective. Perspective conferred order and clarity to pictorial composition; more significantly, it afforded the artist a means by which to elevate concrete appearance to ideal heights. Scholarship surrounding southern concepts of perspective during the Renaissance generally attribute its discovery or invention to Filippo Brunelleschi and its theoretical formulation to Leone Battista Alberti.¹⁴ In his germinal treatise *Della pittura*,¹⁵ Alberti defined the practical means by which three-dimensional space could be projected onto a two-dimensional surface. The fundamental principles of this system of spatial rationalization are what is known as perspective. Alberti described the picture plane as a transparent plane of glass

¹³ See Susan Bordo, *The Flight to Objectivity: Essays on Cartesianism and Culture* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1987) and Umberto Eco, *The Aesthetics of the Chaosmos: The Middle Ages of James Joyce*, trans. from the Italian by Ellen Esrock (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1989).

¹⁴ For further discussion of the use of perspective in Italian Renaissance art see, among others, Sidney Blatt, *Continuity and Change in Art: The Development of Modes of Representation* (Hillsdale, New Jersey: Laurence Erlbaum Associates, 1984); Charles Bouleau, *The Painter's Secret Geometry* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1963); William M. Ivins, Jr, *Art and Geometry: A Study in Space Intuitions* (New York: Dover Publications, 1946) and On the Rationalization of Sight (New York: Da Capo Press, Inc., 1975); and John White, *The Birth and Rebirth of Pictorial Space* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987).

¹⁵ *Della pittura* has been published in English under the title *On Painting*, translated with introduction and notes by John R. Spencer (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1956). References throughout this thesis refer to the revised edition of 1966 unless otherwise noted.

beyond which a panorama unfolds:¹⁶ this is the metaphor of the window which, as these pages will make evident, has become the unspoken ordering code of our (western, scopic) culture. In his text, Alberti not only stipulated the measurements that structure illusory space but fixed also the position of the viewer in relation to that fictional order; in doing so, he defined an absolute, static and measurably controlled universe based on scientific principle [fig. 5]. He circumscribed a microcosm visible from his particular station in time and space, a realm ideally replicating the macrocosm in which he was situated.

The import of Alberti's message did not pass unnoticed; in devising his theorem, Alberti was to set out the ground-rules of an aesthetic defined according to platonic principles of harmony and proportion that would come to influence artists for the next four hundred years. The construction of reductive form as the fundamental principle of order in the visual arts gained ascendance through the texts of Viator, Durer and Leonardo, among others. Its representation granted artists a framework in which human drama could unfold, each compositional element causally related to the whole. Illusionary prospects could either be metaphysical, open spaces or realistic interior environments. Within these enclosures, the device of the open window or door, sometimes figured as an illusory archway [fig. 6], allowed for sophisticated combinations of outdoor and interior exposures.¹⁷

¹⁶ Alberti, *ibid.*:51.

¹⁷ The history of the window motif as the point of articulation between interior and exterior space can be found in Carla Gottlieb, *The Window in Art* (New York: Anaris Books, 1981); Suzanne Delehanty, *The Window in Twentieth-Century Art*

Such a combination governs the composition of Colville's painting *Nude and Dummy*, 1950 [fig. 2]. The image represents a dressmaker's dummy, a nude woman and an imaginary vista beyond a rooftop visible through a window. Preliminary sketches for the piece such as a pen and ink *Study for Nude and Dummy* dated March 1, 1950 [fig. 7] show that painting was originally conceived as containing two human figures, the first establishing the surface of the picture plane and immobile, the second establishing the middleground and in motion. This composition was later changed to a more stable configuration¹⁸ the first figure, already only partly cut off by the frame in the sketch was transformed into a dummy through the elimination of an arm at the side and the addition of a supporting post below. The second figure was conferred gravity. The finished painting achieves the effect of hieratic stasis from the formal balance of line and colour.

(Purchase, New York: Neuberger Museum, State University of New York, 1986); Musée de l'Annonciade, *D'un espace à l'autre: la fenêtre* (St Tropez: Musée de l'Annonciade, 1978); Lorenz Eitner, "The Open Window and the Storm-Tossed Boat: An Essay in the Iconography of Romanticism", *Art Bulletin*, XXXVIII (1955): 281-290; Carl Nordenfalk, "Outdoors-indoors: A 2000-year-old Problem in Western Art", *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, vol. 117, no. 4 (1973):233-258 and J.A. Schmoll gen. Eisenwerth, "Fensterbilder: Motivketten in der europäischen Malerei" in *Beitrage zur Motivkunde des 19. Jarhunderts*, Ludwig Grote, editor (Munchen: Prestel, 1970):13-165.

¹⁸ See for example, the sketch *Study for Nude and Dummy* March 14, 1950 and the more fully realized ink and watercolour *Study for Nude and Dummy* of the same period illustrated on pages 76 and 77 respectively of David Burnett, *Colville* (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario and McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1983).

Nude and Dummy derives clarity and order from a text-book understanding of geometric space and Albertian projection. A strong sense of depth is established through one-point perspective construction. The eye is led from the clothes-dummy in the foreground to the model in the middleground and into the distance through the window. Further, a diminishing relation of scale conforms to projective models of receding depth, also serving to lead the viewer out of the room. The relationship of the figures to each other and to the room in which they are situated is at the core of the painting's meaning. The mathematical disposition of the figures in relation to the ground lends an air of restraint and measure to the piece. This feature, coupled with Colville's characteristic economy of gesture, typifies his work during the period.¹⁹

Nude and Dummy marked a turning point for Colville in terms of his viewpoint and, as noted earlier, in terms of the devices he chose to determine it. Unlike the empirically defined spaces evident in the sketches that preceded it, *Nude in Corridor* (January 17, 1949; fig. 8), and *Nude in Doorway* (February 2, 1950; fig. 9) for example,²⁰ in which a female figure also appears poised at the threshold of a room, space in *Nude and Dummy* is defined with precision, scientifically. With this painting, Colville, for the first time, explicitly aligns himself with the methods of science and allows them to permeate his work. While the doorways of these sketches, like the

¹⁹ See, for example, *Horse and Train* (1954), *Family and Rainstorm* (1955), *Woman at Clothesline* (1957) and *Child Skipping* (1958), illustrated in Dow, op. cit..

²⁰ See Figs. 7 and 8 in Burnett.

window in *Nude and Dummy*, mark the transitions between one spatial sphere and another, literally and figuratively opening the domestic interior to view, they also correspond as well to a process of internal distancing opened up by the Italian theorists of the Quattrocento.

Colville's method of constructing a painting has been attributed to an "overwhelming need to make sense of the world requir[ing] [a] lucid, rational approach to organization."²¹ Such an organization, as Nochlin has asserted, is characterized by "impartiality, impassivity, scrupulous objectivity, rejection of *a priori* metaphysical or epistemological prejudice, the confining of the artist to accurate observation and notation of empirical phenomena, and the description of how, and not why, things happen."²² In relation to the realism of Alex Colville, this dispassionate investigation requires of the artist a willingness to efface himself from the mechanisms of production by two primary means: the first through recourse to reason over imagination, the second through the erasure of the artist's hand. Both these means will be elaborated upon in subsequent chapters, for the moment it is only necessary to point out that this detached method of portraying the world is contingent, for Colville, upon the reduction to pure mathematical form expressed through unequivocal spatial construction.

Such is the case in the painting *June Noon* [fig. 3], which again demonstrates Colville's use of orthogonal projection based on the Albertian modular scheme.

²¹ Ibid.:45.

²² Nochlin, *ibid.*:43.

Executed in 1963, *June Noon* draws upon our understanding of the universality of time and matter. The composition operates on two levels: the figures are stationed in space; the painting is constructed in successive layers. Colville constructs corporeality, substance and solidity through the use of geometry in this work as in *Nude and Dummy*. The figures project naturalistically in space, appearing to be surrounded by light and atmosphere. The spectator's eye moves from interior darkness to exterior light through the aperture in the tent. The point of highest luminosity in the work frames the vanishing point, focus of the man's attention.

Realism of observation and the application of mathematics circumscribes *June Noon*, which one author has interpreted as follows:

In *June Noon* ... the man instinctively turns away from his inevitable momentary present, represented by the nude in the foreground, to concentrate instead upon the still unaccountable future, striving with every technological asset to fathom even a portion of what he at least knows has not yet vanished into yesterday. Going far beyond artistic permanence, therefore, the eternity which this image implies is an actual one.²³

Present, future and past are conflated in a single moment of time: The bather drying herself is situated in the present. Her wet body reveals the past. The man looks out to the future. Colville deliberately avoids the fleeting moment and replaces it a distillation of momentary experience. This is how perspective operates: it provides a

²³ Dow, *ibid.*:128

mechanism by which the artist can distance reality and replace it with a generalized *idea* of reality, granting the image a totalizing universality.²⁴

June Noon's controlled orderliness roots it in a specific time and place (the beach, at noon, in June) yet at the same time place and space are rendered universal, immutable. Colville has eliminated the accidents of time and place, the incidental detail, the marks of individuality, replacing them with a clear distillation of the external world as it exists in his mind's eye. And this is contingent upon reason and the ideal, not emotion and the real.

At the time of painting *Nude and Dummy* (1950) Colville wrote:

I now placed all my bets ... on a more rigorous, disciplined, and intellectual plan of attack, a plan which relied less on perception,

²⁴ Arthur Perry has referred to this aspect of Colville's work as a "reassemlage [through which] an intensified reality is obtained", acknowledging that Colville *designs* on reality. "[F]or Colville the truth of reality is manipulated and fashioned into an *appearance* of reality", Perry states. See Arthur Perry, "Alex Colville's Art of the Seventies: New Brunswick Artist in Vancouver", *artsmagazine*, vol. 9, no. 3 (March/April 1978):42-43, 56-57. Similarly, Monique Brunet-Weinmann has pointed to this ability to effect a form of bricolage in discussing the analogies between Colville's work and mythology. "L'attente et la disponibilité laissent aux *images premières*, archétypales, le temps de monter de l'inconscient pour s'amalgamer aux *images* plus *anecdotiques* de la vie active et se traduire enfin, très consciemment, en *images plastiques*. Le mythe suit le même cheminement: il part lui aussi d'événements réels avant de fonctionner dans l'imaginaire en prenant corps dans un récit qui en parachève beaucoup d'autres." (Monique Brunet-Weinmann, "Alex Colville, ou la dimension mythique du monde moderne, *Vie des arts*, vol. 94 (Spring 1979):68. The key to this mythologizing quality in Colville's work, Brunet-Weinmann claims, is its reductionism, the absence of anecdotal detail. Brunet-Weinmann also notes that Colville's is a art of synthesis: a distillation or resume of fragmentary situations, a feature also noted by William Withrow in *Contemporary Canadian Painting* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1972):58.

though perception was involved in it, and more on conception....[T]he conceptual artist operates more independently of mundane experience: perceiving or seeing for the conceptual artist is a feeling which is used to confirm or to modify which what he has already determined.²⁵

The concurrences between concept and intellect that Colville alludes to in this passage correspond to the measured environment of the Presbyterian Covenanters' Church at Grand Pre, Nova Scotia in *Visitors Are Invited to Register*, 1954 [fig. 10]. In this painting, the physical world is represented as architectonically ordered, creating a visual analogue for God's spiritual order and harmony. Integrating formal and emotional composition in a manner suggesting correspondences with of Piero della Francesca,²⁶ an artist of the Italian Renaissance cited as a source of inspiration for Colville,²⁷ the artist employs architecture as a structural and compositional device. For Colville, as for Piero, mathematical projection provides not only a cohesive spatial schema but allows for the construction of substance, dimensionality and volume in the forms that fill that space. Such affinities unequivocally point to Colville's status as the intellectual follower of the Quattrocento ideals.

²⁵ Alexander Colville, "My Experience as a painter and some general views on art", in Helen J. Dow, *The Art of Alexander Colville* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson Limited, 1972):204

²⁶ See, in particular, Piero's *Meeting of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba* from the *Legend of the True Cross*, c. 1453-54 [fig. 11], to which Colville's painting shows remarkable compositional affinities.

²⁷ Colville has cited Piero as a source on numerous occasions, including comparing himself with the artist. See for example, Gillian MacKay, "The World of Alex Colville", *Maclean's Magazine*, vol. 96, no. 31 (August 1, 1983):42-47.

Rational metrical coherence also characterizes *Pacific*, painted in 1967 [fig. 4]. The key motif here is the window, which stands as a metonym for its architectural surround. Formally, space is defined by the verticals and horizontals the window designates as interior boundaries. The ruler echoes these boundaries, denoting interval and measure. It is the ruler's relationship to the gun, and then to the figure at the window, which lends psychic tension to the work. Where the window in *Nude and Dummy* separates one spatial plane from another, and the window-like aperture *June Noon* distinguished one sphere of activity from the next, the window in *Pacific*, upon which the man leans looking out onto the sea, marks the point of intersection between two worlds: the world of the nature, represented by the sea, and of the world of culture, signified by the man. In *Pacific*, the natural order of the environment -- water, air -- is played against the rational, architectural order of man.

The device of the window provides the means by which Colville articulates several counterpositions at once: the spatial dimension presented above is but one in a relay of binary oppositions. The window in *Pacific* foregrounds too the balance between action and inaction. Like Aristotle, his ideological ancestor, Colville has chosen to depict the moment at which the action reaches its peak of intensity. This is brilliantly signalled by the figure of the man who, leaning against the window-frame, disrupts the mathematical rational and architectural enclosure yet at the same time provides an organic counterpoint to the rigidity of the mathematically ordered interior. The figure appears to be equivocally stationed in relation to the narrative: is he considering action, figuratively 'measuring' or gauging options in relation to the

gun, or have the measures already been taken, the decision been already made, the action already occurred? The meaning of the piece is equivocal; the answers are not provided. To the tension inherent in the moment of action, suggestive of polarity, Colville has added the dialectical polarity between the spectator and the image. The figure of the man is positioned with his back to the spectator, he is featureless, hence anonymous. This anonymity invites identification, a reversal of the subject-object position. However, this potential identification is held in check by means of the table, located parallel to the picture plane. The device of the table screens out, separates, the viewer from scene, preventing at the same time identification with the individual depicted. The meaning of the work is now observed to be articulated between two points of transition: the movement of the represented figure from one condition (activity) to another (passivity) or, since this is equivocal, from passivity to activity, and the passage of the viewer from active engagement to passive restraint, since the viewer is actively involved in deciphering the scene yet figuratively rendered powerless to identify with its characters. The window is thus a site of negotiation: a threshold upon which a series of alternatives must be positioned and contracted before proceeding.

Arthur Kroker has postulated of *Pacific*:

The brilliance of Colville's painting ... is precisely to have seized the transformation to postmodernity: the American empire passing the severed parts of the American self [the painting was produced at a time of great violence in the United States] signalling the destruction of the social. ... [*Pacific*] is a reading of the self because the social no longer exists. It is a reading of the self that has reached contentment with nihilism: the table is swept clean. Yet the very sterility of the

expanse of water, juxtaposed with the sterility of the table, is almost of no consequence for the relaxed pose of the man threatens no one, and for this reason is the most threatening of all postures.

Colville's man has donned the most modern of fashions, that of seduction and violence. He no longer has need of clothes, gun, or scale -- only the very light breeze coming from the ocean. Fashion, war, and nature all are painted in the light of a society that can take them for granted, and has. The very forgetting of these basic constituents of the struggle in the capitalist world signals the advent of postcapitalism in its aesthetic form. It is also as *a signal of the movement beyond the politics of engagement* ... Colville's painting becomes one of the most modern paintings in the twentieth century.²⁸

Kroker's reading of *Pacific* constitutes the canvas as the site of postmodernism's dispersal of the gaze, rather than the locus of its rational, logical continuation. To advance the argument further, taking up the reference to 'seduction and violence', Kroker proposes an interpretation of *Pacific* in keeping with the combined fear and pleasure opened up by the esthetics of the sublime.²⁹ Yet this element of the canvas does not inherently contradict the idealism of Alberti's design; perspective functions through the 'suturing' of narrative illusion, as the spectator 'stitches together' from an imaginary (and controlling) position their own space and the space of the represented, fashioning seamless continuity. Thus the space of representation is also the space of desire.

²⁸ Arthur Kroker, *The Postmodern Scene* (Montreal: New World Perspectives, 1986):287. Emphasis mine.

²⁹ See Jean-Francois Lyotard, "Presenting the Unpresentable: The Sublime," *Art Forum*, vol. 20 (April 1982):64-69.

The moment of pleasure in *Pacific* is the moment of the sublime, the point of balance in the narrative, at which the specific is distilled into the absolute. The ability to eschew the particular in favour of the typical is a significant aspect of the classizing tendency in Colville's work, being at once a feature and a function of humanism. Colville shares with Alberti a fundamental belief that a work of art results from the solution to specific formal problems rather than from specific observations from nature. This allows for the principle of distance which characterizes Albertianism: the artist is removed from nature through detached, dispassionate observation. While the subject matter may be drawn from nature and external impressions, conformity to the ideal insists on rational, artificially manufactured, construction and on objective synthesis as the measure of greatness. "Generalized meditations on human life" typify classicism³⁰ which, as noted earlier, originates in antiquity, for

Aristotle had associated the nature and excellence of artistic production with the knowledge of universals derived from particular experience He ... remarked that the superiority of the painter's art over real objects lay in his having collected scattered excellences into one composite example of them all.³¹

The idea that art should fashion universality from the fabric of observable reality, synthesizing "scattered excellences" into a homogeneous whole lies behind Colville's

³⁰ Michael Greenhalgh, *The Classical Tradition in Art* (New York: Harper and Row, 1978):168.

³¹ Lee, *Ut Pictura Poesis*:209.

Pacific, and points to him as an heir to the artistic legacies, conventions and procedures of the past. But the temporal considerations circumscribed in *Pacific* represents only half of its coordinates. There are further, spatial, points of concordance between Colville and his tradition; these are flagged, again, by the window. Humanist formulations of aesthetics visualized painting according to the orderliness of geometry; thus, the ideals of painting were formulated in architectural terms: "A perfect painting, then, like a perfect poem, is a logical construction of the human reason, an architectonic *pensee* with every least part causally related to the informing the dramatic purpose of the whole."³² Architecture provided an organizational principle for artistic endeavour; it dictated a modular scheme upon which to overlay form.

The humanist reification of pictorial space presupposes the human figure as a point of departure for the construction of painting and in turn constructs the body as a site of privilege. Drawing upon the literary theory of antiquity, the Italian Renaissance devised an aesthetic of proportion originating in the human body, a literal reading of man (sic) as the measure of all things. This meant the devising of a frame of reference based on a series of modules the application of which could be traced to and was legitimized by a recognizable system of *proportio* stemming from Vitruvian notations and representing the rule of harmonious measure. Such an aesthetic of proportion was present throughout the Renaissance period in Italy;

³² Lee, *Ut Pictura Poesis*:226. Emphasis mine.

although the spirit of the Renaissance would eventually give way to Academic formalism, the principle of selective discrimination in form has been the legacy of all (western) artists.³³

The tradition of Italian perspectivalism can be traced from the Renaissance through to the classical revival in the seventeenth-century, neoclassicism in the eighteenth century and realism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The keystone of perspectivalism is the production of an ideal enclosure in which objects are projected at measured intervals. Perspectivalism is also one of the main components of classicism. Michael Greenhalgh:

[Classicism's] concern is always with the ideal, in form as well as in content. Such is the case, it is true, with virtually all artists before Romanticism, but classical artists look back to the ideal of Antiquity as well as to its varied styles. They were sure that art is governed by rules which are determined by reason. Beauty, which is one form of truth, must depend on some system of measurement and proportion ... artists working from classical models made it their business to rediscover such a system in the works of art and buildings of Antiquity. Such an emphasis on measurement, allied to reason, is summarized in the Vitruvian figure of a man within a circle and a square, which expresses the concurrence between beauty, mathematics and Man.... Antique art, centered on the depiction of a noble human mind in an ideal body, provides convincing models for imitation.³⁴

Albertian space conforms to the humanist and anthropocentric ideals of the Renaissance. Based on scientific observation and rationalism, it proposes that the

³³ It is not necessary here to trace the process by which the vital humanism of the Italian Renaissance became the inert formalism of the French Academy. See Lee, *ibid.* and Greenhalgh, *ibid.*

³⁴ Greenhalgh, *ibid.*:11.

viewer be stationed both prior to and *at a distance* from the observed scenario and hence be detached from it, a condition foregrounding the production of art as the result of discovery rather than inventiveness. Alex Colville's *Nude and Dummy* [fig. 2] and *Pacific* [fig. 4] illustrate this principle at work. Further, if invention is characterized, as it is by Norman Bryson, as artistic self-assertion and pride of creativity expressed through direct and unequivocal means (evidence of the artist's hand literally at work upon the surface in the form of signatory gesture and/or apparent brushwork, for example)³⁵ then discovery is the renunciation of such means and the attendant conformance to a higher ideal: scientific detachment; such signatory detachment is present (through its absence) in *Nude and Dummy* and *Pacific*.

