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THE CONTEMPORARY LONG POEM

**Spatial Practice in the Work of Kamau Brathwaite and Derek Walcott;
Ed Dorn and Susan Howe; Robert Kroetsch and Daphne Marlatt**

Christopher Paul Joseph Thurgar-Dawson

**Thesis submitted for the Degree of PhD
University of Durham, Department of English Studies**

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UNIVERSITY OF DURHAM

1998



24 FEB 1999

Let us space. The art of this text is the air it causes to circulate between its screens. The chainings are invisible, everything seems improvised or juxtaposed. This text induces by agglutinating rather than by demonstrating, by coupling and uncoupling, gluing and ungluing rather than by exhibiting the continuous, and analogical, instructive, suffocating necessity of a discursive rhetoric.

— Derrida, *Glas* 75

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ABSTRACT

Christopher Thurgar-Dawson

The Contemporary Long Poem: Spatial Practice in the Work of Kamau Brathwaite and Derek Walcott; Ed Dorn and Susan Howe; Robert Kroetsch and Daphne Marlatt

PhD, University of Durham, 1998

The key to understanding the contemporary long poem lies in its use of spatial practices. Since recent long poems employ an identifiable set of six spatial practices, it is possible to attach a new label to this technique: "choropoetics." The best way for readers to approach the texts is directly through the analysis of their choropoetics. This new interpretive mode can be called a "chorological reading practice."

Part I explores the spatial practices at work in two Caribbean long poems. Chapter 1 makes a Lefebvrian "triadic" reading of Brathwaite's trilogy *Mother Poem*, *Sun Poem*, and *X/Self* through social geography whilst chapter 2 converts Chris Fitter's "matrices of landscape perception" into an environmental geography for Walcott's *Another Life*.

Part II moves to America but retains spatial materialism as its organizing concept. Whereas chapter 3 surveys the geography of consumption to make a touristic and Parmenidean reading of Dorn's *Gunslinger*, chapter 4 uses contextual theory and time-geography to interpret the space-time dimensions of Howe's *Pythagorean Silence*.

Part III focuses on place and placial practices in two Canadian long poems. Chapter 5 confronts geographical theories of "non-place" and "placelessness" in order to explore the topography of Kroetsch's *Completed Field Notes* and chapter 6 approaches Marlatt's *Steveston* as a feminist geography and as a Geographical Information System.

Each study in the thesis founds a new core element of "choropoetics" — the writing of regional space into a long poem form. These comprise: the production of space; landscape and space; the consumption of space; space-time; topography; and the gendering of place. The thesis aims to correlate literary and geographical critical practices.

DECLARATION

This thesis is the original work of the author except where indicated by reference, and no part of the thesis has been previously submitted for a degree in this or any other university.

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Three of the chapters initially took shape at conferences: Palacky University (Brathwaite), Brno University (Marlatt) and the University of Wales, Swansea (Kroetsch). Many thanks to all involved for their comments and suggestions.

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Also special thanks to the students of my two long poem modules at Palacky University, 1995-96 - Na Zdravi!

Which leaves my supervisors Seán Burke and Diana Collecott who have helped at every stage of the work with care, patience and generosity.

The thesis is dedicated to Christine

NOTE ON THE TEXT

MLA Style

The thesis is written in MLA style using endnotes for substantive material and abbreviations for frequently cited texts. Abbreviations are listed by chapter on the following two pages. Cross-references are contained in the endnotes. Long quotations append the name of the author where it may be unclear from the context of the argument.

Ed Dorn's long poem *Gunslinger* (chapter 3) contains a character called "I." To avoid confusion I have used quotation marks around this name.

Citation of the Long Poem

The exaggerated length of the long poem line presents particular difficulties for accurate quotation if correct page-space is to be reproduced. Rather than adjust fonts I have chosen where required (chapter 6) to release the right-hand margin in order to preserve the integrity of the material quoted. The referencing convention for long poems is simply to cite the whole page number where the specific text occurs. No line numbers are given.

Greek Alphabet

The characters of the Greek alphabet have been reproduced as follows:

alpha	α	nu	ν
beta	β	xi	ξ
gamma	γ	omicron	ο
delta	δ	pi	π
epsilon	ε	rho	ρ
zeta	ζ	sigma	σ
eta	η	tau	τ
theta	θ	upsilon	υ
iota	ι	phi	φ
kappa	κ	chi	χ
lambda	λ	psi	ψ
mu	μ	omega	ω

ABBREVIATIONS

CHAPTER 1: BRATHWAITE

- CD* Michael Havinden and David Meredith, *Colonialism and Development: Britain and its Tropical Colonies, 1850-1960* (London: Routledge, 1993)
- MP* *Mother Poem* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1977)
- PS* Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991)
- R* *Roots* (Michigan: Ann Arbour, 1993)
- SP* *Sun Poem* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1982)
- XS* *X/Self* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1987)

CHAPTER 2: WALCOTT

- AL* *Another Life* (London: Cape, 1973)
- HHG* Derek Gregory and Rex Walford, eds. *Horizons in Human Geography* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989)
- L* Richard Payne Knight, *The Landscape: A Didactic Poem in Three Books* (1795), facsimile of 2nd edition (Farnborough: Gregg, 1972)
- PSL* Chris Fitter, *Poetry, Space, Landscape: Toward a New Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995)

CHAPTER 3: DORN

- G* *Gunslinger* (Durham, NC: Duke, 1989)
- IR* Donald Wesling, ed. *Internal Resistances: the Poetry of Edward Dorn* (Berkeley, CA: U of California P, 1985)
- P* Leonardo Taran, *Parmenides* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1965)
- PEL* Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley, CA: U of California P, 1984)
- PTE* Erik Cohen "A Phenomenology of Tourist Experiences" (*Sociology* 13 (1979): 179-201)
- RP* Alexander P. D. Mourelatos, *The Route of Parmenides: a Study of Word, Image and Argument in the Fragments* (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 1975)

CHAPTER 4: HOWE

- ET* *Europe of Trusts* (Los Angeles: Sun and Moon Press, 1990)
- GI* Derek Gregory, *Geographical Imaginations* (Cambridge, MA and Oxford: Blackwell, 1993)
- ID* Torsten Hågerstrand, *Innovation Diffusion as a Spatial Process* (1953), trans Allan Pred, (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1967)
- SPG* Doreen Massey, *Space, Place and Gender* (London: Polity, 1994)

CHAPTER 5: KROETSCH

- CFN* *Completed Field Notes: The Long Poems of Robert Kroetsch* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1989)
- GBP* Edward S. Casey, *Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World* (Bloomington: Indiana, 1993)
- LTW* *The Lovely Treachery of Words: Essays Selected and New* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1989)
- NP* Marc Augé, *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity* (London: Verso, 1995)
- PP* Edward Relph, *Place and Placelessness* (London: Pion, 1976)
- T* J. Hillis Miller, *Topographies* (Stanford, CA: Stanford, 1995)

CHAPTER 6: MARLATT

- FAG* Gillian Rose, *Feminism and Geography: The Limits of Geographical Knowledge* (Oxford: Polity, 1993)
- FG* Women and Geography Study Group, *Feminist Geographies: Explorations in diversity and difference* (London, Longman, 1997)
- S* *Steveston* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1974)
- SGK* Linda McDowell and Joanne P. Sharp eds, *Space, Gender, Knowledge: Feminist Readings* (London: Arnold, 1997)
- OEG* Smaro Kamboureli, *On the Edge of Genre: The Contemporary Canadian Long Poem* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1991)

General Introduction

The Long Poem and Spatial Practice

Lines of Argument

In the course of this thesis I argue that the key to understanding the contemporary long poem lies in its use of spatial practices. Secondly, I argue that because recent long poems use an identifiable set of spatial practices — six in total — it is possible to attach a new label to this technique: "choropoetics." Thirdly, I suggest that the best way for readers to approach the long poem is specifically through the analysis of "choropoetics." I refer to this new interpretive strategy as a "chorological reading practice." Although the kinds of knowledge implicated in the research will be situated separately, much of the epistemological framework of the thesis is inevitably bound to this new terminology. Since the terms of the discussion involve either marginal usages or completely new words — and since little headway can be made without my use of them — I will move directly to the definitions.

New Terminology

(1) *Chorology*

Chorology — literally "the word (*logos*) on space (*chora*)" — may be new to the discipline of literary theory, but is one of the foundational concepts of geography.¹ Indeed, as the OED currently has it, chorology is "the scientific study of the geographical extent or limits of anything." While there are historical reasons not to be overly sympathetic to the adjective "scientific," I take the phrase "limits of anything" to include poetry. Translating such lexicography to the task in hand thus produces the "study of the geographical extent or limits of [long poems]."

Hecataeus of Miletus was the first to employ the Greek word for chorology, *Xwpograφία*, in the sixth century BC, but it was the seventeen books of Strabo's *Geography* (from 8 BC to AD 18) that cemented the practice of "writing space" (*chorographein*).² For Strabo, the definition of the geographer as "the person who attempts to describe the parts of

the earth" was synonymous with that of the chorographer. Both terms were used to signify those engaged in the practical study of the local environment in relation to its human occupants. Chorology (or chorography) was thus associated from the earliest times with the three ideas of *practice*, *region* and *human activity*: what we might now call a "regional human geography." Even more appealing, however, was the insistence with which Strabo attached his regional results to a wider philosophical framework. Chorology was not to be thought of as an end in itself but as the material inspiration for socio-spatial contemplation.

Strabo's deliberate focus on the description of local space (in Latin the *descriptio loci* tradition) was forcefully challenged by Ptolemy around AD 150.³ Instead of treating geography and chorography as essentially the same thing, Claudius Ptolemaeus insisted it was the job of geography to produce "a view of the whole" rather than to discuss "the peculiarities of the peoples." In addition, he maintained that the new global picture should not be "described" or "written" but "mapped" — the seeds of cartography and spatial analysis. In the words of Derek Gregory, "The distance between Strabo and Ptolemy could not be plainer."⁴ Strabo insisted on the local and human; Ptolemy, the universal and statistical.

For the purposes of this thesis, which starts from the materiality of the local environment in order to outline a spatial reading practice for the long poem, it is therefore Strabo's definition of chorology which is better suited to the task at hand. Unlike Varenius, I will not argue first, a Strabonic, then a Ptolemaic approach, but rather a combination of the two. Fortunately however, the chorological reading practice that I aim to set out has more recent forebears than those of classical antiquity.

Kant's thoughts on the physical, moral and human elements of geography, as set out in *Physical Geography* (1802),⁵ were among the last of his papers to be published. Since there is no shortage of commentary on Kant's general theorization of space,⁶ for the purposes at hand I intend only to highlight certain aspects of his thought.

We know that "Kant introduced the study of geography into the curriculum of the University of Königsberg in 1756 and offered a course on geography forty-eight times during the subsequent forty years."⁷ Kant was the key philosopher in modern history to re-label geography as a "chorological science": he returned the study of space to its regional roots. Secondly, in his precritical essay of 1768, "On the First Ground of the Distinction of Regions in Space" he maintains that region

(*Gegend*) "does not consist in the reference of one thing in space to another — that is really the concept of position — but in the relation of the system of these positions to the absolute space of the universe."⁸ Kant is here positing the region as a set of objects configured by the properties of global space. This interpretation is confirmed by the text that soon follows:

To be specific: it [region] refers not to places in the space — for that would be the same thing as regarding the position of the parts of the thing in question in an external relation — but rather to universal space as a unity, of which every extension must be regarded as a part. (Immanuel Kant)⁹

Although Kant is speaking in abstract terms at this early stage, he appears to be suggesting that far from being a regional geography isolated in its analysis of an entirely local space ("the parts of the thing in question"), study of the region is actually defined by its relation to universal space ("of which every extension must be regarded as a part"). The definition of chorology I have in mind for the contemporary long poem, therefore, incorporates the practical, local and human qualities of Strabo but *as an extension of* the absolute, global and universal of Kant.

It is a small step from the above definition of *Gegend* in Kant's "Regional Space" to his third influence on chorology. Famous for its introduction of "exceptionalism" the following quotation is taken from his *Lectures on Physical Geography*:

We may classify our empirical knowledge in two ways: either according to conceptions or according to time and space in which they are actually found. The classification of perceptions according to concepts is the logical classification, that according to time and space the physical classification. . . . Geography and history fill up the entire circumference of our perceptions: geography that of space, history that of time. (Immanuel Kant)¹⁰

There is a simple question here. Is the contemporary long poem a way of knowing that classifies perception of the world "according to conceptions" (a logical classification) or "according to time and space (a physical classification)? Or, to rephrase the question in neo-Kantian discourse, does the long poem lean towards a "nomothetic" (generalizing, lawful) or "idiographic" (individualizing, distinctive) methodology?¹¹ So long as an answer to this question can be found, a suitably conceptual or material way of reading the long poem can be devised in response.

Jonathan Z. Smith points out that "both the nomothetic and idiographic are possible ways of conceiving the same object."¹² Recent movements in geography have endorsed this view by using both systems in relation to one another; they have gone about their investigations with a theoretical awareness that neither local region nor the global world system can fully dispense with the other. Since there are no compelling reasons to dispense with either formulation, the chorological method most suited to the spatial practices of the long poem is one which recognizes the claim that "what is at issue . . . is the articulation of the general with the local . . . to produce qualitatively different outcomes in different localities."¹³ In this way it is possible to use chorology as a mode of ingress, as R. J. Johnston puts it, ". . . that finds a middle course between on the one hand the generalizing approaches, which allow for no real freedom of individual action, and on the other the singular approaches, which argue that all is freedom of action."

The writings of Carl Sauer, William Hartshorne, Torsten Hågerstrand, G. de Jong, Robert Sack and Nicholas Entrikin have also had a significant bearing on chorological issues. Carl Sauer, writing in the 1920s in California, produced the first convincing, twentieth-century definition of chorology as the written representation of the seen cultural landscape. At the end of the 1930s, William Hartshorne popularized the new continental interest in chorological approaches and stressed that "a region is unique in respect to its total combination of major characteristics." He stated clearly that "areas, as such, cannot be studied in terms of generic concepts, but can only be regarded as . . . combinations of interrelated phenomena."¹⁴ The 1940s witnessed a renewed interest in literary space through the exceptional work of the American critic, Joseph Frank, and his concept of "spatial form," but ultimately Frank's "dynamics of spatial relationships" lacked a fully geographical awareness.¹⁵ It was not until the early 1950s when the Swedish geographer, Torsten Hågerstrand began his detailed chorological analyses of "diffusion processes" at Lund University that the possibility of a spatiotemporal "time geography" of the local environment was born. In 1957 Van Paasen lent further weight to this return of geographical regionalism with his commentary on Strabo in *The Classical Tradition of Geography*. The following decade saw the Dutch research of G. de Jong come to the forefront of spatial analysis. Of particular note is his open assertion in *Chorological Differentiation* (1962) that "the concept chorological should be preferred to the concept spatial in geography."¹⁶

After a period in which the mathematics of spatial analysis gained the upper hand in academic research, Robert Sack's spirited revival of the debate between chorology and spatial analysis returned regional geography to the agenda in 1974. Sack's exploration of chorological interpretation — which places chorology in the middle of a continuum between objective, scientific analysis and subjective, spatial sketch — was published in 1980.¹⁷ Whilst recently the place of chorology in geography seems to have gone underground, either through cultural absorption into other subjects or through the relativism offered by postmodern concepts of space, the work of Nicholas Entrikin in the early 1990s stands out. Of particular importance is Entrikin's discussion of chorology in *The Betweenness of Place* (1991) where the regional becomes fully implicated in the social authority of narrative.¹⁸ This theme will be further explored in relation to the long poems of Robert Kroetsch (chapter 5) where Entrikin's definition of chorology as "offering a form of understanding that is between description and explanation"¹⁹ is pressed into service. It is certainly Entrikin's use of chorology as an interpretive strategy which is the closest to my own delineation of a "chorological reading practice."

To conclude, my own use of chorology is based on region, everyday practice, and human geography. Region is defined not just internally as a collection of related places, but also in Kant's sense as a unity in relation to universal space. It is therefore three-parts local and idiographic in the stress it places on the uniqueness of the immediate landscape and environment (Strabo) but still one-part global and nomothetic (Ptolemy). Since, as Kant averred "[i]t will not be surprising if the reader should find these concepts still very obscure,"²⁰ it will help to consider their function in this particular study. This can be done by moving to poetics.

(2) Choropoetics

I will use the term choropoetics as the contracted form for "chorological poetics." This is an important point as it makes the difference between the "poetics of regional space" — my bounded and local definition — and a far more abstract "poetics of space."²¹ Many poetic practices could be said to address spatial concerns in general, for example through the handling of themes and images, or through the figuration of narratives

and tropes, but only the process of writing a long poem makes use of the durational and documentary requirements necessary to represent the regional in poetic form. So although the term might initially be thought to refer to any theory of making a poem about space, I will reserve the term choropoetic practice for "the practice of theorizing the chorological into long poems in all their forms." Since the question of genre will be addressed separately below, I want to introduce the specific kind of *poiesis* I have in mind. My usage naturally includes the literary meaning of "poetics" as the study of the principles and forms of poetry, but again I want to emphasise a geographical intent at work in the long poem. Here is a cultural geographer's definition of *poiesis*:

Poiesis (ποίησις) denotes the evoking of geographic awareness, critical reflection, discovery and creativity. It elicits curiosity and insight about relationships between humanity and the physical earth in themes such as culture and landscape, sense of place, nature symbolism, or the history of ideas. It may take the form of playing with ideas, simulation exercises, speculations about language and power, or the ethics of applied geography. The poetic dimension should ideally address the critical and emancipatory interests of all other practices. (Anne Buttimer)²²

This would not be a particularly strong definition of many forms of poetry that come to mind. The sonnet, the haiku, the elegy, the dirge, the lyric, the psalm, the limerick, the rondel, the verse drama, the narrative poem and even the classical epic itself rarely fit such a geographical definition. As I seek to demonstrate, however, this is the closest definition of the *poiesis* involved in the contemporary long poem — the choropoem — that we are likely to encounter. The inclusiveness heralded by Buttimer's final sentence, the fact that "the poetic dimension should ideally address the critical and emancipatory interests of all other practices" is of paramount importance to the recent long poem. Such considerations also link back to the "betweenness" mentioned in relation to the chorologies of Robert Sack and Nicholas Entrikin above. Like Smaro Kamboureli, I do see "betweenness" as the definitive concept here, but, it is crucially a *spatio-regional* "betweenness," a poetics mediated by chorology:

the long poem, although not necessarily narrative in form, has the ability to absorb into its large structure lyric, dramatic, and other disparate elements, thus creating a textual process of 'betweenness.' This betweenness is not a matter of simple deviation from previously established generic conventions; rather, it is a

matter of multiple encodings and decodings, of shifting value systems, of infraction. (Smaro Kamboureli)²³

Choropoetics, then, is the theorization of chorological issues as they relate to the "textual process of 'betweenness'" that designates the contemporary long poem. A successful use of choropoetic strategies in writing, a writing which fully explores the regional environment in relation to spatio-placial "encodings and decodings," results in a choropoem. Not all contemporary long poems are choropoems, but all present-day long poems exhibit a level of choro(logical) poetics.

(3) Chorophyle

Alongside choropoetics, "chorophyle" is the second genuine neologism in the thesis; chorology, as we saw, has a very lengthy etymology. Whereas both chorology and choropoetics have significant conceptual and methodological importance, "chorophyle" is little more than a shorthand form or a macro instruction. Just as the macros of my computer enable me to press single buttons to write whole strings of assigned words, "chorophyle" avoids the need to write "shared, material, socio-historical and regional, mindset-towards-space." The roots of the chorophyle are anthropological and require a brief history.

Originally, Attica had only ten tribes and hence ten military divisions. As the Greek empire expanded, however, "phule" or "foreign tribes" (*ϕυλη*) came into being overseas.²⁴ These clans or tribal colonies were still technically under the governance of Athens and expected to fight for the empire, but held very different ideological allegiances to the imperial capital. This was not only due to what postcolonial critics might call their "subaltern" identities, but also on account of their differing spatial expectations. Each conquered tribe had its own material expectations of how a camp should be arranged, of how a battle-group should look and of how everyday objects (weapons, bedding, utensils) should be arranged in space. As the works of Yi-Fu Tuan and others attest,²⁵ all individual tribal societies have their own mental sets-toward-space through their shared spatial expectations. Examples range from the *New York Times's* assertion that: "A Zulu lives in a round world. If he does not leave his reserve, he can live his whole life through and never

see a straight line"²⁶ to the fact that Australian Aboriginal groups experience space in relation to "dream-time." The Hopi Indians of the American south-west take "far away and long ago" absolutely literally — a distant place must of necessity be distant in time. These recognitions (crudely introduced here) indicate not only that "the tale of the tribe" cannot be told from without tribal space, but that tribal space itself is the tale the tribe tells.

Non-tribal societies do not escape such spatial expectations: the members of class-divided and class-capitalist first- and second-world nations have equally determinable "sets-toward-space." These arise through time via common social practices and the everyday movements of human bodies in the real world. All spatial knowledges are materially situated in a region, whether it be metropolitan (Williams, Olson), provincial (Marlatt, Kroetsch) or national (Brathwaite, Pound). This "shared, material, socio-historical, regional, mindset-towards-space," an extension of the "set toward space" of spatial behaviourism and mental mapping, is shortened in the current work to the chorophyle. Choropoems read — and are read by — the prevailing chorophyle of the environment in which they are produced.

(4) Spatial Practice

Gilles Deleuze formulated the thought that "[p]ractice is a set of relays from one theoretical point to another and theory is a relay from one practice to another."²⁷ At first this sounds tautologous, but in fact the statement can be broken into three parts: one, there are small points; two, there are mediatory practices; three, there are grand theories. It occurs that to draw such strong boundaries between unique examples, the practices they demonstrate, and the theory which totalises them, is unhelpful in the extreme. What is important, however, is that from either end of the picture practice remains central — *salto mortale*.

Henri Lefebvre also puts practice in the middle of the battle for understanding, but his hands-on "spatial practice" is not remotely theoretical. It is material, necessary, and above all social:

Once brought back into conjunction with a (spatial and signifying) *social practice*, the concept of space can take on its full meaning. Space thus rejoins material production: the production of goods,

things, objects of exchange — clothing, furnishings, houses or homes — a production which is dictated by necessity. (PS 137)

This passage gradually moves us towards the spatial practice we require for interpretation of the long poem: one which is less boxed than Deleuze, socially active in real time and space, and returns to Strabo's emphasis on the practical, regional and human. However, as Liggett and Perry note in their introduction to *Spatial Practices: Critical Explorations in Social/Spatial Theory*, "usage of the term *spatial practices* is derived from Lefebvre's overall theory of space as a production *but contains all three elements of his more detailed model*."²⁸ We should remember that for Lefebvre, spatial practice was only the first of a "triad" of terms (explored in chapter 1) and care should rightly be taken when expanding the term to mediate between other areas. In my own use of spatial practice to explore the interstices between chorology, choropoetics and the chorophyle, therefore, I will basically follow Liggett and Perry's theoretical positioning of the term, but add a further passage from *The Production of Space* which is even more foundational:

Every language is located in a space. Every discourse says something about a space (places or sets of places); and every discourse is emitted from a space. Distinctions must be drawn between discourse *in* space, discourse *about* space and the discourse *of* space. There are thus relationships between language and space which are to a greater or lesser extent misconstrued or disregarded. (PS 132, emphasis original)

Transferring the effects of this balanced eloquence to choropoetics, what makes this passage so haunting is not the discursive recognition that every long poem is "located in a space," that every long poem "says something about a space (places or sets of places)" or that every long poem is "emitted from a space" but the fact that any methodology using spatial practice as a critical tool cannot avoid being "to a greater or lesser extent misconstrued or disregarded." The six analyses which follow are therefore an attempt, provisional in form, to prevent the space of the long poem from being treated, or taken for granted, in this way.

The Long Poem Genre

Since 1982 explorations of genre have so dominated criticism of the long

poem that they have seriously curtailed research into the texts themselves. Sally Rosenthal and M. L. Gall, Ted. Weiss, Margaret Dickie, Stephen Fender, Robert Oeste and Edwin Morgan — to name but a few — have all been snared in the generic trap.²⁹ Even setting aside these weightier contributions, three journal special-issues have been principally devoted to discovering whether the long poem is a new genre, a sub-genre, a mixed-genre or not a genre at all.³⁰ The precedent I would ideally like to follow, therefore, is that of D. M. R. Bentley. Bentley embarks on his definitive 350 page volume *Mimic Fires* concerning "[a]ccounts of Early Long Poems on Canada"³¹ without so much as a glance at genre. Nevertheless, certain criteria regarding length, chronology and subject matter must still be set.