Science is defined as knowledge. It stems from the root *scire*, to know. It is the knowledge based on self-evident truth stemming from the application of expert skill to observable phenomena. Pure science has no practical application (think of mathematics or logic) but, applied to visual representation, scientific method generates the appearance of verisimilitude or truth, since it originates in the world of science. Classicism, like science, is characterized by measure and order, simplicity, harmony, regularity and, above all, the appeal to reason. Reason lends intellectual control to the picture surface, serving the purpose of the artist in helping to endow the subject matter with monumental grandeur. Architecture in classical painting

³⁵ Norman Bryson, *Looking at the Overlooked: Four Essays on Still Life Painting* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1990):14.

operates in the same way, at the same time lending dignity and stature to human subjects. Buildings in painting may provide monumentality, or convey meaning through association or provide formal measure. The window motif in the work of Alex Colville has served all three purposes.

Whereas imagination over reason characterizes much of Colville's work from the seventies and eighties, the emotional ambivalence evident in, for example, *In the Woods* (1976), *Dog and Bridge* (1978) is not apparent in the paintings of the mid-fifties and sixties here under consideration.³⁶ A "cool, depersonalized classicism"³⁷ distinguishes these works both from the factual genre scenes of the war years and the psychological concerns expressed in subsequent pieces. This classicising tendency should not be surprising. Colville was trained in academic method. He received a conventional training at Mount Allison University in Sackville, Nova Scotia where, under the tutelage of Stanley Royle, himself trained in the Sheffield School of Art, England, he earned a Bachelor's degree in fine art in 1942. Further, the School of Fine and Applied arts which Colville attended was located in the Owens Art Gallery; this institution formally introduced the artist to European art.³⁸ What is surprising is that Colville submitted himself to the means and stipulations of Albertianism during a period in which most artists were engaged with abstract expressionism.

³⁶ Perry, *ibid.*

³⁷ Gillian MacKay, "The World of Alex Colville", *Maclean's*, vol. 96, no. 31 (August 1, 1983):42.

³⁸ David Burnett, *Colville* (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario and McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1983):38.

Albertianism governs Colville's conception and design; it allows him to express clearly and unequivocally the material signification of objects while at the same time allowing him to transcend actuality by reference to idealized form.

A recent writer observed that in Colville's paintings, "The viewer is left as an observer of reality."³⁹ This sense of detachment is made tangible in works such as *Nude and Dummy*, *June Noon* and *Pacific*. And, as these pages have demonstrated, the site upon which it is mapped is the window. The window is a metonym for architectural order, the order of place and locale. But it is also a synecdoche for the greater order of scientific reason: architecture stands for Albertian perspectivalism, the means, mechanisms and procedures that permit control and confer order to the picture plane. The window is at once one of a series of regulatory features within the piece and a feature of its regulation. The representational windows and doors of Colville's paintings provide a substitute order for the system that underlies the pictorial text. The function of the underlying order is to orient the viewer. At the same time, the frame operates ideologically as an authenticating device giving the painter licence to call upon the foundations of form. As stated earlier, the structure of this cadre is based on the identification of one-point perspective with science in the age of humanism. Aristotle believed that "art as ideal imitation is founded upon its own principles of structure."⁴⁰ This structure operated as a regulatory frame and, just as Durer's proportional frame in *Draftsman*

³⁹ Perry, *ibid.*:57.

⁴⁰ Lee, *Ut Pictura Poesis*:227.

Drawing a Nude [fig. 1] established points of symmetry according to a pre-established system of hierarchies, so the frame presents correspondences, in the words of Louis Marin, "between the *structure of the messages* in painting in general and *the system of a pictorial text* in particular."⁴¹ The windows and doors of Colville's work represent the informing presence in his architectonic representations of the underlying ideology labelled the Albertian ideal. One might be tempted to ask, along with Umberto Eco, "if order really functions as a referential frame for the reader [or viewer], or if it is not simply an operative structure useful to the [artist] in the construction of the work but discardable once the work is finished."⁴² The answer, in the case of the work of Alex Colville, appears straightforward: Albertian perspectivalism provides both an internal and an external frame simultaneously. Both frames provide a key to the interpretation of the work. Turning back to Eco, one must concur with his assessment of Joycean order applied to Colville: "The code must accompany the message, not because the message is obscure, but because the message considers even the code as one of its contents."⁴³

Colville's paintings are constructed according to a tacit code, perspectivalism, which in turn codes Albertianism as its paradigm. His work thus supports the discourse while at the same time gaining from it an organizing principle, its cadre. The frame superimposes a web of traditional order upon the canvas, conferring it

⁴¹ Marin:293.

⁴² Eco, *Aesthetics*:50.

⁴³ Ibid.

valuative status and legitimacy. Ideologically, the frame acts as a grid, mapping the world of the imaginary.

Alex Colville's humanism is a feature of his style, as one writer has claimed;⁴⁴ it has furnished Colville with the means to communicate simply and accessibly.⁴⁵ His tacit referencing of traditional authority is not, however, proof that his paintings lack originality, or that they are lifeless, static.⁴⁶ As Greenhalgh has ably demonstrated, classicism during the Renaissance was not static but rather that a variety of types of antiquities were utilized in a variety of ways to expressive ends.

⁴⁴ Virgil G. Hammock, "Alex Colville -- La Perfection dans le realisme," *Vie des arts*, vol. XV, no. 3 (Fall 1976):14-21.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ In the current American climate of patriotism, the New Right, Reagan, Bush and God, it is not surprising to find classicism discussed in moralizing tones such as those adopted by Henry Hope Reed, President, Classical America in 1980 when he wrote: "In an age such as our own, when the artist and the concerned public have broken the chain, when the artist would appear to have no other goal than that of satisfying his ego, even to indulging in aesthetic vivisection [the Academic painter of murals Kenyon Cox] deserves to be ... honored." [Kenyon Cox, *The Classic Point of View* (New York, London: W.W. Norton and Company, 1980):xlx-l] Colville is not outside being adopted by proponents of the New World Order, however, nor of being lauded on moral grounds. See Alan Reynolds, "Books: Theology in Art," *United Church Observer* (Toronto, Ontario), May 1973; Scott Macrae, "An artist in the realm of morality," *Vancouver Sun* (B.C.), February 5, 1974. Michael O'Brien, "The Hidden Face: Sacred and Profane in Canadian Painting," *Canadian Catholic Review* (February 1986):51-58 and "Barometer Falling: Landscapes of Unreality in Art and Society," *Canadian Catholic Review* (February 1990):44-54. Considerations of length preclude a discussion of the valuative status conferred to the Classical ideal in popular culture and in Canadian representation; its legitimated standing should nonetheless be registered.

All of which goes to say that Colville's classicism forms part of a living tradition. Classicism is not an empty exercise. Like the artists that precede him and whom he has cited as inspirations -- Piero de la Francesca, Poussin -- Colville has drawn from classicism not what is representative of antique art but its *example* which he has then utilized according to his own stylistic tendencies. As *June Noon* [fig. 2] illustrates, the work of the early sixties may be considered to be in the classicizing manner rather than simple imitations of antiquity. It must also be said that Colville's conformity to the dictates of tradition does not signify that the meaning of his paintings should be derived from their formal foundation. Colville's work shares with that of American realist Edward Hopper a circular exchange of form and meaning. In the words of Arthur Kroker: "In Hopper's world, a circular logic of sign and event is at work. Culture is coded by the signs of nature; nature is processed by technique; and *we are coded* by the false appearance of antinomic reciprocities between nature and culture."⁴⁷

The argument thus far has problematized the question of space relative to the work of Alex Colville; it has pointed to Albertianism as the cornerstone of a valiative system subsequently legitimized through the practical instruction of artists and encoded in Colville's paintings. Realism in painting has been related to questions of form by reference to both humanism and Colville. This form, which literally and

⁴⁷ Arthur Kroker and David Cook, eds., *The Postmodern Scene* (Montreal: New World Perspectives, 1986):251.

metaphorically provides the ordering principle of the canvas by reference to the frame has been examined through its trope the figured window.

Albertianism is, however, but one constitution of representational space among a range of alternatives.⁴⁸ It is not necessary here to elaborate on these alternate formulations except to note that, relative to perspectivalism, they are conferred secondary status on Cartesian grounds.⁴⁹ In other words, as the male artist to Durer's engraving was to the female model, so the Italian normative model was at the time of Durer, and continues to be, to alternate representations of space in western art. The same logocentrism distinguishing male from female, culture from nature and mind from body, accords Albertian perspectivalism normative status through the valorization of its origin in science.⁵⁰ Within the logic of hierarchical oppositions, a prior entity is understood as normative and the second as a variant on that norm. Victor Burgin elaborates on this point as follows:

⁴⁸ Considerations of length preclude a characterization of these alternatives here; they are the ground upon which future structures are to be built. See Svetlana Alpers, *The Art of Describing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983); Norman Bryson, op. cit.; Martin Jay, "Scopic Regimes of Modernity," in Hal Foster, ed., *Vision and Visuality* (Seattle, Washington: Bay Press, 1988); Michael Fried, *Absorption and Theatricality: Painting and the Beholder in the Age of Diderot* (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1980); Jacqueline Rose, *Sexuality in the Field of Vision* (London, New York: Verso, 1986), among others.

⁴⁹ See Martin Jay, *ibid.*:5.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

[T]he first term has been conceived as prior, a plenitude of which the second is a negation or complication. Situated on the margin of the first term, the second term designates an undesirable, dispensable deviation. ... Understanding the marginal or deviant term becomes a condition of understanding the supposedly prior term.⁵¹

Science and the rational are pitted, in paintings such as those by Colville, against emotion and the irrational. In *Nude and Dummy* external impression is subordinated to geometric orderliness; in *June Noon*, art is presented as an *analogon* of the world (masculine/feminine, inside/outside, light/dark are countered); *Pacific* reflects the artist's impersonality rather than his personality through its technique, masking the authorial hand so as to remain firmly in the realm of culture not nature. But the dominant term also *suppresses* the terms and conditions of its ascendancy, and this suppression provides the springboard for the final section of this chapter, a consideration of the ideological implications of Albertianism in terms of gender.

Through a discussion of the cognitive style of Descartes in the seventeenth-century and of the epistemological stance adopted by his main advocates and proponents in subsequent centuries, as well as by reference to developmental psychology, Susan Bordo, in the final chapter of *The Flight from Objectivity* titled, "The Cartesian Masculinization of Thought and Seventeenth-Century Flight from the Feminine" effects a reconsideration of Cartesianism and its manifest "objectivity."⁵² The masculinization of thought, Bordo argues, is expressed through the explicit

⁵¹ Burgin:194.

⁵² Bordo, *ibid*:97-118.

rejection of two "feminine principles" which structured the world of the Middle Ages. On one hand the principle of nature and the earth as a primordial, generative force was replaced by a mechanistic revisioning of mother earth as passive receptacle activated solely through male volition. This principle neutralized the vitality of the female cosmos since it was now forced into yielding to the higher authority of 'masculine' will. Bordo tells us that in time all reproduction would be divorced from sexuality, mechanism and God the father literally and figuratively supplanting the natural order of creation.⁵³ The non-dynamic, passive role assigned to women in creaturely reproduction was, on the other hand, also accorded them in the reproduction of knowledge. Feminine values of sympathetic, participatory thinking, which characterized earlier periods and expressed a sense of continuity, closeness and empathy with the world were displaced by a "cognitive position of masculinity" troped by detachment and rationality. The confrontational position adopted by the subject vis-a-vis the object in Cartesian logic corresponds, Bordo continues, to theories of reaction-formation in developmental psychology in which by means of an aggressive act of rejection of the mother and, consequently, the from the world of the feminine, the child/subject comes to terms with the pain of (his [sic],bodily) separation from her at birth.⁵⁴

But, there are advantages to separatedness, compensations for aggression. Detachment from the mother opens up the possibility of mastery and control of that

⁵³ Ibid.:110.

⁵⁴ Ibid.:107.

from which one is separated.⁵⁵ Autonomy is contingent upon domination. Domination is contingent upon silence. In recent years, feminists writers have been instrumental in recovering the silences of history. Like Bordo, feminists writing in the fields of art history, philosophy and, more recently, cultural studies,⁵⁶ have challenged the conventions that police our understanding and interpretation of knowledge. These writers, together with their counterparts in film studies, literature, and sociology have been instrumental in bringing to light the need for a gender-aware epistemology that will free us from that androcentric, or male-oriented knowledge proposed by Descartes. Returning to the visual arts, one finds that feminist art research has uncovered the sexist bias in art history, art education, criticism and studio practice. For example, art historians have pointed out the lack of recognition of women artists and the turpitude that characterizes their incorporation into mainstream texts. They have also pointed to presumptive vocabulary on the part of art historians, and to biases in historical accountings,⁵⁷ and they have flagged the

⁵⁵ Ibid.:107.

⁵⁶ I am thinking here of Janet Wolff, in particular, whose method in her early work is interdisciplinary *in a different way* to the method of the authors falling into the categories of art history or aesthetics about to be cited. See, for example, Janet Wolff, "Excess and Inhibition: Interdisciplinarity in the Study of Art", unpublished lecture presented to the UCSC Alumni Association Lecture, November 21, 1989.

⁵⁷ Georgia Collins and Renee Sandell, *Women, Art and Education* (Reston, Virginia: National Art Education Association, 1984). For a general overview of the challenge feminism has posed for art history, see Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard, *Feminism and Art History: Questioning the Litany* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1982). Broude and Garrard also include bibliography of texts devoted to the development of art history as a discipline which should help to situate

social production of women as objects of aesthetic commodification and its relation to market economics, proposing change based on sociology and historicism.⁵⁸ Art educators have pointed to systemic biases such as the number and kind of artistic practices considered legitimate subjects of study, in the limits imposed on women's education both historically and in the present; in assumptions of inferiority and difference founded in stereotypical attitudes towards women.⁵⁹ Feminist critics have challenged masculine values and norms and reinstated women's traditional association with the arts of domestic utility.⁶⁰ And, finally, studio practitioners have built new models of creativity and found role models outside mainstream artistic production.⁶¹

the reader.

⁵⁸ Griselda Pollock, "Women Art and Ideology: Questions for Feminist Art Historians", in Hilary Robinson, ed., *Visibly Female: Feminism and Art Today, An Anthology* (New York: Universe Books, 1988):203-221.

⁵⁹ Collins and Sandell, *ibid.*; Linda Nochlin, "Towards a Juster Vision: How Feminism Can Change Our Way of Looking at Art History", in Judy Loeb, ed., *Feminist Collage: Educating Women in the Visual Arts* (New York and London: Teachers College, 1979).

⁶⁰ See Rozsika Parker, *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine* (London: The Women's Press, 1984) and Arlene Raven, *Crossing Over: Feminism and the Art of Social Concern* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Press, 1988), among others.

⁶¹ See, for example, Judy Chicago, *Through the Flower: My Struggle as a Woman Artist* (New York: Anchor Books, 1973).

Returning to Albertianism, such revisions allow for a consideration of representational space as a cultural invention, an artificial construct encoded within androcentric epistemology. The ellision of difference along with otherness that characterizes perspectival space calls to mind Bordo's succinct analysis in *The Flight to Objectivity*: "[The dominant] has a secret story to tell, in the alternative perspectives to which it has denied legitimacy, and in the historical and political circumstances of its own dominance."⁶²

In terms of gendered practice, Albertianism masks the story both of women's historic suppression from the formal structures of education in the arts and of the production of femininity as silent and invisible in aesthetic discourse. As stated earlier, the production of idealized classical painting, a product of Renaissance neo-platonism, had, as a formal prerequisite, the artist's training in mathematics, anatomy and perspective. Mathematical control of the picture surface allowed the artist to produce the effect of depth and volume on a flat and free-standing canvas. Within this illusory projection, fictional characters could be situated and fixed in space, their relationship to the frame of the painting as that of actors to the proscenium arch of the stage.⁶³ This for men; for the practice of art as a professional occupation was a masculine task unsuitable for feminine hands.

⁶² Bordo, *ibid.*:115.

⁶³ The development of the proscenium arch in theatre corresponds to, and follows, the development of perspectival space. See Dan Graham, "Theatre, Cinema and Power", *Parachute* (June-July-August 1983):11-19.

Albertianism as an ideological construct is intimately tied to the social circumscription of women, hence the first aspect of its gendering. Women were excluded from the study of human anatomy by virtue of sex. Men, on the other hand, were expected to study anatomy from the live model, and to use this knowledge in the construction of idealized nudes that would, in turn, provide the unit of measure for the surrounding space.

Leonardo's famous Vitruvian man, serially emblazoned across the gamut of western advertising, is not an accident either for Leonardo or for the advertising industry. The Albertian advantage gave men access to the market place and hence to economic power. The ideological implications of Albertianism for women now begin to surface. In *Della pittura*, Alberti prescribed not only concrete measures for the artist but also the training a serious professional should undertake. History painting, defined as narrative action stilled at the peak of intensity and packaged as mythology, allegory, religious or heroic historical event, had achieved primacy among the arts. Knowledge of mathematics, perspective, anatomy, large-scale composition, and specialized painting techniques, as well as a broad education in the liberal arts which included studying from classical antiquity and travel, made up the portfolio of the serious and committed (male) artist. The demand for history painting, with its attendance to the visual evincing of these skills, had very practical implications for women: commissions, and prizes, fame and fortune went to men. Considered dilettantes for the most part, and with limited social expectations, women were discouraged from obtaining the standards of education and training expected from

men. The study of anatomy from classical sculpture, corpses, draped models and, increasingly, the male nude was the hallmark of the professional; women were kept from studying the male nude and thus barred from the insignias of power.⁶⁴

A second aspect of perspectival space which might be said to be gendered and which encodes the production of women's art, is evident in the terms and conditions of the realization of projective space. Projective space is defined according to the 'will to power' to coin a phrase from Foucault. Power-over determines the dominant viewpoint over the painted enclosure. The image beyond Alberti's metaphorical window is subject to the control of the artist's will; the scene taking place is structured accordingly. This conforms to a male view of the world: concordances between the penetrating fixity of the authorial viewpoint and the rigidity of its codification by Alberti are not incidental recalling as they do Francis Bacon's battle-cry: "[Female nature must] be taken by the forelock" and "neither ought a man to

⁶⁴ Lacking the power to be subjects in their own histories, women worked in still-life, genre painting, portraiture, miniature painting, categories considered 'minor' in the hierarchy. (Collins and Sandell:87; and Linda Nochlin and Ann Sutherland Harris, *Women Artists 1550-1950*, exhibition catalogue (Los Angeles County Museum of Art New York: Alfred A. Knopf: 1979):21). Formal training programs, Nochlin and Harris have determined, were established in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Italy (Accademia del Disegno in Florence, founded in 1562, and the Accademia di San Luca in Rome in 1593). The authors play down the impact of such programs. However, such programs, though informal and sporadic by the standards of late seventeenth century Academies in France, did nonetheless provide lessons in draughtmanship and discussion about art theory and practice. Women, although permitted membership in the Academies, were barred from meetings.(Nochlin and Harris:26).

make scruple of entering and penetrating these holes and corners."⁶⁵ Albertian space depends on the viewpoint of the spectator for its effect. Orthogonal projection stems from the spectator's station-point and converges on a horizon line corresponding to the spectator's position. Rendered accurately, as in realist art, perspectival space privileges the spectator's position as much today as in the Renaissance. The impression that the spectator can enter or penetrate (and thus have power over) the illusion of the canvas is central to the tenets of projective space.

The institution of mathematical perspective as a rhetorical paradigm depended on a prior and concomitant acceptance of scientific rationalism, hence its association with Cartesianism. The imposition of Albertian space as a paradigm for the study of vision and visuality follows the scientific method prescribed by Descartes. Androcentricity, in the guise of objective detachment, re-presents the institution that is the epistemology of spatial representation as part of a fact-oriented and bias-free science. Mary Hawkesworth has recently referred to this phenomenon as the 'logic of identity.'⁶⁶ It affords anonymity to its subscribers, granting them independent vision and impartiality. Recourse to reason pervades the work of Alex Colville in the fifties and sixties and, in the current revisionist climate, Colville's 'realism' is subject to question. The biases inherent in Albertianism and its attendants, legitimation and

⁶⁵ Cited in Bordo:108.