As the following example demonstrates, the endemic concern with generic matters has not been confined to Anglo-American critics. Klaus Köhring's German article, "Die Formen des 'long poem' in der modernen amerikanischen Literatur" (1967) was one of the first to provide a foreign-language view of the subject:

Besonders üppig wuchert der Begriffswald bei Walt Whitman's *Song of Myself*, der nicht nur als Meditation, Lehrgedicht und naturalistische Prosahymne betrachtet sieht, sondern ebenfalls als amerikanisches 'proto-epic,' 'prophetic poem,' 'dramatic poem,' 'comic poem,' und 'long poem' eingeordnet wird. Die Versuche hinsichtlich Hart Crane's *The Bridge* reichen vom Begriff 'moderne Ode' über 'epic work' und 'mystical poem' bis zur einfachen Paraphrase 'long poem,' und Stephen Vincent Benét's *Western Star* gilt sowohl als 'epic,' 'ballad-epic' und 'narrative in verse' wie auch als 'long poem.' . . . Vereinzelt finden sich aber neben dem Begriff 'dramatic narrative in verse' noch die Ausdrücke 'long poem,' 'long narrative poem in a pageant-like form' und 'full-length novel-poem.' (Klaus Heinrich Köhring)³²

It is ironic that Köhring's method of assembling the generic categories is so close to the collaging, juxtaposing, and palimpsesting of the poems he is struggling to define: the form of the attempt is more persuasive than his argument ever could be. Culminating in the citation of W. Thorp's description of the "long narrative poem in a pageant-like form," Köhring's various mixed-genre possibilities are at least reminiscent of the considerably older but more concise nomination I will adopt:

The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-historical-comical-pastoral, scene indivisible, or poem unlimited. (*Hamlet*, II.ii 376-79)

Of all the attempts to define the contemporary long poem — often by the poets themselves — Shakespeare's, above, has been universally overlooked. A number of contextual reasons might account for this: Polonius's speeches are not to be taken seriously, the dramatic focus of Act II, scene ii lies elsewhere, the phrase gets lost in the laughter generated by 'tragical-historical-comical-pastoral,' and the end of the sentence is a falling rhythm. Apart from contextual reasons, there are also conceptual assumptions: that experimentation in long forms is a twentieth-century invention, that drama is not the place to search out academic definitions, and that the passage of time somehow nullifies the connection anyway. None of these objections, however, can dispute the real existence of the genre "poem unlimited" itself — a genre which, interestingly, could be performed by travelling players.

In actual fact, "poem unlimited" contains benefits both for the general discussion of the long poem as well as for an approach through spatial practices. We should first consider what it was that Shakespeare was referring to as "unlimited." "[P]oem unlimited" acts in ideational opposition to the preceding phrase "scene indivisible." If we take "scene indivisible" to refer to the Aristotelian dramatic unities of time, action and place, it "probably means a play in which the 'unity of place' is adhered to." "[P]oem unlimited" would then be the opposite, "one in which the 'unities' of time and place are not observed."³³ Classical ballast is provided by the line which follows and seals this interpretation: "Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor Plautus too light." My preference for "poem unlimited" to define the genre of contemporary long poem indicates not only its breaking of the first two unities of "time" and "action," but, more importantly, the third unity of "place." Since, as we saw, chorology is "the study of the geographical extent or *limit* of anything," "poem unlimited" is a better working definition than the above commentators have offered.

Although the *vers libre* of the French Symbolists and Anglo-American Imagists certainly provided a new form with which "to break the pentameter," Shakespeare's recognition of a "poem unlimited" as early as 1601 (a time when Copernicanism was the spatial revolution of the age and Giordano Bruno had just been burned as a heliocentrist in the *Campo dei Fiori*) is far more unsettling. Aristotle aside, Shakespeare's use of "poem unlimited" at this time would certainly have denoted the prosimetric or "prose-poem" tradition. It is often overlooked that the contemporary long poem is merely the latest incarnation of the Boethian

prosimetric tradition flourishing from *De Consolatione Philosophiae* (524 AD) onwards: Bernard Silvestris's *Cosmographia* (ca. 1150); Dante's *Vita Nuova* (1293); Boccaccio's *Ameto* (1342); and Sidney's *Arcadia* (1590). Alternatively, for those who think the 'found poetry'³⁴ aspect of recent long poems to be their defining or generic characteristic, "poem unlimited" would also have covered the *troubadour* (Provençal: *troveor*, to find) and *trouvère* (Mod Fr: *trouver*, to find) mixed-genre traditions from the south and north of France respectively, as well as the Occitan *vidas* and *razos* (sung prosimetric biographies). Critics of contemporary long poems who exalt their ability to mix lyric and epic genres would do well to recall that generic boundaries for poetic composition were more — not less — flexible between the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance than they are today.

In outlining a choropoetics and a chorological reading practice for interpreting the regional spatial practices of the long poem, I am not therefore undertaking an intentionally generic task because the "poem unlimited" appellation is already a spatio-temporal umbrella term. Also I have already committed myself to a one quarter nomothetic interest at most and genre, no matter the *differentia specifica* which give it life, is an entirely nomothetic process. What I do hope to demonstrate, however, is that all contemporary long poems have the same socio-spatial function within their individual environments.

Finally, I need to state my position on the issue of length. Robert Oeste polemically asserts that "a 'long' poem may be one of several dozen or several thousand lines" because, he asserts, "almost anything long can be read as a long poem."³⁵ John Foster and Edwin Morgan, on the other hand, see a watershed at a "thousand lines," the latter sheepishly acknowledging "it's only a rough figure, of course, and there are exceptions."³⁶ The most remarkable of these exceptions is worth a mention in passing: "the *Manas*, the national epic of Kyrgyzstan, which has half a million lines and is recited once a year as a festival in itself." The intervention of Smaro Kamboureli mediates between the two extremes:

It would be naive to suggest that length in itself could suffice to define the long poem as a distinct genre; by the same token a long poem can only be long. But it wouldn't suffice to resolve such a tautological assertion by specifying the number of lines or pages that make a long poem long. . . . The issue here is duration rather than length. (*OEG* 49-50)

Edwin Morgan agrees it is a question of "duration" but suggests we "think about it in terms of reading time." While in theory I applaud all three "anti-line-length" arguments (any length, duration, reading time) they are ultimately let down by their sheer impracticality. Students, commentators and readers alike need an active way of solving this most basic of questions. Strange as it may seem, a serious attempt to gauge the lower limit of large forms actually comes down to a very limited range of line numbers. There is of course no maximum requirement but contemporary long poems start (as a minimum requirement) somewhere between 670 and 700 lines. Once past this poetic sound barrier and into the 700-line-plus dimension, any uncertainty readers may have been entertaining soon disappears. In all practical terms this is a very usable and accurate definition. It tends not to be a question of which texts to allow in — by and large these speak for themselves — but which authors to keep out. There are whole roomfuls of authors who write "short long poems," (between 300 and 670 lines) of whom Wallace Stevens is the obvious example: six densely wrought texts, but nothing beyond 620 lines.³⁷ In material terms, choropoems have by definition to be longer than 670 lines; as a rule of thumb, a chorological poetics is rarely achievable in under twenty pages of text.

Intention and Reading

In what is essentially a hermeneutics of the text, my treatment of the poems themselves is closest to Georges Poulet:

. . . nothing is unimportant for understanding the work, and a mass of biographical, bibliographical, textual, and general critical information is indispensable to me. And yet this knowledge does not coincide with the internal knowledge of the work. . . .
And so I ought not to hesitate to recognize that so long as it is animated by this vital inbreathing inspired by the act of reading, a work of literature becomes at the expense of the reader whose own life it suspends a sort of human being, that it is a mind conscious of itself and constituting itself in me as the subject of its own objects. (Georges Poulet)³⁸

The long poems analysed are supremely self-regarding. Indeed, every one is an example of Poulet's "mind conscious of itself," and each "constitut[es] itself in me as the subject of its own objects." Such an

argument is often used to maintain that the long poem is more a performance of the lyric mode than a fragmentation of the epic. Although I reserve a more materialistic, documentary and social view of the long poem in which the text is a product of its unique regional culture and space, I do occasionally use constructions such as "*Pythagorean Silence* does this," or "*Steveston* does that" as if the text possessed an intent of its own: "a mind conscious of itself." Such phrases may indeed signal a retreat into the "mental space" which Lefebvre so abhors but I return again to the term "poem unlimited" and its ability to dramatize the act of "one social space authorizing another."³⁹ Chapters 1 and 5 consider the oral tradition of what we now call "performance poetry"; chapter 6 includes the argument that Marlatt "performs" gender, an idea popularized by Judith Butler.⁴⁰ For Kamboureli, Poulet's "act of reading" would even be a generic feature of the long poem, the re-performance of "A Genre in the Present Tense." While I have no general objection to the vogue for extending Austin's performatives into the cultural domain, such readings too easily ignore the fact that every reading is a re-performance of the long poem as a "discourse *in* space, [a] discourse *about* space and the discourse *of* space."

Wolfgang Iser famously stated that ". . . the concept of the implied reader designates a network of response-inviting structures, which impel the reader to grasp the text."⁴¹ To this I would add Norman Holland's assurance that we "can speak of the reader's characteristic expectations."⁴² By juxtaposing and spatializing both these claims, I aim to underline another assumption about the six chorological readings which follow. What sets the contemporary long poem apart from its generic heritage and apart from all other present-day genres is this: the response-inviting structures of the late-twentieth century long poem are highly chorological. The texts contain choropoetic structures (intended or not) which write themselves toward the reader's "characteristic expectations." The reader's "characteristic expectations" are, in turn, individually spatial with regard to the chorophyle that has formed them. The "identity theme" of every reader includes spatial expectations engendered by their personal, biographical movements through material, social space. The contemporary long poem is written in such a way as to elicit and require greater recognition of each reader's characteristic spatial expectations. This is not to deny that readers look for all other kinds of things in choropoems — historical, personal, emotional, narrational aspects and so on — but these are mediated, one and all, through the

spatial practices, the "response-inviting" spatial structures of the text (the choropoetics).

Michel de Certeau's essay, "Reading as Poaching" is also important to an understanding of the chorological reading practice. Apart from his treatment of the reader as a consumer — our way into Dorn's *Gunslinger* in chapter 3 — de Certeau writes that:

. . . [the text] is ordered in accordance with codes of perception that it does not control. It becomes a text only in relation to the exteriority of the reader, by an interplay of implications and ruses between two sorts of 'expectation' in combination: the expectation that organizes a *readable* space (a literality), and one that organizes a procedure necessary for the *actualization* of the work (a reading). (de Certeau, emphasis original)⁴³

From this we may say that the long poem too achieves its textual status "in accordance with codes of perception it does not control." The long poem may indeed possess "response-inviting" spatial practices, but without access to the "characteristic [spatial] expectations" of the reader — de Certeau's "two sorts of 'expectation' in combination" — it is powerless to let go its full semantic potential. The chorological reading practice outlined, utilized and finally summarized in this thesis, is devised in order to release "the expectation that organizes a *readable* space" and "one that organizes a procedure necessary for the *actualization* of the work." In order to connect spatial practice (choropoetics) to the contemporary long poem (choropoems) through a new reading strategy (chorological analysis), the work of Poulet, Iser, Holland and de Certeau has therefore been influential.

Methods and Knowledges

In terms of praxis, the thesis aims to complete the following three goals:

- 1 to identify and study the core spatial practices of six contemporary long poems from the Caribbean, America and Canada;
- 2 to bring geographical and literary theories together by exploring shared critical investments in the existence of a choropoetics;
- 3 to demonstrate a new chorological reading practice for the contemporary long poem in the process of (1) and (2) above.

Although these aims are presented here separately for clarity, they are in fact indivisible from one another and will not be addressed in any set order or chronology. Being thoroughly interrelated projects, fulfilment of the aims proceeds simultaneously in the course of the study. All six chapters have a part to play in advancing the completion of all three tasks and they include regular signposting on their progress for this purpose. Accordingly, each chapter draws on three types of knowledge. The first is literary criticism which directs itself to the internal spatial practices of the texts as well as to historical traditions of spatial representation in writing. Alongside these are recent geographical knowledges which bring more external or socio-spatial theories to bear on the "choropoetic" process. Finally, contextual knowledges (time-space settings and sequences) link the two by gradually building a new "chorological" reading practice. At first this sounds Hegelian, with literary thesis, geographical antithesis and contextual synthesis, but these are not hermetically sealed knowledges: rather they interweave on every page. Nor does the contextual work dominate — that again would stress nomothetics and remove us from the study of individual texts.

The six core spatial practices which seek to establish the long poem as a choropoetics and the method of interpreting them as a chorological reading practice are: the production of space (chapter 1); landscape and space (chapter 2); the reception of space (chapter 3); space-time (chapter 4); topographical place (chapter 5); and the gender of place (chapter 6). The first two parts of the thesis explore four Caribbean and American long poems (chapters 1-4) and address predominantly spatial issues in the long poem. The last part focuses on two Canadian long poems and uses place as the organizing concept. All six chapters disclose the material, regional and "taken-for-granted" spatial practices of the contemporary long poem.

The individual merits of each poem are discussed in the introductions to the three main parts of the thesis, but in general the selection criteria are as follows. The text has to be over 670 lines in length; physically available in printed form; written in English; written and published in the last thirty-five years; written outside the British Isles but from the same continent as the other texts chosen; written substantially *about* an overseas land or terrain; marginal to the Anglo-American literary canon; perceived as a long poem or large open form by other readers and interested parties; and fitting my own trans-historical definition of "poem unlimited." Having fulfilled all these conditions and

chosen the Americas since 1963, the result is still a field of texts too large to be quantified. Indeed, marginality to the Anglo-American canon is more a defining characteristic of the form than a factor of limitation. It makes no sense to speak of a canonical contemporary long poem but there are very clearly canonical Modernist and twentieth-century equivalents. Some level of arbitrariness was thus inevitable, although I did make a deliberate choice to include the work of both female and male authors. No commentaries or plot summaries are provided as all the texts are currently available (and four of them still distributed in print) in the United Kingdom.

The thesis is, however, hostile to two positions and these are easily mentioned. Firstly, I am proceeding against the notion that genre is the most important question in the long poem. Since Poe's assertion in "The Poetic Principle" that the long poem is nothing but a "flat contradiction in terms mere *size*,"⁴⁴ commentators have found it easier to make generic statements based on hunches than actually to confront the material and semantic complexities of the texts themselves. My attempt to identify shared socio-spatial techniques at work in such poems is not a generic quest but simply a way for readers to "deal" with the difficulties of the long open form. Genre is "a vast decoy," as Dorn's *Gunslinger* would say.

Secondly, since the contemporary long poem is synonymous with theory, experimentation and polysemy, I am writing against all anti-theoretical and anti-experimental conceptions of it as some kind of unifying moral yardstick for society. The Sebastian Barker and William Oxley manifesto of 16 Sept. 1994 is a prime example of this approach which can only be called neo-Georgian:

However, the group will mostly rule out experimentalist conceptions of the epic or long poem since it believes these are unlikely to contribute to the further development of this tradition in any particularly significant manner. The group believes this is because, far from addressing such central problems as narrative method, the use of imagery, characterization, and a coherent structure, such works no longer advance our understanding of the historic practice. To continue in such moulds, therefore, inevitably obscures and devalues the means by which we build up a belief in the meaning of the communal or individual experience to be communicated. (Barker and Oxley)⁴⁵

Each sentence of this "Statement of Group's Criteria" is the polar opposite to the position from which I set out — which is what makes anti-

matter so quotable when situating the real matter at hand.

Therefore, in order to demonstrate the importance the long poem attaches to the regional theorization of social space, a contrasting geographical approach has been taken to each individual text. Chapter 1 makes a Lefebvrian "triadic" reading of Kamau Brathwaite's *Mother Poem*, *Sun Poem*, and *X/Self* through social geography. Chapter 2 converts Chris Fitter's "matrices of landscape perception" into a cultural geography for Walcott's *Another Life*. Chapter 3 uses the geography of consumption to make a touristic and Parmenidean reading of Dorn's *Gunslinger*. Chapter 4 uses contextual theory and time-geography to interpret Howe's *Pythagorean Silence*. Chapter 5 traduces geographical theories of "non-place" and "placelessness" in order to explore Kroetsch's *Completed Field Notes*. Finally, chapter 6 treats Marlatt's *Steveston* as a feminist geography and as a Geographical Information System.

PART I

CARIBBEAN SPATIAL PRACTICE

Introduction to Part I

There is a natural tendency, as illogical as it is appealing, to equate long poems with large spaces. It is somehow as if the size of the physical space to be mapped has determined the expanse of text required. An epic poem must be written from an epic geography. How else could it assume its epic (or even pseudo-epic) proportions? But at twenty-one miles by fourteen, Barbados is no bigger than the Isle of Wight and St. Lucia only slightly larger.¹ Yet from these two West Indian islands — respectively a British Commonwealth sovereignty and an independent island state — four long poems of truly international status have sprung in the last thirty years. Derek Walcott's *Omeros* won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1990 and Kamau Brathwaite's *The Arrivants* led to a Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship in 1972. Both poems changed the course of postcolonial literature and, to a lesser extent, the course of the English language itself. Ironically, however, both poets also wrote more accomplished long poems — and these harder texts, less prized by society, are the subject of Part I.

At a hundred and fifty pages, *Another Life* is under half the length of *Omeros*, but took Walcott twice as long to write (1965-1972). At three hundred and fifty pages in length, Brathwaite's "Second New World Trilogy"² was never published in one volume like *The Arrivants*, but again took an incomparable time and effort to complete (1972-1987). Together, they put paid to the long-poem-equals-large-space analogy; individually, they destroy the assumption that the Caribbean islands are "all the same anyway." Whereas *Another Life* preceded *Omeros* by almost two decades and is written in a late-Modernist free verse, *Mother Poem*, *Sun Poem* and *X/Self* commenced publication nine years after the first *New World Trilogy* and are all composed in the "nation language" of Bajan performance poetry. Two very different strategies of "writing back from empire"³ are thus in operation.

Chapter 1 works in three ways. First and foremost, it introduces the thinking of Henri Lefebvre, whose ideas concerning the "production of space" are as axial to the chapter as they are to the spatial materialism of the thesis as a whole. Second, by converting Lefebvre's "conceptual triad" into an interpretive strategy, it makes a reading of

the spatial practices at work in each volume of Brathwaite's "Second New World Trilogy." Lastly, by weighing the results of this process in which the long poem is subjected to a "trial by space,"⁴ it levers the first of the six choropoetic spokes into place.

Section 1.1 opens in response to Lefebvre's key question about the representation of social space: "What texts can be considered special enough to provide the basis for a 'textual' analysis?" In attempting to answer Lefebvre, I argue not only that the long poem occupies this position, but that Brathwaite's "Second New World Trilogy" is an enunciation which bridges the gap between "real" and "ideal" space. I suggest that it does this firstly by monitoring the quantity and quality of the material space (re)produced and secondly by analysing the social methodology through which this space is authorized. The trilogy reproduces and "re-appropriates" the power relationships of that space in the form of a poetic enunciation. It is also argued that Lefebvre's three "moments" of space — "spatial practice," "representations of space" and "representational space" — have a key role to play in the long poem's quest to reach the "truth of space." In justifying the theoretical relevance of this new, Lefebvrian reading practice, I finally move that we think of it as follows: Brathwaite's "Second Trilogy," like all long poems, "gives utterance" to the spatial relations which a society creates in its own regional reproduction of socio-material space.

Mother Poem (1.2) is broached according to Lefebvre's first moment of the triad, his narrower, inaugural definition of "spatial practice." This is the realm of "perceived" space and the reading of *Mother Poem* I outline accords with Lefebvre's pronouncement that "space is listened for, in fact, before it is seen, and heard before it comes into view" (*PS* 199-200). The linguistic and performative attributes of the space produced by the Bajan chorophyle on the one hand, and by Brathwaite on the other, are therefore addressed together as a "soundscape."⁵ This sounding-out of Antillean space is linguistically and materially grounded through Brathwaite's employment of four chorological practices: "nation language;" "environmental expression;" "nommo;" and "groundation." The consequences of these regional strategies for the reproduction and reinscription of social space are traced and related to the postcolonial strategy of re-placing Standard English. That which resigns the Barbadian occupation of space in Brathwaite's text is his development of an extended poetics of "total expression."

Sun Poem (1.3) is read through the second moment of Lefebvre's triad, the "representation of space." This is the realm of social space as it is "conceived," space as it is relentlessly controlled by planners, urbanists and (as I argue) colonial powers. The Lefebvrian textual practice pressed into service identifies the dominant mode of production in social space and analyses how exactly that process is represented. In the case of *Sun Poem*, socio-material space is conceived, controlled and colonized by the forces which rule over the production and reproduction of sugar cane. Using statistical evidence from Havinden and Meredith's *Colonialism and Development*, *Sun Poem* is read as a site in which European powers of imperialism and capitalism wage a war for material space against Barbadian forces of independence and restitution. With his coining of the terms "dominated" and "appropriated" space, Lefebvre provides forceful theoretical tools for an analysis of this nature.

X/Self (1.4) is the final book of the trilogy and is approached through Lefebvre's final moment, "representational space." It continues to identify a human contest over the social production of space — the "beneficiaries of space" and "those deprived of space" — but we are now in Lefebvre's antagonistic "realm of the lived." At this point "place" is introduced for the first time through consideration of *X/Self's* use of imperial "traits and criteria" which effect "interchangeability upon places." I argue that this spatial practice sets up a concept of inversionary "x/placement" in which the locative attributes of fallen empires are pluralised and disempowered. "[T]rial by space" (*espace-en-procès*) is also seen to operate on the domestic scale of "dwelling" in *X/Self*: the Lefebvrian concept which is a necessary part of the chorological reading practice here is "counter-space." It is no coincidence that the climax of *X/Self* is entitled "The visibility trigger" since we learn that counter-space asserts itself "against the Eye and the Gaze." This section is the culmination of Brathwaite's spatial practices in the "Second Trilogy." The reader is faced with a choropoetics which fully "gives utterance" to the material production and reproduction of social space.

The final section of chapter 1 (1.5) summarizes and reconsiders the process of adapting Lefebvre's *Production of Space* into a chorological reading practice. Focusing on the difficulties experienced in analysing the long poem in such a way, I anticipate certain objections to spatial materialism and indicate some potentially useful spatial approaches which had to be sidelined in the study.

Chapter 2 posits landscape as the second core spatial practice of choropoetics. Whereas Lefebvre introduced a "triadic" concept in thinking about spatial practices, Chris Fitter outlines four "matrices of perception" which affect landscape sensibility. After a consideration of the main features of this approach — which involve "ecological," "cosmographical," "analogical" and "technoptic" readings of the landscape — the study of Walcott's long poem *Another Life* proceeds by categorizing these matrices into "natural" and "cultural" approaches to the text. Whereas sections 2.1 and 2.2 of the chapter maintain that "ecological" and "cosmographic" readings have affinities with the natural landscape, sections 2.3 and 2.4 make an "analogical" and "technoptic" reading of St. Lucia's cultural landscape. Although this is an expedient rather than a necessary categorization of Fitter's matrices, such streamlining is clearly beneficial for a textual practice adapted to read landscape representation in poetry.

Beginning with an analysis of "Homage to Gregorias," section 2.1 seeks to determine whether the "ecological" perception of landscape sensibility gives rise to an "open" or a "closed" representation of the environment. By concentrating on the regional, bodily and visual relations which link subjects to their physical surroundings, arguments relating to Jay Appleton's "prospect" and "refuge" potential of the natural landscape are brought to bear on the poem. Through readings of the vegetation, the climate, and the horizon in *Another Life*, I aim to demonstrate that the ecological drive is essential to the spatial configuration of Walcott's long poem.

Section 2.2 of the chapter addresses the natural landscape of *Another Life* according to the "cosmographic" matrix. This second trans-historical drive reads the island landscape of St. Lucia in relation to wider religious and philosophical questions about the structure of the universe. It seeks, moreover, to assess the "level of system consciousness" at work in the text. The cosmographic awareness of the regional landscape is evidenced in relation to three further concepts: the "animistic, the rational-geometric and the Christian anagogic" modes. All four books of *Another Life* are read under this heading in order to diagnose the forces at work between these three historical influences on landscape perception. Book One addresses the decline of rationalism through a "sawing" of the old colonial symmetries (a rational-geometric cosmography). Book Two suggests it is animism that lies behind the mask of indifference which nature adopts (animistic cosmography). Book Three exhibits Biblical parallels and links the apocalyptic landscape to Cesar

Vallejo's epigraph to this part of the poem (*AL* 81). Book Four explores time as part of cosmography, and leads to a synopsis of the landscape practices on offer.

In moving from the natural to the cultural landscape in *Another Life*, section 2.3 sees the "analogical" matrix making metaphorical and iconographic investments in "symbolically appropriate locales." This section addresses questions relating to the treatment of the landscape as a text, and the extent to which other discourses are implicated and used in such a choropoetic practice. The work of the "new landscape school" and of Denis Cosgrove in particular is employed here to justify such a stance and seascapes become an important focus for this approach. Towards the end of the "analogical" emphasis on the cultural landscape, I argue that *Another Life* exemplifies what Cosgrove calls a "residual" landscape in comparison to alternative definitions termed "dominant," "emergent" and "excluded" terrains.

The "technoptic" perception of the landscape (section 2.4) depends upon the identification and critical appraisal of "reusable spatial topoi." These are the spatial tropes which have historically been associated with the extended poetic form (the epic, the quest narrative, the *langes Gedichte*⁶ and so on). In making the case that these spatial *topoi* are still in significant use by the contemporary long poem, *Another Life* is compared to one of the most important long poems of the late-eighteenth-century, *The Landscape*, by Richard Payne Knight. Ann Bermingham's reading of this text as a political landscape is considered in relation to the Berkeley School of cultural geography: Carl Sauer's early-twentieth-century "morphological" landscape comes into play. Walcott's long poem is held to exhibit a strong, albeit differential, use of the list (*peritopos*) the travelogue (*peripateia*) and the amenable or pleasant place (*locus amoenus*), tropes recognisable since the *Odyssey* and before. I maintain that the last of these categories — which reads the *locus felix* and *locus vilis* components of *Another Life* against those of Knight's picturesque aesthetic — to be particularly helpful in determining the level of landscape awareness exhibited by the spatial practices of long poems.

In the concluding section (2.5), landscape choropoetics — the practice of making a local effort to write the natural and cultural elements of the region into the form of a long poem — is proposed as the second spatial complex that any chorological reading must address.

CHAPTER 1

Productive Choropoetics: The Production of Space in Edward Kamau Brathwaite's "Second New World Trilogy"

1.1 The Lefebvrian Triad

1.2 *Mother Poem*: Spatial Practice and the Perceived Moment

Nation Language

Environmental Expression

Nommo

Groundation

1.3 *Sun Poem*: Representations of Space and the Conceived Moment

Caned Space

Dominated and Appropriated Space

1.4 *X/Self*: Representational Space and the Lived Moment

Counter-Space

1.5 Productive Choropoetics: Summary

and from this tennament this sipple spider space we hold
we make this narrow thread of silver spin the long time of sand

(Brathwaite, *X/Self* 101)

1.1 The Lefebvorean Triad

What about literature? Clearly literary authors have written much of relevance, especially descriptions of places and sites. But what criteria would make certain texts more relevant than others? . . .

The problem is that any search for space in literary texts will find it everywhere and in every guise: enclosed, described, projected, dreamt of, speculated about. What texts can be considered special enough to provide the basis for a 'textual' analysis? (*PS* 14-15)

Lefebvre poses this tantalising question about literature after rejecting philosophy and just before rejecting architecture as possible starting-points for bridging the gap between "ideal" ("logico-mathematical") and "real" (socially practical) space, in his opening chapter, "Plan of the Present Work." He suggests that the problem with using literature as the mediator to span this impossible chasm is one of mimetic excess. There will be simply too much discussion and representation of space and place in literature to be of any precise use. He asks, explicitly, what criteria we might use to affirm that "certain texts are more relevant than others". Fortunately, however, the next four hundred pages are spent providing the criteria for us in answer to this conundrum by keenly assembling an array of spatial tools with which to test our literary suspicions. So extensive and compelling are the strategies which follow the "Plan of the Present Work" that in this context it is defensible to engage Lefebvre on his own terms. If a group of texts will stand up well in the face of a Lefebvorean critical analysis, they will be judged to have been useful in closing the gap between ideality and reality not in spite of, but precisely because of the fact that this is Lefebvre's own aim on a larger scale. Far from begging the question as to why we might choose the contemporary long poem in English as "special enough to provide the basis for a 'textual' analysis," it is *The Production of Space* itself which provides the answers to the riddle.

What Lefebvre accomplishes as "some intrepid funambulist" setting "off to cross the void, giving a great show and sending a delightful shudder through the onlookers" (*PS* 6) in philosophical French prose, the long poem does equally well in poetry: whereas the former achieves its goal by explanation, the latter operates by demonstration. The former actuates, the latter acts out. Neither project aims "to produce a (or *the*) discourse on space, but rather to expose the actual production of space by bringing the various kinds of space and the modalities of their

genesis together within a single theory" (PS 16). The long poem is persistently theoretical, and the theorizing it deals in is a poetic dramatization of the material dynamics of socialized space.

The first questions we must ask are obvious. To which of Lefebvre's renowned "conceptual triad" does the long poem belong and where do we look for evidence of its operation in Brathwaite? Let us remind ourselves of Lefebvre's three foundational positions to which he returns us time and again in order to prove that "(Social) space is a (social) product" (PS 26):

1 *Spatial practice* The spatial practice of a society secretes that society's space; it propounds and presupposes it, in a dialectical interaction; it produces it slowly and surely as it masters and appropriates it. From the analytic standpoint, the spatial practice of a society is revealed through the deciphering of its space. . .

2 *Representations of space:* conceptualized space, the space of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers and social engineers, as of a certain type of artist with a scientific bent — all of whom identify what is lived and what is perceived with what is conceived. . . .

3 *Representational spaces:* space as directly *lived* through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of 'inhabitants' and 'users,' but also of some artists and perhaps of those, such as a few writers and philosophers, who *describe* and aspire to do no more than describe. This is the dominated — and hence passively experienced — space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate. (Lefebvre, PS 38-39)

These three categories of spatial interaction become respectively present to the individual subject as the "perceived-conceived-lived triad", or, in reverse order, as the "lived, conceived and perceived realms" (PS 40). The "perception" of spatial practice involves us in deciphering the social production and reproduction of space; the "conception" of representations of space removes us to the intellectual contemplation and scientific planning (civil engineering, urban planning and so on) of space, tending towards verbal sign systems, and making special use of understanding (*connaissance*) and ideology; finally the domain of the "lived" sees representational spaces as symbolically charged images and tends towards "systems of non-verbal symbols and signs," favouring a historical overview. Lefebvre is careful to warn us of certain dangers: we are dealing with a triad, not a dualism; we cannot afford to use the above as a "model," but must endow it with practical application; and we are bound to recognise that ideology is always spatial (spatiality being not

necessarily ideological). Furthermore, we are drawn to conclude that for the triadic theory to hold, all spaces at all times must be able to be subjected to these categories of spatial organization. Barbados — *las barbadas*¹ — provides as good a geographical location as any to test these premises with regard to our chosen textual genre.

Lefebvre's ongoing claim throughout *The Production of Space* is that "every society . . . produces a space, its own space" (PS 31). My own claim is that the contemporary long poem is a textual poetic enunciation whose function is one of interpreting the social methodology, quantity and quality of that space produced. The interpretation the choropoetic text makes proceeds in such a way that the perennial duration of its genesis (exceptionally rare in other literary forms) must be seen as a time-geographical study. The contemporary long poem, as the title of Robert Kroetsch's offering, *Completed Field Notes*, suggests, is literally a text created "in the field,"² that is, as a kind of field-work report, written up in open form in an attempt to summarize the power relationships between Lefebvre's triad: spatial practices, the representation of space and representational spaces. The resulting complex which is enunciated in final poetic form, is only final in the sense that the time allotted to the survey is over. A complete sense of semantic closure is therefore impossible in the contemporary long poem because the informational data of space runs on regardless of whether it is still being textually recorded or not.

The material relationship between Lefebvre's "conceptual triad" or three "moments of space" — the power relations invested in the domination or appropriation of any one over the other two — are explored and acted out in the extended poetic form. The choice of which type of open verse form to utilize in this interpretation of the space produced by a society depends on the terrain involved. The choropoetic code must be cut according to the cloth. The depth or intractability of the code, a depth which we see in operation throughout Brathwaite's chorological interpretation of Barbadian space with his programmatic reinscription of linguistic registers, is selected along a continuum of semantic closure in response to only one thing: the perilous potency of the currently operative power relations at work in the fabric of socially produced space.

If real censorship and political danger is involved in the enunciation of spatial power relations between the three moments, a relatively heavy poetic code will be utilized bringing many cloaking and

veiling devices into play; these might include, for example, extensive troping, textual annotation or commentary, innovatory experimentation, highly metaphorical, metonymical or figurative language, a strong presence of ellipsis, rhythmical, syntactical or typological irregularities and so on. If, on the other hand, the spatio-temporal conditions are more favourable and less threatening at the time of writing, a more referential poetics may be used. Thus the chorophyle of a society, composed as stated earlier from a set-towards-space which includes the psychological, the material, the social and the temporal environment, determines the level of semantic closure, or "openness" required in the contemporary long poem. This also accounts for the large variation in referentiality between different sections of the same poem, since the enunciative duration of the text is likely to be years rather than weeks, with the mobile chorophyle updating, recasting and editing itself *in perpetuum*.

Whether we as inhabitants and "users" of space are conscious or unconscious of these power relations is one of the main social questions Lefebvre asks. His answer seals the current project: it is of no importance, both "yes" and "no"; the only real necessity is that the spatial relationships produced by society be given utterance:

Are these moments and their interconnections in fact conscious? Yes — but at the same time they are disregarded or misconstrued. Can they be described as 'unconscious'? Yes again, because they are generally unknown, and because analysis is able — though not always without error — to rescue them from obscurity. The fact is, however, that *these relationships have always had to be given utterance*, which is not the same thing as being known — even 'unconsciously.' (Lefebvre, *PS* 46, emphasis added)

With its distinctive highlighting of the spatial over the temporal, one of the defining characteristic of choropoetics, it is clear that this ideologically spatial "utterance," this mediator between the abstract and the real, is the long poem.

1.2 *Mother Poem*: Spatial Practice and the Perceived Moment

Linking back to the definition of this primary moment once again, we are reminded that the term delineates only two fundamental areas of study: firstly that spatial practice entails society's material production of space, in this case plantation space, which, as quoted above, "it produces . . .

slowly and surely"; and secondly, that "the spatial practice of a society is revealed through the deciphering of its space," that is, through a continual awareness of our modes of spatial perception. Indeed, contrary to contemporary academic usage, the economic production and reproduction of space and the perception of socialized space are the only two areas properly germane to the term "spatial practice" as it is used in the present inquiry.

A second proviso: even supposing that we can see a cognitive link between language and perception, what right do we have to equate this very narrow definition of spatial practice with linguistics, and to risk starting our whole project of choropoetics here? Back to Lefebvre: "[s]patial practice ensures continuity and some degree of cohesion. In terms of social space, and of each member of a given society's relationship to that space, this cohesion implies a guaranteed level of *competence* and a specific level of *performance*" (PS 33). Lefebvre's footnote to this passage makes explicit his Chomskyan use of "competence" and "performance" and serves to link spatial practice to linguistics: "[t]hese terms are borrowed from Noam Chomsky, but this should not be taken as implying any subordination of the theory of space to linguistics" (PS 33). The footnote witnesses Lefebvre himself recognizing and cutting short the possible danger that his theory of space might be seen as subordinate to theories of linguistics: it provides the initial suggestion that the speech act itself is fatally implicated in the material ideologies of spatial practice.

With these initial parameters set, treating spatial practice purely in the sense of Lefebvre's first moment, it is to the "logos" of chorology, the logos which carries and focalizes perception in the long poem, that the study now turns: "and don't try to learn their landridge: teach them spanglish / preach them rum" (SP 49).

Mother Poem (1977), a "nation language" poem in which Brathwaite personifies the geological "porous limestone" history of "my mother, Barbados" (MP preface) exhibits the profile of the Barbadian chorophyle in a number of ways. This will be explored with reference to the linguistic space of the poem as challenges to standard English are made. As the first book of the trilogy, it provides a descriptive geography of the land on which the whole poem rests, a telluric base of female gender which owes much to the Modernist ideal of poet as prophetic voice.

Mother Poem is written in four parts. "Rock Seed," where "to loss dis space / is to lay down dead" (MP 28) charts the now dry territory

and dryer "Chalkstick" education of the island in which "we find my mother having to define her home as plot of ground — the little she can win and own."³ "Nightwash" places a voodoo curse on the colonizers of this "tilted cracked fragmented landscape" (MP 41). "Tuk," a Bajan masquerade, satirizes the Jamaican slave narrative of the twelve-year-old Ann, merely a "*becky-face nigga*" or "*senseh-head*" (MP 71, 73) who is sold into Judge Jackson's family from the auction block and beaten with a "supple-jack" (MP 121). Finally, "Koumfort" a "space that the hands shape, koumforts" (MP 112) which retells the Bridgetown uprisings of 1966 from a local perspective and finally brings rain in the form of Barbadian independence from British colonial rule.

Nation Language

We also have what is called *nation language*, which is the kind of English spoken by the people who were brought to the Caribbean, not the official English now, but the language of slaves and labourers, the servants who were brought in by the conquistadors. (Brathwaite, R 260)

we are in the very ancient dawn of nation language, and to be able to come to terms with oral literature at all our critics must be able to understand the complex forces that have led to this classical expression . . . (R 298)

The above quotations are taken from Brathwaite's most influential and often cited essay, "History of the Voice"⁴ in which the relationship between the different forms of spoken English in the Caribbean are traced back through their ancestral forms to show the exceptionally rich and heterogeneous development of "nation language," a living example of what is later in his lecture termed "total expression." Total expression works in resistance and opposition to the term "dialect" which is derided as the language of "caricature" and which "carries very pejorative overtones" (R 266). The form provided so expansively for nation language by the long poem seems the ideal recognition that, "total expression comes about because people live in the open air, because people live in conditions of poverty, because people come from a historical experience where they had to rely on their own breath patterns" (R 273).

What, then, is the relationship between nation language and the iambic "protestant pentecostalism" of received pronunciation with which English versification is literally more "at home"? One way of answering

this is to concentrate on the rhythmical quality of the sound itself and we are instructed to remember that "Nation language . . . may be in English, but often it is an English which is like a howl, or a shout, or a machine-gun, or the wind, or a wave. It is also like the blues" (*R* 266). It is perhaps no coincidence that this short quotation itself contains the titles of two other contemporary long poems, Allen Ginsberg's renowned beatnik *Howl* (1956) and John Ashbery's reflective, *A Wave* (1983), further indicating the aged but irrepressible link between oral tradition and recent choropoetics.

"History of the Voice" is typical of Brathwaite in its encyclopedic approach, its excessive annotation, its urgent drive for clarity and its heavy use of intertextual quotation and oral fragments to support the overall presentation. The influence of kumina, shango, kaiso, carnival, calypso, reggae, and "Trinidadian nation forms like *grand charge, picong, robber talk*, and so on . . ." (*R* 282) are all mentioned as essential background participants in total expression with the proviso that,

A full presentation of nation language would, of course, include more traditional (ancestral/oral) material (e.g. shango, *anansesem*, Spiritual [Aladura] Baptist services, grounnations, yard theatres, ring games, tea-meeting speeches, etc., none of which I've included here) (Brathwaite, *R* 303, parentheses original)

Likewise the languages of the original inhabitants of the island are not omitted, the ancestral "Amerindian people, Taino, Siboney, Carib, Arawak" nor yet are the arriving tribal languages of the "new labour bodies . . . the labour on the edge of the *slave* trade winds . . . the labour on the edge of West Africa . . . of Ashanti, Congo, Nigeria" (*R* 261). The question of creolization and the adaptation not only of standard English, but also of the other three imperial vernaculars, French, Dutch and Spanish is also covered as are the Chinese, Hindu and East Indian oral heritages insurgent from the Asian and Oriental diaspora to the Caribbean. Quotation ranges from the reggae dub of The Mighty Sparrow through Bongo Jerry, John Figueroa, Imogene Kennedy, Jimmy Cliff, Oku Onoura and Michael Smith to Linton Kwesi Johnson and Bob Marley.

So extensive and convincing is a "History of the Voice" as an assemblage of Barbadian folk tradition and "Bajan country speech" with the Modernist free verse forms of Eliot and the pentameter-breaking theories of Pound and the Imagists⁵ that the reader is left with only two

feelings: awe that this kind of poetry can be written and amazement that any world language has been left out.

Environmental Expression

In the context of this particular study, however, there are two repeated phrases in the lecture which are of paramount significance, "environmental experience" and "environmental expression":

The hurricane does not roar in pentameter. And that's the problem: how do you get a rhythm that approximates the natural experience, the environmental experience. (Brathwaite, *R* 265)

And you can see how the Caribbean poets introduced here have been influenced by him [T.S.Eliot], although they eventually went on to create their own environmental expression. (*R* 287)

One thing is clear: the important thing to Brathwaite and to Caribbean writers in general, is that the unique "natural experience" of the environment be expressed in their poetry by finding a characteristic rhythm, a bespoke "'riddmic' aspect" (*R* 290). So already from the prose writing, a link is made between rhythm and the environment, and we are led to expect that a reading which moves between poetry and geography could be powerful.

But even having studied Brathwaite's hundred or so articles on Caribbean history and literature, published over forty years in periodicals like *Daedalus*, the *Caribbean Quarterly*, *Bim* and *Savacou*, nothing could quite prepare a reader fully for a textual encounter with the kind of "submerged" linguistic space which Brathwaite is opening up on his own Antillean ground in *Mother Poem*, truly a text which begins "to disclose the complexity that is possible with nation language" (*R* 273).

Many postcolonial critics have spoken of the importance of "naming" and of finding a new language more suited to challenging the received history of a land, a narrative always presented in standard or Queen's English. Others have recognized the way in which developing world writers open up a linguistic space which was previously non-existent or culturally latent in order to recast or retell histories of nationhood countering the imperial centre.⁶ Certainly this has become a

standard initial feature or claim with which studies of such anti-colonial and postcolonial texts are often seen to commence to the extent that the phrase "opens a new linguistic space" has become a rather suspect requirement for all and sundry postcolonial approaches. In reality what often follows this modish claim is a half-hearted attempt to overstate the case for a linguistic inventiveness which is little more than elision, register-shifting or slightly unusual syntactical alignment. Genuine poetic innovation and space-clearing, on the other hand, needs neither introduction nor apology as its "sound explosion" simply blows the "scholastic education" of "Clarendon syllables"⁷ away:

9

*but me head hard ogrady
an me doan give a damn*

*me back to me belly
an me dun dead a'ready*

*back to back belly to belly
dun dung dead in de grounn*

but he never know what me
main

an

e

nomminit
nomminit
nomminit

10

an

e

nomminit
nomminit
nomminit

an

e

nomminit
nomminit
nomminit

lame me black
lame me blue
lame me poopapadoo

lame me nig
lame me nog
lame me boobabaloo (MP 64)

an

e

nomminit
nomminit
nomminit

but e nevver maim what me
mudda me name
an e nevver nyam what me
mane

11

*back to back belly to belly
uh doan give a damm.*

uh dun dead a'ready

*back to back belly to belly
dun dung dead in de grounn...*

Parts nine to eleven of the sequence entitled "Nametracks" are accurately reproduced here in full as they appear on the page in their distinctive twin column figuration. They will be used extensively in the course of this chapter since they contain much important thinking that illustrates the whole work. Composing the final lines of the second book of *Mother Poem*, "Nightwash", they appear at the dead centre of the work. The two concrete verticals of the text are peculiar to "Nametracks" alone and enact on the page Albert Memmi's dialectical struggle between colonizer and colonized for the same dominance of voice which the text outlines substantively. It is both plantation worksong (secular soul litany), chantwell and kaiso (calypso) in intonational form, a sound poem drawing heavily on the oral tradition of nation language, but still a free verse concrete poem indebted to Modernist experimentation, using typological space on the page and alternation between italic and Roman font to reproduce the repetitive "riddmic" cadences so typical of West Indian musical syncopation.

Such textual innovation is ideally suited to and an essential part of the modern long poem which is perpetually committed to making "many beginnings" in order, ultimately, to deny Death himself, and will be explored further in the Canadian context (chapter 5). In this case, however, the apparent free-form spontaneity has its roots in jazz improvisation (later in ska and rap) and in the dance movements made by the physical body in response. Brathwaite was really the first to identify this "trans/fusing" trend in Caribbean literature which has since become a well-trodden path in the semantic analysis of West Indian poetic and musical texts.⁸ In both poetry and song, of course, it is the breath which unites and binds rhythm and bodily movement together, an observation made nowhere more succinctly than by Bunting in his 1970 lecture at the University of British Columbia: "our bodies make their own music whenever we move . . . the more or less inarticulate grunts and shellocks that the vigour of the dance forces from your lungs: which must be the first murmurings of poetry."⁹ This inner somatic space of the lungs is equally important to the Jamaican poet, Wilson Harris: "One must remember that *breath* is all the black man may have possessed at a certain stage in the Americas. He had lost his tribal tongue, he had lost everything but an abrupt area of space and lung."¹⁰ Writing in 1974, we could realistically expect Lefebvre to be left behind in analysis of the spatial politics of the body which in the eighties was to become, and to some extent remains, a burgeoning critical enterprise. Besides this, we

would need to find a way of joining the realm of the perceived to the language of the long poem, to Brathwaite's "auriture," to the "area of space and lung" occupied by the body as well as to the moment of spatial practice, for any headway to be made at this stage. Does Lefebvre's spatial practice provide any operative help at the level of the individual body's cycle from breath to lung to mouth to poetry to ear?

. . . the hearing plays a decisive role in the lateralization of perceived space. Space is listened for, in fact, as much as seen, and heard before it comes into view. The perceptions of one ear differ from those the other. . . . The hearing thus plays a mediating role between the spatial body and the localization of bodies outside it. . . . Hearing-disturbances, likewise, are accompanied by disturbances in lateralization in the perception of both external and internal space. (Lefebvre, *PS* 199-200)

According to Lefebvre, then, both the outer and inner ear are "decisive" in our perception of space, so that hearing "plays a mediating role" in our orientation, both locationally and laterally. Brathwaite's extraordinary trans/fusion of musical forms into poetic ones, not to mention his own explicit recognition of inner space, "there's a space in your head where your eyes / were" (*XS* 46) therefore has a profound impact on the hearer's balance, orientation and perception. It follows that changes in the poem's rhythm and beat between sections — changes which need the long poem form in which to establish themselves — produce changes in our perception of space when performed aloud. Any unexpected loud noise disorients and Brathwaite legitimately describes his and others' total expression in terms of "roaring" and the "sound explosion"; again, "space is listened for . . . as much as seen, and heard before it comes into view."

That there should be this immense cross-fertilisation between musical lyric and poetic lyric (and such a close creolisation in operation between the two) squares the ancient circle in a most interesting and explosive way. For this is surely a return to a parallel which the Athenians knew well: that the graphing of dance and lyric through space is part and parcel of the graphing of space itself. The great choreographers have also been great chorographers and the contemporary long poem is indeed a lyrical score for dance as even canonical titles have testified from Berryman's *Dream Songs*, through Eliot's *Four Quartets* to Pound's *Cantos*. The "Sun" of *Sun Poem*, Brathwaite's second book of this trilogy, is actually a "SON", an "Afro-

Cuban folksong form" as well as a ritual sun-dance. A full study of the complex linkages between Caribbean choreography and chorography would be a lengthy undertaking and cannot be adequately rehearsed here, but it is meaningful to recognise that the chorus/chora connection is a constitutive part of the Barbadian chorophyle because it articulates space, dance and lyric through a temporal duration which can only be provided by the extended poetic form. The oppositional call/response cast of the narrative is further evidenced by the dramatic presentation of the singular voice of the solo artist (part 10) as it plays its taunting provocation against the multivocal scream of the chorus (parts 9, 11).

Isocolonic repetition, onomatopoeic neologisation, concrete chiasmus, and extensive half-homonymical punning are the dominant tropes which together lend to the explosive lyricism of this unique style a stable but apparently spontaneous structure. So obviously more than the polite "space-clearing" of postcolonial academe, Brathwaite sends whole swathes of linguistic territory back to empire in this virtuoso performance of rhythm and blues. The divide and conquer of the imperial sonneteers has been replaced by the slash and burn of total expression.

Nommo

The naming process lies at the heart of the above quotation in particular and to understand the passage fully in terms of linguistic space, it is necessary to understand the nation language concept of "Nommo." For this I am using Brathwaite's long essay "The African Presence in Caribbean Literature"¹¹ written between 1970 and 1973 since it provides the clearest explanation of the cultural reference behind the technique. Again I want to underline the fact that this is a specifically placial concern relating to the Barbadian chorophyle and to Brathwaite's insistence in writing poetry that is appropriate to the environmental experience: "[w]hat I am saying is that the choice of word (nommo) dealing with experience in and out of the hounfort, must be appropriate to the place and the experience" (*R* 227).