⁶⁶ See Mary Hawkesworth, "Knowers, knowing, known: Feminist Theory and Claims of Truth", *Signs*, vol 14, no.3 (1989):533-557.

truth, are laid bare by this aphorism by Michel Foucault: "the quest for truth [is] not an objective and neutral activity but [is] intimately related to the 'will to power' of the truth-seeker. Knowledge [is] thus a form of power, a way of presenting one's own values in the guise of scientific disinterestedness."⁶⁷

So far we have seen how the intrinsic biases within art history are evinced in the discourse of spatial aesthetics, pointing to the social and political relationship between men as producers of culture and women as manifestations of nature. Femininity as 'otherness', as a negation or complication, has in turn been exposed as an artificial construct encoded within androcentric epistemology. A male-centered view of the epistemology made accessible to us through the words of Descartes, has ensured the preservation of male interests and the privileging of masculine values as normative while eliding difference.

There is, however, yet another aspect of gendering within Albertianism to be considered. When Michelangelo referred to northern painting as fit only for women⁶⁸ he was equating order and harmony with southern rationalism and likening them to masculinity, and disorder and irregularity with northern empiricism and femininity, as Svetlana Alpers has made clear. As implied above, this troping of the feminine with irrationality and chaos focuses on the feminine as *negativity*, as opposed

⁶⁷ Michel Foucault in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings of Michel Foucault, 1972-77*, Colin Gordon, ed. as cited by J.B. Hartley, "Maps, Knowledge, and Power" in Cosgrove and Daniels, eds., *The Iconography of Landscape*:279

⁶⁸ Alpers, *ibid.*:223.

to the positive attributes conferred upon masculine rationality. But it conveys too the fundamental tenet of the mind/body split proposed by Descartes and suggested by Alberti in his theorem: it is indicative of the implicit threat the body poses for the mind, a threat that must be subjugated and controlled at all times. The cool, impersonal distance of the Albertian/Cartesian paradigm reveals not only the need for a distanced cognitive relation to the world but also that such a world must remain distinct and separate from the actual world of the artist. Alberti's *velo* affords the artist the opportunity of inventing a world in which all frontiers are secure; the world beyond the figured window is bounded, hermetically sealed. It is, moreover, an autonomous world: its subjects are cast upon reality as players upon a stage, requiring no outside intervention since they are reproduced in a world artificially staged and synthetically lit. Such an alternative spatial order parallels the ordering of Cartesian logocentrism and is conceptually gendered; it is doubly gendered as feminine, as Naomi Schor discovered when examining the aesthetics of the detail,⁶⁹ because it is not sexually neutral, "it is an axiology carrying into the field of representation the sexual hierarchies of the phallogentric cultural order."⁷⁰ Albertianism, like the detail, "is not beyond the laws of sexual difference."⁷¹ The threat of the feminine principle, to bring back Bordo and Cartesianism, is that

⁶⁹ See Naomi Schor, *Reading in Detail: Aesthetics and the Feminine* (New York and London: Methuen, 1987).

⁷⁰ Ibid.:5.

⁷¹ Ibid.

distinctions between the mind and the body might be blurred, that cognitive perspective might be distorted by subjectivity. Stated another way, this time in psychoanalytic terms, the implicit threat of feminine subjectivity is that the 'lack' of the phallus which grants women their 'otherness' might be imposed upon men.

Colville's representational window in the paintings *Nude and Dummy*, *June Noon* and *Pacific* demonstrate that the world beyond the representational frame is a world cut off from the space of the spectator, both figuratively and ideologically. Figuratively, they mark the transition between two spatial spheres; just as, in *Pacific*, there is no continuity between the metaphysical world of the sea (and nature) and the architectural world of man [sic] (and culture), there is no continuity between the spectator's world and that of the figured illusion. The window in *Pacific*, as in *Nude and Dummy* and *June Noon* might therefore be said to map the site of negotiation between two opposing spatial planes not the blurring of the distinctions between them. However, the legitimation of Albertianism as an ideological paradigm is contingent upon the appearance of fluidity between the spectator's space and that of the representational world. The codes of Albertianism as an ideology are evident in Colville's work in his engagement with humanism's reification of pictorial space through recourse to reason, geometry and the ideal. Colville elicits Albertianism's hegemonic tradition; thus he positions himself historically within an ideological continuum that has gained ascendancy among a number of representational options. Colville moves with Albertianism, his works gaining strength in (and acclaim from) its legitimated cultural value. Yet Albertianism is a system capable of generating its

own meanings. The dualistic imperatives of Albertianism are contingent upon the elision of difference between representational or narrative illusion and the spectator's space. In privileging possession through mastery -- the projective orthogonal depth of Alberti contrived from the point of view of the master's hand -- the Albertian paradigm foregrounds the *absence* of an alternate matrix for interacting with the world, one in which experience is embedded in nature and directly related to it. In sum, the window as figured trope for the ideological paradigm of Alberti ultimately and most importantly provides a structure for securing difference. As Colville's paintings demonstrate, the world beyond the frame is cut off from the world of the spectator; just as, for example, there is no continuity between the metaphysical world of the sea in *Pacific* and the architectural world of the man, there is no continuity between the spectator's world and that of the illusion. The window in *Pacific*, as in *Nude and Dummy* and *June Noon*, maps a site of negotiation, not the blurring of spatial spheres. In privileging possession through mastery, Albertianism foregrounds the *absence* of an alternate matrix for interacting with the world, one in which experience is embedded in nature and related directly to it. In sum, the window as figured trope for the ideological paradigm of Albertianism ultimately and most importantly provides a structure for securing difference.

This chapter has argued that the constitution of spatial representation in contemporary Canadian realism forms part of a larger ideological construction of visual space in the west. It has pointed to the mechanisms by which realism is both constituted by and constitutes this ideology as a dominant, hegemonic order. This has

been achieved by means of the window motif, both a whole part and a synecdoche for the larger frame of reference. Finally, taking Susan Bordo's *The Flight from Objectivity* as a point of departure, Albertianism has been situated in the context of Cartesianism and problematized in terms of gender. The following chapter will explore those representational spaces of realism in which perspectivalism is simultaneously elicited and repressed. What happens when boundaries blur?

CHAPTER 2

PLAY: RESISTANCE IN THE WORK OF CHRISTOPHER PRATT AND CHRISTIANE PFLUG

Between [empirical orders and scientific theories or philosophical interpretations] lies a domain which, even though its role is mainly an intermediary one, is nonetheless fundamental: it is more confused, more obscure, and probably less easy to analyse. It is here that a culture, imperceptibly deviating from the empirical orders prescribed by its primary codes, instituting an initial separation from them, causes them to lose their initial transparency, relinquishes its immediate and invisible powers, frees itself sufficiently to discover that these orders are perhaps not the only possible ones or the best ones; this culture finds itself faced with the stark fact that there exists, below the level of spontaneous orders, things that are in themselves capable of being ordered.... Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*¹

Chapter 1 looked at the constitution of Albertian perspective through a description of its means, mechanisms and procedures as represented in the work of Alex Casselle. I argued that perspectivalism is one of a number of representational options in western art and that its force is totalizing and hegemonic. In this chapter I will examine those spaces in contemporary Canadian realism in which Albertian perspectivalism appears to be applied inconsistently or incorrectly, spaces in which the import and message of the figured window might be said to be blurred. I will argue here that for Pratt and Pflug the window/door motif is a site of resistance to

¹ Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (New York: Random House, 1971).

the functional and ideological imperatives of Albertianism but that while the intent is to subvert Albertian perspectivalism to expressive ends, in effect their work reconfirms its normative standing. My hypothesis will be proved by means of a comparative study of selected paintings by Christopher Pratt and Christiane Pflug. Pratt's *Self-Portrait* will be utilized to substantiate claims of Pratt's interest in decentering the authorial gaze of Albertianism, signalled by his use of the window as an auxiliary device in the painting, *French Door* as evidence of his interest in deconstructing Albertianism's power over the subject. The import of Pratt's *Night Window* will be shown to lie in its simultaneous elicitation and suppression of the Albertian ideal. *Self-Portrait in a Window Pane*, by Pflug, will be described and analysed as proof of the presence of a 'principle of opacity' replacing the 'principle of transparency' encoded within Albertian theory. Pflug's *Kitchen Door and Esther* will illustrate resistance through spatial compression; *Interior at Night* will then document Pflug's development of a spatial tradition countering Albertianism's hegemonic order. In the final section of the chapter, the existence of this counter tradition will be problematized for the purpose of making clear that, while the comparison of Pratt and Pflug raises the spectre of gendered practice, the work of Pratt and Pflug ultimately endorses, through their apparent resistance, the thevaluative status of the masculine doctrine of Albertianism and hence the Cartesian sense of the gendering of space.

Resistance to the Albertian ideal is subtle yet constant feature of the work of Christopher Pratt and, in his 1961 *Self-Portrait* [fig. 12], it is signalled by means of the

window motif. Pratt learnt the Albertian system for projecting space mathematically hand in hand with the ideals of classicism while a student at the Glasgow School of Arts and subsequently, in Sackville, New Brunswick, at Mount Allison University. At both establishments, Albertianism was a founding precept as well as a didactic tool.² A sound grounding in perspective and geometry, and proven ability in drawing from a model were considered essential for eventual advancement to the life-class, as they had been since the institution of the Academy. Pratt learnt that concept was stressed over emotion, line over colour, the ideal placed above the real. As his early work attests, in time, architectural form came to dominate his practice. One of Pratt's earliest paintings [*Battery Road*, 1956; fig. 13] combines an architecturally defined landscape with the intimation of Albertian grid. The transition between the picture surface and the representational middleground appears to be mapped by a crystalline plane separating and distinguishing the two.³ In another early work, he seems to consider the oppositional contrasts -- secular, ecclesiastic -- of the symbolist window, although he replaces the crossed mullion which appears in works such as Odilon Redon's *The Light of Day*, 1891 [fig. 14] with a the simple horizontal line of a sash window, suggesting more prosaic concerns. Pratt's *Self-Portrait* presents aspects of both. Perspective lends definition to the outlines of a room, drawing the eye towards a distant horizon line literally set at the artist's eye level; the Albertian ideological

² Joyce Zemans, *Christopher Pratt*, exhibition catalogue (Vancouver, B.C.: Vancouver Art Gallery, 1985):esp. 13-17.

³ Ibid.:11.

window confers order and measure upon the scene. A mullioned window divides indoor from outdoor space, serving an ancillary function in the painting as the source of illumination.

Pratt's use of the window as an auxiliary device used to add depth to his painting corresponds to artistic conventions established in fifteenth-century Italy. While window-like devices had always existed in art to open out space and allow other spheres to be seen, they gained particular prominence during the Quattrocento in Italy. In Roman mural decoration, frames surrounded an illusory exterior view, creating the appearance of an aperture onto the world [figs. 15, 16]. The illusion of a window was established by two means: an illusory architectural framework might be devised around the view depicted or an actual architectural aspect of the room might be used to the same effect, as illustrated by Baldassare Peruzzi's wall fresco [fig. 17]. Yet here the window was suggested rather than featured. It was not until Alberti's concept of the *vision transversante*⁴ had taken hold, around 1435, and gained acceptance as a tool in the artist's repertoire that the window motif itself came into use. Where murals had once adorned the walls, the easel painting was gaining acceptance. The interest aroused by Alberti's perspectival system, and consequent acknowledgement of the importance of the vanishing point and the horizon line for its construction, brought about an ever-increasing taste for landscape painting as an illusory backdrop for action taking place in the foreground. With the interest in creating the illusion of deep space, however, came the attendant problem of

⁴ Cf Chapter 1.

reconciling large foreground figures harmoniously with background vistas apparently receding *ad infinitum*. The solution, when dealing with an indoor scene, was to juxtapose foreground and background simultaneously by means of a window or window-like device; intermediary planes were left to the imagination, hidden behind a screen-like wall [fig. 18]. Among a range of other alternatives,⁵ the window motif also allowed artists experiment with the effects of light: darkened interiors could now be contrasted against luminous exteriors outlined by the window frame [fig. 19]. In these paintings, the window served as a source of illumination for the personage described inside the window while setting the sitter off through the opposition of contrasting values. Portraiture allowed for yet another variant, as in Piero della Francesca's *Federigo da Montefeltro and Battista Sforza, Duke and Duchess of Urbino*, where the window is not present but the effect is window-like [fig. 20]. In paintings of this nature, the view through the window might detail information about the sitter. Frequently complementing their identity, the window might help to define the sitter's personality through expository means, as the words of Anne-Marie Lecoq and Pierre Georgel make clear, "Elle [la fenêtre] permet de présenter facilement à côté du personnage un lieu ou édifice (château, convent, église ...) qui lui est intimement associé et participe en quelque sorte à la définition de sa personnalité."⁶ The window could also define and delimit the bounds of property: the sitter's claim to social

⁵ See Delehanty et alia, op. cit.

⁶ Anne-Marie Lecoq and Pierre Georgel, "Le motif de la fenêtre d'Alberti à Cézanne," in *D'un espace à l'autre: la fenêtre*, exhibition catalogue (St Tropez: Musée de l'Annonciade, 1978):25-27.

standing and wealth might subtly be conveyed to the viewer by means of a panoramic vista across his terrain without recourse to ostentatious displays of status and power.

In the examples outlined above, the window takes a secondary position in relation to the subject of the painting. Christopher Pratt's *Self-Portrait* is no exception. Not only does he establish depth through the use of the window but he also situates himself against a luminous backdrop relative to interior darkness. While Pratt's torso and hands disappear into the shadows of the room, his face is revealed through the combination of geometric form and the light from the window. Form is reduced to a simple structure based on the underlying geometries of square and circle. Light gives volume to the high, domed forehead, conferring upon it weight and mass. Pratt uses the window as formal device as well, to lend tension to the image. Pratt's head and torso, tectonic and self-contained as forms in themselves, are contained by the window frame yet at the same time seem to thrust beyond its confines. Pratt's head intersects the square of the window frame; the artist appears to strain towards the ceiling as if suspended, larger-than-life, over his surroundings. The formal compression serves to reinforce the impression of monumentality already defined by means of scale and volume.

There are certain elements of the painting, however, that intimate an interest in using the window to further ends other than the ancilliary. A certain tension is inherent in the equidistant opposition of inside and outside in all paintings of the window motif. Pratt, however, has deliberately magnified this effect, as further reference to its historical antecedents makes clear. In Italian portrait paintings during

the Quattrocento, the subject is usually centered in the composition, given priority over the scene described beyond as already noted above [fig. 18]. The exceptions to this rule are those portraits in which the subject is a religious or allegorical figure, as is the case in Filippo Lippi's *Madonna and St John the Baptist* [fig. 21], where the Madonna is situated to one side and framed by a doorway to signify her role as an intercessor between lay subject and God.⁷ As in both cases described, the role of the window motif in *Self-Portrait* is both an integral, functional part of the composition and a subsidiary part at the same time. Yet Quattrocento portraiture relied on a second aspect of the Albertian window as well. As chapter 1 has already detailed, it was contingent upon the appearance of a seamless continuity between one spatial field and another; in fact, upon the *elision* of any trace of the distinction between 'here' and 'there.' The system of projection Alberti proposed was a means not only of ensuring mathematical consistency in the representation of space but also of canonizing the erasure of difference between subject and object, between space of the the artist and the space of the represented. Herein lies the key to Pratt's resistance to perspectivalism in *Self-Portrait*, signified formally though his location in the composition. Pratt's image does not present him centrally located in space but slightly to one to one side; the eye is therefore led not only to the portrait subject but over his shoulder to the horizon line. As stated earlier, in this respect the

⁷ See Marilyn Aronberg Lavin, "The Joy of the Bridegroom's Friend: Smiling Faces in Fra Filippo, Raphael and Leonardo," in *Art the Ape of Nature*, edited by Moshe Barash, Lucy Freeman (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1981):193-209.

composition does not seem to differ from earlier examples. But there is here an added element. Attention is drawn not to the metaphysical transparency of the window but to its material, figured, intervention between indoors and outdoors. Rosalind Krauss has observed the same effect in the windows of symbolist artists such as Redon [fig. 14].⁸ Like symbolist windows, Pratt's window lays claim to its own significance through the geometrical intervention of its crossbar upon the spectator's line of sight. The crossbar is an ordering device: it controls what we see and how we see it. It points to the artifice that is Albertian construction by mapping the surface of the intermediary plane that is the window. Pratt's window, then, like the window of the symbolists, moves beyond a singular meaning of the window as the locus of the binary opposition of inside and out, light and dark. Like the window of the symbolists, it suggests too simultaneous transmission and reflection of light, a polyvalent reading contrasting the transparent with the opaque. In Pratt's *Self-Portrait* a principle of opacity replaces the principle of transparency of Albertian perspectivalism. The order and clarity that makes Albertian space cohesive is disturbed, undone, by the window through its emissary, the crossbar. Pratt's window, unlike the opening of Colville's *June Noon* [fig. 3], is a distracting presence in the represented scene, for it figures the deconstruction and reconstitution in the artist's own terms of the authorial gaze of Albertianism.

⁸ Rosalind Krauss, "Grids", in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1988 [1985]):9-22.

The principle of opacity is also at work in *Self-Portrait in a Window Pane*, 1965 [fig. 22] by Christiane Pflug, but to different effect. Like Pratt, Pflug gazes steadily out at the viewer; this time the artist is seated behind a table. Three levels of depth are immediately apparent to the viewer by virtue of the window. The first is delimited by the edge of the paper she uses as her support, the surface of which, in turn, becomes part of the wall around the window. The second is established by the window frame, illusionistic shadow giving relief to its mouldings. The third defines the encasement of a sash window, a smaller rectangle within the rectangular format of the frame. Inside the limits of this frame the room in which Pflug sits recedes into darkness. Each of these geometric devices impede direct access into the drawing. Yet these are not the only means deployed. The artist, who appears located in the middleground, is removed still further by means of the table at which she sits, since it is positioned between subject and object. But further distancing is yet to take place. The drawing, which at first appears to have been conceived from outside the window looking into the room, hence unequivocal in interpretation, unlike Pratt's is, on second glance, a portrait reflected back by the glass. The drawing is a night scene, the luminous interior of Pflug's room creating a mirroring effect on the glass, as details such as the double image of the curtain on the left and a small hook visible on the lower casement of the window confirm. The combined effect of glass and frame, mirror and window, produce a spatial tension quite distinct from that of Pratt and unique to Pflug, yet one which also make use of the principle of opacity for its effect.

Pflug combines traditional elements associated with the window motif -- its form, its architectural correspondences with the human body as a unit of measure, its mechanisms for distancing -- with a 'reversal' of the gaze not immediately apparent to the viewer. In this she is like Pratt; opacity and dislocation take over from transparency and continuity. The overall effect of *Self-Portrait in a Window Pane* however is quite different. Pflug seems to envision herself a diminutive, restrained figure, diminished by her surrounds. This effect is due as much to Pflug's inconsistent application of the rules of orthogonal projection as it is to the gradual 'stepping down' of successive layers of depth suggested by means of the window or the mirroring effect of the glass. Pflug, unlike Pratt, the drawing seems to tell the viewer, is neither monumental nor imposing; unlike Pratt, Pflug is framed by the Albertian window, enclosed and limited by its strictures. In Pflug's work, spatial ambiguity, the contrast of traditional architectural elements to define space with a non-traditional inconsistency of treatment of the general rules of perspective (as is evident in the middleground of the drawing where space seems vague and undefined, and forms amorphous) has replaced the Albertian ideal and has been added to the opacity of Pratt's design. The result is that the emotional appeal of the image supercedes its formal concerns. Pflug's window suggests empirical, not rational, ends.

Where Pflug leans towards empirical means as a method for subverting Albertian perspectivalism, *French Door*, 1973 [fig. 23] by Pratt belies his reliance upon its mathematical ordering. In *French Door*, Pratt utilizes the Albertian paradigm as

a point of departure for a rigorously organized formal structure outside the bounds of perspectivalism. In conformity to the Albertian ideal, space is architecturally defined, mathematically ordered and mimetically transcribed. The figure in the painting exists in a world reproduced from a distance: the artist's forming hand, the authorial touch, is elided through the painstaking process of production which leaves no tangible trace of brushstroke; the french door is a distancing device between subject and object; the ideal takes precedence over the real.