"Nametracks" as the title itself suggests, links the ideas of linguistics and naming with those of tracking and leaving a ground-trail through space. This is evident in the way the text trails down the page swerving from side to side but also in the difficulty faced by the "ogradey" figure to name the slave poet. In fact, in the movement of the

punning and repetitious letter-swapping it is as much, perhaps, nametricks as nametracks. Again we can read close parallels with the characters in the long poems which follow this study. Ed Dorn's *Gunslinger* faces exactly the same fear of being "described" in Book One of his eponymous poem, "Are you trying / to "describe" me, boy?" (G 25) while the Canadian Trickster figure in *Completed Field Notes* connects us to an acknowledged but hidden and unnameable Arcadian mythology. However, whereas Kroetsch and Dorn see their task as one of unnamings and whilst Walcott is on record in many places for his project of initiating an "Adamic naming,"¹² Brathwaite deals almost exclusively with the powers and dangers involved in the process itself of re-naming, a process which is ever subject to variform strategies of veiling, disclosing, doubling and secreting to which the contemporary long poem is both particularly suited and justly renowned. Coming full circle, the whole concept of renown or fame is itself linked to the idea of reiterating or re-sounding a name, thus for example the French word for famous, *renommé*, the 're-named.'

Brathwaite, too, recognizes the internationalism of this power of language, a power which in the West is very much in question today, having gradually replaced an oral tradition or "auriture" with a scriptural one, "écriture." Even erring on the side of caution, it is true to say that the growing recognition of the denotative inefficacy of the word has been a twentieth-century phenomenon. Significantly, in "The African presence in Caribbean literature," Brathwaite asserts that "a certain kind of concern for an attitude to the *word*, the atomic core of language. . . . is something that is very much present in all folk cultures, all pre-literate, pre-industrial societies" (R 236). It would be fair to say that in his desire to resubmit to us the full pre-existing Benjaminian aura of the Word as Sign, Brathwaite follows a long line of Modernist poets and proves himself to be the only true Modernist (albeit a late Caribbean Modernism) of this thesis. We think of Eliot's "that is not what I meant at all," of Pound's "it coheres all right / even if my notes do not cohere," of Beckett's "I can't go on, I'll go on," of H.D.'s "undecipherable script," and above all, perhaps, of David Jones's life-long "utile" project to lift up valid signs, "things that somehow are redeemed."¹³ Such recognition of the failure of language to signify, of the poem, literally, to mean, at the risk of over-reading *Mother Poem*, is nevertheless part and parcel of Brathwaite's own poetic use of "nam" "nyam", "nomminit" and of the whole African, Bantu concept of "nommo."

We learn that "[t]he word (*nommo* or name) is held to contain secret, power. . .":

People feel a name is so important that a change in his name could transform a person's life. In traditional society, in fact, people often try to hide their names. That is why a Nigerian, for example, has so many names. Not only is it difficult to remember them, it is difficult to know which is the name that the man regards or identifies as his *nam*. If you call the wrong name you can't damage him. Rumpelstiltskin in the German fable and Shemo-limmo in the Jamaican tale are other examples of this. (Brathwaite, *R* 236-37)

The importance of the poetic quotation I have chosen from "Nightwash" can now be recognized. If the colonizer of empire, personified in the figure of O'Grady, to whom the piece is addressed, can be prevented from naming the poet by his own name, the "maim what me / mudda me name", then he can be linguistically and culturally outwitted by the Bajan nation-language adoption of ancient African ritual. No matter how hard O'Grady tries to beat the slave-poet into submission (notice the play on maim/name), his identity is veiled, hidden, secure. The note on the word "nomminit", typical of Brathwaite's notes in its tone of bare understatement and in that it only partially decodes the liturgical secrets of his text for fear of neocolonial entrapment, runs as follows:

p.64, l. 9. nomminit: nation-language sound/word for 'cultural domination', literally 'the gobbling up of the (other's) name.'
(Brathwaite, *MP* 121)

Similarly, the note for "nam" itself is quoted below, since it demonstrates the wordplay techniques which underlie and inform the whole trilogy and, again, is symptomatic of the kind of annotation which we must learn to read not just as explication and commentary, but as an integral part of the poetic text itself:

p.62, l. 8. nam: secret name, soul-source, connected with nyam (eat), yam (root food), nyame (name of god). Nam is the heart of our *nation-language* which comes into conflict with the cultural imperial authority of Prospero (O'Grady), pp.58-64.
(Brathwaite, *MP* 121)

Jumping forward, briefly, to the notes for *X/Self*, we should compare this definition with another explanation of "nam" which again stresses the

political implications of the word in relation to its colonial past, a whole new frame of reference being carried along in the same three letters.

Nam (the title of the poem and word used throughout the work) means not only *soul/atom* but *indestructible self/sense of culture under crisis*. Its meaning involves root words from many cultures (meaning 'soul'; but also (for me) *man* in disguise (*man* spelled backwards)); and the *main* or *mane* of *name* after the weak *e* or tail has been eaten by the conquistador; leaving life (*a/alpha*) protected by the boulder consonants *n* and *m*. In its future, *nam* is capable of atomic explosion: *nam...dynamo...dynamite* and apotheosis: *nam...nyam...onyame...* (Brathwaite, *XS* 127)

The neologising tendency which gives rise in our example to "poopapadoo" and "boobabaloo" is again dependent on our knowledge of the "onomatopoeia and sound-symbols" of nommo in which "a kind of conjuration . . . the same magical/miracle tradition as the conjurman" means that "Vibrations awake at the centre of words" (*R* 238). The conjurman figure or "word see-er" of African descent becomes the poet of oral tradition and of performance poetry and in this respect Brathwaite reemphasises his Modernist hand. The belief that the poet could redeem or act as social prophet was a persistent theme of the European literary avant-garde throughout the twenties and thirties and in this way the second trilogy's linguistic space is seen to rewrite or reconfigure the history of empire not simply by replacing it with nation-language, but by infusing certain experimental principles of British Modernism with the environmental experience of the Barbadian set towards the word. The textscape of this long poem becomes a triage point between the British, Bajan, and African chorophyles.

Groundation

In his heavily annotated prose Brathwaite names thirteen common sound-symbol usages ranging from the short "pattoo" of the Asante owl to the mouthful, "barrabbattabbattabba" (*R* 238) of his own island. Such sound formations link cosmological or ritual space to a determinate geographical place through a "groundation" of the "loa", or, in translation, through an electrical earthing of the invoked spirit through the body of the poet to the ground. Accordingly parts nine and eleven — and by extrapolation the whole of the "Nightwash" episode — end with the word "grounn" in

the alliterative drumbeat epistrophe of "dun dung dead in de grounn." The see-er poet is earthing the spirit of nommo in the physical geography of Barbados. It is hard to imagine a more material example of the way in which poetry can be read as human geography than in the call/response performance of groundation: "[t]he overall space/patterns of this language, we might say, are controlled by a *groundation* tendency in which image/spirit is electrically conducted to earth like lightning or the loa (the gods, spirits, powers, or divine horsemen of vodun)" (R 243).

Groundation also demonstrates a concrete tendency relating to the spatial construction of the words on the page. It can only occur where there is a pause in the flow of the written text, or, put another way, there is always the white space of negativity (blank page space) following the positive charge of expression (black type). A natural break in the duration of the outpouring is experienced at these points and they provide ideal starting points for new or repeated "forward accumulating polyrhythm" (R 244). The narrators in the poem are engaged in "the rhetoric of yard quarrels, word-throwings, tea-meetings and preacher/political orations," no single one of which traditions is familiar to British shores. The invisible punctuation created by groundation in Brathwaite and other West Indian free verse is spatially unique to the Caribbean, can only be sensed with much practice in reading the poetry aloud, and provides the speaker or orator with a breathing space in counterpoint to the quickening pace and gathering inevitability of the poem's beat. It counters very obviously the Western tradition in versification of explicit visible punctuation to show the length of silences or hiatuses in the text, and again is only something that can be effectively used in poetry of considerable length. In order to get the intonation of the reading right, it is sometimes necessary to read the same passage a number of times, but such is Brathwaite's skill in the choreographing of his text that the reader's expertise and spatial awareness increases rapidly as a necessary aid to competent interpretation.

The following passage is taken from "Angel/Engine" (MP 97-103), the opening piece of the final section of *Mother Poem*, "Koumfort"; it represents the invocation of the spirit of Shango, god of lightning, as he is summoned to spark the fires of insurrection which will result in the revolutionary coup d'état and political independence of 1966. The latter are themselves forcefully described in the second section of Koumfort, "Peace fire." Shango is symbolized here as both horse and railway engine

in one, and joins Ogoun, the god of iron ("i:ron") in a piece which shows both the heavily dactylic cadences of calypso along with the responsorial groundation tendency of "road," "itch," "huh" and "hah." The sound of the horse's hooves becomes one with the noise of the engine's wheels on the rail track, "*bub-a-dups*" as the invocation builds to a tumultuous climax:

my head is a cross
is a cross-

road

who hant me
is red

who haunt me
is blue

is a man
is a moo
is a ton ton macou

is a coo
is a cow
is a cow-

itch

bub-a-dups
bub-a-dups
bub-a-dups

huh

bub-a-dups
bub-a-dups
bub-a-dups

hah

is a hearse
is a horse
is a horseman

is a trip
is a trick
is a seamless hiss

that does rattle these i:ron tracks (*MP 101-02*)

We are now in a stronger position to summarize Brathwaite's linguistic technique as it relates to the Barbadian chorophyle. We can see

that a true extent of genuine postcolonial linguistic space has been slashed and that standard English has been burned away. Although a radical rewriting of English has taken place and the vernacular vocabulary of the home counties replaced, it is surprisingly easy to visualise the coherent sequence of *poiesis* which is summarized below.

The performance poet-as-seer who cannot be named conjures up the loa or divine spirit required (Shango, Ogoun), becomes a conductor possessed by the Voice with the power of Word or nommo, is involved in a call/response ceremony with other initiates standing on sacred space, who then earths the vodun spirit (Haïtian ritual) through a bodily drum-beat syncopation of "riddmic" groundation. Rhythm and blues or ska and rap or chantwell or calypso musical forms are likely to be used in a nation-language (or jazz improvisational or Rastafarian jive) complex of Afro-Caribbean total expression.

It is precisely this potential for combining the latter different styles along with others mentioned earlier in the body of the long poem which constitutes its generic power. The temporal and spatial duration of the text means that competing musical rhythms and discourses can be endlessly attempted, juxtaposed and interwoven, thus giving rise to exactly that quality of spontaneity and innovation which so readily makes itself at home in the contemporary extended form. There need be no necessary loss of epic *gravitas* because of the unavoidable classical ballast with which all long poems are freighted. By recognizing the consequences of such points as these, real progress in coming to terms with the poetics of Brathwaite and his contemporaries can be made.

1.3 *Sun Poem*: Representations of Space and the Conceived Moment

"Representations of space," Lefebvre's second and central moment of the plan, is the realm of the "conceived," or, alternatively, of "conceptualized space, the space of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers and social engineers." Again it is not difficult to see how this very narrow term might be misunderstood or misapplied in more generalizing theories of text and culture. The scientific conception or mental mapping of how society's space is to be organized and distributed (perhaps through Althusser's repressive and ideological state apparatuses) is the only legitimate meaning of this term. What "representations of space" is not to be confused with is simply the

semiotic representation of space by any sign system. Although critical analysis of how long poems or any texts represent space is clearly a central issue to chorological criticism, it is only Lefebvre's scientific, social engineering of space which concerns us here. Furthermore, unfortunately, there must be no confusion with "representational space," the third moment of Lefebvre's plan, to which we shall shortly turn.

Where does *Sun Poem* engage with Lefebvre's second moment, "representations of space the dominant space in any society (or mode of production)" (*PS* 38-39)? This question could be answered in a variety of ways: it would be possible to concentrate, for example, on the transport network ("the sunday school bus," *SP* 41); the retail infrastructure ("canadian english apples," *SP* 89); the fishing trade ("flying fish," *SP* 23); or the tourist industry. In the case of these propositions, readings which extracted analyses of bus and train routes ("Hearse hill," *SP* 43-44), shop locations ("pharmacist," *SP* 66), harbour facilities ("browns beach," *SP* 11) and hotel/leisure accommodation ("the lodgers," *SP* 66) could all be made with some reasonable degree of accuracy from the narrative of the poem. Subsequently, the extent of their interaction upon one another could be charted in potentially interesting ways so that conclusions as to the type of spatial assemblies and conventions under operation in the Barbadian environment could be made. This in turn would promote a better knowledge of the Bajan chorophyle through the long poem since, as Lefebvre tells us, representations of space tend "towards a system of verbal (and therefore intellectually worked out) signs" (*PS* 39).

To use one or all of the above examples might well provide a respectable, if limited, collage of the "eye/land" conceptual space, the second "moment" of the triad, but as a full picture it would still be culpably lacking. Any chorological interpretation of the trilogy must deal first and foremost with the dominant regional mode of spatial production; seen from this aspect, the long poem at hand is about one commodity, and one spatial division of labour alone.

Caned Space

and a sugarcane sprouted
.....
and its owners shouted for their women to behold this sibilant
miracle (Brathwaite, *SP* 47)

remember us now in this sweat juiced jail
in this hail of cutlass splinters of cane (SP 53)

those mindless arch

itects that cut the cane (SP 61)

the plantation ground would not be a play-
ground for ever and we could never own that silver hush of cane
those lorries growling up the hill... (SP 70)

cutting flame all day in de
canefields (SP 77)

the cane/fields spinning slowly around him the whole
shape of the world stretching lazily out in the heat (SP 83)

watching the canefields groan (SP 92)

Just as sugar cane is the commodity which drives the production of social space in the physical and economic geographies of Barbados, cane also produces a space for itself within the overall textual space of the entire trilogy. To trace the significant movements of cane through the history of the island, its modes of production and reproduction, its colour, growth and symbolic capital, is to trace the history of the primary spatial practice which dominates and provides meaning for both human and animal populations of the island alike. The omnipresence of the living body of the plantation which is everywhere personified as "this / sibilant / miracle" which sweats, groans and stretches "lazily out in the heat" is only fully appreciated when read against the publication of Havinden and Meredith's recent statistical research. The latter's objective methodology splits all the global tropical colonies into four sub-groups according to their socio-economic structure and hence to their importance on the profit and loss ledger to London. Barbados is figured under the heading "old plantation colonies":

Thus we have the old plantation colonies, located mainly in the Caribbean, dominated by a small white-settler 'aristocracy' of plantation owners, and a large work force of ex-slaves of African descent. Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad were the largest and most important of these. Some cocoa, oranges, limes and bananas were grown for export, *but in almost every case, the cultivation of sugar cane dominated the economies of these islands.*

(Havinden and Meredith, CD 13-14, emphasis added)

The whole space of Barbados is immediately figured as a plantation, a sugar machine "where in 1850 nearly 136,000 people occupied an island only slightly larger than the Isle of Wight" (CD 33). By far the most densely populated island of the British West Indian colonies (820 persons per square mile), as well as the oldest, this tiny island was ranked fifth in both import and export league tables (excluding gold bullion) between the years 1851-54 from among all the British Empire's tropical territories (CD 65). Even by the mid 1880s it was still sustaining seventh place in both tables, exports rising from £890,131 to £1,217,666 despite being "almost totally dependent on sugar and its by-products, molasses and rum" (CD 64-65). Pay and conditions for this mid-Victorian period, despite the Emancipation Act of 1833 which formally abolished slavery in all Britain's colonies, were nevertheless horrendous, by far the worst, in fact, according to Ronald Segal, of any in the whole Caribbean: "on average 6 pence a day, compared to 15 in Jamaica, 20 in British Guiana, and 24 in Trinidad."¹⁴ The individual struggle for land, "a piece of lann" which continues to echo throughout Brathwaite's verse today, can be read from the very cover of *Mother Poem* onwards. The cover shows the fascinating Richard Ligon Map of Barbados from the 1673 publication, *A True and Exact History of the Islands of Barbadoes*, where, instead of finding "Here be Dragons" inscribed upon the unexplored interior of the island, we read instead, "The tenn Thousande Acres of Lande which Belongeth to the Merchants of London." Perhaps the distinction between dragons and merchants is somewhat subtle; Ronald Segal in *The Black Diaspora* makes the situation admirably clear:

Barbados emerged with 501 apprentices per square mile, much the highest density in the British Caribbean. The abundance of labor in relation to land, moreover, reached beyond demographic statistics. The land was so contained by sugar estates . . . that the prospect of finding an available piece for cultivation was as remote to the apprentice who contemplated absconding as the prospect of finding a hiding place had previously been to the slave. (Segal)¹⁵

Havinden and Meredith, however, not content simply to blind us with the economic statistics of the plantation colony, invoke the literary support of a certain eminent traveller to back up their case. Anthony Trollope, visiting the capital, Bridgetown, in 1859, wrote with almost aphoristic brevity of the island that, "[h]appily for the Barbadians every inch of

it will produce canes; and, to the credit of the Barbadians, every inch of it does so" (CD 34).

The ironic truth wrought by this statement in all its spatial perceptiveness, while accounting for the island's wealth in the nineteenth century, was to become its epitaph in the twentieth when worldwide sugar consumption turned away from ever increasingly expensive cane production towards the inferior, but cheaper sugar beet of the African continent. As the figures for the end of 1910 demonstrate (the year of which Lefebvre wrote "that around 1910 a certain space was shattered," PS 25) Barbados no longer figured anywhere in the top ten ranking of tropical exporting colonies. Moreover, in 1905, as many as twenty thousand black plantation workers left Barbados to work for the Panama Canal Agency which was allowed to open a recruitment office in Bridgetown that year as a result of United States government pressure. Additionally, it is worth mentioning that since the 1850 census figure above, the island population has almost exactly doubled so that now over a quarter of a million people inhabit a "tear-shaped" land, twenty-one miles in length and fourteen miles wide. *Sun Poem*, by insistently drawing attention to the way in which Barbados has literally taken a caning, enforces the parameters of Lefebvrian "representation of space" for the rest of the trilogy.

It is worth stressing that not only the colonial power has access to conceptualized representations of space; in theory, anyone may have designs, however limited, on its conceptual control. Nor is it fair to say that this moment is the Larkinesque pen-pushing part of the theory despite its being the most mathematical, areal and quantitative element. The temptation to regard this part of the plan as simply the scapegoat for all evils, or as the sin-bin for all the city council planners and governmental spin-doctors of space, has resolutely to be resisted. It is, rather more positively perhaps, to be seen as the potential locus of a revolutionary conceptual takeover. The theory of "representations of space" is the front-line battleground for the control of both how social space is to be conceived as well as of the type of diffusion model to be employed. So far as the "Second Trilogy" is concerned, we must look for evidence of the conceptual war for space being waged by and against the imperial powers. We can do this by focusing on two related ideas: "dominated" and "appropriated" space.

Dominated and Appropriated Space

After a paragraph which asks us to remember that "No space vanishes utterly, leaving no trace," Lefebvre introduces us to the twinned pairing of "dominated [social] space" and "appropriated [social] space" (*PS* 164-68). He stresses that although these concepts are oppositional, they are by no means exclusive. In fact, he asserts that it is more usual to experience a co-existence of these two different kinds of spatial organization. Dominated space is introduced by Lefebvre as follows:

Now let us consider dominated (and dominant) space, which is to say a space transformed — and mediated — by technology, by practice. In the modern world, instances of such spaces are legion, and immediately intelligible as such: one only has to think of a slab of concrete or a motorway. Thanks to technology the domination of space is becoming, as it were, completely dominant. The 'dominance' whose acme we are thus fast approaching has very deep roots in history and in the historical sphere, for its origins coincide with those of political power itself. Military architecture, fortifications and ramparts, dams and irrigation systems — all offer very fine examples of dominated space. . . . dominant space is invariably the realization of a master's project.

(Lefebvre, *PS* 164-65)

Appropriated space, on the other hand, Lefebvre describes as "a natural space modified in order to serve the needs and possibilities of a group." He goes on:

Examples of appropriated space abound, but it is not always easy to decide in what respect, how, by whom and for whom they have been appropriated.

Peasant houses and villages speak: they recount, though in a mumbled and somewhat confused way, the lives of those who built and inhabited them. An igloo, an Oriental straw hut or a Japanese house is every bit as expressive as a Norman or Provençal dwelling. Dwelling-space may be that of a group . . . or that of a community. . . . It should be noted that appropriation is not effected by an immobile group, be it a family, or a village, or a town; time plays a part in the process, and indeed appropriation cannot be understood apart from the rhythms of time and life.

(Lefebvre, *PS* 165-66)

In poetry too, it seems, there are dominated spaces and appropriated spaces. The epic long poems of Homer and Virgil, Milton's *Paradise Lost*, the canonical tragedies of Shakespeare, Tennyson's *In Memoriam* all seem to occupy a textual space with which we could

associate the concept of dominance. By dominance here I mean that these texts reinforce, or are seen as reinforcing certain paradigms of a unitary national identity. According to this parallel, appropriated textual space would then belong to the more marginalized areas of literary creativity, to feminist writing, to gay literature, to postcolonial texts, to Brathwaite's own excluded voice in his trilogy under question here. A problem, however, looms large on the horizon. Simply to say that the canonical, colonial texts of empire reinforce the myths of national identity — while asserting that postcolonial literature writes constantly against those narratives of nationhood — seems to me extremely questionable. To avoid such universalizing, it follows that we must knock down the wall between the two categories. We must surely deny the exclusivity of dominated space and appropriated space and in so doing we run conveniently into several fundamental questions which are central to the poetic representation of spatiality.

The intertextual representation of space in any literature is subject to exactly the same interpenetration that we find in socialized space itself. It is with similar thoughts, perhaps, that Lefebvre himself rejected some terms of his own:

We are confronted not by one social space but by many — indeed, by an unlimited multiplicity or uncountable set of social spaces which we refer to generically as 'social space'. No space disappears in the course of growth and development: the *worldwide does not abolish the local*. . . .

Social spaces interpenetrate one another and/or superimpose themselves upon one another. They are not *things*, which have mutually limiting boundaries and which collide because of their contours or as a result of inertia. Figurative terms such as 'sheet' and 'stratum' have serious drawbacks

(Lefebvre, *PS* 86-87, emphasis original)

As we turn our attention now to consider some concrete examples of spatial representation in action in Kamau Brathwaite's *Sun Poem*, I hope to show that appropriated space and dominated space do indeed co-exist and interpenetrate one another in complex ways which break down these categorical barriers between colonial and postcolonial ideologies.

i owns it? more cow an gate food an a carry cot fuh de fella an
nobody hey mindin i. an wha bout a house a we own: shed roof
an a little latch on: is to get piece a lann an who own it. doan
mine it is rab: yu watchin dat grass piece brawlin back there:wid
de stick-yuh-toe weeds an de little mauve flowers among it: yu

thinkin i owns it? dat paff dat dere now: runnin way from yu goin
up de hill rounn de benn by miss brevitor tree: yu tinkin i owns it?
we u:sed to run up there fass fass fass we bare feet spinnin like
bicycle wheels de singin angel kite in me hann already ablaze
wid de rainbow a heaven. who block off de paff an rip up de kite
when it pitch down? where de pond water gone wid de frogs an de
mornin stars? who fence in de gully wid cat wire? who put up dat
sign saying

KEEP OUT

and de green white purple an blue a de sea stain wid oil. dis kinda
question is peddle me mine. it is ride i

KEEP OUT

uh pushin back home thru de rain wid me brain soakin wet. who
gwine dry me?

KEEP OUT (*SP 70-71*)

Here and in the passage immediately preceding it, Brathwaite is clearly describing his childhood and the attempts of his family to find a house to live in and objects to put in it, "a good tickin raleigh bicycle" and a "singer sewing machine." Attentive readers may recognize its close similarity to the "i did dream o' dis house" episode of *Mother Poem's* "Bell" section (*MP 10-15*), now recreating through the male voice the same spatial dreams and sense of shame already experienced by the female. The attempt is clearly to appropriate, "doan mine it is rab" a living space for a group of people, and in so doing to move the spatial function of that "piece of lann" away from the plantation owners who have dominated the space with both their technology "those lorries growling up the hill" and their prohibiting signs which repeatedly read "KEEP OUT." The attempt to appropriate the house, which doesn't amount to very much in any case, "a shed roof an a little latch on" is successful, but only in so far as it is a temporary habitation. The actual ownership of the dwelling with which Brathwaite continually taunts the reader, "yu tinkin i owns it?" is impossible and in the last lines of "Clips" we finally learn, "i never did own it. cause a man cyan be / faddah to faddah if e nevvah get chance to be son/light" (*SP 71*). This postcolonial perspective looks back to colonial times and describes the type of conflict over social space which Lefebvre has already outlined:

Dominated space and appropriated space may in principle be combined. . . . But history — which is to say the history of accumulation — is also the history of their separation and mutual

antagonism. The winner in this competition, moreover, has been domination. (PS 166)

To put this another way, the Bakhtinian double voicing which Brathwaite employs in this example, that is, the postcolonial voice of the contemporary poet writing *Sun Poem* in 1982 merging with the earlier childhood narrative of colonial times, effectively breaches the representation of space both chronologically and ideologically. The only reading we can justifiably make in the face of this complex spatial dynamic is one in which dominant colonial space both interpenetrates and is interpenetrated by appropriated postcolonial space. We can say, as a result, that the representation of space in such a poetics is not so much isotropic as heterotropic, not tending towards a neatly contoured hierarchy of spatial organization, but moving inexorably away from any demonstrable locative homogeneity.

1.4 *X/Self*: Representational Space and the Lived Moment

There are beneficiaries of space, just as there are those excluded from it, those 'deprived of space'; this fact is ascribed to the 'properties' of a space, to its 'norms', although in reality something very different is at work. (Lefebvre, PS 289)

Brathwaite's trilogy, which consistently seeks to expose those responsible for reenforcing the "norms" of this apparently harmless ideology, attempts to discover what exactly this difference is and where it lies. In particular, the final book of the trilogy, *X/Self*, is justifiably unwilling to fall into the trap of accepting space as abstract, blank or normative. From the provinces of the opening section, "Letter from Roma" to the prairies of the final section, "Xango," Kamau Brathwaite insists upon the material facticity of space, its quotidian links to political power and military intent, and ultimately to the modes of production and reproduction that serve the commodity and leisure industries of the first world. By adamantly refusing to be a passive user of space and by determinedly foregrounding the substantiality of its material nature, the text implies a sustained readerly collusion in historical strategies of imperial aggression. "Rome burns / and our slavery begins" (XS 5) becomes the repetitive symbolic mantra of imperial colonization, a leitmotif

or subject-rhyme sowing "seeds of colonies" throughout the text. The insistent possessive "our" of "our slavery" is a calculated tactic of exclusion, of distancing; an absent but colluding "your" — the position of the reader as accessory to empire building — is implied.

The fragmented shards of fallen empires around the globe which Brathwaite presents in *X/Self* as this ongoing diachronic inventory of "man's inhumanity to man" become the symbolic images, or "representational space" of the third Lefebvrian moment, the realm of the "lived." There is a distinct emphasis on specifically Eurocentric expansionism in the name of "gods that make them smile / that allow them to welcome the stranger" (XS 34). In the section headed "Nuum", Brathwaite delves into the subterranean petrology of the colonizer's mining operations on his island, what he elsewhere calls the "landscape" and uses this as an extended spatial metaphor of technocracies in general which "arise and rust within their oxides." White men with black coaled faces become the actors in this topological inversion of the "banana green" Bajan landscape. This is the X/space of Brathwaite's "miners of empire," a space crossed out or struck over by the "prospero language" of occidental avarice. Their industry is described as follows:

they burn
they eat the land
they vomit it up
they leave lakes of desolation

ochre choler water

that returns no benediction
plantations of dead plankton

ceaselessly
ceaselessly
ceaselessly (XS 34-35)

We can usefully apply Lefebvre here too and in the following quotation from *The Production of Space* we discover how and why Brathwaite's use of "lived" or symbolic representational spaces works so effectively. It also reinforces one of the initial points of the study that we cannot afford to equate postcolonial writing between different regions and lands:

The tendency toward the destruction of nature does not flow solely from a brutal technology: it is also precipitated by the economic

wish to impose the traits and criteria of interchangeability upon places. The result is that places are deprived of their specificity — or even abolished. (Lefebvre, *PS* 343)

The key phrase here is "interchangeability upon places" and as occupiers of the space world ourselves, we instantly recognize contemporary real world examples of Lefebvre's observation. If we walk into a BP petrol station, a Marriot hotel, a MacDonaldis fast food outlet, it makes no difference which monuments are reflected in their respective neon corporate logos: the Eiffel Tower, the Statue of Liberty, the Sydney opera house or London Bridge. Global corporations dis/place the local environment for the simple reason that spatial specificity stands squarely in the face of surplus value. The very project of capital accumulation within the dominant spatial network of the global economy stands or falls by its ability to reproduce not a space in the product market but reiterable material space itself, space *qua* space. Brathwaite's recognition of this fact provokes his inversionary critique of empires in the plural. If he can rid fallen empires of their spatial iconographies and placial idiosyncrasies, if he can represent all imperialization as a merely indiscriminate process of land seizure, then, in the words of William Carlos Williams, "Poet Beats Fire at Its Own Game."¹⁶

The two extracts which follow, taken from Part II of *X/Self*, demonstrate Brathwaite's method of disenplacement or "x/placement" which insists upon what he calls "the flattened world" (*XS* 8). His technique here is disjunctive and paratactical, almost an imagist poetics in its use of spatial emblems.

there is no sun
in alexandria date palms and gourds
in the desert the islamic whordes are arising

scimitar saracen saladin my companions of the curved cross
the bosphorus awaits cannon tennyson
salonaika and the dead sea shells of the dardenelles

the stones of venice are cold

.....

there are no olives left in lebanon
in the camp of the visigoths vercingetorix the arvernin creole
chieftain

has met che has met kismet has met young doctor castro
liberators are being guillotined from heaven

along the ho chi minh trail

caesars daughter is pompeys wife

.....

sparks of horses hooves make stars along the adriatic

the franks

pour into gaul into the lime trees of saul

hadrians wall

known only to jordie goats

and the precursors of the textile industry

o bordeaux o engine driving manchester eternal winter of niagara
falls (XS 5-6)

One of the first things we notice is that it is by no means necessary to name a city or a country to invoke place or to make a representation of a spatial locality. The name of a canonical author will call up a land, a famous general or politician, a landmark, a waterfall, a mountain range, a creed, the name of a tribe, of a rebel militia, of a building, an anthem, a flag — all these will signify a "lived" location "through its associated images and symbols" almost before the immediate referent. As we have just heard, these symbolic synecdoches and placial metonymies are used to great effect in *X/Self* and the net result is an overall flattening or levelling of cultural and imperial origination. Fallen cities line Brathwaite's register of bloodshed and become indistinct. Aztec, British, Babylonian, Greek, French, Ming, Persian, Roman and American empires melt into a single plasma of un/spaced, x/placed impotence.

By emptying empires of their individual locative attributes, Brathwaite has turned the tables in his favour. There is a pleasing irony in that the representation of the imperial and capitalist locus is here disempowered by the same strategy of spatial multiplication that it originally relied upon itself to widen its own field of operations. As the colonizing powers had crossed out, or over stamped the symbolic capital of the indigenous peoples, erasing their lived environment through incorporation and assimilation, so *X/Self* turns the tide to rid all empires of any temporal or geographical idiosyncrasy.

Counter-Space

Lefebvre calls this kind of oppositional insertion "counter-space," and he too makes the connection to the global economy so that:

we can see how a counter-space can insert itself into spatial reality: against the Eye and the Gaze, against quantity and homogeneity, against power and the arrogance of power, against the endless expansion of the 'private' and of industrial profitability; (PS 382)

The fact that social space is always a negotiated space with many possible placements and displacements, a process of temporary validation and countervalidation, is as important to us as readers of textual, conceptual space as it is to the philosophy of Lefebvre and the poetry of Kamau Brathwaite. There is a Lacanian identity crisis in any "discourse *in* space, discourse *about* space" or "discourse *of* space" (PS 132); for spatial representation in any textual practice, relying as it does upon the linguistic sign, cannot but misrecognize itself. If language is Lacan's "discourse of the other," and all textual spatial identity is carried in language, then the identity of conceptual space itself, of our personal spatial awareness and phenomenology must also be othered, an alterity at once fragmented and unitary. We can link this psychoanalytical idea to Lefebvre's thinking again:

It is not, therefore, as though one had global (or conceived) space to one side and fragmented (or directly experienced) space to the other — rather as one might have an intact glass here and a broken glass or mirror over there. For space 'is' whole and broken, global and fractured, at one and the same time. Just as it is at once conceived, perceived, and directly lived. (PS 355-56)

Such a writing practice is certainly significant in the present context of arguments concerning "representational space." Brathwaite must avoid the charge placed in Lefebvre's definition of the third moment that it is the locus of "a few writers and philosophers, who *describe* and aspire to do no more than describe" (PS 39). But *X/Self* is nowhere descriptive; its imaginative, metaphorical and figurative recognition of the symbolic values with which the diasporal archipelago is shot through, dynamically insures against passivity or any risk of spatial appropriation. The way in which *X/Self* in particular stands out from the former two books is that it institutes its own "[t]rial by space": "[t]rial by space invariably reaches a dramatic moment, that moment when whatever is being tried — philosophy or religion, ideology or established knowledge, capitalism or socialism, state or community — is put radically into question" (PS 417).

X/Self is indeed dramatically climactic like no other single volume

of the six books which comprise the two New World Trilogies, truly a judgement day for the symbolic spatial investments made for and against Barbados. X/Self's alter-ego, "i-man," awoken from the ancestral odoum tree in "The visibility trigger", is summoned by name in "Nam" and returns in the form of Xango, god of thunder for the final passage of the long poem:

word
and balm
and water

flow

embrace
him

he will shatter outwards to your light and calm and history
your thunder has come home (XS 111)

"Counter-space" is a constitutive part of Lefebvre's general "trial by space" (*espace-en-process*) which works towards the ultimate goal of discovering "the truth of space." As the following passage shows, this "truth of space" is not to be confused with "[t]rue space":

True space, the space of philosophy and of its epistemological offshoot, seamless in all but an abstract sense, is a mental space whose dual function is to reduce 'real' space to the abstract and to induce minimal differences

By contrast . . . the *truth of space* ties space on the one hand to social practice, and on the other hand to concepts

The truth of space reveals what mental space and social space have in common — and consequently also the differences between them. (Lefebvre, *PS* 398-99)

Lefebvre sees "[t]rue space," — essentially the mental space of Descartes's *res cogitans* — as the omnivore of real social space, a corollary of which is that "minimal differences" between the two are induced: the moment of the lived is eaten away by that of the conceived, or, put another way, "Representational space disappears into the representation of space — the latter swallows the former" (*PS* 398). The "truth of space," on the other hand, is *summum bonum*, that which accentuates and therefore points up the differences between the ideal and the real, preserving and maintaining not only the separable *res*

extensa of the body, but also the divisible finite "networks of named places" or *lieux-dits* (said places) of social space (PS 193).

Kamau Brathwaite's trilogy, no less than other chorological long poems, is an attempt at the truth of space. It is a semiotic centre in which the gap between the ideal and the real can never achieve closure, but where the distance between the two is recognized in a procedural play which meters the power surges in colonial and postcolonial spatial assemblies. Through its monitoring of the Barbadian chorophyle, of which it is both analyser and analysand, and by defending itself with a suitable level of semantic coding, it enunciates from and gives utterance to the outer limits of agency. The contemporary long poem thus rejects isotropic postcolonial interpretations as naive and becomes instead a heterotropic plexus, "a concentration of energy a locus of action" and "a sequence of operations" in order to acquire "functional reality" (PS 399).

1.5 Productive Choropoetics: Summary

Having extracted a practical methodology from the theoretical complexities of Lefebvre's *The Production of Space*, I want to suggest three clear steps to follow if a chorological reading is to be made. The productive choropoetics of any recent long poem can be revealed in this way:

- (1) "Spatial practice." Discover how the text is perceiving the material space of the region it represents. Is it open and referential language using explicit words like "space," "place" and "environment," or a more coded mediation? The long poem produces its own space in response to the material social space it monitors. Does the space it produces enforce the dominant spatial ideologies of its region or criticize them?
- (2) "Representations of space." What is the dominant mode of spatial production in the region and who has the power to change it? Is this space being actively reproduced or is it diminishing? What signs are there in the text of town planning, architecture, mapping and other ways of authorizing social space? Who are the conceivers of material space in the poem?
- (3) "Representational space." Material space is ordinary everyday space in which people live their lives. Can they appropriate or somehow insert their own powers against the dominant modes of spatial production? If this cannot be accomplished in material terms, can they alter the symbolic or iconic ways in which their social space is represented. Is there any evidence of counter-spatial practices?

The advantages of the Lefebvorean triad as a chorological reading practice are that it recognizes both the mimetic and diegetic elements of the long poem. The materiality of the social space produced by a society may be either simulated by the concrete page-space of the poem, or argued conceptually in the cognitive space provided for themes and long narratives. Productive choropoetics read the space produced by a region over a long period of time. The duration of the long poem's enunciation is able to reflect, disclose and appropriate the veiled or taken-for-granted relationships between power, space and production.

The disadvantages of any critical materialism, whether spatial or temporal are fairly obvious. These include an undue emphasis on a real, objective world of extant political forces, a leaning toward the epic or anti-epic depiction of warring ideologies which ignores the lyric "I," and an emphasis on how space is produced (authored) rather than consumed (read). Lefebvre's is a neo-Marxist dialectics of space which traces its roots to the European riots of 1968 and formulates a crushing response to Gaston Bachelard. It may favour critiques of consumer capitalism and postmodernism but this is far from a global condition and it may not be the theory best suited to the writing of the region at hand. In addition Lefebvre has understandably little to say on autonomy, aesthetics or the transcendental ideal. Although a Lefebvorean analysis must be the essential starting point for any chorological reading practice because it stresses the social materiality of local space and questions the opacity of abstract geometric space (Euclid), it must also be reinforced by the full array of regional geographies.

CHAPTER 2

Landscape Choropoetics: *Another Life* for Poetry, Space and Landscape in the Work of Derek Walcott

2.1 Natural Landscape and the Ecological Matrix

2.2 Natural Landscape and the Cosmographic Matrix

Book One: Rational-Geometric Landscape

Book Two: Animistic Landscape

Book Three: Christian Anagogic Landscape

Book Four: Timing the Landscape

Cosmographic Conclusions

2.3 Cultural Landscape and the Analogical Matrix

The Residual Landscape

2.4 Cultural Landscape and the Technoptic Matrix

Listing the Landscape

Travelling through Landscape

The Amenable Landscape

2.5 Landscape Choropoetics: Summary

I knew you'd grow tired
of all that iconography of the sea

(Walcott, *Another Life* 98)

2.1 Natural Landscape and the Ecological Matrix

The "ecological" landscape matrix is identified by its "eye to subsistence and security." Crucial to this drive is the idea of "territorial feeling" and the "'Nature' that serves our material and productive needs" (*PSL* 15). Such territorial feeling is created in response to the complex of sensations experienced in a given locale. In "primitive" cultures, this response is made in reaction to the contours of the physical landscape itself, a landscape of either "prospect" or "refuge." Whereas the prospect landscape gives the subject access to open horizons for exploration and hunting, the refuge landscape promises safety from attack and seclusion from the elements. As a society advances, the individual becomes increasingly aware of this "differential sense of the world" (*PSL* 16), of its hospitable and inhospitable regions. In literary terms, such awareness results in either the landscape idyll on the one hand (georgic, bucolic) or in the anti-pastoral on the other.

The ecological matrix — an approach heavily dependent on Jay Appleton's "habitat theory" of the 1980s — is appealing to *Another Life* for a number of reasons. Not only does it offer a reading of landscape that is purposefully regional but it also reconnects the space of the living body to the habitability of the local landscape. Still more important, the ecological approach analyses the visual geography of the land that is available to the eye, a visual or scopic function. In the passages which follow, therefore, it is argued that the regional, the bodily and the visual are the core active features of the choropoetic landscape.

Walcott's most explicit invocation of the natural environment in *Another Life* takes place in chapters 8 and 9 of the second book, "Homage to Gregorias" (*AL* 49-61). These are the chapters describing the late-teenage years of the poet in autobiographical detail. He and his friend Gregorias (the painter, Dunstan St. Omer) have both recently lost their fathers and getting drunk becomes a major pastime. They explore deeper and deeper into the interior of the island, searching for some new direction in their lives. Ultimately they swear to devote themselves to the cause of the St. Lucian landscape: the island of Santa Lucia, "that astigmatic saint." While Gregorias adopts the medium of landscape painting, Walcott writes landscape poetry:

But drunkenly, or secretly, we swore,
 disciples of that astigmatic saint,
 that we would never leave the island
 until we had put down, in paint, in words,
 as palmists learn the network of a hand,
 all of its sunken, leaf-choked ravines,
 every neglected, self-pitying inlet
 muttering in brackish dialect, the ropes of mangroves
 from which old soldier crabs slipped
 surrendering to slush,
 each ochre track seeking some hilltop and
 losing itself in an unfinished phrase,
 under sand shipyards where the burnt-out palms
 inverted the design of unrigged schooners,
 entering forests, boiling with life,
goyave,orrosol, bois-canut, sapotille. (AL 52)

An ecological reading of the landscape presented here would have to conclude that the vegetation, layout and territorial feeling of St. Lucia present little in the way of an open prospect, nothing that would seem to nurture or sustain. As a landscape of refuge, however, the evidence of the "sunken, leaf-choked ravines" and "the ropes of mangroves" is eloquent. The forest may be "boiling with life" but this is neither fecund nor harvestable paradise: it is "choked . . . self-pitying . . . burnt out."

What hope could there be to populate such a chaotic rainforest — and if populated, how described? Such is the challenge laid down by the blind Saint Lucy, "For no one had yet written of this landscape / that it was possible, though there were sounds / given to its varieties of wood" (AL 53). Although a few ancient names for the flora and fauna of the island still exist — "*goyave,orrosol, bois-canut, sapotille*" — the vocabulary has largely been destroyed by the process of colonization; the very possibility of rewriting the whole landscape by returning to the roots of the language has never been considered. This is *incomposita terra*, disorganised or "untilled" land, and invokes an array of associations with otherness: wilderness, chaos, the unknown. It is a perilous and ancient panorama in which "whole generations died . . . forests / of history thickening with amnesia." The landscape is no less exciting to the young Walcott than it was to the first European explorers, but the poet is well aware of this irony and his oath, accordingly, is to try and capture the first poetic vision of it "as firm / as conquerors who had discovered home" (AL 53).

Meteorology is a second symptom of the ecological matrix. The climactic conditions of "the sun drumming, drumming . . . on some noon struck Sahara" with "roads limp from sunstroke" (AL 53) provide a

further approach via landscape. Passages which trace the temperature, air quality and barometrics of the text all contribute to the delineation of territorial feeling. Lines such as "Nature is a fire, / through the door of this landscape / I have entered a furnace . . . the sun plates your back / salt singes your eyes" and "The skull is sucked dry as a seed, / the landscape is finished" (AL 56, 57) are profoundly ecological, explicitly linking the natural landscape to the human perception of habitat. The tropical, scorched vista which presents itself to the eye is no less a threat to contemporary St. Lucians than it was to the seventeenth-century English and French invaders, and Walcott's description of it parodies historical, colonial reports of the Caribbean heat. By rewriting the climate from a subaltern perspective, *Another Life* disempowers the kind of Eurocentric writing which historically represented non-Continental climates as alien and fearful. The more this line of argument is pursued, in fact, the more meteorological criticism becomes a necessary part of a chorological reading.

The horizon — edge of vision and limit of the eye's command — throws up still more clues to territorial feeling. *Another Life* makes continuous use of liminal imagery: we experience "The smell of the horizon's rusting rim," and wait "till the landscape settles on / a horizon humming with balance"; these are related to "the edge of the canvas" and to the "trees on the edge of that ridge" (AL 58). This language of ridges, horizons, edges and beaches constitutes an ecological imagery with its eye for the life-supporting and habitable. It speaks clearly to the scopic drive whose job it is to locate the position of the body in space by distinguishing between vertical and horizontal planes. Territorial feeling is established in *Another Life* by the reader's constant awareness of the focalizer's bodyspace in relation to land, sea and horizon.

The verandah is indicative of "betweenness" *par excellence*: between natural metaphor, "Verandahs . . . of the sea" (AL 3) and cultural built environment "a sun-warped verandah" (AL 50); between place of classical scholarship or work where the earliest Platonic teachings began, and place of *otium* and rest where the rocking chair of the deep American South sits; between East Indian etymology (Bengali, *baranda*; Hindi, *varanda*) and symbolic space of West Indian fiction (V. S. Naipaul, Neil Bissoondath); between the riches of the imperial roofed gallery, Palladian portico, or Renaissance loggia and the poverty of the corrugated iron porch; again, between place affording prospect and vista

"I looked from old verandahs / at verandahs" (*AL* 150) and place of refuge "erected chiefly as a protection or shelter from the sun or rain" (*OED*). As the alpha and omega of horizontal experience uniting both the literal, factual narrative and the figurative, descriptive elements of the text, both the place where Gregorias's father went through the rotten floorboards so that he was "wearing the verandah like a belt" (*AL* 51) and the very first trope of the whole poem, the verandah renames the colonial experience of the threshold and replaces it with associations of liminality more appropriate to the St. Lucian chorophyle. Every horizon or boundary is part of the ecological matrix and every different chorophyle will seek out metaphors appropriate to its own specific hermeneutics of that complex, profoundly scopic yet linguistically arbitrary relationship between the internal and external. As the landlocked Moravians have it, "the mountains are our sea."

Apart from the influence of prospect/refuge vistas, vegetation, climate, and horizon, there are still other ways into the "landscape-consciousness" of the long poem via an ecological approach. These include oceanography, landscape morphology and zoology which all have a bearing on the representation of the land's ability to sustain life in relation to the human body. The sea, the changing surface of the island, and the animal population — from "old soldier crabs" (*L* 52) to "huge spiders stuck on shafts" (*L* 121) — all provide powerful ecological points of departure which stress the contemporary long poem's commitment to regional spatial practices.

2.2 Natural Landscape and the Cosmographic Matrix.

Cosmographic perception, the second trans-historical drive, "is alert in landscape to the forces and processes of the world order, as current cosmology perceives it" and in addition "respond[s] to what in landscape illustrates religious or philosophical beliefs and instincts about the structural order of the universe . . ." (*PSL* 19). This, then, is landscape conceived in relation to global and universal knowledges, but subject to the mythico-religious beliefs and social practices of a given time and place.

The cosmographic landscape is arranged in three parts: the "animistic (lasting into classical antiquity); the rational-geometric

(classical, Hellenistic and Roman, with a reprise in Renaissance Europe); and the Christian anagogic" (*PSL* 19). Although there are some serious epistemological issues which Fitter fails to address in setting up this chronology,¹ nevertheless, the three separate elements can be used as effective spatial tools to unpack the long poem's cosmographic matrix.

The existence of such competing cosmographies in the representation of the natural landscape is something that is explicitly recognized in *Another Life* as a matter of course. In "Homage to Gregorias" the young Walcott recognizes the spatial traditions that have separated Dunstan from himself: "it was classic versus romantic / perhaps, it was water and fire" (*AL* 59). The classical landscape is an ordered and mimetic, objectively perspectival rendering of natural forces. Nature is controlled, repressed, articulate — as it appears in the Dutch landscape school of Hobbema, Van Goyen and Ruisdael. The romantic vision, by contrast, is characteristically seething out of control. Windswept, blasted, burnt-out, flooded through, the tidal waves of Turner, the lightning bolts of John Martin and the snowscapes of Caspar Friedrich paint an entirely different picture.

In the discussion that follows, I want to suggest that the cosmography of *Another Life* moves beyond the classical/romantic binarism voiced by the poem itself. The animistic, rational-geometric and Christian anagogic components provide a better framework for doing this. The following sections therefore build an argument from each of the four books of the poem in turn. They present a cosmographic argument to test the "level of system consciousness" in Walcott's St. Lucian environment.