The configuration of compositional elements is however not static; in fact, it is considerably unstable. The french door that gives the painting its title is equivocally located within the architectural framework of its enclosure. This intentional effect is signalled by the relationship of the french door to the model and to the surrounding space. I will attempt to explain it here by reference again to fifteenth century Italy. The development of naturalistic representation in the Italian Renaissance hinged on the construction of figure with weight, substance and mass and its stationing within a enclosure sufficiently ample to contain it. By resorting to geometry, Pratt achieves these ends. Pratt gives his model substance and volume. Further, the reduction to geometrical forms visible in the overall composition of the painting extends to the forms of the body in the academic tradition, obliterating idiosyncratic detail.⁹ The idealized form of his image in turn lends the model

⁹ Proof of this process is can be found by simple comparison of his sketches of models in the studio with the finished paintings for which they posed. For example, *Donna/Study for Apartment* (1975) and *Apartment* (1976) in which the latter reveals significant elimination of the specifics of body hair, skin tone and detail. In *French Door*, the inherent geometry of the body has been accentuated, the sexual

physical remoteness and emotional distance. Yet the space in which the model stands cannot be defined with certainty; it does not appear large enough to contain her. As Joyce Zemans has succinctly observed, the model in *French Door* "appears to stand in an undefined and ultimately impossible space."¹⁰

In relation to the meaning of the work, the door metaphorically signals the separate place of the model's existence. The woman in the painting, Donna Meany - according to Pratt "the most specific figure" of his work -- lived with the Pratt family as an au-pair and home help. Painted three years after her departure, *French Door* is an evocation of the space between their two worlds. In Pratt's words: "I always felt that she was just on the periphery, endangered, exposed to our ideas, which were not viable for her. She was outside looking in."¹¹

By reference to the means, mechanisms and procedures of Albertian space, with its rigid internal structures and geometrical forms, Pratt secures a mnemonic place for his model. The french door of Pratt's painting is a distancing device between model and viewer. The door defines space through interval and measure, locking the model into a fixed yet detached place. Christopher Pratt's *French Door* captures the

characteristics -- breasts and pubis -- revealing the underlying shapes of a cylinder and a triangle.

¹⁰ Zemans:56.

¹¹ As quoted to Merike Weiler in Silcox, *ibid.*:185.

essence of Bachelard's assertion: "Memories are motionless and the more securely they are fixed in space, the sounder they are."¹²

The structure for securing memory in *French Door* is however not the Albertian window but its antithesis, the modernist grid. The organization of *French Door* can be reduced to a symmetrical grid of vertical and horizontal lines; this grid, which recalls both the abstract network of lines Pratt drew in studies for earlier paintings such as *Sheds in Winter* (1959) and *Demolitions on the South Side*, 1960 [figs 24, 25] and Durer's cartographic screen [fig.1], goes beyond both in providing the work not only with a rigorous geometrical armature¹³ for spatial projection but with a mapped surface traversing the visual field. As Krauss elucidates, this is a uniquely modern phenomenon since, in abandoning Albertian mimesis, it declares the materiality of the surface of the canvas:

There are two ways in which the grid functions to declare the modernity of modern art. One is spatial; the other is temporal. In the spatial sense, the grid states the autonomy of the realm of art. Flattened, geometricized, ordered, it is antinatural, antimimetic, antireal. It is what art looks like when it turns its back on nature. In the flatness that results from its coordinates, the grid is the means of crowding out the dimensions of the real and replacing them with the lateral spread of a single surface. In the overall regularity of its organization, it is the result not of imitation, but of aesthetic decree. ...

¹² Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space* (New York: The Orion Press, 1971):3.

¹³ Zemans refers to the grid as an organizing principle analogous in structure to the window (Zemans:37); I intend to argue here, modelled on Krauss, that although both serve coordinating functions the grid and the window are in modernist practice quite separate devices.

In the temporal dimension, the grid is an emblem of modernity by being just that: the form that is ubiquitous in the art of *our* century, while appearing nowhere, nowhere at all, in the art of the last one.¹⁴

In mapping the terrain of the surface, the door in *French Window* marks Pratt's resistance to perspectivalism.¹⁵ Christopher Pratt's crossed window in *Self-Portrait* [fig. 12] has become, in the later painting, the grid/lattice of the french door. Pratt's *French Door* by means of declarative materiality of its grid deconstructs Albertianism's 'power over' the subject; it breaks with the illusion of projection onto and consequent knowledge of the representational domain. Pratt's door, then, is uniquely fitted to the subject he has selected to represent. Donna Meany, though fixed both temporally and spatially in memory like the modernist grid, remains out of grasp, screened out, in an ambivalent space that is at once tangible and elusive.

Compositionally as complex as *French Door*, Pflug's *Kitchen Door and Esther*, 1965 [fig. 26] marks another means of resisting the imperatives of Albertian pictorial structure. *Kitchen Door and Esther* is one of a series explorations of the window/door motif and at the same time a departure from them. Drawings such as *Front Room and Bay Window on Yonge Street*, 1961 [fig. 27] and *Rear Window on Yonge Street*, 1961 [fig. 28] for example, Pflug had utilized the window as a formal element signalling the convergence of interior and exterior space -- the former combining controlled form and precise line to transmit recession into depth; the latter suggesting

¹⁴ Krauss:9-10.

¹⁵ That Pratt subverts, rather than abandons, perspectivalism will become clearer in the discussion of *Night Window* to follow.

interval and measure by literally outlining the artist's visual environment with a window frame. But where she had previously only utilized the window/door motif in sketches, in 1964 she introduced it into her paintings in oils with *Kitchen Door at Winter II* and *With the Last Snow* [fig. 29]. Pflug's door in *Kitchen Door and Esther*, like Pratt's, is a french door; both convey a particular significance. Whereas all doors may mark enclosure, define transition or act as absolute barriers, depending on the degree of their aperture, the french door combines elements of window and door: the french door allows metaphorical escape while simultaneously blocking exit. Threshold and barrier at once, the image of the french door achieves heightened power and tension when the juxtaposition is effected between an outdoor scene and a domestic scenario. In this case it contrasts the enclosed, intimate world of the interior with the open, natural setting beyond.

At the compositional centre of the *Kitchen Door and Esther*, the french door establishes perspectival depth through the acute oblique of its relation to the viewer while dividing the canvas in two. On the left side of the painting part of the kitchen can be discerned, a stove parallel to the door. On the other side is a view of the outdoors demarcated by the door frame. Poised between the two spheres is the figure of Esther seated on the threshold with her back towards us.

By Alberti's standards, Pflug's portrait landscape presents certain difficulties. First, the open doorway, metaphorical point of transition between indoor and outdoor space, does not allow passage to the outside. The viewer's imaginary access beyond the doorway is blocked, first by the balcony rail crossing the opening, then, more

forcefully, by a swirling vortex of luxuriant foliage. Second, while the eye is drawn to a bright circle of light representing sky at the centre of the greenery its placement conflicts with the viewer's expectations set up by traditional canons: the orthogonals established by the door converge not at the point of highest luminosity but on the door frame opposite the door. In fact, no single vantage point is discernible; organizing the composition, multiple viewpoints seem to replace the Albertian ideal of one point perspective. Third, the figure of Esther, who acts as a *cartellino*¹⁶ bridging two worlds, is measurably too small in scale in relation to the proportions of the room thereby countering the Albertian modular scheme described in the preceding chapter.

An alternate order seems to dictate the correspondences between figure and ground in Pflug's *Kitchen Door and Esther*, one based on the disarticulation of Alberti's projective canons. As I will subsequently make clear, this displacement of traditional rational perspective takes place on a number of levels simultaneously; in this section I will concentrate on its formal structuring alone. *Kitchen Door and Esther* describes proximal space, a space articulated not according to abstract geometric conceptualization but by means of perceptual immersion in the visual field. It is a phenomenological space akin to that of Van Gogh and Cezanne; the mechanism for its inscription upon the canvas is spatial compression not spatial depth.

¹⁶ A *cartellino* is traditionally a slip of paper placed on the boundary between two spatial planes and operating as a visual bridge between them.

Griselda Pollock has theorized the existence of an alternate framework for spatial representation in the women's practice that lies outside the dominant claims of a masculinist Albertian tradition. Based on the positional difference and experience of women's lives, this alternate spatial order maps the deconstruction of traditional representational practice on the way to securing a different configuration of pictorial space.¹⁷ Pollock defines phenomenological space in the following terms:

Instead of pictorial space functioning as a notional box into which objects are placed in rational and abstract relationship, space is represented according to the way it is experienced by a combination of touch, texture, as well as sight. Thus objects are patterned according to subjective hierarchies of value for the producer. Phenomenological space is not orchestrated for sight alone but by means of visual cues refers to other sensations and relations of bodies and objects in a lived world.¹⁸

Esther is stationed within a space that corresponds more to her perception of it than to her adult mother's. The doorway looms high above her head, the door handle represents an obstacle for tiny hands, the door appears conspicuously heavy and foreboding. Most significantly, however, Pflug has represented Esther's world as a world ordered by barriers. Within Pflug's rendering, Esther's environment is inaccessible to her and that is signalled both by the disproportionate scale and prominent figuring of the architectural elements around her -- door, threshold, balustrade -- and by the alternative rendering of space.

¹⁷ Pollock, esp. 56-65.

¹⁸ Pollock:65.

Pollock has observed a similar effect in the practice of Mary Cassatt. Cassatt's Young Girl in a Blue Armchair, 1878 [fig. 30] "not only pictures a small child in room but evokes the child's sense of the space of the room."¹⁹ Pollock has also observed in the representational spaces of Cassatt a tendency towards formal compression; the same compression is at work in Pflug's painting. The spectator's visual experience of distance in *Kitchen Door and Esther* is disrupted by means of a compositional collapsing of representational space towards the foreground plane. Signalled by the balustrade separating Esther from the world beyond her enclosure, this compression maps the discontinuity between Albertian and phenomenological space.

As already noted, Albertian space is made unstable by means of the inconsistency of its geometric coordinates. The spatial ambiguity of the design defines a shallow space replacing the illusory depth of perspective projection. A sense of immediacy is apparent in Pflug's compositional construction as a result; its effect is claustrophobic. As in *Self-Portrait in a Window Pane*, Pflug's *Kitchen Door and Esther* is structured around a frame within a frame; this structuring accords the painting its feeling of confinement. Several devices are at work to this end. In addition to the ambiguous treatment of spatial projection, the door is cropped at either end by the frame of the canvas drawing the spectator into the depicted illusion. The amount of light and air perceived between the fore- and background planes has been reduced; where Albertian space depends on a convincing rendition of light and air as substances made tangible through perspective, their absence in Pflug's work

¹⁹ Pollock:65.

creates a sense of enclosure. The swirling foliage of the trees outside follows an abstracted design rather than naturalistic representation. In suggesting a surface pattern, it brings the eye forward to the picture plane in a manner similar to Pratt's *French Door's* surface grid.

The effect of Pflug's canvas is however quite different from that of Pratt. Where Pratt figuratively distances the spectator from the object of representation, Pflug forces the viewer engage the subject matter directly and with immediacy. The viewer oscillates between her/his actual station in space and the representational order of the work, made party to the tension-fraught relationship between real and imaginary space experienced by the artist. Pflug's *Kitchen Door and Esther* resists the imperatives of Albertianism by minimizing the intrusion of the frame as ordering device constituting spatial representation. In Pflug's work, space is made unfamiliar through systematic compression: through these empirical means, rather than the abstract mathematical ordering of Alberti, Pflug constructs a sensory, phenomenological experience of her world.

If in effecting a distancing from Albertianism's codes Pflug's methods appear to grow steadily more empirical, Pratt's mechanisms are insistently mathematical. *Night Window*, 1971 [fig. 31] refers to the window as a metaphor of perception, taking up an archetypal definition of the motif already alluded to in *Self-Portrait* [fig. 12] by means of the correspondence between the horizon line, Pratt's eye level and the line of sight. Originally devised with a female model [fig. 32], Pratt describes an empty room by recourse to rigorously frontal composition around an abstract design of

squares and rectangles. In the final version, a fireplace and a mirror are all that can be seen; they are reflected in the panes of a sashed window. The space of the room in which the window is situated can be logically reconstituted from the calculated regulation of the design. And, due to the architectonic nature of the composition, the observant I/eye is presumed to have mastery over the painted scenario. However, this expectation is frustrated: where logic and rationality would dictate the presence of a figured reflection in the mirror corresponding to and aligned with the spectator's station in space, no such presence is indicated. Pratt's room is rigorously constructed to be self-referential. Literally and metaphorically, there is no room for the viewer; the space appears hermetically sealed. The space of *Night Window* is constituted as if the invisible wall that is the stock in trade of the mime artist where to replace the proscenium arch of the stage. Its effect is that the space of the room, while apparently empty, is foreboding in its airless atmosphere. There is no means of access into Pratt's enclosure; no means of escape.²⁰

Pratt's subversion of Albertian perspective lies, in *Night Window*, not in the deconstruction and reconstitution of conceptual order according to the vicissitudes of practice as did *Self-Portrait* and *French Door* but in the devising of an infinitely replicating world of unyielding surfaces set at the extreme edge of Alberti's discursive space. *Night Window* is a visual analogue for optical refraction, a paradox of the Albertian window, playing upon both its mathematical and ideological projection.

²⁰ David Burnett and Marilyn Schiff, *Contemporary Canadian Art* (Toronto: Hurtig Publishers Limited, 1983):166.

The windows and mirrors of Pratt's room imprison; there is no suggestion of release. Joyce Zemans has observed of *Night Window*: "This is not the space of later interiors, in which the world of memory engraves the image of a particular place in our mind. Rather, it is *an anxious space, airless and illogical* in which we are *trapped*, invisible between the mirror and the dark window."²¹

The feeling of disquietude Zemans attributes to *Night Window*, the feeling of apprehension and misgiving she associates with its space, intimates the metaphysical understanding of the window held by symbolists such as Redon. The symbolist painters and poets perceived the window as both opaque and transparent, mirror and glass at the same time. Rosalind Krauss:

As a transparent vehicle, the window is that which transmits light -- or spirit -- into the initial darkness of the room. But if the glass transmits, it also reflects. And so the window is experienced by the symbolists as a mirror as well -- something that freezes and locks the self into the space of its own reduplicated being. Flowing and freezing; *glace* in French means glass, mirror and ice; transparency, opacity, and water. In the associative system of symbolist thought this liquidity points in two directions. First, towards the flow of birth -- the amniotic fluid, the 'source' -- but then, towards the freezing into stasis or death - - the unfecund immobility of the mirror.²²

Iconographically, the mirror in *Night Window* is both a reflex of the window motif of representation and a representation of the French for glass. In *Night Window* Pratt engages in an ironic play on the translucence of the window. The darkened window,

²¹ Zemans, *ibid.*:34. Emphasis mine.

²² Krauss, *ibid.*:17.

like the mirror, reveals through turning back on itself. Like the mirror, it engages the view. And, like the mirror, it intimates decomposition. Pratt himself has observed: "The notion of a window, a window as a mirror [intrigues] ... because it is almost a perversion, a philosophical corruption of the idea of a window."²³

The paradoxical relation of the window motif in *Night Window* to the surface upon which it is portrayed is that while the imagery extends an invitation to the viewer to enter the picture and participate in the scene, formal elements within the painting impede visual access. Further, while the figured window in Pratt's work is manifestly objective and scientifically rational in its definition, in accordance with Alberti's precepts, the space of the picture is not a logical continuation of the observer's space as it was determined by him. This calls into question the position of the authorial hand. For, if the context of the piece -- its historical positioning as an iconographic motif delimiting distance -- figures Pratt's presence as the originator, the original source of meaning and, in conformance with Barthes' definition, with his position as the *creator* of the work, placing him in "a position of discursive authority",²⁴ then the very instability of its formal construction (especially when the means of tradition are being used against that tradition) must signify authorial intent. Pratt, it should be underscored, received a formal training by academic standards.

²³ David Silcox and Merike Weiler, *Christopher Pratt* (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall Canada, 1982):11.

²⁴ Hutcheon:85.

This training is drawn upon in *Night Window* yet conventional forms of pictorial syntax are disposed of; perspective construction has been destroyed. Therefore, *Night Window* represents a radical new interpretation of the principles of Albertian order.

The irony of *Night Window* stems from Pratt's ability to simultaneously elicit and suppress artistic convention, causing the 'eye' to oscillate between one space (that of the canvas) and another (that of the mind). Where the materiality of the surface is not brought to mind, where it is absent from the mind's eye, it is elicited; conversely, where it is brought to light by means of a disarticulation of artistic convention, it must be absented for the paradox to be apprehended. Michael Fried has observed the same practice in American novelist and story writer Stephen Crane:

In Crane's prose ... the materiality of writing turns out to be simultaneously elicited and repressed: elicited because, under ordinary circumstances, the materiality doesn't call attention to itself -- in fact we might say it effaces itself -- in the intimately connected acts of writing and reading; and repressed because, were that materiality allowed to come unimpededly to the surface, not only would the very possibility of narrative continuity be lost, the writing in question would cease to *be* writing and become mere mark.²⁵

In Crane's text as in Pratt's the process of production must remain hidden in order for paradox to be apparent. Albertianism serves Pratt by providing him with a mechanism through which to engage the viewer; perspective provides the illusion of seamless continuity through the erasure of the codes of production. Pratt's classical

²⁵ Michael Fried, *Realism, Writing and Disfiguration* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1987):xiv. Emphasis in the original.

training provides him too with a procedure: the invisibility of the marks of production, the distracting disclosure of authorial intent.

Yet in the the process of the effacement of practice, the presence of artifice is signified. Pratt elicits the materiality of the surface through the window in the same way that Thomas Eakins elicited the surface of the body of water in his rowing scenes. To cite Fried again:

[A] principle effect of the underlying perspectival structure in these pictures is to make us acutely aware of the surface of the water as an image-bearing horizontal plane; and inasmuch as the underlying structure belongs to a complex of practices that at once posits and articulates such a plane, it is tempting to see in the finished paintings images of that condition of their own production, which is to say of genesis in writing/drawing. Put slightly differently, the rowing pictures refuse to allow the implied horizontality of the "original" sheet of paper to be wholly superseded and in effect suppressed by the verticality of the stretched canvas."²⁶

The solicitation and disavowal Fried supposes hidden in Eakins are made directly apparent in Pratt. Indeed, it is possible to go further with Pratt's *Night Window* and to see these mechanisms as an integral part of the work. The semi-conscious play between elicitation and suppression described in Fried's book *Realism, Writing and Figuration* in relation to both Eakins and Crane is pointedly referenced in Pratt, bringing to mind Dada's call to 'unreasoned order' (*ordre d'irraisonnable*).²⁷

²⁶ Ibid.:52.

²⁷ See William Rubin, *Dada, Surrealism and Their Heritage* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1977).

Where, in Eakins, the alternating mechanisms of "writing/drawing" (Fried takes these to mean the referencing of the mechanisms of production (the blank canvas, the picture plane) as opposed to and distinct from the illusion represented upon its surface (the scene depicted)) are covert, a feature Fried admits might suggest they are unintentional,²⁸ in Pratt they are unequivocally stated. The figured window parallels in form and structure the frame of the canvas; the illusion beyond the window both stands for and represents the illusionism of painting. This is not to say that there is no ambivalence in terms of meaning; on the contrary, the meaning of the piece is openly indeterminate.

Night Window is endlessly contradictory. While its appearance is of a mise-en-abyme (textual mirroring) in actuality the painting represents a mise-en-scene (textual staging). The mirror, while compositionally leaving the spectator oscillating between the internal levels of the composition, points to the "intramural" nature of the painting, that is, to the codes within itself. Pratt's window looks back to its historical antecedents; it refers to an imbricated iconography of fictive windows illuminating, revealing and bounding western aesthetic practice. It is this internal coding which distinguishes it from the grid, whose manifest intent is to announce, as Krauss reminds us, "modern art's will to silence, its hostility to literature, to narrative, to

²⁸ Fried notes that the "project" of defining alternating mechanisms of "writing/drawing" would most likely to have been "unconscious" in Eakins; that is, the "project" and the "reading" (interpretation) is admittedly Fried's not Eakin's. Ibid.:80.

discourse."²⁹ If the grid emblemizes spirit while purporting to signify materiality, as Krauss claims,³⁰ it does not pretend to historicism.

Pratt's painting not only bears the marks of the tradition that buoyed Eakins but also the self-reflectiveness that characterizes modernism and which situates *Night Window* with Marcel Duchamp's *Fresh Widow* [fig. 33], Rene Magritte's *The Human Condition* [fig. 34] and his *La Lunette d'approche* [fig. 35]. These pictures share in common an element of parody originating from the desire to flirt with the limits of convention as a means and an end in itself and for the sake of effect rather than for the sake of demonstrating the expressiveness of their model or strengthening its inherent design. They create a language of their own, abstracting and troping the window motif at the same time as reifying space. In *Night Window*, this intention is evinced in the active play upon the codes and conventions of perspectivalism that artists such as Colville, in paintings such as *Nude and Dummy*, work hard to suppress. Where Colville works to efface and disguise his intervention in the process of production, for example, Pratt *et alia* call it to mind, 'dredging up' submerged practice.