Book One: Rational-Geometric Landscape

In its dimension the drawing could not trace
the sociological contours of the promontory;
once, it had been an avenue of palms
strict as Hobbema's aisle of lowland poplars,
now, levelled, bulldozed and metalled for an airstrip,
its terraces like tree-rings told its age.
There, patriarchal banyans,
bearded with vines from which black schoolboys gibboned,
brooded on a lagoon seasoned with dead leaves,
mangroves knee-deep in water
crouched like whelk-pickers on brown, spindly legs
scattering red soldier crabs
scrabbling for redcoats' meat.
The groves were sawn
symmetry and contour crumbled (*AL* 6)

In Book One, "The Divided Child," the old symmetrical, colonial aisle of the palms has been cleared to make way for a runway, the banyans brood on the dead season past, and the mangrove swamps too have had to surrender their old ordered contours in place of a crumbled dilapidation. The natural world, once brought under the sway of the symmetries of colonialism, now scrabbles to survive as a banana state in the face of tourism, global consumerism and conditions more suited to Lefebvre's capitalist reproduction of space. The capital's promontory, we are told, has a sociological history rather than a natural history, a point remade at the end of *Another Life* in the penultimate section of Book Four where the reader is asked,

And what if it's all gone,
the hill's cut away for more tarmac,
the groves all sawn,
and bungalows proliferate on the scarred, hacked hillside,
the magical lagoon drained
for the Higher Purchase plan,
and they've bulldozed and bowdlerized our Vigie,
our *ocelle insularum*, our Sirmio
for a pink and pastel New Town (*AL* 150-151)

These passages above are thus indicative of a strand of Walcott's world-order or "level of system consciousness" which runs throughout the poem and holds a debasing secular rationalism of competitive economies responsible for destroying a landscape of expansive immanence and transcendent preternaturalism. To cosmographic animism we can therefore add an awareness of the fruits of Western rationalism: the secular mercantilism of a global economy operating according to the demands of world-systems theory.² The colonial, hire purchase of St. Lucia has become elevated to the cosmographic and transcendental status of "Higher Purchase" and Walcott's treasured Vigie landscape can no longer be seen as the apple of our islands' little eye, our "*ocelle insularum*." Under such conditions, however, at least the natural landscape is figured as potentially changeable, capable of human accommodation for good or for ill. So much cannot be said for the following cosmographic category.

Book Two: Animistic Landscape

Following this scheme, the first qualities associated with an animistic

imago mundi, are "basic susceptibilities towards spatial mood and colour" which include a "special sensitivity to motion . . . to contrasts of brightness and darkness [and] to silence . . ." (*PSL* 20). Fitter's own analysis of the animistic landscape makes use of the Roman fresco of *Odysseus in the Land of the Laestrygonians* by the first-century artist Apollonius Rhodios. This chance comparison may serve as a welcome chiaroscuro link to Walcott's chapter "Frescoes of the New World" (*AL* 62-67) which paint a similarly animistic and photosensitive landscape:

O that his art
could sink in earth, fragrant as Christ's tomb!
But darkness hid
never departing wholly as it promised
between the yam leaves on the river bank
on whose bent heads the rain splintered like mercury,
in shacks like paper lanterns, in green lagoons
whose fading eye held Eden like a transfer,
it hid in yellowing coconuts where the sea-swifts
breaking and forming in their corolla
fluttered like midges around the glare
of the gas lantern. Shadows left the wall, bats
ferried his thoughts across the feverish creek
where the kingfisher startled like a match,
and rows of trees like savages stepped back
from the gas lantern's radiance, from his faith. (*AL* 63-4)

Replete with colour and luciferous imagery, the passage describes Gregorias's first commission as a painter, "The Roman Catholic church at Gros Ilet, / a fat, cream-coloured hunk of masonry" where "The church is a shell / of tireless silence" (*AL* 62). Alternating between a literal, *descriptio loci* tradition with "green lagoons," "yellowing coconuts" and "yam leaves on the river bank" and a personified *genius loci*, with "darkness hid," "shadows left," "bats ferried" and "trees . . . stepped back," the poem metaphorically landscapes Gregorias's spiritual future "whose fading eye held Eden like a transfer."

In reaching for a vision in which the *terra infirma* of the landscape aesthetic meets the *terra firma* of physical geological contact, "O that his art / could sink in earth" we witness a choropoetic practice that evokes a desired union between the physical and the metaphysical. Along with its mercurial rain, shadowy walls and sulphurous stars (*AL* 63-4), such a reading well supports a theory of cosmological animism with Gregorias "stepp[ing] back / from the gas lantern's radiance, from his faith," and no longer seeking a monotheistic Christianity, but, a

"revisited epic world with sophisticated obscurities of shadow, mist and sudden theophany" (*PSL* 20).

But *Another Life* is more than just an Antillean meeting place where the Christian *lux mundi* epiphany meets the diaphanous forms of neo-Platonism. The second cosmological drive of landscape perception, the "level of 'system-consciousness' in nature that will prevail" (*PSL* 20) raises further spatial questions. Is the chorophylic cosmology of *Another Life* based on a "comparative, rationalistic" hierarchy of the natural landscape or on one that "beholds nature submissively, registering with pious awe and wonder the whirlwind and the uncontrollable sea" (*PSL* 20)? Is the landscape depicted according to a world-view that promotes it as active, contoured and optative, or as one that records it as passive, uniform and submissive? Is there an omnipotent controlling force over natural phenomena or is humanism the only husbandry?

Beyond this frame, deceptive, indifferent,
nature returns to its work,
behind the square of blue you have cut from that sky,
another life, real, indifferent, resumes.
Let the hole heal itself.
The window is shut. (*AL* 58)

Book Two deals with the best way of capturing the atmosphere of the natural environment in the face of an uncaring, disregarding cosmography. Recognizing the twice-repeated "indifference" of a nature which is capable of a pre-programmed regeneration, the text reemphasizes the existence of a deceptive and powerful self-regulation, a *tellus mater* or *mater generationis* which will be eternally insouciant in the face of mankind, closing the window on human interference and essentially determined, regardless, to lead "another life." As fast as Gregorias or Walcott make their creative representations of the natural environment, the landscape closes back in over the holes they have made. As soon as the landscape is held, it is lost. The expression and capture of Saint Lucy's identity is a rainbow that runs away, a reflection only of the subject's endless desire for enunciation, for proclamation: Just as Brathwaite tried to steal his enemy's identity by calling him by his true name, so the autobiographical heroes of *Another Life* attempt the paint and paper theft of their geographical mother. But Lucy's blindness is supremely indifferent to man's petty colour-gratification and will not be pinned, Prufrock-like to any canvas wall. Her power is not open to

witness or attestation, neither to energy nor sloth. It is greater than these, eternal, indifferent and "[t]he hand she held already had betrayed / them by its longing for describing her" (AL 94).

Book Three: The Christian Anagogic Landscape

The sky, vibrating, rippled like sheet iron,
like hairy behemoths, their lungs burnt out, the hills
were hoarse with smoke, everywhere
the retching odours of a tannery.
Clouds curled like burnt-out papers at their edges,
the telephone wires sang from pole to pole
parodying perspective. (AL 83)

Book Three, "A Simple Flame" is the book of lost love, of a singed ego, reflecting on the poet's lecherous failure to succeed with his lover, Anna, so that "[e]very room he entered was an album / from which her image had been crudely torn" (AL 90). Reminiscent of both Eliot's "What the Thunder Said" in *The Waste Land* and Book Three of William's *Paterson* which endures hurricane, fire and flood, the text above pronounces an elemental restitution on mankind through an assertion of Biblical apocalypticism. The telluric forces become all too prevailing in a set-piece demonstration of Lear's mighty "cataracts and hurricanoes"³ which threaten to engulf the whole Caribbean arena.

The "parodying [of] perspective" which only the power of a natural phenomenon can bring about, has no positive value or outcome for the islanders whatsoever and results only in "[Y]our ruined Ilion, your grandfather's pyre" and "A landscape of burnt stones and broken arches" (AL 84). The assault on the senses is total, primeval, seeming to belong more to a prehistoric era of "hairy behemoths" than to our own time and space.⁴ But that which the storm of Book Three presages is itself a three-fold break. First and foremost, the break is Walcott's first departure from his home island, setting off on his early British Council tours of England, "Tea with the British Council representative, / tannin, calfskin, gilt and thank you vellum much" (AL 106). Secondly, it is a break from "[t]he three faces I had most dearly loved Harry, Dunstan, Andreuille" (AL 114-5) — signalling his brother, Harry Walcott, his mentor, Dunstan St. Omer, and his lover, Anna. The third break is quite simply spatio-temporal: the year is 1950 and "[t]hey heard the century breaking in half" (AL 83). From here on Walcott will look back

on the years prior to his Book Three departure as "Another Life" and as the apocalyptic turning point of his career, his loves and his geography. Only now can we return to the beginning of the book where Cesar Vallejo's lone epigraph to "A Simple Flame" is suddenly clear:

All have actually parted from the house, but
all have truly remained. And it's not the memory
of them that remains, but they themselves. Nor is
it that they remain in the house but that they
continue because of the house. The functions and
the acts go from the house by train or plane
or on horseback, walking or crawling. What continues
in the house is the organ, the gerundial or circular
agent. (AL 81)

The house, the room, the space, the *chora* of chorophyle cannot be removed from its place of genesis, its own region, either with or without apocalyptic cosmography. Walcott is right to quote Vallejo, for spatially speaking, "what continues in the house is [indeed] the gerundial or circular agent." Agency, from which the chorophyle springs as a social and psychological set towards space, may well proceed from the body, but still remains firmly in place well after the body has gone.

The apocalyptic landscape has thus made two accomplishments. It has finally brought about an end to the poet's personal contact with the St. Lucian environment, but — more importantly — it has shown the natural landscape to be an awesomely active one: romantic, sublime, supreme.

Book Four: Timing the Landscape

Miasma, acedia, the enervations of damp,
as the teeth of the mould gnaw, greening the carious stump
of the beaten, corrugated silver of the marsh light,
where the red heron hides, without a secret,
as the cordage of mangrove tightens
bland water to bland sky
heavy and sodden as canvas (AL 141)

As the final book, "The Estranging Sea" is no longer, in Nana Wilson-Tagoe's words, "enacting the exhilaration of the poet's discovery of identity with landscape and surrounding,"⁵ but explores instead the nature of the irreconcilable divide that has opened up between a childscape of visionary possibility and an adult life of remorse and

removal. Life, landscape and language — like the "red heron" who has no secret — now contain neither shame nor promise. The future is "inured / only to the real" so that "the cordage of mangrove"⁶ functions only to lock down a bland-scape, "heavy and sodden as canvas." The text submits to a cosmographic matrix drawn by "the muse of history" where "the lizards are taking a million years to change" (AL 142). *Another Life* now knows that it can provide no answer to Marvell's "[d]eserts of vast eternity" and because no answering exists, there can be no questioning either. By the time we reach the opening "Why?" of chapter 21 in Book Four, we have learnt that the natural geography of the poem's cosmographic landscape is itself its own answer. Despite this, the text remains confident, even awesome towards its conclusion, and still the majestic spatial awareness ploughs on, as the last lines below echo the Hull poet's own spatio-temporal metaphysics:

So you have ceased to ask yourself,
nor do these things ask you,
for the bush too is an answer
without a question,
as the sea is a question, chafing,
impatient for answers,
and we are the same.
They do not ask us, master,
do you accept this?
A nature reduced to the service
of praising or humbling men,
there is a yes without question,
there is assent founded on ignorance,
in the mangroves plunged to the wrist, repeating
the mangroves plunging to the wrist,
there are spaces
wider than conscience. (AL 137-8)

Cosmographic Conclusions

In extracting and applying the new spatial practices of *Poetry, Space, Landscape*, the cosmographic drive was said to be concerned with the "level of system consciousness" exhibited by the text. It was also interested in "apprehending a conceived world order" and with responding "to what in landscape illustrates religious or philosophic beliefs and instincts about the structural order of the universe and the forces or laws governing it" (PSL 19). The examination undertaken showed evidence of four constituents in the natural landscape's relation

to governing structures: an elemental animism portrayed through chiaroscuroal imagery; a loss of the rainforest's reproductive power in the face of colonial rationalism; an apocalyptic potency whose invisible origin seemed to preclude mortal legislation; and a tendency to entropic decay through time. Such are the conclusions we may reasonably reach from the varieties of free verse at hand.

Partially animistic, subject to humanity, indifferently pregnant, cosmically powerful, yet tragically doomed, the seven-year marathon of *Another Life*, ironically dwarfing the three-year sprint of *Omeros*, portrays no single reassuring unity of landscape cosmography. Now blasphemous, now repenting, often romantic, occasionally brimstone, sometimes Miltonic, perpetually biographical, yet ever aware of wider legislative possibilities, Walcott's text is motivated more by the fear that "I have had a serpent for companion" than in any hope of salvation. However worthwhile the recognition that man-made laws are usually inoperative, the representation of this fact through the destruction of the St. Lucian landscape hardly guarantees a heavenly landscape in store for its implied author. On the other hand, "it is harder / to be a prodigal than a stranger" (AL 150) and there does exist the final appeal for forgiveness from "you folk, . . . you, sea, . . . you islands . . . you, Gregorias. / And you, Anna" (AL 151). Where, finally, does such thinking leave us?

It is not inconceivable that in the centuries to come the West will return once again to that state of mind which makes a unified cosmography (one world order) possible. Nor is it impossible, as we have seen, to buy into those cosmographies in which a text trades. What Fitter's approach does tell us, however (a problem he himself avoided by curtailing his survey with Henry Vaughan [1622-1695]), is that the cosmographic method is likely to be better suited to poems which are themselves seeking or reflecting the singularity of an ordered universal hierarchy. Since contemporary long poems deliberately emphasize the cosmographic fractures and geo-spatial materialities at work in local/global relations, such universality, essentially the transcendental ideal, is in short demand.

2.3 Cultural Landscape and the Analogical Matrix

The watchwords of the third "analogical" matrix of landscape perception are similitude, comparison and correspondence. The correlational and

allegorical aspects of the representation of landscape, which vary between the sensory and the intellectual, are considered here by Fitter in relation to their textual and semantic symbolism. The metaphor and the simile, metonymy and synecdoche therefore reign supreme as indicators of this third drive in the contemporary long poem. In the words of *Another Life*, "No metaphor, no metamorphosis" (AL 115). Fitter himself cites two epic poems when he introduces what I take to be his most suggestive phrase in this argument, "symbolically appropriate locales":

Analogical perception receives and redacts the external world through the faculty of similitude. Man's symbolic and typological workings derive at one level from the automatic sorting activity common to all organisms. . . . Literature as early as *The Epic of Gilgamesh* and *The Odyssey* invests its major protagonists with symbolically appropriate locales, whilst Vincent Scully has argued that archaic Greeks pursued the profound instinct for the symbolic import of scenery both in myth and settlement practice, founding cities on sites auspiciously marked by the crescent moon of twin peaks. (Fitter, *PSL* 21)

As any aerial photograph of the island shows, St. Lucia too is dominated by the natural symmetry of its twin volcanic conical peaks on the North East coast, conspicuous not just for their sheer inclination, but because verdurous forestation completely covers their surface. Walcott himself makes surprisingly little of these "symbolically appropriate locales" as icons of the island's fertility, perhaps because they play no part in the cultural landscape, but more probably because he is so concerned to depict a still more dominant factor in the "symbolic import of scenery," the "iconography of the sea."

When matters of geographical iconography come under scrutiny, it seems there has been just one direction in which to turn since the late eighties in a field practically reinvented by the work of one man. For discussion of this matrix, therefore, we need to consult the authority of Denis Cosgrove. By exploring the symbolic landscape imagery of *Another Life* with the help of iconographic methods, it should be possible to update key spatial procedures in choropoetic practice:

The many-layered meanings of symbolic landscapes await geographical decoding. The methods available for this task are rigorous and demanding, but not fundamentally esoteric or difficult to grasp. Essentially they are those employed in all the humanities. A prerequisite is the close, detailed reading of the text, for us the landscape in all its expressions. (Cosgrove, in Gregory, *HHG* 126)

Cultural geography's *modus operandi* in the last ten years or so has been to treat landscape, as Cosgrove outlines above, as a text. Alternatively, by re-stressing the divide between word and world ignored by such an approach, there have been those who refute as utterly impossible the reading of landscape as a text. Either way, we must acknowledge that the main thrust of theorization has been largely in response or reaction to this particular axis of interpretation. *Another Life* responds positively to enquiries into the textual landscape:

Verandahs, where the pages of the sea
are a book left open by an absent master
in the middle of another life-
I begin here again,
begin until this ocean's
a shut book, and, like a bulb
the white moon's filaments wane. (AL 3)

The real sea is compared to "a book left open" and is analogically symbolic of the "absent master's" reading process. The introduction of a disembodied first-person, "I," however, coupled with the fact that we know that this is the beginning of the poem, suggests that it is the writing process that is referred to, commencing a textualization of landscape that will continue "until this ocean's a shut book." From the outset there can be no confusion; the subject's reading of the landscape will be the subject's writing of the landscape, a cultural geography by explicit definition. A few pages later we discover that the process is even reversible: while the ocean will become a text, real textbooks like "FIRST POEMS: / CAMPBELL" will take on the imagery of the sea:

And from a new book,
bound in sea-green linen, whose lines
matched the exhilaration which their reader,
rowing the air round him now, conveyed,
another life it seemed it would start again (AL 7)

A second way of joining text and seascape is introduced through the rhythmical sweep of Auguste Emmanuel's oar through the brine. The act of rowing across the ocean, the human mode of cultural transportation most obviously connected to St. Lucian experience through naval combat, enslavement and trade, is described in both Books One and Three as "pentametrical," the poetry literally rowing across the text of the sea. A juxtaposition of the passages reveals this process, which might

more simply be described as iambic rowing, in action:

Auguste, out in the harbour, lone Odysseus,
tattooed ex-merchant sailor, rows alone
through the rosebloom of dawn to chuckling oars
measured, dip, pentametrical, reciting
through narrowed eyes as his blades scissor silk,

"Ah moon / (bend, stroke)
of my delight / (bend, stroke)
that knows no wane.
The moon of heaven / (bend, stroke)
is rising once again," (AL 18)

Weakly protesting,
the oarlock's squeak, the gunwale's heaving lurch,
the pause upheld after each finished stroke,
unstudied, easy, pentametrical,
one action, and one thought. Halfway across
the chord between the downstroke of the oar
and its uplifted sigh was deepened
by a donkey's rusting winch, from Foux Lachaud,
a herring-gull's one creak, till the bay grew
too heavy for reflection. (AL 85)

The "uplifted sigh" of the blade's recovery through the air is the unstressed syllable, followed by the stressed "downstroke of the oar" completing each iambic foot. A donkey and a "herring-gull" intervene from the material landscape in this poetic metaphorization of human contact with the environment. This contact can be seen as symbolic because the active agency of Auguste in the first example and of the poet in the second, effect a temporary change in their elemental surroundings: "all landscapes carry symbolic meaning because all are products of human appropriation and transformation of the environment" (HHG 126), as Cosgrove claims.

Although it is true that this idea of the textualized sea could be extensively supported by interpreting Gregorias's paintings as textual readings of the landscape, "He frames a seascape" (AL 64), "his youngest seascape" (AL 65), we need only concentrate on the written text, looking to "the turning pages of the sea" (AL 104), "the eternal summer sea / like a book left open by an absent master" (AL 150), "the fine / writing of foam" (AL 115) or to "the ocean's catalogue / of shells and algae" (AL 98). Still sceptical, we could watch "evening fold the pages of the sea" (AL 151), and eventually conclude "for what else is there / but books,

books and the sea, / verandahs and the pages of the sea" (AL 147). In other places, water is used as a correction fluid, waiting "for the sea to erase / those names" (AL 67) or, not unlike Jean Rhys, to castigate colonial "evangelists, reformers, [and] abolitionists" whose "text was cold brook water" (AL 24). In the face of such concentration on hydroscopic and oceanic imagery we begin to close in on Walcott's sense of iconic priority: "The Caribbean is an immense ocean that just happens to have a few islands in it, . . . the people have an immense respect for it, awe of it."⁷

Fortunately, however, *Another Life* converts more than just the water to a scriptural analogy. It textualises the island landscape in other ways to underwrite its investments in cultural geography. In the following examples, the landscape attributes of forests, clouds, leaves, villages, and beaches, in that order, are symbolically turned into various textual discourses:

I watched the vowels curl from the tongue of the carpenter's plane
resinous, fragrant
labials of our forests, (AL 74)

Note after note the year was orchestrating
those wires of manuscript ruled on its clouds
till they were black with swallows quavering
for their surge north. (AL 111)

All of the epics are blown away with the leaves,
blown with the careful calculations on brown paper:
these were the only epics: the leaves. (AL 142)

the names of villages plaited into one map, (AL 134)

you had learnt by heart
the monotonous scrawl of the beaches
for years trying to reach you,
delivering the same message, Go, (AL 110)

In these pieces we see the landscape turned, respectively, into linguistics (phonology), poetry (*poiesis*), sheet music (musicology), maps (cartography) and handwriting (chirography). In the light of such extracts, the fact that Walcott reads the landscape as text, a ploy for which shorter poetry usually has scant room or desire, is beyond reasonable doubt. The best example of this analogical practice — Fitter's

third perceptual drive — is given in the chapter entitled "*West Indian Gothic*" which corrals into three stanzas all the above considerations about cultural geography, textual sign-systems, symbolization and landscape transformation. The focus here is both pedagogical and anthropological, with the vehicle of the extended metaphor being the island's roots:

here was a life older than geography,
as the leaves of edible roots opened their pages
at the child's last lesson, Africa, heart-shaped,

and the lost Arawak hieroglyphs and signs
were razed from slates by sponges of the rain,
their symbols mixed with lichen,

the archipelago like a broken root,
divided among tribes, while trees and men
laboured assiduously, silently to become

whatever their given sounds resembled (*AL* 54)

The Residual Landscape

Having glanced at some of the forms of Walcott's reading of the St. Lucian landscape as a textual practice, and becoming accustomed by now to some of the long poem's characteristic moves in its handling of space, Fitter's analogical drive would become a little tedious to cultural geographers if all it accomplished was to identify symbol after symbol in a given regional landscape. For this reason it is especially gratifying to see Cosgrove himself not only using the word "analogy" in relation to this topic, but to see him suggesting ways of advancing the argument once the general iconography of landscape has been established:

This is why the analogy of landscape to text is such a fertile one . . . And the most interesting questions concerning images have less to do with the heritage of particular images, with their specific form or structure, the media of their inscription (although these are vital stages in interpreting them) than with their contextual meaning. Landscape is no exception. As a cultural geographer I seek to interpret the meaning of a landscape as it constitutes and articulates social and environmental relationships,
(Cosgrove)⁸

It is the "contextual meaning" of the symbolic landscape as text which marks the way forward in the interpretation of "social and

environmental relationships." The political power and authority which a society invests in the visual elements of its symbolic landscape thus enables us to decode the chorophyle of a region. Apart from Cosgrove's strange claim that he provides a "threefold typology" with which to decode the symbolic landscape, his (definitely four) categories are: "dominant, residual, emergent and excluded" (*HHG* 127). Recalling Walcott's foundational claim in this poem, that "no one had yet written of this landscape / that it was possible," and supported by the tenor of the preceding claims, I want briefly to argue that the data collected through the analogical analysis represents Cosgrove's "residual" cultural formation. First, however, to justify the exclusion of the dominant, emergent and excluded configurations.

The symbolic capital raised by the St. Lucian landscape in no way upholds the cultural ritual of a "dominant" power centre: "where was the world in which we felt the centre, / our *mundo nuevo* . . . Where?" (*AL* 126). *Another Life's* recognition that the battlescape chronology of the island is a "history of ennui, defence, disease" (*AL* 70) therefore prevents our reading the text as any kind of reinforcement of independent nationhood. As argued above, this is not a passive landscape, a place of *otium* and sybaritic retreat, reflecting a complacent governmental order and finely tuned democracy, but an aimless environment in which the Old Testament morality of "an eye for an eye" prevails, a cultural landscape in which "The slowly sinking stain mapped no direction" (*AL* 25). A more memorable and appropriate analogical landscape is "the leper colony of Malgrétout," a place which survives, in its very name, "in spite of all." On the leeward side of the island, hidden away, Malgrétout is an entirely negative landscape where there is "a beach without a footprint, clear or malformed / no children, no one, on the hollow pier" (*AL* 33). There is clearly no dominance here.

If the poem contains no dominant landscape symbols, it is still less an "emergent" or "excluded" iconography. Although these terms at first seem likely candidates for the St. Lucian environment — and perhaps occasional examples could be found to support their use — the full visual context of the writing firmly precludes them. Emergent landscapes, says Cosgrove "often have a futuristic and utopian aspect to them . . . imaginative geographies . . . to anticipate future cultures and social relations" (*HHG* 132-33). Here Walcott's pessimism bites, for there is absolutely nothing anticipatory or utopian about his inscription of St. Lucia's symbolic landscape. The reverse, in fact, is true: *Another Life* is

permanently bound to the past through its imagery of memory and retrospection as "things found the memory of their former places like a film reeled backward" (AL 103), or through an alternative imagery of forgetfulness, with "forests / of history thickening with amnesia" (AL 53). Where the metaphorization is not amnesial, the island is figured as actually asleep in the past, a "sea-snoring island" reluctant to awake to present possibilities, let alone to Cosgrove's "blueprints" for the future:

Where else to row, but backward?
Beyond origins, to the whale's wash,
to the epicanthic Arawak Hewanora,
back to the impeachable pastoral,
praying the salt-scales would flake from our eyes
for a horned, sea-snoring island (AL 75)

To say that Walcott's landscape vision in *Another Life* is one that is analogical to "exclusion" is even more tempting, and postcolonial theories delight in forcing us in this direction. In this category comes that which is overlooked or unseen, the day-to-day geography of the "taken-for-granted landscape." The problem here is that this particular choropoetic text nowhere presents the St. Lucian cultural environment as invisible. On the contrary, each page details with great accuracy both the internal and external human agencies which have acted out their transformations upon the face of the land. Walcott's St. Lucia may be populated by "These dead, these derelicts, / the alphabet of the emaciated" (AL 22), more of whom in a moment, but the agency and actions of these people are precisely not negligible, for, "they were the stars of my mythology." At no point is *Another Life* itself willing to submit to the ethical retreatism of Gregorias's repetition, "PRAISE YOUR GOD, DRINK YOUR RUM, MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS" (AL 51), since, for the Walcott of both *Another Life* and *Omeros*, the contemporary, working islanders will be the real living heroes of the landscape.

Residual Many landscape elements have little of their original meaning left. Some may be devoid of any meaning whatsoever to large numbers . . . Geographers have long taken an interest in relict landscapes, generally using them as clues for the reconstruction of former geographies. But as with all historical documents, the meaning of such features for those who produced them is difficult to recover, and indeed the interpretations we make of them tell us as much about ourselves and our cultural assumptions as about their original significance.

(Cosgrove, *HHG* 131-32)

Cosgrove's fourth category under discussion here, which relates to the analogical matrix through the common ground of landscape iconography, is termed "residual." Dealing with "relict landscapes" and "residual landscape symbols," it makes both an accurate and pleasing interpretation of the contextual meaning of Walcott's iconographic practice in *Another Life*. According to this approach, the poem can now be read as a reactivation of the socially symbolic landscape in a process of extended recovery or historical geography of the region. In terminology more pertinent to this thesis, we can see it as the recovery of an ancient St. Lucian chorophyle in order to update the present one. Cosgrove warns us above that although the original landscape elements, or symbolic relics may be "devoid of any meaning whatsoever to large numbers" the recovery of their past symbolic codes is nevertheless a worthwhile project since they will tell us a great deal about our own symbolic environment. Walcott, it seems, is at great pains to do just this, as his project of Adamic naming continues through the book to the very last page:

Gregorias listen, lit,
we were the light of the world!
We were blest with a virginal, unpainted world
with Adam's task of giving things their names,
with the smooth white walls of clouds and villages
where you devised your inexhaustible,
impossible Renaissance, (AL 152)

By the end of the poem the re-naissance or rebirth of the symbolic capital which was once everywhere operative in the form of Arawak hieroglyphs and in the power of the old indigenous names given to the vegetation, has been partially completed by the poet and the painter. By adhering to their sworn pact "to put down in paint, in words" Cosgrove's "residual landscape symbols" in the form of "every neglected, self-pitying inlet" and "*goyave, corrossol, bois-canot, sapotille*," a reawakening of the relic landscape has taken place. We are encouraged in this belief through Walcott's admission that St. Omer's skill was beyond his own:

His work was grotesque, but whole,
and however bad it became
it was his, he possessed
aboriginal force and it came
as the carver came out of the wood.
Now, every landscape we entered
was already signed with his name. (AL 59)

For a more detailed analysis of the contemporary long poem in the light of Cosgrove's thinking on landscape studies — including iconographic source work from Erwin Panofsky, Raymond Williams, John Berger and Clifford Geertz — it would be beneficial to apply the techniques described in *The Iconography of Landscape*.⁹ The completion of this task, which would involve geometrical, rhetorical, cartographic and influential readings of the St. Lucian landscape in order to assess what Walcott chose to omit or include in his ideological representation, is somewhat beyond the scope of the present framework. However, this should not prevent us from recognizing the potential of such analogical and iconographic readings for future texts. Finally, if landscape theory is powerful for the very range of its symbolically aware practices, it is also relativizing and disposable. Gregorias's success in moving from place to place, capturing vista after vista in oil and acrylic, and signing "every landscape with his name" is ultimately an ephemeral attempt to grasp the ungraspable. In some ways, Gregorias's reiterable landscape results are less hopeful than Walcott's acknowledged failures. They serve as a salutary reminder that:

From such a post-modern perspective landscape seems less like a palimpsest whose 'real' or 'authentic' meanings can somehow be recovered with the correct techniques, theories and ideologies, than a flickering text displayed on the word-processor screen whose meaning can be created, extended, altered, elaborated and finally obliterated by the merest touch of a button.
(Cosgrove and Daniels)¹⁰

2.4 Cultural Landscape and the Technoptic Matrix.

Our final category of perception is the 'technoptic.' . . . much that we 'perceive' in landscape will in fact be the gratifying recognition within the natural manifold of certain elements identified according to codes of beauty learned in our experience of art. Topographical description in graphic art is thus better defined as a proceeding of 'Art into Landscape' than 'Landscape into Art,' since painters repaint the painted: a recognition, as Gombrich points out, dating back at least to Richard Payne Knight. (Fitter, *PSL* 23)

After this Wildean start of which we make what we will, Fitter goes on to give various examples of the way in which landscape perception is more conditioned by repeated aesthetic conventions than by actual scientific observation. Citing artists from Brueghel and Poussin to the

American landscapist, Samuel B. Morse, he never quite succeeds in returning to the contribution of Richard Payne Knight, above, who, given the symptomatic title of his offering, is of more than passing interest here.

Richard Knight's long poem, *The Landscape*,¹¹ which runs in excess of thirteen hundred lines and was written in September 1793, is an object lesson in the way a thoroughly marginal literary text has been reinvented simply because it crosses postmodern aesthetic and geographical boundaries. A late example of the extended neo-classical debate on the nature of the "picturesque" between Knight himself, Uvedale Price, Humphrey Repton and William Gilpin, the main text of the actual poem itself is little more than a vessel for its openly propagandist advertisement, notes, and postscript which run, fantastically, to almost three times its length. However, given that the subjects of the main narrative are treated with such high seriousness and include such crucial imperatives as the best way to improve a landscaped vista, the pros and cons of the *jardin francais* versus the *jardin anglais*, the immeasurable merits of the kitchen garden over the lawn, the sure impossibility of benefitting from "clumps" (L 33), the "*new system of improving by neglect*" (L 48) or simply the "sacreligious" avoidance of pruning (L 71), perhaps it is not surprising that Knight and Repton became the thinly veiled Squire Headlong and Mr. Milestone of Thomas Love Peacock's *Headlong Hall*: "'I perceive,' said Mr. Milestone, after they had walked a few paces, 'these grounds have never been touched by the finger of taste.'"¹²

The notes to *The Landscape* also contain much material that is hard to take seriously: the pompous, "I cannot attribute the misinterpretation of it to want of intellect" (L 10); the politically incorrect, "popular among a people who had no principles of true taste" (L 65); the hyperbolic, "Curse on the pedant jargon, that defines / Beauty's unbounded forms to given lines!" (L 6); the racially offensive, "attitudes of savages are in general graceful and spirited" (L 3); and no small measure of platitudinous nonsense, "*a little knowledge is a dangerous thing*" (L 103).

For all these attributes so inimical to the 1990s, *The Landscape: A Didactic Poem in Three Books Addressed to Uvedale Price, Esq.* remains, notwithstanding, a useful marker in discussion of the technoptic matrix. First, it exemplifies a genuine choropoetic practice, trying to answer exactly the same initial spatial question as Walcott in *Another Life*, "How best to bid the verdant Landscape rise" (L 1); but more importantly, it

provides a comparative text with which to explore questions of the long poem's unfolding generic influence on itself and its continued use of set-piece spatial motifs. The question we can formulate in response is lengthy, but pertinent: how much does *Another Life*, which itself employs tropes common to other contemporary long poems, owe its depiction of the cultural landscape directly to reusable spatial *topoi* that have been engaged in long poems through the ages as poetic devices, instead of to the objective geomorphology of the St. Lucian habitat itself? Does *Another Life* in 1973 use any chorological motifs found in *The Landscape* of 1793?

Listing the Landscape

Let the rich lime-tree shade the broken mound,
And the thin birch and hornbeam play around:
Willows and alders overhang the stream,
And quiver in the sun's reflected beam.
Let the broad wyche your ample lawns divide,
And whittey glitter up the mountain's side;
The hardy whittey, that o'er Cambrian snows
Beams its red glare, and in bleak winter glows:
Let the light ash its wanton foliage spread
Against the solemn oak's majestic head;
And where the giant his high branches heaves,
Loose chestnuts intermix their pointed leaves;
While tufted thorns and hazels shoot below,
And yews and hollies deep in shadow grow. (Knight, *L* 74)

Ajax,
lion-coloured stallion from Sealey's stable,
by day a cart-horse, a thoroughbred
.....

Berthilia,
the frog-like, crippled crone,
a hump on her son's back, is carried
.....

Choiseul,
surly chauffeur from Clauzel's garage,
bangs Troy's gate shut!
.....

Darnley,
skin freckled like a mango leaf,
feels the sun's fingers press his lids. (Walcott, *AL* 16-8)

The documentary list in the long poem is the first of three major technoptic devices which link the two examples above to a distinct spatial chorology rather than to a temporal narration. The list, tracing its roots back to oral tradition via the form of the long poem, was originally, of course, a mnemonic device. As with the shopping list, the order of sequence is not primarily significant, the only important consideration being that no items are forgotten. Thus the A - Z display of Walcott's "alphabet of the emaciated," with E - Z following A - D as above, is more an *aide memoire* or lexical game than a logical necessity.

The list is primarily a static and immobile enumeration. It is a flamingo-like rhetorical device in more ways than one, fixed to a single point but equipped with panoptical perimeter vision. Beginning with the tree and bird-catalogues in Homer's "Calypso,"¹³ it is linked as we shall see, to the two other key structural features of the long poem which have remained essentially unchanged through the centuries: the travelogue and the *locus amoenus*.

Peritopos, the flower or tree catalogue, entails the deliberate prevention of *peripateia*, the journey around. Put more aphoristically — Scheherazade's tactic no less than Calypso's — the list is the spatial deferral of time. The list undermines linear progression through strategies of arbitrary dispersal, and in the guise of inventory or schedule goes on to become a major component of the medieval *occupatio*, and an essential ploy of the *digressio* or excursus, often in its depiction of stock tableaux or scaena. Walcott's major use of the documentary list above, no less a part of the long poem today than ever, takes the form of a social register of people rather than plants (a cultural rather than a natural geography), but is nonetheless derived from the flora and fauna flower-catalogue of which the third book of *The Landscape* is possibly the apogee. The catalogue, register, inventory or list lends itself naturally to the space of the extended poetic form not because it needs the temporal duration provided by the genre for chronological progress, but because it is one of the best ways, even in the earliest oral examples, to use chorological coda to subvert closure and *telos* and thus to prevent Odysseus from returning to Ithaca.

The Greek preposition and prefix "peri," however, apart from signifying proximity and nearness to describe what is visually "around" or scopically "concerning" us from a static viewpoint (the perimetrical), is also used in the same way as the Latin intensifier "per" to imply a physical movement throughout a region (perambulation), hence the

classical *peripateia*,¹⁴ a "treading through" and our modern version, "peripatetic," a travelling around or journeying from place to place. This alternative frame of reference brings us to the second of the long poem's conventional *topoi*, again a relatively narrow field of human geography, the physical excursus or travelogue.

Travelling through Landscape

Jerome claimed that there was a "thirst in mankind to look into the unknown" and the epic poem has rarely been perceived as epic without some kind of circuitous voyage, circumnavigation or quest narrative, be it physical, spiritual, or simply imaginary. Contrary to popular expectations, though, the journey as a motif does not necessarily imply a reintroduction of temporal progression, or a teleology per se. Deriving originally from Pausanias' *periegesis* or travel itinerary and continued in the *hodoeporicon* or Renaissance travel verse, the travelogue as demonstrated by both long poems under scrutiny here accomplishes instead what Kroetsch calls "an elaborate grammar of delay" and *Another Life* again seeks a cultural alteration to the anticipated aesthetic norms. "Provincialism" Walcott jibes, "loves the pseudo-epic" (*AL* 41).

Knight's poem presents a reasoned argument which asserts what, in his opinion, are desirable modifications to the eighteenth-century landscape aesthetic, more properly as Fitter reminds us, to the "landskip" aesthetic, since he is "signifying the concern in [painting or] poetry specifically for the technique of pictorial naturalism" (*PSL* 25). As such Payne Knight is setting up an aesthetic ideal and uses the device of the imaginary journey epideictically, not as a description of a real approach he has made himself to a single country estate in particular, but as a general signpost to a theoretical best practice of "ideal approachability." Since this sounds more than a little abstract, here are the accentual-syllabic pentameters in full swing:

First fix the points to which you wish to go;
Then let your easy path spontaneous flow;
With no affected turn or artful bend,
To lead you round still farther from the end:
For, as the principle of taste is sense,
Whate'er is void of meaning gives offence.
"But in your grand approach," the critic cries,
"Magnificence requires some sacrifice:-

"As you advance unto the palace gate,
"Each object should announce the owner's state;
"His vast possessions, and his wide domains;
"His waving woods, and rich unbounded plains."
He, therefore, leads you many a tedious round,
To shew the extent of his employer's ground;
Climbs o'er the hills, and to the vales descends;
Then mounts again, through lawn that never ends.

But why not rather, at the porter's gate,
Hang up the map of all my lord's estate,
Than give his hungry visiters the pain
To wander o'er so many miles in vain?
For well we know this sacrifice is made,
Not to his taste, but to his vain parade;
And all it does, is but to shew combined
His wealth in land, and poverty in mind. (L 12-13)

In accordance with the development of the long poem's technoptic *topoi*, a similarly pseudo-epic "vain parade" is made in *Another Life*, but in this case, although her "coast threading captain / hums, 'La vie c'est un voyage,'" the daily sailing of the "Jewel, a single stack, diesel, forty-foot coastal vessel" around the ports of St. Lucia by Captaine Foquarde is all too real (AL 32-40).

In stark contrast to Knight, Walcott's description of the *Jewel's* journey round the island is very far removed from the province of a vain imaginary "landskip" sensibility.¹⁵ This is replaced instead by a deliberate focalization on the full horror of the poverty and disease — lives lived in vain — through which the schooner sails: "That very special reek, / tristes, tristes tropiques" (AL 38). In chapter 6 of the first book, which is given over to the description of the Conradian journey around "Sancta Lucia, / an island brittle / as a Lenten biscuit" (AL 35), Walcott is working thoroughly within the technoptic matrix of repeating recognisable generic motifs not because he wishes to celebrate the nationhood of a dominant epic chorophyle, but because his landscape perception is sketching a cultural and political geography, rather than a naturo-descriptive aesthetics. Such a position can similarly be conceived as didactic or epideictic, but is more overtly motivated by a subversionary politics than the eighteenth century text ever dare be.

As a member of the manorial aristocracy of the Welsh borders, beyond the aesthetic and into the political is a realm into which Knight, for fear of inciting an English republican revolt in the wake of the recent French Revolution, expressly dare not go. The very last lines of his postscript specifically entreat Price and others not to "suppose that the preservation of trees and terraces has any connection with the

destruction of states and kingdoms" (L 104) and so, in anticipation of Pater, *The Landscape* must be read for its own sake. However, Knight's arresting recognition that landscape gardening could function as some kind of spatial metaphor for the systematics of government is a particularly interesting thought and one which has already unwound itself in relation to the respective Whig and Tory sensibilities of the period. Ann Bermingham has written specifically on this aspect of the Knight/Price debate and summarizes the key ideas as follows:

Clearly systematic forms of gardening or government were distasteful, and the connection in Price's mind between the two is a good example of the way in which landscape design functioned as a political metaphor. The practice of [Capability] Brown and his followers to clear prospects so as to open views and vistas within the garden to the landscape outside it was seen by Price as equivalent to the leveling tendencies of democratic governments and revolutions. . . . The prospect landscape therefore became a sign if not of French principles then at least of their consequences. (Bermingham)¹⁶

In certain ways Uvedale Price's affirmation — and Richard Knight's denial — that the landscape is socially symbolic and therefore a political tool is well ahead of its time and seems to anticipate Carl Sauer's famous introduction of the term "cultural landscape" over a hundred years later in his 1925 landmark essay, "The Morphology of Landscape":

The cultural landscape is the geographic area in the final meaning (Chore). Its forms are all the works of man that characterize the landscape. Under this definition we are not concerned in geography with the energy, customs, or beliefs of man but with man's record upon the landscape. . . .

The cultural landscape is fashioned from a natural landscape by a culture group. Culture is the agent, the natural area is the medium, the cultural landscape the result. Under the influence of a given culture, itself changing through time, the landscape undergoes development, passing through phases, and probably reaching ultimately the end of its cycle of development. With the introduction of a different — that is, an alien — culture, a rejuvenation of the cultural landscape sets in, or a new landscape is superimposed on remnants of an older one. (Sauer)¹⁷

The applicability of Sauer's last point here about the superimposition of a new "alien" cultural landscape over the "remnants" of an older one obviously relates closely to the landscape practices we have seen in *Another Life* and confirms the discussion of Cosgrove's "residual" landscape above. Whereas Knight shies away from the politics of

landscape representation and uses the motif of the *peripateia* as an imaginary aesthetic travelscape, Walcott seizes upon it to foreground the abject morphological effects on the landscape of colonization. In theory we learn that the enunciative function of the spatial device of the journey can therefore swing from pole to pole, here aesthetic, there political. In practice, however, it is enough to recognize that the travelogue still finds its place in the structure of the recent long poem.

The Amenable Landscape

Our final term of interest to the technoptic matrix and to both poems under consideration, and one which cannot be avoided in discussion of the inherited spatial techniques of the long poem, is the *locus amoenus*. The depiction of a pleasant or fertile glebe, a leafy glade or a spiritually uplifting locale has long been a spatial motif of the genre, just as its opposite, the *locus vilis* or wasteland has also become a recognized set piece. The Victorian cult for the "beauty spot" or for "picturesque bits" is a latter day relation of the *locus amoenus*, including in Britain emblemata such as "abbeys, ancient places, birches, brooks, canals, cattle, churches, cottages, crags, crosses, dingles, farms, ferns, foxgloves, gables, ivy, lanes, locks, oaks, ponds, rustic bridges, rustics at work, tombs, watermills, windmills, walls and woods."¹⁸

The praise and approval of a given place, often during the creation of a *paradisi simulacrum* (earthly paradise), *imago mundi* (reflection of the world) or *paysage moralisé* (moral landscape) thus contrasts with the alternative landscape conventions of the *agri deserti* (barren land), *horror sylvanum* (Gothic woodscape) and *incomposita terra* (untilled expanse). While all of these *topoi* have specific flora and fauna associated with them, usually exhibiting, as above, a lengthy chronicle of attachment between given objects and material place, it is nevertheless difficult to avoid the purely subjective moral distinction between a place which is simply liked or approved of and one that is disliked or somehow contemptible. So profuse and powerful is the *de natura locorum* tradition of poetic *ekphrasis* in this mode, that it is tempting when faced by any long poem, contemporary or classical, simply to run it through a locative deconstructive process in order to situate the *loci amoeni* against the *loci viles*.

Although huge advances can be claimed for the formal

representation of landscape in the modern and the postmodern long poem alike, it is perhaps interesting to note that neither the *loci amoeni* nor *loci viles* motifs have been completely abandoned; to do so would be a practical impossibility for a true choropoetics in any case, necessitating the stripping of a spatial ethics from the perception of landscape, and by extension from the poetic signification of place. Perhaps it is hard to imagine, for example, Eliot's *The Waste Land* or Olson's *The Maximus Poems* stripped of their ethics of place. In actual fact, this formulation makes more sense in reverse: choropoetics derives its ethical stance through the moral qualities it attaches to locality. Only in the context of a proper understanding of landscape's historical *topoi* can the moral aspect of a chorophyle therefore be approached. The technoptic drive, although simply repeating the superficial motifs it has learned in art and poetry, is not necessarily an amoral concern.

As a treatise on aristocratic "good taste" regarding landskip written purely to "cultivate alone the happy arts of peace" (L 93), Knight's poem drives hard in two places towards the moral rectitude of the *locus amoenus*. In Book One, Knight argues against the "dressed," "Brownian landscape" of "Mr.Repton" and his associates, favouring a classical "undressed" landscape in which the "stately mansion" hoves into prospect "Through the rough thicket or the flowery mead; / . . . bursting from some deep-imbowered shade, / Some narrow valley, or some opening glade" (L 15). Even in the eighteenth century, these are surely still the thickets, meads and glades of the classical *locus amoenus* and Knight, in an almost postmodern gesture, even provides the reader with two soft ground etchings by the illustrator, Thomas Hearn, in case his poetry fails to conjure the differences between Launcelot (Capability) Brown's vision and his own *nouveau* picturesque vividly enough.

The early Romantic equivalent of Wyndham Lewis' Vorticist blasting and blessing in 1914-5, Knight's argument expands in scale to become even clearer in Book Three where Britain as a whole nation becomes the *locus amoenus* in an appalling display of xenophobic superiority. According to *The Landscape* Britain exhibits none of the stereotypical traits of the *locus vilis* to be found overseas. The short extract below serves well enough to show how this is done, but in reality the comparison of the English rurally sublime with the "pestilential" vileness of foreign lands lasts for almost two hundred lines:

Bless'd land! — though no soft tints of pearly hue
 Mellow the radiance of the morning dew, —
 And melt the tender distance to the eye,
 In one clear tinge of varied harmony: —
 Yet guiltless, autumn breathes its sultry breath,
 Nor taints the breezes with contagious death;
 No fen-suck'd vapours rise, and nightly shed
 Their deadly damps around the peasant's head;
 No poisonous reptiles o'er his pillows creep,
 Nor buzzing insects interrupt his sleep:
 Secure, at noon, he snores beneath the brake,
 Nor fears, diseased, with feverous pulse to wake;
 Nor e'er, at night, in restless anguish lies
 Amidst the hums of pestilential flies. (L 84-85)

The list of alien horrors which England's "brooks," "pastures" and "streams" need never face goes on in all sincerity to include foreign "gulfs of subterraneous fire," "earthquakes" which "show the mountains tottering on his head," "parch'd beds" and "shrivelled bowers." These general complaints, however, are nothing compared to the *loci viles* of certain named members of the current EEC, although "e'en in Belgian skies" Knight has to confess there is some "brilliance," and "Holland's damp and marshy downs" are not always "the dreary waste" (L 88). For the ultimate *locus vilis*, however, and thus the absolute antipodes to merry England, the section describing "Kamtschatka's ever dreary coast" is eclipsed only by Knight's note on that unfortunate country:¹⁹

v.349. No part of Kamtschatka will ripen wheat, and very few parts any farinaceous grain whatever.— The general food of the inhabitants is dried fish and berries. The country is torn by volcanoes, earthquakes, and hurricanes; and so cold, during seven months, that they live under ground; and so wet during the other five, that they are obliged to raise their huts upon stages of wood. The snow lies till the middle of May, even in the lower parts, from six to eight feet deep; and of course, when thawed, produces a continued deluge, till it begins to accumulate again in October.

(L 89)

Once again it is the durational length of the long poem which comes to the rescue and extended verifications or vilifications like these, for or against a particular landscape, are rare. The *locus amoenus* and its oppositional partner more often occupy a far more limited space in the overall narrative, and reports suggest that, unlike their twentieth-century counterparts for example, an educated late-medieval audience would clearly recognize the trope after the first few lines in any case, thus rendering its pursuance narratively redundant.

"Boy! Name the great harbours of the world!"
 "Sydney! Sir."
 "San Franscesco!"
 "Naples, sah!"
 "And what about Castries?"
 "Sah, Castries ees a coaling station and
 der twenty-seventh best harba in der worl'!
 In eet the entire Breetesh Navy can be heeden!"
 "What is the motto of Saint Lucia, boy?"
 "Statio haud malefida carinis."
 "Sir!"
 "Sir!"
 "And what does that mean?"
 "Sir, a safe anchorage for sheeps!" (AL 29-30)

The harbour, signifying a safe mooring from the storms of the open sea, fresh supplies and recuperation, has been from as early as the eighth century BC a stock example of the *locus amoenus*. From the *Odyssey* (9.136-41) to the *Aeneid* (1.158-69) to Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (11.228) and the frescoes of Pompeii depicting vast harbour scenes, the celebration of the port's utility and serviceability has been a standard digressive *topos*.²⁰ As such, it is a perfect site for postcolonial tactics of parody, and Walcott uses it in addition to the Virgilian tag and St. Lucian motto, "'*Statio haud malefida carinis*'" to ridicule the naive delight with which the inhabitants of the island have pursued a European education in the hope of escaping the poverty for which that continent is held responsible. The implicit ironies in the fact that Walcott himself took pride in a Western education are not lost in the text; nor is the fact that there is a woolly emblem of the English pastoral *locus amoenus* mistakenly finding its way into Castries harbour. Ship may as well have been sheep,²¹ since this is an imperial history, sanctioned only by the colonists and learned by rote. The indigenous signifiers are replaced by a decontextualized Western nonsense of statistics and quotations, from Virgil to geography. Walcott wallows self-indulgently in this inversion of the classical harbour *topos* which he has moved tactically from *amoenus* to *vilis*. As in the second *locus vilis* description of Castries below as a "[B]roken, decrepit port," which creolizes Conrad's *Lord Jim* to "Tuan Jim," both examples occur within a human, educational framework, and are therefore once more mapped as a cultural, rather than a natural geography of *Another Life*.