In this light, *Night Window*, like Bakhtin's medieval and Renaissance carnival, exists in a space outside and beyond the bounds of convention.³¹ Neither inside nor

²⁹ Krauss:9.

³⁰ Ibid.:12.

³¹ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, trans. Helene Iswolsky (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1968), cited in Hutcheon, *ibid.*:73.

outside rational order, it appears to be posted at the interface of realism and abstraction. On one hand it refers to its mimetic and idealist antecedents, on the other to the modernist grid. In reality it belongs to neither. *Night Window* looks forward to the scopic imperatives of Francesca Woodman's *Space* [fig. 36] as described by Arthur Kroker:

And so the woman framing the case [in *Space*] is a *trompe-l'oeil*, distracting the gaze from the absence in the *Space* sequence of any border between inside and outside, between the limit and transgression. What we have in *Space* is not, as Rosalind Krauss has claimed in her interpretation of this work, an illustration of the 'edge' in architectural practice, but the reverse. *Space* is the site of an endless body slide: an indeterminate optical refraction ... between the limit and transgression.³²

Like contemporary metafiction, *Night Window* exists "on that boundary between literature and life, denying frames and footlights."³³ Its glass is the reverse image of Foucault's panoptic gaze, a negative image marking not the limit as division but the limit that confirms the impossibility of division.³⁴ Herein lies the double paradox of *Night Window*. If Pratt's mirror as an endlessly signifying trope constitutes a resistance to Albertian perspectivalism as a set of general rules for orthodox spatial projection and resistance also to its ideological imperatives, then it should also break with its hegemonic tradition. Yet this is not the case. Despite its internal self-

³² Arthur and Marilouise Kroker, *Body Invaders: Panic Sex in America* (Montreal: New World Perspectives, 1987):23.

³³ Hutcheon, *ibid.*:73.

³⁴ Arthur and Marilouise Kroker, *ibid.*

reflecting mirror (a virtual mise-en-abyme), perhaps because of it, Pratt's *Night Window* always harks back to the iconography of the window motif. The rectangular frame of the window that locates the pictorial field and the surface of the canvas leads back to the Albertian perspective, away from the iconoclasm of the grid's mapped surface. In other words, the very intramural nature of *Night Window* stands for the artist's intimacy with the conventions of the genre. Pratt's *Night Window* signals in its insistent resistance to Albertian doctrine the very crux of Albertianism's normative value. Linda Hutcheon explains: "[While] the pointing to the literariness of the text may be achieved by using parody: in the background will stand another text against which the new creation is implicitly to be both measured and understood."³⁵

The first paradox of *Night Window* lies in the repetition of the window motif recontextualized through critical distance. Pratt reworks the convention of the window, synthesizing its essential elements. The second is that, in eliciting and suppressing its formal elements simultaneously, he elicits too the ideology of Albertianism, allying himself with Duchamp through modernism's critical self-awareness and intentionality but ultimately demonstrating more affinities with Eakins than with either Duchamp or Magritte. Unlike Duchamp or Magritte, both of whom might be considered to be actively engaged with what Hutcheon has termed an "awareness of the context-dependent nature of meaning",³⁶ clarified as the

³⁵ Hutcheon, *ibid.*:31.

³⁶ Hutcheon:85.

"signification of the circumstances surrounding an uttering,"³⁷ Pratt's realism betrays his direct engagement with the tradition of Albertianism. Further, Pratt's *Night Window*, as all his work, implies a context *outside* the specificities of time and place of its production and it is this interest in remaining within the bounds the general, the non-specific and the absolute, that exposes it as remaining within Albertianism's ideological enclosures. More significantly, however, Pratt's paradox cannot be interpreted without recourse to its originary text; in order for the paradox to be effective, Albertianism, as an originary text, must be elicited. *Night Window* is not the site of resistance to the ideological imperatives of Albertianism but an "authorized transgression" whose "parodic double coding" reinforces the authority of the norm even while transgressing it. In its parodic intentionality, *Night Window*, like all parody, "is both a personal act of supersession and an inscription of literary-historic continuity."³⁸

The space of Christopher Pratt's *Night Window*, whether looked at philosophically or discursively, is the space of scientific principle, that is, a space based on rational observation and theoretical detachment. Pflug's painting *Interior at Night*, 1965 [fig. 37], on the other hand, presents a series of intangible givens which are sensed rather than clearly identified as in Pratt's work. Pratt deals with the classical, the ideal. His reference to measure, proportion and harmony looks back to humanism's aesthetic values. His is the appeal to contemplation through

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Hutcheon:35.

2

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simplification and reduction, the recourse to reason and, ultimately, his the objective detachment that enables the authorial infringement upon the rule. Pflug's means are quite different: *Interior at Night* formulates an alternate scopic regime to the Albertian hegemonic paradigm.

Several dimensions of space are parlayed in *Interior at Night*, as they were in Pratt's *Night Window*. Yet Pflug's spaces are quantitatively and qualitatively different from Pratt's since, returning to taxonomy of visual representation theorized by Griselda Pollock and referred to in the context of Pflug's *Kitchen Door and Esther*, Pflug's imaginary order describes space as social location, as internal order in painting and the space of femininity.³⁹ The space of location of *Interior at Night* is the domestic space of the home, the social space represented is that of the private sphere. This social space allows for a reading of the window as a point of contact and communication between the public urban milieu of the outside world represented by power lines and electric lights and the private interior world of the domestic enclosure. Pollock's definition of space as location -- the spaces represented in Pflug's paintings -- also draws attention to the serial replication of the artist's iconographic motifs: the kitchen, the bedroom, windows and doors, cages and schools, all of which denote and connote the private sphere, enclosure and/or containment. The space of representation in *Interior at Night* is the same compressed space of *Kitchen Door and Esther*: the subject is portrayed intimately and subjectively, the composition is simple and frontal, space is brought forward to the picture plane by

³⁹ Pollock, *ibid.*

means of cropping and closure. But the 'anti-Albertian' devices of *Self-Portrait in a Window Pane* [fig. 22] are also represented. The principle of opacity is again apparent: the interior that gives the painting its title is the reflected interior visible on the upper half of the open sash window; the space of the room cannot be reconstructed mathematically from the spatial coordinates Pflug has provided. And these 'old' devices in turn introduce a new aspect of Pflug's deconstruction of Albertian space. The objects stationed within Pflug's interior, the easel, the ceiling fixture, cannot be exactly reconstituted in the mind's eye, because their construction does not follow Albertian mathematical principles. The transparency Alberti inscribed upon the canvas opened each object to the view in its totality; by means of logical deduction any part hidden from view could be reconstructed in the mind's eye as a logical extension of those components made visible to the eye. In other words, the exact nature of the particulars of the painting could be inferred from the general rules of its construction. In Pflug's *Interior at Night*, by contrast, the precise nature of each object is concealed from view through its equivocal rendering within the already ambivalent space of its enclosure: the heterogeneity of her space is matched by the non-specific nature of the elements within it. Her spaces subvert Albertianism as a result. Pflug replaces Alberti's calculated exposures with unexpected prospects in *Interior at Night*. Precise determination of each component part of the painting is impossible because her composition does not conform to any single easily determined order. The formal construction of *Interior at Night* cannot be deduced from a single,

general rule. Pflug has thus produced a heterotropic⁴⁰ space to counter Alberti's single vantage point.

Interior at Night represents a space for which the artist has an emotional affinity. This is formally signified by means of phenomenology, spatial compression its distinguishing feature. This is the space of femininity which Pollock describes.⁴¹ In *Interior at Night* as in *Kitchen Door and Esther*, Pflug manifests a sense of locatedness and positionality conditioned by a social relationship to the world shaped by politics and ordered by sexual difference. For Pflug, it is a world intuitively apprehended rather than rationally construed. Susan Bordo's useful distinction between "locatedness" and "place," drawn from Whitehead, is here called to mind:

"Simple location" is the "perfectly definite sense" in which something "can be said to be *here* in space and *here* in time, or *here* in space time [without] any reference to other regions of space-time. In other words, the "simple location" of something is the location of the thing, considered as an "independent, individual ... bit of matter." The sense of locatedness is the experience of *oneself* as "simply located."

The sense of "place" on the other hand, is the experience of 'fit', of *belonging* where one is, of having a home. It is the assurance that where one is, is appropriate or meaningful or of value within some larger context. One could say that the sense of "place" takes the sting out of the recognition of locatedness. And, indeed, the shock of separation, for the human child, is compensated for (when conditions permit) by the nurturing home provided by the parents, by their continued assurance that the place occupied by the newborn is a

⁴⁰ From the Greek *hetero*, meaning "other, different" and *tropos* "turn, way, trope": diverse and multi-leveled.

⁴¹ Pollock:66.

privileged and secure one, that the newly emerged entity has not been thrust into a world indifferent to it.⁴²

The frame of vision inside the illusory window -- the space reflected in the darkened panes -- is the artist's own social space defined by fragmentary forms and unfathomable shadows. This is a space defined outside of mathematical projection; it is the space of quotidian reality and of the concrete present. To understand the radical nature of Pflug's imaginary, it is necessary here to refer to the artist's personal history and social circumstance. Christiane Pflug had no studio of her own in which to work nor the time to paint at leisure. Her artistic production was conditioned by her socially prescribed role as wife to Michael Pflug and mother to Esther and Ursula Pflug; as stated earlier, the spaces of her canvases simultaneously represent the spaces of her social world. *Interior at Night* is not only the created locale of an imaginary world but also the site of the artist's social positioning within the real world. In keeping with this topology, space and time in *Interior at Night* are ephemeral and evanescent rather than concrete and universal. The fluttering curtains suggest the passing of "the living moment," a sensuous touch underscored by the presence of the dolls at the window who seem to point to the cyclical nature of life in suggesting the passage from childhood to adulthood. Pflug's is not the "cold, new world" of Cartesianism, as Susan Bordo so aptly terms it.⁴³ On the contrary, hers

⁴² Bordo, *ibid.*:71.

⁴³ Bordo, *ibid.*:95.

is a world of sensual relationships: Pflug's *Interior at Night* resists Albertian discourse through the gendering of the space.

Pflug's practice presents affinities with those women creators whose laborious method of production replicates the ritualistic subjectification of women's entrapment within her identification as wife, mother and domestic. The entrapment of women within socially constituted roles has been drawn upon to validate an alternative realism that stems from the condensation of experience rather than the diffidence and apparent objectivity of visual data⁴⁴ alone; its proponents share a theorization of sexual difference as a social construction constituted along asymmetries of power. As Pollock has stated: "Difference is not essential but understood as a sexual construct which positions male and female people asymmetrically in relation to language, to social and economic power and to meaning."⁴⁵ Two streams of thought in relation to women's aesthetics have attempted to come to terms with women's creative expression as distinct from that of men, the first grounded in the social constitution of women as subjects (Nochlin, Pollock, etc.), the second founded on their political reconstitution as objects (Schor, *écriture féminine*, etc.). The former enables us to locate Pflug's place within the social and cultural space that women inhabit in the world of men. The latter uncovers the politics behind women's historic oppression. Both prompt questions of representation and gendered practice; both can be applied to Pflug.

⁴⁴ This point is made earlier in the text by Nochlin, *ibid.*:88.

⁴⁵ Pollock, *ibid.*:56.

Pflug shares with other women realists the space of women's social reality, manifest as realism in her art. Its distinction from masculine representation is made clear by art historian Linda Nochlin whose term "the feminine variable"⁴⁶ distinguishes those images set in the domestic world which refer back to the private sphere in which they were created from those of similar iconographic content which stem from the studios of male representational artists. Yet such definitions are inherently problematic. For, to distinguish between Pflug's subversion of Albertian spatial order and Pratt's on the basis of gender is to assume an essentialist position.⁴⁷ *Can* Pflug's experience as a woman provide her with a 'feminine' understanding of space?

Pflug gives the viewer access to the space of women's labour within the home, domestic rituals are invoked through the iconography she has selected. These are spaces located in the private arena rather than the public domain. Pflug also presents a narrow range of places and subjects open to view. They are, for the most part, the spaces of labour; territories traditionally inscribed by female hands. Yet Pflug's paintings do not make visible any aspect of this labour. There is no evidence of production or consumption -- the counters are cleared of any signs of 'creaturely

⁴⁶ Linda Nochlin, "Some Women Realists", in *Women, Art and Power and Other Essays* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1988):.

⁴⁷ See Linda Nochlin, "The Issue of 'Women's Imagery'", in Ann Sutherland Harris and Linda Nochlin, *Women Artists 1550-1950* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf: 1979):64-67.

existence.’⁴⁸ The space is organized according to the artist’s will, not the mother and wife’s. It is this aspect of their construction that brings me back to Albertianism and to my argument that while Pflug’s paintings effect a resistance to the Albertian model, ultimately they reinscribe its existence and prevalence as a norm.

To sum up: Pratt’s interest does not lie, in paintings such as *French Door* and *Night Window*, in the strong expression of emotion, or in articulating his sense of locatedness. As *Night Window* attests, Pratt’s interest lies in *space*, in the realization of a concretely ordered structure, a notional box hermetically sealed. Toward this end, he engages in a play upon formal reduction and technical simplification. His paintings aim for definition within a simple, paradigmatic order. He eliminates the ‘nuances’ of his depiction -- details, ornamentation, detritus -- as well as the technical ‘traces’ of intrusion -- variegations of surface, evidence of texture -- for this purpose, since they might detract from the single, immediate impression that his traditional academic training has led him to believe in as the ideal of painting. For Pratt, Albertianism is both a set of rules and regulations governing spatial organization and a constituting ideology. Moreover, the imbricated contradictions of his *Night Window* are possible only because the rules of the game are known so well. In Pratt’s work, the deconstruction and reconstitution of aesthetic meaning is contingent upon Albertian perspectivalism as a hegemonic order in representation. This allows for the

⁴⁸ It seems to me that this is nowhere more evident than in Pflug’s 1964 portrait of Avrom Isaacs [fig. 38].

paradox, as Hutcheon makes clear. For Pratt, the Albertian window is a mind-set both performative and preformative.

While Pratt resorts to a play upon *costruzione legitima* (the correct construction of figures), Pflug appears to abandon its mechanistic order altogether. Where Pratt explores the possibilities of the system, Pflug formulates alternatives. Yet Pflug's practice ultimately confirms Albertianism along with Pratt's. Pflug's work at first seems to run contrary to the universal, genderless aspirations of the Albertian ideal. It appears to express a manifestly feminine experience of space expressed through phenomenology in relation to the world. *Self-Portrait in a Window Pane*, *Kitchen Door and Esther* and *Interior at Night* manifest a sense of locatedness, not of place, according to Bordo's definitions of the terms. But the interests of her gendered awareness are mediated by the enforced orderliness and extra-creaturely organization of the domestic interior, a feature which divorces her from the social world she inhabits.⁴⁹ Pflug does not celebrate her otherness, she elides it. This aspect of her work, which fundamentally distinguishes her practice from Wieland's as chapter 3 will outline, links her to Pratt and to the doctrine of Albertianism she appears to refuse.

Pflug's manifest values are those of the Cartesian/Albertian ideal. Pflug's iconography sustains the oppositions between outdoors and indoors, public and private, the self and the world. They collude, even in their resistance, to

⁴⁹ See Norman Bryson, "Rhopography" and "Still-Life and Feminine Space" in *Looking at the Overlooked: Four Essays on Still Life and Painting* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990).

Cartesianism's divisive strategems. Through her engagement with the window of Albertianism, Pflug identifies Albertian discourse with the norm, confirming her practice as other and subsidiary. And, for all their empirical treatment, Pflug's spaces still pit the appearance of stability and safety of the home sphere against the unknown public space of the world beyond the threshold. Pflug's world is not the representational world of Mary Cassatt [fig. 30], in which the window is featured as a site of resistance and negotiation. Pflug's compressed enclosures are suggestive of the psychological state of agoraphobia, a condition which expresses itself through a refusal to leave the familiar boundaries of the home. Like the agoraphobic subject's resistance to psychic constraint through immobility, Pflug's iconoclasm determines a representational crisis: her erasure from authorial intervention and from historical possibility.

Subscription to order can be emancipatory, as Martin Jay,⁵⁰ has recently observed, echoing the ideological position of American writers Catherine MacKinnon and Andrea Dworkin. MacKinnon and Dworkin subscribe to the idea that "to be misdefined is to be powerless; to know the power of definition is to gain power."⁵¹ Luce Irigaray proposes to the contrary that lack of definition is empowering because from indeterminacy stems the knowledge that leads to self-determination.⁵² Pflug's

⁵⁰ Martin Jay, in Hal Foster, ed. *Vision and Visuality* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1988):24.

⁵¹ As cited in R. Howard Bloch and Frances Ferguson, eds, *Misogyny, Misandry, and Misanthropy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989):xiii.

⁵² Ibid.

knowledge is that the space of femininity is also the site of powerlessness. By materializing the canvas she acknowledges that hers is not the representational space of the "power over," of authorial intervention, but the contracted and fragmented space described by *l'écriture féminine*. Pflug's windows are a figuring of contingency: in them is to be recognized that to be positioned historically as a woman creator is to be dispersed onto the margins of aesthetic production.⁵³

But we need not go as far to find the legitimization of the Albertian doctrine and its ideology in Pflug's praxis. So far, I have described and discussed Pratt's academic training, time now to register Pflug's. Though less formal than Pratt's, Pflug's education and travel exposed her to a number of influences, the work of Lucas Cranach, Georges Seurat and Paolo Uccello amongst them.⁵⁴ While Cranach is representative of the Northern style of art in fifteenth-century Flanders, Uccello's work is typical of the Italian Renaissance of Alberti; in fact, Uccello is noted for taking perspectivalism to its farthest extremes [fig. 39]. Seurat, on the other hand, is representative of nineteenth-century French neo-impressionism, a school known for its scientific theorizations of colour as much as for its geometrization of form. While in Toronto in 1960, Pflug worked on the definition of order and form in a drawing titled *Claudia's Room* [fig. 40]; a work suggestive of the spatial constructions of the

⁵³ On the significations of gender and creative genius, see Christine Battersby, *Gender and Genius: Towards a Feminist Aesthetics* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989).

⁵⁴ See Dorothy Farr and Natalie Luckyj, *From Women's Eyes: Women Painters in Canada* (Kingston: Queen's University: Agnes Etherington Art Center, 1976):69.

fifteenth-century Venetian, Vittore Carpaccio [fig. 41]⁵⁵. In Toronto she was also exposed to current trends in abstraction through her association with the Isaacs Gallery. Mary Allodi cites her rejection of the tachistes in favour of French painting of the nineteenth-century, noting that the formalist Cezanne was preferred to the colourist Matisse.⁵⁶ These affinities are critical. I would submit here that Pflug's rejection of the abstract expressionism favoured by Greenberg partisans in Toronto in the 1950s and 1960s in favour of representational painting is evidence in itself of the legitimation and valiative standing of Albertian perspectivalism for her.

It is possible to take this argument one step further. The self-reflexivity which characterizes Pratt's subversion of Albertian perspectivalism is matched in Pflug by her authorial intent to deconstruct Albertianism by means of modernism's trope, abstraction. The patterned foliage of *Kitchen Door with Esther*, the surface quality of her *Interior at Night*, the principle of opacity in *Self-Portrait in a Window Pane*, all direct attention to Pflug's ability to synthesize Albertianism and abstraction. This ability, intuitive or not, coupled with the fragmentation of form through the deconstruction of Albertianism points to the possibility of a sophisticated yet perhaps atavistic understanding of her position as a woman *and* a creator in society. Pflug's practice seems to point to a realization that, for her work to be understood as coherent in its surface fragmentation, the creator as woman must be stationed *equally*

⁵⁵ See *The Drawings of Christiane Pflug* (Winnipeg, Alb.: The Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1979):20-21.

⁵⁶ Mary Allodi, "Christiane Pflug", *artscanada* (December 1972/January 1973):42.

within male and female traditions of art. This is the contractual agreement Pflug has made with Albertian tradition: in return for creative freedom, in return for the appearance of subversive intent, she must acknowledge her consignment to a subsidiary position in the social nexus of power.

This thesis argues that Albertian perspectivalism is an ideological construct, that its value is normative, and that its nature is gendered. The work of Christopher Pratt and Christiane Pflug has been presented in this chapter as evidence of Albertianism's prevalence in Canadian representational practice. Pratt's *Self-Portrait*, *French Door* and *Night Window*, Pflug's *Self-Portrait in a Window Pane*, *Kitchen Door* and *Esther* and *Interior at Night*, reflect, through various mechanisms denoting spatial ambiguity and inconsistency, intent to resist and subvert the inherited norms of Albertian discourse. Pratt's subversion is effected through mathematical projection, logical construction and recourse to reason. Pflug's resistance is through affective association, phenomenological space and empiricism. The means of both artists is radically different, yet whether explicitly or tacitly stated, their work refers to the figured window as a paradigm for the order and control of the picture plane. In eliciting the Albertian code, both inscribe and reinforce its normative value.

CHAPTER 3

GENDER: 'A DIFFERENT ORGANIZATION OF THE LOOK'¹ -

JOYCE WIELAND

AN ALTERNATE FORMULATION OF REPRESENTATIONAL SPACE

But if the female imaginary happened to unfold, if it happened to come into play other than as pieces, scraps, deprived of their assemblage, would it present itself for all that as *a* universe? Would it indeed be volume rather than surface? Luce Irigaray²

This thesis has so far approached the question of Albertian space with the idea of determining the ideological forces behind it. As stated in the introduction, it has considered questions of domination and subordination in relation to the Albertian paradigm and problematized gender in relation to space. It has not, however, dealt with the issue of 'female' or 'feminine' aesthetics. That is another enquiry, well beyond the scope of this paper.³ With that in mind, the following pages will examine

¹ Griselda Pollock, *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the Histories of Art* (London and New York: Routledge, 1988):84.

² Luce Irigaray, excerpt from *This Sex That is not One*, in *New French Feminisms: An Anthology*, edited by Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron (Amherst, Mass.: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1980):104.

³ The reader is reminded too that feminine subjectivity in creative expression and subjectivity in relation to spectatorship are also beyond the scope of the current investigation.

Joyce Wieland's films *Water Sark* (1964-5), *1933* (1967-8) and *Reason over Passion* (1967-9) for evidence of an alternate formulation of spatial representation, always making use of the window/door motif, that constitutes movement outside the Albertian paradigm. This will be achieved by recourse to Norman Bryson's essay, "Still Life and 'Feminine' Space", in his book *Looking at the Overlooked*. This chapter will argue, along with Bryson, that parallels can be drawn between the valuation of women's work and the legitimization of Albertian perspective. Following Bryson, gender is to be understood throughout as a particular constitution of reality designated by culture, not nature: Wieland will therefore be studied as a producer of gendered meaning in art not as a woman artist. Her filmic practice, which in these pages will be argued as rhopographic, heterotopic and fragmented, will not be presented as proof of essentialism but rather, as the introduction made clear, as a specific instance within Canadian contemporary praxis in which the author has moved away from the 'masculinity' of Alberti and Descartes. In other words, and to reiterate, the concern here is not to distinguish men's art from women's art but to consider the ways in which spatial representation might be said to be gendered.

In the work of each of the artists considered so far, windows and doors literally and metaphorically set the tone for the their canvases. Ideologically, windows and doors set the parameters of representation, dictating boundaries beyond which the artist is unwilling to go. Colville has been seen to operate within the bounds of perspectival convention, taking from it order and clarity. Pratt and Pflug have, on the

other hand, subverted tradition to expression, utilizing the window to equivocal ends.

These works demonstrate that, at least formally, the window as a metaphor sets limits; it imposes a structure upon the canvas that both controls and subordinates the elements making up the composition. This infrastructure in turn conditions our aesthetic response to any work bearing the hallmarks of realism.

But the question of gender remains problematic. If the construction of space in representation vis a vis the window and door motif is ideologically charged and culturally legitimated, can it be said to be gender coded? Put another way: having established the frame as the site of contingency between two oppositional planes or spheres and adumbrated the relationship between dualism and gender asymmetry, as I have done in the introduction by referring to Durer's *Draftsman Drawing a Nude* [fig. 1], is it possible to differentiate between the interior spaces described by Colville and Pratt and those of Pflug by virtue of the artist's sex? The resolution of this question is at once complex and instructive, since it sheds new light on the work of the fourth artist here under discussion: Joyce Wieland.

On the face of it, all three artists discussed so far share a common interest in the dialectical opposition of an interior, private space with an exterior, public world. And each of their paintings utilizes the window (or door as the case may be) to mark the separation of pictorial planes. Therefore, their work may be said to share a common formal structure -- its spatial order -- which centers on the fracture of spatial continuity (as indeed did Durer's), while simultaneously conforming to the ideals of perspectivalism as an ideological construct. Aesthetic considerations of technical proficiency and personal expression aside, moreover, all share the same authorial

point of view: Colville, Pratt and Pflug each describe not a view from the exterior looking in, but rather a view from the interior looking out.

It is this particular vantage point, and its attendant association with the feminine side of Cartesian discourse, which throws biological determinism in relation to the representation of space into question. An essentialist position with regard to the construction of space in the art of women would dictate that such a space conform in its representation to a common set of signifiers or signs reflecting a 'common gender consciousness,' i.e. a woman's point of view, common to all women and intrinsically different in kind and appearance from that of a man. But what if subject matter and iconography fail to shed light on authorship? What if the marks of singularity, the evidence of the artist's hand at work crucial to modernist discourse, reveals form and symbol to be indistinguishable from one sex to another? The futility of projecting social and cultural difference beyond the specifics of time, geography and locale in order to characterize women's representations of space is brought to light by Griselda Pollock's attempts to map the enclosures of modernity.⁴ Pollock instructively distinguishes between spatial order in painting, characterized in early modernist painting by formal devices such as acute angles, varying viewpoints and references to the flatness of the picture plane, and spaces as social locations, the topoi of modernity: the theatres, the cafes, the brothels of the masculine domain and the salons, bedrooms and private gardens of the world of women. Turning her

⁴ Griselda Pollock, *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the Histories of Art* (London and New York: Routledge, 1988).

attention to the paintings of Mary Cassatt and Berthe Morisot, she goes on to observe that, by comparison to their male Impressionist peers, not only does there exist a difference in the subject matter these two artists chose present to the viewer, a difference which might signal the social world to which they were confined as subjects, but also in their treatment of representational space. Pollock observes that women's space appears bounded and compartmentalized. Balconies and verandahs provide the viewer with the experience of a dislocated space compositionally structured according to two distinct spatial systems. The world of the public, the male world, appears beyond the reach of observer, mediated by the social circumscription of women as creatures of an interior, private realm. The problem with transposing such an analysis to the Canadian context is that, as noted above, subject and iconographic motif in Canadian realism does not appear to vary according to the discursive practices and social positioning of the artist.

Gaile McGregor's book, *The Wacousta Syndrome* illustrates one attempt to grapple with this problem and another of the hazards of determinism. The vast array of central core imagery (imagery which focuses on a central, often circular, motif) displayed in Canadian art by both male and female artists, combined with the equally impressive number of views from the interior looking out, also by both male and female artists, has led McGregor to posit 'femininity' as a feature inherent in the Canadian psyche. Greatly oversimplified, McGregor's argument runs something like this: Since central core imagery is intrinsically feminine (i.e. biologically determined), and since both male and female artists engage in its practice in Canada to an equal

degree; and, since a view from *inside* is intrinsically feminine; and Canadian artists' views of the landscape are frequently mediated by windows or other similar motifs regardless of the artist's sex; therefore such imagery must conform to an collective imaginary *outside* social or institutional specificity. McGregor finds her answer in the distinction not between male and female but between the psychic structure of Canada vis-a-vis the United States. For McGregor, the presence of a national identity is constituted around its absence.⁵

Psychoanalytic theory enables us to see McGregor's interpretation in terms of *lack*, the absence of a national signifier marking the equivalence between Canada and the United States leaving the United States in the position of object (Burgin's prior term, i.e. masculine) and Canada as subject, the damaged other of the imaginary.⁶ McGregor's idea of the feminine, based on otherness, whether national or personal, is arguable, particularly in relation to space. The equation of the representation of an interior, private space with the "sexing of subjectivities" -- to coin a phrase from

⁵ Gaile McGregor, *The Wacousta Syndrome* (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1985), esp. chapter 1, "A View from the Fort," and "I-Site," which focus on Canadian representation at length.

⁶ On the subject of the other as the point of differentiation see Pollock, *Vision and Difference*:24. "The feminine stereotype, we suggest, operates as a necessary term of difference, a foil against which a never acknowledged masculine privilege in art can be maintained. We never say man artist or man's art; we simply say art and artist. This hidden sexual prerogative is secured by the assertion of the negative, an 'other', the feminine, as a necessary point of differentiation. The art made by women has to be mentioned and then dismissed precisely in order to secure this hierarchy."

Griselda Pollock⁷ -- fails because, as Pollock herself tells us, it treats woman "as a transhistorical and unitary category"; further, it secures the prerogative of the normative term, instituting its station in the hierarchy.⁸ In relation to nationalism, then, Canada's identity is, according to McGregor, constituted around the absence of a sexual signifier (the phallus) which would figure the nation as masculine, hence *equal to* the United States. Lacking the phallus, the national psyche and the national identity must, in accordance to McGregor's hypothesis, remain other and secondary, besieged by a 'them' and 'us' mentality which seeps out in the choice of symbolic representational motifs such as the window.⁹

Other models for the examination of spatial representation in relation to women are available however. Pollock proposes a a third reading of pictorial space based on the social, cultural and historical situation of women. Something of this model has been employed in chapter two, where particulars of the nature of Pratt and Pflug's life are incorporated into the analysis of their work. But there are still limitations to this model despite its practical application and overall soundness. The model *qua* model is unidimensional: while it incorporates more information than its predecessors in traditional art history, seeking "a totality of many relations and derminators,"¹⁰ the very specificity of its address (marxist/feminism) and the

⁷ Ibid.:7.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ McGregor, *ibid.*:284 ff.

¹⁰ Pollock, *ibid.*:5.

consistency of its application guarantee only one level of signification.¹¹ A reasonable question in the face of "The Space of Modernity's" agenda might be the following: Is the model applicable to works of art whose content and meaning are intentionally heterogeneous and multi-faceted, as Wieland's are, as opposed to the 'unintentional' subversions of modernism? And, in light of the present discussion, here do ideology and the feminine intersect?

Norman Bryson's essay, "Still Life and 'Femininity'",¹² in his book *Looking at the Overlooked*, engages with this problem and furnishes a solution. In Bryson's own words, his essay "asks what the distinctions between low-plane reality and high-plane reality, between rhopography¹³ and megalography,¹⁴ between still life and the supposedly 'higher' genres of painting, may have to do with gender positions and

¹¹ Pollock's analysis has been formed within a range of critical alternatives proposed in the postmodern period. Her essays make abundantly clear that this hers is a marxist/feminist view. While current heterodoxy has formed her work, her position in "The Spaces of Modernity" is not, in itself, methodologically cross-disciplinary. Norman Bryson's reading of femininity in *Looking at the Overlooked*, was selected as a methodological model for this chapter because it is truly cross-disciplinary, being informed by semiotic, post-structuralist, feminist and psychoanalytic discourse.

¹² Norman Bryson, *Looking at the Overlooked: Four Essays on Still Life Painting* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990).

¹³ Defined by Bryson as that "dealing with the routines of daily living, the domestic round, the absence of personal uniqueness and distinction" (:15).

¹⁴ Defined by Bryson as that "dealing with the exceptional act and unique individual, with the narrative and the drama of 'greatness'" (ibid.).

gender ideology."¹⁵ The matter is not easily resolved. Several historiographic and methodological procedures must be integrated by way of an approach, notably discourse theory, feminism and psychoanalysis. It is this plethora of postmodern procedures that is of interest here. Bryson's text is richly suggestive, for it engages directly the issue of domination and subordination, and at several levels. Still-life is considered as evidence of creaturely existence and personal routines of self-maintenance and this in the light of 'low plane reality' versus 'high art'; painting production is considered in terms of its internal semiotic processes as well as its intrinsic economic constraints and again in the light of cultural symbolism; the *coding* of still-life as part of a sign system legitimating a dominant, hegemonic order is considered in relation to the ideology of economics, class and sexuality. This polysemic approach provides a panoramic and multi-leveled view of the subject at hand, hence its methodological usefulness to this essay. And, while objections to such an eclectic solution to the twin problems of aesthetics and art interpretation might be made -- and indeed the problems of the text are many¹⁶ -- Bryson does acknowledge power as intrinsic to the production and circulation of meaning in art and he completes his all-encompassing vision with his ability to problematize and

¹⁵ Ibid.:15.

¹⁶ John Tagg's essay, "Art History and Difference" in *The New Art History*, is particularly suggestive in this context. See "Art History and Difference", *The New Art History*, A.L. Rees and F. Borzello, eds. (Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey: Humanities Press International, 1988):164-170.

synthesize the discourses of culture. Bryson, like Pollock, couples the problem of gender with the idea that value is ideologically determined.

The first evidence of an alternate formulation of space is in Joyce Wieland's film *Water Sark* (1964-65). *Water Sark* is set in the space of the domestic, the familiar. In that space, trivial objects, *rhapos* of various sorts, are displayed. These objects, objects clearly dear and near to the artist and mostly to do with the reflection and refraction of light, are presented clustered upon a kitchen table by means of a long tracking shot in the opening sequence. The space Wieland represents might thus be said to be proximal: the space is close and familiar and the objects within it are close to her affective center. And it is this proximity which distinguishes her work from that of Colville, Pratt and Pflug. The representational space of *Water Sark* is not filled with a random assortment of personal effects but by a series of objects connected through their appeal to her body. It is possible to go one step further. The objects within the space are not mathematically engaged but rather drawn together through touch. Their relationship is not abstract but sensory. Bryson characterizes the space of the tactile as "creatural space," a space whose matrix corresponds to the body and its movements. It is a "cocoon-like space, defined by habitual gestures,"¹⁷ an unvisual space in which objects are found atavistically not through visual identification. Most significantly, it is the space of the created, imaginative and animated rather than the invented, scientific and observed.

¹⁷ Bryson:70.

Knowledge, for Wieland, is reflexive -- this is clearly signalled by the optical and refractory apparati of *Water Sark*. The mirror and the breast of Wieland's imagery invest *Water Sark* with a spatial openness and fragmentariness corresponding to a model in the female genitals;¹⁸ fittingly, evasions and detours trope the film, doubling back, by reference to the body, the codes of Albertian construction.

Tactile or bodily space differs from the Albertian space in two ways: the first is evident in the manner by which the artist distinguishes him or herself from the object represented and the technical means the artist deploys to render subject matter; the second in the selection of objects to be represented and the manner in which such objects are stationed in space. In Wieland's *Water Sark*, the image engaged is the image of the Wieland's own reflection, as Kay Armatage has succinctly observed;¹⁹ in highlighting the film's "agencies of enunciation"²⁰ (the camera, the frame), she distinguishes herself from authorial discourse and effects an oppositional constitution space. Here the first intimation of a space outside Albertian codes of

¹⁸ This point has been brought out by Kay Armatage in "The Feminine Body: Joyce Wieland's *Water Sark*," *Canadian Women Studies*, vol.8, no.1 (Spring 1987):84-8, esp. page 86.

¹⁹ Ibid.:86.

²⁰ See Anna Gronau, "Avant-Garde Film by Women: To Conceive a New Language of Desire," in Lorne Falk and Barbara Fischer, eds, *The Event Horizon* (Toronto: The Coach House Press, 1987):159-176.

production, a space of "passionate detachment" in accordance with feminist propositions of counter cinema.²¹

There is yet the second difference to Albertian space. Albertian perspectivalism dictates distance as a condition of access to the canvas.²² Space is subordinated to the artist's need if the artist is male. Colville's spaces are spaces in which calibration and measure determine depth and distance; these are rational, mathematical means by which the artist demonstrates his ability to invent a homogeneous, totalizing space *apart* from the world of everyday reality. These are not spaces of the real world, the world of domestic routine and mundane activity but spaces of invention, controlled and ordered according to the artist's will. And, while the artist is free to express emotion through content and iconography, the means at his disposal must remain hidden in order to safeguard his position in the hierarchy of existence. For example, as Bryson illustrates by reference to Cotan [fig. 42], in terms of a still life or an interior view, creator and creation must remain separate and distinct; the mundane and the generic household artifact, the commonplace surround and the habitual gesture must be elevated through the artist's superior inventive skill.²³ The represented world must for this reason be devoid of marks of human presence. In Colville's work, even the brushstroke is obviated as an informing agent,

²¹ Ibid.

²² Bryson:165.

²³ For a fuller account of the nature of this distinction between subject and object in still life, see Bryson, *ibid.*, esp. pp.136-140.

this is evident in *Pacific* [fig. 4]; Pratt's realism is equally conditioned by the necessity to deny agency in works such as *French Door* [fig. 23] and especially in *Night Window* [fig. 31], where the subject matter is not only motionless, being stilled, arrested in time, but also curiously *absent*, distanced from the hand that painted it, immaculate and untouched. In the work of both artists, the subject of representation is divorced from the marks of its individuation as much through technique as through idealization.

In terms of the choice of objects and their relationship to one another and to the surrounding space, the Albertian ideal dictates that the spaces be free of distracting and mundane adornment. Gratuitous ornamentation, like detail, is equated with disorder and formlessness, characteristics to be avoided, as this quotation by Sir Joshua Reynolds makes evident:

All the objects which are exhibited to our view by nature, upon close examination will be found to have their blemishes and defects. The most beautiful forms have something about them like weakness, minuteness, or imperfection. But it is not every eye that perceives these blemishes. It must be an eye long used to the contemplation and comparison of these forms; and which, by a long habit of observing what any set of objects of the same kind have in common, has acquired the power of discerning what each wants in particular. This long laborious comparison should be the first study of the painter, who aims at the greatest style. By this means, he acquires a just idea of beautiful forms; he corrects nature by herself, her imperfect state by her more perfect. ... This idea of the perfect state of nature, which the Artist calls the Ideal Beauty, is the great leading principle, by which works of genius are conducted.²⁴

²⁴ Sir Joshua Reynolds, *Third Discourse on Art*, cited in Naomi Schor, *Reading in Detail: Aesthetics and the Feminine* (New York and London: Methuen, 1987):15.

Imperfection, deformity and minutia, the specific, must be sublimated to the higher ideals of the general, the non-specific, as Reynolds makes abundantly clear. This is why, for all their spatial compression and associative meaning, Pflug's paintings remain at the same time tied to Albertianism. Colville and Pratt's interior views (*Nude and Dummy* [fig. 2]; *Night Window* [fig. 31]) reveal spaces cleared of ornament and detail, clutter and detritus. Pflug's images, though more equivocal in terms of technical means such as consistency of design (*Kitchen Door with Esther*, fig. 26) and in terms of personal expression (*Window at Night*, fig. 37), are equally spaces in which objects are arranged according to creative volition rather than ordinary necessity. The spaces of the interior world may produce the impression of confinement through an un-Albertian compression of planes but, ultimately, the overall *arrangement* of elements in the composition conforms not to phenomenological reality but to the artist's representational vision. In relation to their functional arrangement within the home as toys to be played with or even as decorative bric-a-brac, the dolls in most of Pflug's paintings (*Window on Yonge Street* [fig. 43], *On the Balcony No. 2* [fig. 44]), are stationed arbitrarily in space, their placement made unfamiliar, transformed by objective engagement in the interest of art rather than through Wieland's affective lens.

Wieland's *Water Sark* illustrates the intrinsic artificiality of Albertian spatial construction. While Wieland shares with Pflug an overriding need to utilize nearness as a spatial value replacing perspectival depth, Wieland's spaces are rhopographic, Pflug's megalographic. Wieland embraces clutter and confusion, affirming its

alternate order of existence. Chaos and the feminine are traditionally linked through threat, as Naomi Schor has pointed out:

The irreconcilability of details and the sublime and the concomitant affinity of details for the effete and effeminate ornamental style point to what is perhaps most threatening about detail: its tendency to subvert an internal hierarchic ordering of the work of art which clearly subordinates the periphery to the center, the accessory to the principal, the foreground to the background.²⁵

Wieland turns about face the pejorative connotations imposed upon the association of detail and the mundane with the feminine; she valorizes the devalorized and inverts the traditional hierarchy. It might be said that in *Water Sark* this is signalled by an evident shift in the placement of the open window appearing in some of the sequences from foreground to background, from domination to subordination. In *Water Sark*, the window motif is but a narrow slit through which the phallic shape of a chimney stack is discernible. The concern is with the objects in the foreground, at one point prisms, mirrors and glasses of water. Such refractory objects allow us to see the artist's self-examination through film, as already described; *Water Sark* is, ultimately, a journey of self-discovery.²⁶

²⁵ Schor, *ibid.*:20.

²⁶ Lauren Rabinovitz, "The Films of Joyce Wieland", in *Joyce Wieland* (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario/Key Porter Books, 1987):120.

On her journey Wieland embraces the sensuality of surface that marks the *jouissance* of feminine space.²⁷ For Wieland, the body as matrix takes the place of the mind as paradigm. Space is known according to touch and through familiar movement. The habitual gestures of domestic economy dictate the form of expression by setting the scale and the ordering of the design where Albertian perspective dictated measure and control of the surface. Instead of the artist stepping back from reality to establish her identity as distinct from association with the personal sphere of the home and the familiarity of the objects within it, she celebrates her relationship with them. As one writer has aptly observed: "*Water Sark* establishes the kitchen table as a domestic altar and a world of aesthetic beauty -- of exciting colours, tones, textures and compositions."²⁸

Between 1967 and 1968 Wieland completed three short and somewhat whimsical 'structural' films: *Hand Tinting, 1933*, and *Sailboat*, all three under six minutes long. *1933* brings together the spaces of public and private world through the motif of the window. Whereas the theme of *Water Sark* was the artist's self-

²⁷ Writing on women and sensuality, Luce Irigaray observes: "Women's desire most likely does not speak the same language as man's desire, and it probably has been covered over by the logic that has dominated the West since the Greeks.

In this logic, the prevalence of the gaze, discrimination of form, and individualization of form is particularly foreign to female eroticism. Woman finds *pleasure more in touch than in sight* and her entrance into a dominant scopic economy signifies, once again, her relegation to passivity...." Luce Irigaray, in *New French Feminisms: An Anthology*, Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron eds (Amherst, Mass.: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1980):101 [emphasis mine].

²⁸ Rabinovitz, *ibid.*

discovery as a woman effected through the suggestion of women's desire through the active rupturing of perspectival space and dominant practice (masculine power-over) as well as by direct reference to the female body, *1933* points to the Wieland's daily negotiation of the cultural world beyond the domestic sphere.

Wieland's world is a world of continual negotiation and interplay, mapped by a visual repertoire that inscribes it as feminine. Its first aspect, as in *Water Sark*, is the formal strategy of detachment from narrative suture. The contrast between this feminine space and the masculine space of Albertian discourse is immediately apparent on looking back at Pratt. Paintings such as *Self-Portrait* [fig.12] make clear Pratt's apparent inability (perhaps an outright refusal) to harmonize with his domestic surround, unlike Wieland, who celebrates the creaturely. When Pratt envisions himself inside the home he is not at one with it; his physical presence takes over the represented enclosure, subordinating and ordering it. As noted earlier, the Albertian paradigm serves Pratt well; it allows him control, thus power over, the potentially unfamiliar terrain of the personal. Wieland's *1933* presents a different prospect, materially figured by the window frame. In *1933* the open window and the balcony rail that separates us as viewers from the scene outside is set on an oblique angle, formally foregrounding the difference between outside and inside. Like the intentional disclosures of *Water Sark*, the window foregrounds the film's agencies of enunciation, this time by pointing to the 'frame' as ideological 'cadre'. And, like the intentional rupture effected in *Water Sark*, it indicates Wieland's awareness that if a

particular slice of life is to be replicated in art, it should at least be recognized as an illusion.

Mimesis is avoided by other means as well. Where conformity to the Albertian ideal dictates that the artist's hand be sublimated to the higher order of the canvas and that evidence of artistic control be suppressed in favour of apparent naturalism, in *1933* the ordering is visibly and unequivocally foregrounded. Just as, in *Water Sark*, Wieland and her moving camera appear and disappear from the frame, so the artist as technician and interpreter is in evidence throughout the 4 1/2 minutes *1933* takes to project. Several means may be highlighted: First, there is tangible proof of *production* in the creation of art. Wieland's forming hand is present through devices such as non-naturalistic colour, speeding and slowing down the footage, extraneous sound. These mechanisms make evident the artist's role as a technician and the craft within the art. Second, there is manifest *invention*, creativity, at work. For example, where perspective granted depth and closure in Albertianism, assisting in the resolution of the imperatives of the narrative fiction, the spatial planes are collapsed in *1933* by means of the overall, non-naturalistic colouration of the stock, resolution is therefore disrupted. This difference to the Albertian paradigm is critical since colour in *1933*, being external in the sense of later applied to the stock rather than part of the original footage, calibrates and unites the two opposing spatial planes.

The result is that attention is drawn to the surface qualities of the work rather than to their mimetic content. The principle of distance, of removing oneself from nature yet remaining faithful to it, so intrinsic to Albertianism, can therefore be said to be actively resisted in Wieland.

Further, Wieland's representational world is not ordered mathematically as the result of scientific observation and discovery, but is the product of creativity and risk. *1933* was made from the footage left on the cutting room floor; it was crafted, like *Hand Tinting*, from heterogeneous materials (detritus, trifles, *rhopos*), as such breaks with the traditional cinematic convention in the same way as her use of non-traditional materials such as cloth and found objects broke with pictorial convention [figs 45, 46]. Moreover, in *1933*, the artist's hand is directly conferred, frame by frame, upon the work, in much the same painstaking manner as her stitching in contemporary quilts such as *Camera Eyes*, 1966 [figs 47, 48]. If Wieland's *1933* must be considered feminine since it ruptures the continuous projection into depth and mimesis encoded in perspectival space, so too must it be considered feminine in its creatural and rhopographic reference to the body through handcrafting and process.

But this is an aside; there are other, more specific ways in which *1933* resists the Albertian paradigm. These refer to the space of locale. Locale defines physical and material space, location, as Griselda Pollock's argument in *Vision and Difference* makes clear.²⁹ Distinct from the ideological construction of femininity or social spaces structured according to sexed identity, locale defines space as place -- the places women inhabit and which, for women, are represented "with a sureness of knowledge of the daily routine and rituals which not only [constitute] the spaces of femininity but collectively trace the construction of femininity across the stages of women's lives."³⁰ But, where is there evidence of this space of locale in *1933*? In the constitution of the window as an aperture uniting rather than distinguishing space. The point is again made clear by comparison to Colville and Pratt. The windows represented by Colville and Pratt situate and define two distinct compartments of space and place. The window represents the point of juncture, a site of disruption in the continuous and fluid space of Albertian perspectivalism. For Wieland, on the other hand, the window is a point of transition, a metonym for women's daily negotiation of and resistance to the public and private worlds they inhabit; Wieland's space is a space activated by her knowledge of the ambivalent relationship to both these worlds. The window frame and the balcony in *1933* marks not closure but the interplay between both compartments of space; it suggests not an ideological

²⁹ See Pollock, "Modernity and the Spaces of Femininity" in *Vision and Difference*, op.cit, especially pp.67-85.

³⁰ Ibid.:81.

framing of discontinuity but the posing of another alternative: space as reciprocal and dynamic. This is not the space of Pflug's *Interior at Night* [fig. 37]: where Pflug's spheres are oppositional, and her doll facing outwards suggests woman's passive role in the order of existence in the same way that did the 'figure at the window' motifs of German Romantic tradition³¹ [fig. 49], Wieland's passionately detached female body is actively engaged in a fluid and heterotopic space. And this heterotopia is suitably feminine by nature:

Heterotopias are disturbing, probably because they secretly undermine language, because they make it impossible to name this *and* that, because they destroy syntax in advance, and not only the syntax with which we construct sentences but also the less apparent syntax which causes words and things (next to but also opposite one another) to 'hang together.' This is why utopias permit fables and discourse: They run with the very grain of language and are part of the fundamental dimension of *fabula*; heterotopias ... dissect speech, stop words in

³¹ The 'figure at the window' motif was used frequently around 1810 in genre painting and portraiture; typical examples describe a fairly ordinary interior with a figure either quietly at work or absorbed in meditation, by the window. At a slightly later date, Caspar David Friedrich's *Woman at the Window* is dated c.1818, the motif became incorporated into the German Romantic tradition, where it gained semantic significance inviting the spectator's empathy -- since the viewer can identify with the common experience of looking out of the window, s/he feels compelled to participate in the scene. In such constructions, the window is like a threshold and a barrier at once, as in Pflug's *Interior at Night*. The figure (Pflug's analogue, the doll) surveys a distant horizon from an enclosing indoor frame; participation in the exterior world is mediated by the window, metaphorically imprisoning the figure by reference to the longing for escape in contrast to the interior setting. See Lorenz Eitner, "The Open Window and the Storm-Tossed Boat: An Essay in the Iconography of Romanticism," *Art Bulletin*, vol. 37 (1955):281-290.

their tracks, contest the very possibility of language at its source; they dissolve our myths and sterilize the lyricism of our sentences.³²

Heterotopic space is disruptive and destructive by its very definition, like Reynold's detail. In its fluidity it blurs and fragments distinction: another point of congruence with Wieland's space in *1933*. In *1933*, Wieland utilizes the private world of the home as a reference point for the observed public world of transport (cars, trams), commerce and communication (passersby), in a manner similar to Pflug's representation, but the window is conspicuously wide open, and the sounds from outside enter the inside, activating the exchange of *jouissance*. Wieland seems to signal her acceptance of the dual nature of existence: her window is an aperture into the possibility of a language of exchange and interplay.

Anne Hollander's description of film as a fluid medium comes to mind here. In film, she states, "The world is presented as a fluid medium that depends on incompleteness, quick change, and often on ambiguity."³³ Life is unpredictable flow; film reflects a partial and incomprehensible sense of life. Hollander, however, fails to distinguish between the flow of traditional narrative film and the plethora of imagery offered up by independent film but her description, applied to *1933*, is apposite nonetheless. Wieland's use of rhopographic footage might even signal this exchange, since it connotes the continuity of life and its internal, 'looping,' organic

³² Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (New York: Pantheon, 1970):48.

³³ Anne Hollander, *Moving Pictures* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989):7.

order, an order which defies both the completion that the originary moment implies³⁴ and cinematic closure. In *1933*, the passage of time is measured by the ebb and flow of human and mechanical traffic. The sounds of the street invade the home. Time and space come together at the window, a hiatus in the divide of public and private. This exchange, like the others, is circular. It signals an understanding of the world in which different aspects interact, mutually inflecting and reflecting one another and, at the same time questioning and supporting that mutuality. The point of view in *1933* is still tied to the routine of the home and the local space of the house. This is the space of locale, of the feminine. Because less visual information is given about the world inside the threshold, structurally it appears absorbed into the larger and more public world of the outside. But the presence of the outside reconfirms the space of the inside, pointing to their mutuality not their exclusivity. In this Wieland's space is quite unlike Pratt's and Pflug's: where Pratt (*Self-Portrait*, [fig. 2], *French Door* [fig. 23]) stipulates a taxonomy of difference, and Pflug locates the spectator by recourse to strategic categorization (*Kitchen Door and Esther* [fig. 26], *Interior at Night* [fig. 37]), Wieland's space in *1933* dispenses with any formulation of spatial representation according to the Albertian ideal. In Wieland's space, one sphere cannot function without the other; all locations are equally open to view.

³⁴ On the subject of origin, the originary moment and originality see Rosalind Krauss, "The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths" in the book of the same title (Cambridge, Mass. and London, England: The MIT Press, 1988):151-170.

The window of *Reason over Passion* (1967-69), Wieland's first full length film (it is 90 minutes long) presents yet another alternate, feminine vista. *Reason over Passion* is about Canada. The 'action' in this experimental film originates from a moving vehicle presumed to be a car because of the low vantage point accorded to the spectator. Wieland uses the camera to record, with seeming objectivity, the space beyond the car window, which opens and closes conforming to the changes in the weather. The camera points straight ahead, focused on infinity. The window is situated directly in front of the spectator, so that the screen projection directly corresponds to it. As a result, she appears to be experiencing the view unhindered. The spectator looks onto an ever-changing landscape. The camera 'eye' is the spectator's eye fixed on the perspectival world of the visible. Reality seems unobtrusive.

As with the other films, there are several, mutually supporting, levels of resistance to the Albertian paradigm.³⁵ The first level of resistance is evident in relation to the 'unobtrusiveness' of illusion/film. The device of the window allows Wieland to implode cinematic space by affecting the space of the auditorium. There is no enframing device directly surrounding the screen -- no distracting proscenium arch -- in *Reason over Passion*; the glass of the window exists in our mind through

³⁵ It should be noted here that, for women, the selection of film as an artistic medium in itself is evidence of intrusion in the world of men, but that is another thesis.

occasional glints of sunlight and streaks of rain on its surface, not because it is visibly bounded.

It is perhaps necessary here to comment on the nature of experimental film as a medium since only by this means can the significance of Wieland's spatial formulation be grasped. Experimental film privileges the cinematic screen as a code for the nature of cinema; in foregrounding its construction, experimental film challenges the orthodox view which legitimizes the screen as an invisible window opening out onto the profilmic event. Thus the representational object of counter-cinema becomes itself a complex analogy for the process of seeing. The screen operates as a conceptual paradigm and material object at once. The 'window' is here as an invisible film between the audience and the projected illusion. This is not Piero della Francesca's invisible window between two spheres [fig 20] nor Pratt's transitionary, crystalline spatial plane [fig 13] but an imperceptible field. The parameters of that image, determined by the frame of the film, are the cinematic equivalent of the picture plane. The point of narrative cinema is to so convincingly portray the illusion of reality within the film that the barriers separating spectator and narrative space are forgotten. Experimental film, on the other hand, draws attention to the artificiality of cinematic illusion. Grids, sights and other linear devices which establish and articulate the surface of the projected image, are used in experimental film to facilitate the audience's process of re-cognizance (re-acquaintance) with the medium of film.

The coincidences between the camera and the eye have been explored elsewhere and in detail,³⁶ as has its issue, spectatorship and masculinity.³⁷ There exist however certain analogies between theatre and film in terms of the frame which are pertinent to this discussion and need to be pointed to here. These center on the proscenium arch. The proscenium arch in theatre interfaces the audience and the narrative fiction staged on the boards. Like a frame, it serves to focus the viewer's perception on the spatial effects beyond its limits while dissolving the transition between the illusionistic field and the auditorium. Within the enclosed space of the theatre, the audience sits passively in darkness; the players, and the spaces in which they stand are, by contrast, brightly lit. This opposition between subject and object conforms to orders of power established with the emergence of the closed theatre

³⁶ See Edward Branigan, "What is a Camera?" in *Cinema Histories, Cinema Practices*, Patricia Mellencamp and Philip Rosen, eds. (Los Angeles, California: University Publications of America Inc., 1984):87-107.

³⁷ See Teresa de Laurentis', *Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1984) and *Technologies of Gender: Essays on Theory, Film, and Function* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987); Mary Ann Doane, et alia, *Re-Vision: Essays in Feminist Film Criticism* (Frederick, Maryland: Publications of America, 1983) and *The Desire to Desire: The Woman's Film of the 1940s* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987); Ann Kaplan, *Women and Film: Both Sides of the Camera* (New York: 1983); Annette Kuhn, *Women's Pictures: Feminism and Cinema* (London and New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982) and *The Power of the Image* (London, Boston, Melbourne and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985); and Laura Mulvey, *Visual and Other Pleasures* (Bloomington, Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989), among others.

which, in orthodox cinema, continue to be utilized. They hinge on the belief that perspective stands for reality. Film theorist Dan Graham notes:

The conventions of the Renaissance theatre were equivalent to those of Renaissance painting: each spectator, believing himself to have the ideal view, fixed his eyes on the grided perspective field of the stage. The stage is a tableau with a succession of set-back scenery flats on left and right sides tilted slightly inward and painted to give perspective depth. The succession of scenes in which the tableau is altered to represent different places/times creates a self-contained linear narrative. Scenes change while the individual spectator remains seated impassively in a fixed, one-point perspective in order to experience the 'ideal' illusion created by the play.³⁸

The conscious articulation of framing devices, the intimation of narrative transitivity, even the notion of image-as-spectacle, all look forward to filmic devices later developed by narrative cinema. Like Bryson's megalography, it denotes the drama of 'greatness.' Given these paradigms, it is not surprising to find that the theatrical *mise en scene* designates not only the space and contents of the dramatic stage but also the space of conventional cinema. One key difference should however be registered: rather than encapsulating an entire theatrical scenario or scene, in cinema the reference is to a single unit or film frame, "including the arrangement of the profilmic event, of everything, that is, which is in front of the camera -- settings, costumes and props. *Mise en scene* also refers more broadly to what the spectator actually sees on the screen -- the composition of the image and the nature of the

³⁸ Dan Graham, "Theatre, Cinema, Power", *Parachute* (June, July, August 1983):11.

movement within the frame."³⁹ The enclosed movement so evident in perspectival theatre [fig. 50], as well as the illusionistic ideal of the composition, presuppose the same transparent perspective-based laws that so interested Alberti. The internal movement of the frame, the consequential illusion of reality the spectator observes privileges not so much the representation of truth but the *means* by which the profilmic event is predicated. The importance of the frame becomes apparent in this formulation. Experimental film dislocates the traditional proscenium arch of the stage.

In *The Culture of Time and Space*, Stephen Kern cites a German dramatist at the end of the nineteenth-century who, given the task of staging Wagner, set about to transcend the barrier between the stage and the audience. This was achieved by two means: Adolph Appia first raised the house lights to the level of those of the stage "to soften the transition between the traditionally dark auditorium and the bright stage" and then extended the width of the proscenium as far as the side walls "to eliminate the traditional peephole effect of the stage opening and provide a smoother transition from house to stage."⁴⁰ In the same way, Joyce Wieland's *Reason over Passion* blurs subject/object distinctions.

³⁹ Annette Kuhn, *Women's Pictures: Feminism and Cinema* (London and New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987):37.

⁴⁰ Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1983):200.

In *Reason over Passion*, Wieland peels away the space of narrative illusion to reveal the surface of the screen/window and the second site of feminine negotiation in terms of space. Like the mirrored bodily and creatural space of *Water Sark*, this is a space that gives pause, a space of caesura.⁴¹ Caesura marks the boundary between the auditorium and the profilmic event, in effect analogous to the proscenium arch. But it is an overall, totalizing divider, more screening device than frame. In *Reason over Passion* its signs and its iconography are numerous and diverse. The car window provides the first layer of visual enframing for the travelogue documentary. On a pragmatic level, the window mediates between the camera and the elements, proffering shelter from rain, heat, wind and snow. For the filmmaker, it separates and distances the experience of nature, creating a foreground plane which must be crossed in order to effect the perspectival investment in the scene. For the viewer, this experience is replicated: the window (and the camera lens) serve to remove and distance reality.⁴² Wieland's car window also allows her to foreground the illusory plane of the projected image in another way. Throughout the film, the illusion of depth is negated through technical means: the graininess of

⁴¹ See Susan Douglas, "Lisette Model", *Parachute*, 61 (Jan.-Feb.-Mar. 1991):63-64.

⁴² Paradoxically, the situation of the filmmaker allows her to make an impassioned film about cultural dislocation through the dispassionate selection of fragmentary and highly selective images taken from the records of a second-hand imitation of Canada through the glass of the car window.

the footage reduces the effectiveness of the photographic record.⁴³ The 'surface' quality of Wieland's film, which owes much to techniques such as continuous panning and rapid editing, is further reinforced by the surface of the car window, ever-present through the reflections Wieland captures on camera. The disclosing shot of the artist herself, fleetingly glimpsed mirrored in the glass of the window as she shoots the sequence towards the later half of the film, like another sequence in which a woman looks out of the moving train towards the horizon, comes as no surprise to the viewer, by now accustomed to the physical properties of glass.

The second screen in *Reason over Passion* is defined by the Canadian flag. Sequences of travelogue are interspersed regularly in the film with cutaways to the flag, indicating an ontological simulacrum of the nation. These flags, randomly interpolated either right side up or up side down, bracket the narrative coast to coast, ideologically enframing our experience of the landscape. As Kass Banning has noted, "through the presentation of Canadian icons, the film posits a dialectical relationship between Canada's natural self and its more synthetic one."⁴⁴ This interpretation is undoubtedly correct but its meaning is redoubled if the flag is considered not in terms of its symbolism but in terms of its intrinsic abstract imagery. The flag might then

⁴³ Rabinovitz, *ibid.*:165.

⁴⁴ Banning, *ibid.*:160.

suggest a more subtle relationship between indoor and outdoor space relating it to the Albertian window. The two vertical segments framing the maple leaf become the curtains of a window onto the landscape (represented by the leaf) beyond. Wieland's flag is a window onto nature; the outdoors is structured from within by the measured confinement of the implied home structure. Under both interpretations, ironically, the symbol for national systems of order becomes the ordering system of the nation.

There is yet a third screen. The scrambled lettering of the words "reason over passion" appear in 570 computerized permutations, across the surface of the screen throughout the projection. The juxtaposition of near and far are played upon through the contrast of surface of the cinematic frame and the deep space of representational illusion; by means of this device, Wieland engages the viewer in a dynamic investigation of the spatial constructs operating outside the transparency of narrativity. Where participation of the viewer is active, the methods of orthodox cinema are decoded. Sight lines, grids and flares augment the impression of disjunction, impeding narrative closure. These devices provide a challenge to orthodox cinematic coding; the language of *Reason over Passion* is, ultimately, personal and self-referential.

Reason over Passion uses the device of the window to express the filmmaker's point of view on the transparency of film and the nature of the cinematic experience. But this is only its structural meaning. The film also expresses Wieland's commitment to Canadian nationhood in the face of American imperialism⁴⁵; of more significance to this paper, it foregrounds the subjectivity of the camera: through Wieland's film, the spectator is given access to the construction of female imaging. And here is the third level of feminine space, this one referring to the cultural and ideological positioning of women. The window of the car is but one of a series of framing procedures establishing distinctions and barriers between the fictional observer in the vehicle and the presumed audience watching the screen bring about the tension between what we perceive and what we actually observe from the space of the illusory car. Kass Banning has written of *Reason over Passion*:

Wieland's Canadian epic, *Reason over Passion*, comes out of a familiar Wieland thematic preoccupation -- male/female opposition. *Reason over Passion* "agitates" this gendered dichotomy. It is not played out with biologically sexed actors: instead we infer meaning from combinations of symbolic assignations. ... Pierre Elliot Trudeau's statement: "Reason over passion, that is the theme of all my writings," overlaid against rushing images of the Canadian landscape, makes up the imagistic and rhetorical space named *Reason over Passion*. It is a cultural commonplace that *physis* or nature is female, whereas *techné* or technology, which actively gives shape to nature, is considered male. With paradoxical effects, the film doubly articulates this truism....⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Lauren Rabinovitz, "The Films of Joyce Wieland", in *Joyce Wieland* (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario/Key Porter Books, 1987):164.

⁴⁶ Kass Banning, "From Didactics to Desire: Building Women's Film Culture", in *Work in Progress*, Rhea Tregebov, ed.. (Toronto: The Women's Press, 1987):159.

The "paradoxical effects" to which Banning refers centre around formal techniques - framing, distortion, fragmentation -- marking various permutations of the window device. Because of the multiple levels of their signification and the formal complexity of their presentation, these 'windows' (screens) stand for the conceptual framework of the film which centers on the dialectics of distancing.

Wieland situates the spectator within the paradigms of culture. Culture-nature are signified by the reflections on the surface of the glass that is the window of the moving car. The interaction of the viewer with nature is measured in relation to this window. The world of technos -- technology, the machine -- provides a protective enclosure for the experience of tourism; access and hence understanding of nature are prevented by the machine age. The world is filtered through the camera lens, perhaps a metaphor for the physical disruption humankind has inflicted upon nature and the dislocation between humankind and nature. This schism between nature and culture is parodied through its correspondences to spectatorship and film. The viewing experience in both cases involves -- for the majority at least -- the exchange of a commodity (money) for a service (transportation). But there is a second level of parody: By selecting a car as a means of conveyance. The car represents a universally understood extension of the self. It is also a private enclosure. The space of the auditorium is similarly absolute and specific, public and private simultaneously. *Reason over Passion* plays on the affinities between a cinematic 'reality' which appears to address a single spectator through its intrinsic perspectival formulation and the singular view of the car's passenger. Wieland tells us that both concepts are specious.

The passenger in the car is no more alone than the spectator in the cinema; only the flow of the narrative and its power as an illusion coupled with the landscape view beyond the window allows us to suspend disbelief.

Wieland's parody of the federal impositions on the nation finds another exposure through aperture in the circular mask surrounding the section of footage of Pierre Trudeau. This window foregrounds our admission into the private sphere of the politician, signalling the segregation of spaces. Shirley Ardener's lines in the introduction to *Women and Space* draw us back to the significance of this segregation for women:

societies have generated their own culturally determined ground rules for making boundaries on the ground and have divided the social into spheres, levels and territories with invisible fences and platforms to be scaled by abstract ladders and crossed by intangible bridges with as much trepidation as on a plank over a raging torrent.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Shirley Ardener, *Women and Space* (London: Croom Helm, 1981):11-12 also cited in Pollock, op.cit., p. 68.

And elsewhere in relation specifically to politics:

The floor of the House [of Commons] is the centre of the political stage....The peripheral and supportive framework of politics, and the interface of the House with the rest of the nation, and with other countries, is spatially represented by the outer and upper galleries. The occupants of the galleries are the audience of the political drama on the floor below. The spaces for the press, non-participating MPs, spouses, peers, ambassadors, Commonwealth visitors and Distinguished Visitors are physically mapped out by the arrangement of these galleries, which have further internal boundaries marked by ropes.⁴⁸

The circular mask of *Reason over Passion* distinguishes the players from the audience, those who stage world events from those who can only watch the political drama unfold. For the male in the audience watching *Reason over Passion*, the role accorded is that of voyeur into the privileged world of the politician; though unable to participate directly in the experience, the male spectator is conferred an active role, being is able to scrutinize and judge the object of the look as through a peephole without the scrutiny being returned.⁴⁹ For the female spectator there is also an element of scopophilia, a pleasurable role reversal in a world where woman is constantly surveyed.⁵⁰ But far more overwhelming (and especially at the time of the film's development) is the knowledge that the station of women in politics is well

⁴⁸ Ibid.:53.

⁴⁹ See Judith Mayne, "The Woman at the Keyhole: Women's Cinema and Feminist Criticism" in *Re-vision*, Mary Ann Doane, ed.. (Frederick, Maryland: Publications of America, 1983):49-66.

⁵⁰ John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: Penguin Books Limited, 1972):46.

below the salt and that, as Berger gently reminds us: "To be born a woman is to be born, within an allotted and confined space, into the keeping of men."⁵¹

The use of enframing devices to challenge and re-create the emblematic icons of patriarchal power is, in Wieland's hands, a strategy for disruption and provocation. By orchestrating a close examination of Canada's symbol of sexual and political power, the filmmaker reverses orthodox ideas of revelation; traditionally, it is woman who is the object of male scrutiny through the gaze. Here is the feminine space of female imaging, the alternate formulation of Albertianism engendered by a sexed identity other than that presumed to be the norm. (Such a formulation of the window motif to classify and distinguish the mythical 'other' would come to the fore again later in *Pierre Vallières* (1972)). Space as a structural site of resistance to narrative continuity and mimetic illusion in *Reason over Passion* undermines the myth of reality and challenges assumptions of auteurship and filmic mastery. Through formal devices such as the window and the screen in *Reason over Passion* the viewer is distanced from the illusion. At first, this divider might seem to correspond to similar strategies of distancing in traditional narrative representation. But significant differences are in operation. Hence it is the space of caesura, marking not extension but obstruction. This space too is the antithesis of the Albertian paradigm, therefore it is feminine.

⁵¹ Ibid..

The body of work Joyce Wieland produced between 1964 and 1969, corresponding in time to the paintings of Colville, Pratt and Pflug, proposes an alternate formulation of spatial representation, indeed, "a different organization of the look."⁵² This chapter has examined *Water Sark, 1933* and *Reason over Passion* for evidence of a spatial aesthetics that does not conform to the imperatives of Albertian perspectivalism. This has been labelled feminine space since it does not conform to the criteria already established in previous chapters for the Albertian or masculine ideal. Wieland's films have been shown to differ from the Italianate model in significant ways. Where conformity to Albertianism dictates the artist's subjection to the higher ideal of personal effacement and where reduction, simplicity and order is crucial, *Water Sark* is effulgent with references to the personal and the creaturely. Where Albertianism demands a distinct boundary between spatial planes and transitive disruption, *1933* points to space as interactive, as a site of circular exchange. Where Albertianism foregrounds mathematical exactitude, scientific rational order and observation based on objective detachment, *Reason over Passion* promotes its opposite: space without bounds, space noticeably dislocated and sensation built upon empirical understanding. Wieland's is indeed a rhopographic, creaturely space, to cite Bryson once more; it is fragmented, fluid and heterotopic, subjective and *juissant*. Wieland does not speak *about*, she speaks *nearby*; her films are both specific and transversal, as are those of Trinh Minh-ha. In breaking with tradition, Wieland breaks too with the binary polarity dictated by Cartesianism and

⁵² See footnote #1.

reified by Gaile McGregor's proposition for the Canadian psyche. Wieland's visionary films propose an alternative scopic matrix based not on the visual pleasure in seamless suture proposed by the power-over of the Albertian paradigm, the "illusion cut to the measure of desire,"⁵³ but on the constitution of a new language of desire founded on the female body.

⁵³ Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema", in *Visual and Other Pleasures* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989):25.

CONCLUSION

Architectural Referents in Canadian Art: A Question of Space has sought to address three central questions, as follows: How is spatial representation constituted within western art? What evidence exists of a normative construction of space against which all representation is measured; how is this construction legitimated? And, how can this ideological construction be said to be gendered? These questions have been answered through a critical examination of three-dimensional spatial theory, termed Albertianism, applied to contemporary Canadian realism as constituted by Alex Colville, Christopher Pratt, Christiane Pflug and Joyce Wieland in works specifically dealing with the window motif.

The central concern of the thesis has been to demonstrate systematically the similarities and differences between the projective method of depicting illusory space developed during in the Italian Renaissance and representational spaces of Colville, Pratt, Pflug and Wieland. Chapter 1 revealed Albertianism at work in Colville's *Nude and Dummy*, *June Noon* and *Pacific*. In all three paintings, the means, mechanisms and procedures originally prescribed by Leon Battista Alberti serve the artist directly,

lending mathematical authority and the certitude of tradition to his represented domain. In Chapter 2, the window as mapped site for the difference between spatial and ideological spheres becomes the field upon which social location *and* representational practice are staged, fought and secured. Pratt and Pflug, through works such *Self-Portrait*, *French Door* and *Night Window*, *Self-Portrait in a Window Pane*, *Kitchen Door* and *Esther* and *Interior at Night*, work through Albertianism to realize their own pictorial aims. The seamless continuity that is the imperative of Albertianism is stirred and mobilized in their representations; it exists in the difference between the projective norm and projected illusion of their images, through the very slippage and rupture of their forms. Albertianism is neither rejected nor resisted in Wieland's films, presented in chapter 3, it simply exists outside and beyond the artist's imaginary world.

While the constitution of this text is synecdochic, each chapter standing for a larger whole, the thesis is not without argumentative structure. This thesis has argued that representational space in the visual arts is an ideological construct and that its practice is gendered. Chapter 1, "Ideology", in discussing Colville's work, pointed to Albertianism as a valued model born of humanist practice and legitimated through masculinist or androcentric historicism. Chapter 2, "Play", took up the

problematization of Albertian ideology presented in chapter 1, and developed it in relation to Pratt and Pflug, whose practice was presented as effecting a resistance to Albertian discourse. In such a resistance, it was argued, lay the seeds of the Albertian paradigm, a negative symbolic order whose inscription inhabits as it takes from the tensions inherent in their art. The representational spaces of Joyce Wieland films, discussed in chapter 3, "Gender", proposed a solution to the bipolar reflexivity engaged with by Pratt and Pflug: a positivist construction of representational space, a new (bodily and intratextual) language of desire outside and beyond the litany of dichotomies of Albertianism.

The research in this thesis has been restricted to an exposition of only four artist's work, within very limited national framework. This thesis is therefore not intended to suggest a totalizing approach to Canadian art, nor even to propose categorically that representational space might differ according to the sex of the artist. It does, however, consider Albertianism's hegemonic order to be made transparent, freed from the mystifying layers of its aesthetic tradition and its historical legitimation. In taking up and substantiating claims that representational space in the visual arts is an ideological, gendered, construct this thesis situates itself within the feminist discursive practice of exposition and revision, the same tradition that nurtured and

supported Susan Bordo's *The Flight from Objectivity*, Naomi Schor's *Reading in Detail* and Griselda Pollock's *Vision and Difference*. It does not take up or adopt the Cartesian discursive practice of binary opposition, the founding model of Gail: McGregor's *The Wacousta Syndrome*. In mobilizing and articulating previously fixed layers of meaning, the thesis engages with the same poststructuralist methodologies that fuel Rosalind Krauss' "Grids", and Norman Bryson's *Looking at the Overlooked*. This thesis lies within the field of the new art history: is this perhaps the Heterotopia proposed by Foucault?

Three areas of further enquiry spring immediately to mind. The first is to continue the study of representational space through an examination of and assessment of several of the newly-emergent critiques of 'vision and visibility' (sight as physical fact and sight as perceptual phenomenon) in western art, thus expanding the scope of the present thesis. Four representative texts on the nature of visual space might serve as the basis for a comparison as follows: Michael Fried's *Absorption and Theatricality: Painting in the Age of Diderot* (1980), Svetlana Alper-

The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century (1983); Norman Bryson's *Vision and Painting* (1983) and Jacqueline Rose's *Sexuality in the Field of Vision* (1986). These texts represent four differing critical approaches of enquiry: analytic/phenomenology, cultural/historical, structuralist and psychoanalytic respectively. The outcome of this project would be a comprehensive review of the field of vision and visuality as it stands to date and an analysis of Albertianism's import and implications for representational practice in western art in their light.

Since this thesis is grounded in a close examination of Albertian perspectivalism as normative and legitimated in western art, a consideration of its ideological implications in terms of aesthetic value comes to mind as a second alternative for further research. This aspect of enquiry, intimated in chapter 1 by reference to Colville's critical reception as a 'moral' artist, would be grounded in the discipline of Philosophy rather than Art History, yet it would lend itself to a broader application in the field of Cultural Studies. Albertianism might be approached through modernism's discursive (and elitist) theory which, as I have noted elsewhere,¹ has set

¹ See "Out of Bounds: Art History, Gendered Knowledge and Spatial Representation." Unpublished manuscript presented at the the *Fourth International Interdisciplinary Congress of Women*, Hunter College, New York, June 2-6, 1990.

the boundaries of a conceptual opposition as firmly entrenched as Bryson's 'high' and 'low' art, leaving the spectator alone when faced with contemporary art (witness the recent rage over Barnett Newman's *Voice of Fire* at the National Gallery) to cope with abstraction *sans* explication. Albertianism as a totalizing pedagogical force might then be problematized.

This thesis is built upon the premise that Albertian space is only one of a number of alternative methods by which to represent space in painting and film. The program completed so far has included an examination of the spatial representation in Canadian painting and film as well as a close examination of women's representational praxis for evidence of alternate formulations of aesthetic space. As noted in the introduction, while Albertianism has been theorized in these pages within the context of androcentric epistemology, it has not developed to its full extent the issue of representation and gendered subjectivity. Such questions, explored by authors such as Laura Mulvey ("Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" [1975] in *Visual and Other Pleasures* [1989]), Teresa de Laurentis (*Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema* [1984]) and Jacqueline Rose (*Sexuality in the Field of Vision*

[1986]), among others already cited in chapter 3, furnish the third option for subsequent exploration. This thesis is written with the cognizance that -- to paraphrase Naomi Schor, who reached the same conclusion in her analysis of detail in the book *Reading in Detail* -- while the story of Albertianism cannot and should not be reduced to a single story, to retell the story of Albertianism from the vantage point of specularity is to tell another, different, story.²

² Naomi Schor, *Reading in Detail: Aesthetics and the Feminine* (New York: Methuen, 1987):4.

The shattered model of Durer's epistemological project [fig. 1] can be and now is reconstructed by her own standards and according to her own design. This thesis has been written from the critical position of feminism, and in the revisionist spirit of its ideological mothers. Albertianism, as a figured representational practice signified by the window/door motif, and as an ideological paradigm, has been deconstructed and reconstituted here by reference to the work of Alex Colville, Christopher Pratt, Christiane Pflug and Joyce Wieland with the object of problematizing its fundamental precepts. The problem of space in western art is one of the central issues of postmodern theory. A systematic critique of Albertianism's hegemonic order and gendered legitimation in western art such as that effected here inevitably opens up new venues for reformulation and enquiry.

ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Albrecht Durer, draftsman drawing a nude (woodcut), from Unterweysung der Messung (Nurenburg, 1538). Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin.

2. Alex Colville, Nude and Dummy, 1950 (glazed gum emulsion on gessoed masonite). New Brunswick Museum, St John, New Brunswick.

3. Alex Colville, June Noon, 1963 (acrylic polymer emulsion). Private collection, Dusseldorf, West Germany.

4. Alex Colville, Pacific, 1967 (acrylic polymer emulsion). Private collection, Ottawa.

6. Veronese

7. Alex Colville, Study for Nude and Dummy, March 1, 1950 (pen and ink).
Collection the artist.

8. Alex Colville, Nude in Corridor, January 17, 1949 (pencil, ink and white paint). Collection the artist.

9. Alex Colville, Nude in Doorway, February 2, 1950 (pen and brush in ink).
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10. Alex Colville, Visitors Are Invited to Register, 1954 (casein tempera on watercolour board). Mendel Art Gallery, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

11. Piero della Francesca, Discovery of the Wood of the True Cross and Meeting of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba from Legend of the True Cross, c. 1453-54 (fresco). S. Francesco, Arezzo.

12. Christopher Pratt, Self-Portrait, 1961 (oil on canvas).
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13. Christopher Pratt, Battery Road, 1956 (watercolour).

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15. Wall painting from the cubiculum of the villa at Boscoreale.

16. Wall painting from the cubiculum of the villa at Boscoreale. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

17. Baldassare Peruzzi, wall fresco, c. 1515. Sala delle Prospettive, Villa Farnesina, Rome.

18. Domenico del Ghirlandaio, Old Man with a Child, c. 1480 (panel). Louvre, Paris.

19. Sandro Botticelli, Portrait of Young Man, late fifteenth century (oil on canvas). Collection of Sir Thomas Merton, Berkshire, England.

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22. Christiane Pflug, Self-Portrait in a Window Pane, 1965 (pencil on paper).
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23. Christopher Pratt, French Door, 1973 (oil on masonite). Private collection.

24. Christopher Pratt, study for Demolitions on the South Side, 1960 (graphite, ink on paper).

25. Christopher Pratt, Demolitions on the South Side, 1960 (oil on canvas).

26. Christiane Pflug, Kitchen Door with Esther, 1965 (oil on canvas). Collectio Michael Pflug.

27. Christiane Pflug, Front Room and Bay Window on Yonge Street, 1961 (graphite on paper). Collection Michael Pflug.

28. Christiane Pflug, Rear Window on Yonge Street, 1961 (graphite on paper).
Collection Michael Pflug.

29. Christiane Pflug, With the Last Snow, 1964 (oil on canvas). Winnipeg Art Gallery.

30. Mary Cassatt, Young Girl in a Blue Armchair, 1878 (oil on canvas).
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31. Christopher Pratt, Night Window, 1971 (oil on masonite). Collection York University, Toronto.

32. Christopher Pratt, Studies for Night Window, 1971 (graphite on paper).
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33. Marcel Duchamp, Night Widow, 1920 (mixed media). The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

34. René Magritte, La condition humaine, 1933 (oil on canvas). Private collection.

35. René Magritte, La Lunette d'approche, 1963 (oil on canvas). Collection of the Menil Foundation, Houston.

36. Francesca Woodman, Space, 1975-76 (performance piece; mixed media props).

37. Christiane Pflug, Interior at Night, 1965 (oil on canvas). Canadian Industries Limited, Montreal.

[illegible]

38. Christiane Pflug, Avrom Isaacs, 1964 (oil on canvas). Collection Michael Pflug.

39. Paolo Uccello, The Battle of San Romano, c. 1455 (tempera on wood panel).
National Gallery, London.

40. Christiane Pflug, Claudia's Room, 1960 (graphite on paper). Collection Michael Pflug.

41. Vittore Carpaccio, *Dream of St Ursula*, 1495 (canvas). Accademia, Venice.

42. Juan Sanchez Cotán, Quince, Cabbage, Melon and Cucumber, n.d. (oil on canvas). Fine Arts Gallery, San Diego.

43. Christiane Pflug, Window on Yonge Street, 1961 (oil on canvas). Collection Mr and Mrs M. Guberman.

44. Christiane Pflug, On the Balcony No. 2, 1963 (oil on canvas). Collection Mrs J.H. Solway.

45. Joyce Wieland, Stuffed Movie, 1966 (mixed media). Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver.

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47. Joyce Wieland, The Camera's Eyes, 1966 (quilted cloth). Courtesy of the Isaacs Gallery, Toronto.

48. Joyce Wieland, Film Mandala, 1966 (quilted cloth). Courtesy of the Isaacs Gallery, Toronto.

49. Caspar David Friedrich, Woman at the Window, c. 1818 (oil on canvas).
Nationalgalerie, Berlin.

50. 4th Style wall painting, Herculaneum, Museo Nazionale di Napoli.

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