At Canaries,
the sea's steel razor
shines.

Broken, decrepit port
for some rum-eyed romantic,
his empire's secret rusting in a sea-chest,

tarred, tattered coconuts,
an exile's niche
for some Tuan Jim, "a water-clerk under a cloud" (AL 36)

A word of caution is required here, as the date at which the *locus amoenus* proper dropped out of European literature is a matter of some debate and it would scandalize some to see it used at all in the contemporary arena. Curtius has it extending beyond Fitter's Church Fathers into the depths of the medieval Romance forest where the three original Elysian elements of breezes, flowers and birdsong can still be traced,²² but Fitter is more cynical and is reluctant to admit the technoptic motif beyond the twelfth century with "the endless, monotonous recycling of the *locus amoenus* by late antique and high medieval Christian poets alike" (PSL 226). Confusions arise even before early Renaissance dreamscapes and paeans to the four seasons have come into play, between the Anglo-Saxon *locus felix* and the medieval flowerscape of the ubiquitous spring ekphrasis. To say that there are vestigial traces of it in the late twentieth century, in Walcott and his contemporaries, even in parody, therefore approaches the claim that the "Places of Outstanding Natural Beauty" on today's Ordnance Survey Maps are likewise traceable to Calypso's grotto.

Even in black and white, however, this last thought seems not indefensible. Perhaps the contemporary long poem's social geography of the "local amenity" (cf. Paterson, "Sunday in the Park," "The Library")²³ really is just the cultural mapping of what was once the natural *locus amoenus*.

The list, the journey and the *locus amoenus*, then, are all technoptic survivors in the contemporary long poem because they are "codes of beauty," literally the technical (*techne*) mechanics of verse, which we have learned in previous long poems and landscape paintings. Without trying too hard, three similarly technoptic readings of *Another Life* could have traced the name of the Schooner, the "M.V. Jewel" and Walcott's use of precious stone imagery to "the motif of bejewelled waters" (PSL 207); the poet's trance sequence in chapter 7 of "The

Divided Child" with the proto-Christian epiphanic landscape of the burning bush; or even Walcott's twelve usages of the leitmotif "verandah" as learned liminal prospect of the ascetic retreatist landscape.

Thus, reminded of Fitter's formulation of "Art into Landscape" rather than "Landscape into Art," and returning to Wilde's fogs, we should now all be able to create lists, journeys and *loci amoeni* in our own landscapes of life, or as Buttimer calls them, "lifeworlds"²⁴ where there were none before. Our mode of landscape perception, in line with this argument, is now aesthetically conditioned to seeing these technoptic forms in our own contemporary environment.

2.5 Landscape Choropoetics: Summary

Precisely because of its regional and visual investments, landscape awareness is the second core element of choropoetics. Approaches to the long poem which make full use of landscape theory gain immediate access to the spatial practices of the text. Fitter's methodology is far from perfect — it makes historical concessions of which the author is well aware and it ends in the seventeenth century — but it nevertheless converts into a powerful reading strategy for late-twentieth-century texts. The chorological reading practice I propose for the analysis of choropoetics thus updates Fitter's "matrices" for contemporary poetry:

- (1) "Ecological Matrix." Is the natural landscape represented by the long poem "open" (prospect) or "closed" (refuge)? What "territorial feeling" for the environment is expressed in the focalizer's relation to vegetation, meteorology, the horizon, zoology, and oceanography?
- (2) "Cosmographic Matrix." Is there any evidence of wider religious or philosophical belief systems being involved in the depiction of the of the regional landscape? Perhaps there are logico-mathematical, animistic, religious-anagogical or temporal expectations at work?
- (3) "Analogical Matrix." The cultural landscape of a region may exhibit signs of symbolic or iconic importance. How does the long poem mediate and re-present such allegorical correspondences? What part is played by metaphors of space, place and geography in the textual landscape of the long poem ("the landscape of the page")? Lastly, is the reader having to deal with a dominant, emergent, excluded or residual depiction of the environment?

- (4) "Technoptic Matrix." If the contemporary long open form still uses recognisable spatial motifs (list, journey, locus felix and so on), are these the same conventional *topoi* used by centuries of long poems? Do they mark any changes in aesthetic sensibility, politics, or alterations in the historical representation of identity?

The application of landscape geography to the present-day long poem is not without its difficulties. On the one hand, any privileging of the visual gaze has in itself come under persistent attack from psychoanalytic and feminist critics. On the other, there is the association of landscape with certain recondite and elitist conceptions of the author as the sole creator of a unified vision and meaning. Such a reputation is not helped by the prevalence of latinate and classical terms in the historical discourses of landscape art and landscape poetry. Ultimately, however, a focus on landscape practice that works within the bounds of a theoretically-informed cultural awareness, remains an indispensable and irreplaceable part of chorological interpretation.

PART II

AMERICAN SPATIAL PRACTICE

Introduction to Part II

The choice of Ed Dorn's *Gunslinger*, written in four books over a period of seven years (1968-1975) was not difficult. Despite the reissue of the full text in 1989 with a new introduction by Marjorie Perloff,¹ the poem still only attracts a limited readership. However, Dorn's Black Mountain engagement with human geography is well known and his sympathy for the Berkeley School² in general — and Carl Ortwin Sauer in particular — was traced in his first long work, *Idaho Out*.

Idaho Out was published separately as a book-length poem by the Fulcrum Press in 1965,³ just as *Briggflatts* would be for Bunting the following year. At 534 lines, however, it falls into the oxymoronic category of "short long poem" and cannot quite find a place in this study.⁴ This is a shame on two counts: not only is it unerringly descriptive of the Idaho and Montana geographies providing numerous possibilities for spatial readings but it also appears in Dorn's best early collection, simply entitled, *Geography*.⁵ That Dorn should choose this title as the container for his early attempt at a seriously geographical long poem comes as no surprise, but the fact that his poem opens with a dedication to Carl Sauer is the icing on the cake: "The thing to be known is the natural landscape. It becomes known through the totality of its forms."⁶

In fact both *Idaho Out* and Dorn's second long poem "Oxford" (653 lines, 1967)⁷ are crying out for choropoetic readings as the most powerful way of understanding their textual practices: length aside, either one could certainly have been used as the basis of a chorological reading for issues relating to the consumption of space. Fortunately, however, we have the "marvellous accidentalism" of *Gunslinger* which, at exactly two hundred pages, dwarfs its competitors in elegance and scope.

The study of Brathwaite in chapter 1 concerned the production of space from within the specific chorophyle of a region and the influence of regional spatial expectations on the writing of the contemporary long poem. Chapter 3, by contrast, focuses on the consumption of choropoetic space and the material influence of the environment in which the long poem is read. Whereas Henri Lefebvre was the key witness in the first argument, we now resort to the work of Michel de Certeau and particularly to that writer's most influential text, *The Practice of*

Everyday Life.⁸ The latter entails a similarly materialist concept of social space, but recognizes in relief the power of ordinary "users" of space. Theories relating to the "consumption of space" (3.1) address the normal uses of socialized space for retail, recreation, labour and housing. More important than these, however, is a fifth type of spatial consumption which returns critical theory to more familiar territory: reading. Following de Certeau's claim that reading is itself a "fundamental" aspect of consumption, the first section of the chapter links reading to tourism (recreation) as the major way in which space is consumed in *Gunslinger*.

Picking up the work of Erik Cohen, section 2.2 examines Dorn's group of characters, or "pleiad," as phenomenological consumers of touristic space. I question whether the Gunslinger and his travelling companions should be seen as "recreational," "diversionary," "experiential," "experimental" or "existential" tourist-consumers, and attempt to gauge the level of spatial behaviour they exhibit on their drug-induced "trip" through the poem. A number of the text's spatial practices are exposed by adopting this all-consuming approach to Dorn's "ABSOLUTE LINGUATILT SURVEY SITE" (G 141). Recreational space raises issues of centrality ("centering") alongside the travellers' ever-changing perception of distance. It also seeks to determine whether the group are in search of an "authentic" or "inauthentic" touristic experience. The diversionary mode considers links between the meaningfulness of home space and the meaningfulness of foreign space and asks if the travellers become alienated on their way West. Alternatively, are the occupants of the stagecoach merely escaping the boredom of their own home territories? Moving on, it is also clear that the Gunslinger and his "amigos" are sometimes described as pilgrims — which would make them experiential consumers of space. This mode attempts to discover the depth of engagement being sought in the cultures, lifestyles and religions of the inhabitants encountered on the journey. Is there an impossible gulf in perception between the traveller and the dweller or merely a gap to be bridged? The experimental traveller is the "drifter" or "ideal" traveller: it is the job of this sub-section to look for candidates who exhibit a more open attitude to spatial consumption. Lastly, the existential tourist is the person who deliberately seeks a radical change in lifestyle and emigrates to what Cohen calls an "elective external centre." Is there a culture shock involved in this attitude to newly-experienced space? Such are the questions raised by addressing *Gunslinger* with a geography of consumption.

Having posited "The Reader as Consumer" and "The Consumer as Tourist," section 3.3 closes the circle by examining "The Tourist as Reader." This section asks how the characters in the poem read the space they encounter during their journey to Nevada. I argue that both the space and the text of *Gunslinger* are consumed according to Parmenidean principles. By tracing individual words and lines of the poem back through their Eleatic heritage to Parmenides's long poem, *On Nature*, I suggest that Dorn's "fenomenal" tourists read space according to the "way of truth." In the process of this argument an important piece of spatial evidence comes to light which anticipates the topographical concerns of chapter 5 and cements the choropoetic stance. Section 3.4 makes the usual chorological summary.

In her American poetry of the 1980s and 1990s, Susan Howe (b.1937) brings an astonishing number of issues relevant to the long poem "TOGETHER (Urgently)" (*ET* 187). On the one hand she fuses the breathing politics of Olsonian projectivism ("Space steps into breath," *ET* 29) with a recuperation of American and European feminisms ("Mass migration of women," *ET* 122); on the other, she articulates West Coast San Francisco L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poetics with second-wave "disjunctive procedures of the poets associated with the New York School."⁹ She is happy at once to mix Wallace Stevens's organic naturalism with a Williams-Zukofsky concrete objectivism, yet still manages, like "A PENDULUM SWUNG BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES" (*ET* 163) to make the whole performance cohere. Unwilling to let any page space escape her, she moves marginalia centre-stage and relegates much of the American canon to the wings. There are similarities in her use of radical open form with other female language poets (Hejinian, Scalapino, Fraser, Waldrop) but differences in her heavily revisionist use of named, historical intertexts. Having trained in Fine Art, like Walcott, Howe steers a steady course between painting and poetry and poetry and theory; like Brathwaite, however, she favours the articulated sequence of the open trilogy. More urgently than any of these comparisons in the present context, however, she brings ancient manuscripts into the postmodern age, and space into contact with time.

Pythagorean Silence (1982) is a long poem in its own right, but it is also the first of three open forms collected in *The Europe of Trusts* (1990). Having attracted more critical attention than its partners to date, it is itself tripartite in structure. Part I, "Pearl Harbour," is an

unnumbered twelve page retrospective, written on the day of the Japanese invasion of Oahu,¹⁰ which simultaneously traces the private childhood visit of the poet and her father to the zoo at Buffalo, New York State. Part II, "Pythagorean Silence" itself, is a seventeen section reworking of Pythagorean doctrine from the Presocratic fragments of Samos (Dodecanese) and Colon (Southern Italy), written in unevenly accented couplets with white spaces used to echo the caesuras of the original Greek meter. Finally, Part III, untitled, is a demanding open form *bricolage* of key visually-arranged signs. These reiterate and recompress the same word forms that have just scrolled past the reader's eyes in the earlier sections. Echoing the heavily substantive poetics of Gertrude Stein's badly neglected long poem, *Stanzas in Meditation*,¹¹ it tests the reader for fourteen paratactical pages in a constructivist riddle which finds us "Moving in solitary symbols through shadowy / surmises" (*ET* 74).

Chapter 4 argues that time is fundamental to space in the long poem. It also maintains that space-time (or time-space) analysis can help readers of the long poem with the sheer length and quantity of choropoetic texts. Section 4.1 opens with a juxtaposition of four space-time quotations from Susan Howe, Joseph Frank, Murray Melbin and Doreen Massey and considers the influence of their thinking on the study of *Pythagorean Silence* which follows. All of these writers underline the necessity of a four dimensional (4-D) space-time approach to literary and geographical research. The following sections of the chapter convert these aspects of time geography into spatial practices for reading the long poem. To accomplish this I use three different models.

Douglas Janelle's conception of "time-space compression" (4.2), a phrase which has passed seamlessly into the vocabulary of much postmodern thought, makes a distinction between "time-space convergence" and "time-space-divergence." I argue firstly that these processes are frequently used by the poet on the page, and secondly that it is the discontinuity of compression rates that makes the contemporary long poem so demanding. This first spatial reading practice reminds the reader of the care with which the typography of long poems must be analysed in relation to the concepts they sign.

Anthony Giddens's "time-space distanciation" model (4.3), part of his general "structuration theory" of social interaction, can also be used as a reading practice to analyse the space of the long poem. The identification of "intersocietal systems" at work between six different

"fictive spheres" of Howe's poem suggests ways of implementing this new interpretive process. The concomitant idea of distanciation leads to discussion of "time-space edges" in *Pythagorean Silence* and the four forms they take. Distinguishing between four distinct types of time-space edge, I argue that these are responsible for the neglected dimension of depth in the long poem. Time-geographic approaches are uniquely valuable in "disembedding" the hidden spaces between the societies described and this "structuralist" approach is applied under the final heading of section 4.3.

Whilst Janelle and Giddens are comparative late-comers to the field of time geography, the work of Torsten Hägerstrand and the Lund School provide its very foundations. Section 4.4 represents an attempt to bring Hägerstrand's initial concept of "spatial diffusion" to the long poem as a method of understanding the spatial layout and quantity of its innovatory practices. The early pages of the section explain some of the key expressions of Lund spatial discourse such as "available indicators," "areal distributions" and the "mean information field." The main thrust of the argument then devises a provisional "textual model of innovation diffusion" by outlining five guidelines for the mapping of the long poem's innovatory practices. There are five components to the model I outline: the qualification of selection criteria; the representation that the results should take (fig. 1); the quantification of "events" per "page-cell;" the comparison of results; and the methods of analysis to be adopted. The remainder of this section maps three "diffusion indicators" in *Pythagorean Silence* which seek to demonstrate the proposed model in action. The innovatory practices I choose are Howe's radical use of parenthesis, her idiosyncratic capitalization and the extensive use of in-line white space. The resulting diffusion maps are presented in figures 2-4 and an analysis of the type outlined is performed.

The final section of chapter 4 (4.5) reconsiders the workings and effects of the three spatial practices set in motion by Janelle, Giddens and Hägerstrand. In recalling the possible futures of these competing time geographies as a chorological reading practice, consideration is given to the specific types of long poem which might benefit from the models put forward. Chronological space joins materiality, landscape, and consumption as the fourth core element of choropoetics. This point marks the close of *space* as the organizing concept of the thesis. Ideas relating to *place* take up the challenge of the long poem in Part III.

CHAPTER 3

Consumer Choropoetics: Readers, Tourists and the Consumption of Space in Ed Dorn's *Gunslinger*

3.1 The Reader as Consumer

3.2 The Consumer as Tourist

Five Modish Tourists and Five Touristic Modes

Recreational Consumption

Diversiory Consumption

Experiential Consumption

Experimental Consumption

Existential Consumption

3.3 The Tourist as Reader

Parmenides and Tourism

3.4 Consumer Choropoetics: Summary

- Kick out the Dickel
a hard bunch of consumers
is comin through the door

(Dorn, *Gunslinger* 132)

3.1 The Reader as Consumer

Reading is only one aspect of consumption, but a fundamental one. In a society that is increasingly written, organized by the power of modifying things and of reforming structures on the basis of scriptural models (whether scientific, economic, or political), transformed little by little into combined 'texts' (be they administrative, urban, industrial, etc.), the binomial set production-consumption can often be replaced by its general equivalent and indicator, the binomial set writing-reading. (De Certeau, *PEL* 167-8)

De Certeau says above that "reading is only one aspect of consumption" and this is true. To his "fundamental" category of reading the new academic field loosely hailing itself as the "Geography of Consumption" has principally added two further diverse networks of enquiry: on the one hand "recreation" and on the other "retailing." Apart from these major "three r's" involved in the recognized pursuit of the consumption of space, a fourth area of housing (sometimes "dwelling") and a fifth category of "labour" consumption have recently been added. To read any contemporary long poem from the theoretical stance of the consumption of space, or truly to claim that a choropoetics is in progress, it must accordingly to be shown to be addressing at least one of these five spatial nodes in some detail. It should be noted that the number of short or ordinary length poems (from 1-300 lines) which problematize housing shortages, the leisure industry, retail and labour consumption or reader-theory in any depth is understandably small.¹

By way of confirmation, we are reminded that both of Kamau Brathwaite's trilogies revolved around the global retailing of sugar and the problems of securing island dwelling space, while Derek Walcott's *Another Life* and *Omeros* together charted the devastating consequences of the Caribbean tourist industry. Ahead of us lie the hyperspatial reader theories of L=A=N=G=A=G=E poet Susan Howe, the omnipresent recreational travelling of Robert Kroetsch in *Completed Field Notes* and the gender politics of labour consumption in Daphne Marlatt's fish canning plant at *Steveston*. Even before we consider *Gunslinger*, therefore, it seems safe to repeat that the contemporary long poem is first and foremost a poetic chorology produced and destined to be consumed in direct textual response to the regional spatial array of its material human environment.

Having outlined five possible routes into Dorn's poem which penetrate the geography of consumption, we need next to distinguish

between the relative merits of each in order to choose the ones that will yield the greatest returns from a minimal outlay. Apart from the category of the reader-consumer which we have already admitted as foundational to *Gunslinger* on account of their shared phenomenological investment, I want immediately to reject the categories of housing and labour which find no real importance in the thematics of the poem. It is by contrast the ongoing sense of a vocational mobility between fixed centres or places that drives the Gunslinger and his fellow travellers forward, and we may as well confess that neither the fixity of urban housing schemes nor the condition of the labour market find many analogies in the poem. Having therefore omitted the housing and labour questions, "recreation" and "retail" are left in a head-to-head duel, the tourist's consumption of space against the shopper's "Winged Car" (G 98).²

Both of these categories are very significant in the poem and only after much weighing of options is it possible to make an informed choice between the two. Ultimately, however, consumer durables and white goods of the Harrods and John Lewis variety rarely occupy centre-stage in Dorn's "plastic, gestural 'West.'"³ Indeed, although it is tempting to say that the Gunslinger himself is "never knowingly undersold" because he moves with circumspection through a postmodern barrage of advertising slogans simply in order to debunk them, and through a conceptual landscape in which Hollywood "signs of the commodity have become more important than the commodity itself,"⁴ the retail world of the poem stops there, with its conspicuously named products included by Dorn — like Warhol and Koons — simply to out-produce the producer and to out-kitsch the kitsch.⁵ Thus Robart coolly drags on a "Sullivan" whilst washing his mouth out with "courvoissier" and balancing a "kleenex" on the end of his nose; the Slinger asks if anyone can build him a better "genetic louse trap" to parody the march of quality control; and the Horse dupes a "Lucky-Strike Green" fan by auctioning him a fake statue of Howard Hughes at two thousand times its real value (G 83). *Gunslinger* does satirize the retail consumption of space as well as the commodification of the desirable lifestyle spaces sold off the back of the products themselves. Once this has been appreciated and related to the influence of television and the mass media, however, such analysis comes to an abrupt end. Additionally, whereas few inroads have been made to provide a phenomenology of shopping experiences, a phenomenology of tourist experiences will shortly be at hand.

In "Art Rising to Clarity: Edward Dorn's Compleat Slinger," William

J. Lockwood writes lucidly about both the importance of song and the significance of place in *Gunslinger*.⁶ The latter half of his essay, in which he outlines the actual route of the journey made by the travellers, is for me the definitive reading of the poem because its approach is factually geographical as well as critically chorological. To begin with, however, I am more interested in the phraseology with which Lockwood speaks of the travellers. This is less because, like Dorn, he uses throughout the disconcerting U.S. spelling "travelers," but rather because he often links the traveller with the reader of the poem. He speaks of "the effect upon the travelers and the reader alike" and says that the "reader-as-fellow-traveler" is "[e]ngaged in the journey through surprising, unpredictable, multireferenced territories" (*IR* 151). However, the interesting thing is not so much his silent observation that we have relatively reliable intradiegetic focalizers for the journey, whom we as readers must accompany whether we like it or not, but that these observers are themselves consummate readers of all that they survey. For if ever we are to witness an example of Norman Holland's *5 readers reading*,⁷ personae who continually pursue their own individual "identity themes" by way of defining their "characteristic transformations," it is in Dorn's five principal characters of the pseudo-epic *Gunslinger*.

Ordinarily this would be a fruitful line of departure and one which would certainly foreground the two-dimensional, animational quality of the characters on the journey. Unfortunately, however, Holland's subjectivist approach, albeit one that recognizes the importance of perception and psychology, fails to emphasize the material aspect of the reader as consumer which is central to the current argument. What is really needed is a theory which first of all posits the entire pleiad as its own all-consuming moveable feast and then looks upon it as a material reading group *éternelle in mutabilité* who are obsessed with the business of textual interpretation. Dorn's stage-bound consumers are, above all, readers in a storm of information.

3.2 The Consumer as Tourist

Apart from concentrating on the reader as the axis of consumption, the category of "recreation" was chosen as our second doorway into theory. The use of leisure time and leisure space has long been a focus of study for geographers and sociologists alike, but only comparatively recently

has the leisure industry been subdivided into its component parts and subjected to detailed spatial analysis. Among the fields of study concerned (hotels, swimming pools, parklands, theme parks and so on) the tourist industry as a whole has understandably proved an important area. From the 1970s onwards various efforts were made to extract a rough typology of tourism, but these have been gradually replaced by increasingly professional studies on the influence of multinational corporations, the technology of tourism, the meaning of the tourist gaze and the growth of the global/local tourist heritage industry.⁸

In spite of such an industry-sponsored trend in specialization, however, it is not the increasingly intellectualist and scientific studies of tourism which are necessarily useful to the study of the long poem. Often the earlier more amateurish attempts at an overview prove better tools for literary theorists. Of these, one particular essay by Erik Cohen "based on the place and significance of tourist experience in the total world-view of tourists" (*PTE* 179) is analytically appropriate to *Gunslinger*. The essay carries the intriguing title "A Phenomenology of Tourist Experiences" and originally appeared in the periodical *Sociology* in 1979.

Cohen's professed purpose in writing the essay was to explore the tourist experience "as either something essentially spurious and superficial, an extension of the alienated world, or as a serious search for authenticity, an effort to escape from an alienated world" (*PTE* 179). While there is no indication how the article was received by his sociologist contemporaries, Cohen's positing of this "phenomenological typology of tourist experiences" was not only ahead of its time in taking the tourist as the consumer of space, but posited in addition "five main modes of touristic experience" which we can now use to explore Dorn's "ABSOLUTE LINGUATILT SURVEY SITE" (*G* 141) in detail.

The receptors of our theoretical network are now all tuned in: the phenomenology of *Gunslinger* is connected on all sides to the reader's experience (reader response), the tourist's experience (recreational space) and the consumer's experience (of his/her chorophyle). So long as we treat the semi-divine Gunslinger and his cosmic *amigos* as readers, tourists and consumers of space, Dorn's incoming choropoetics can be semantically defused.

Five Modish Tourists — and Five Touristic Modes

The typology, in turn, relates to different points of continuum of privately constructed 'worlds' of individual travellers (not necessarily identical with those prevalent in their culture), ranging between the opposite poles of the conception of space characteristic of modern tourism on the one hand and that of the pilgrimage on the other. I have distinguished five main modes of touristic experiences:

1. The Recreational Mode
2. The Diversionary Mode
3. The Experiential Mode
4. The Experimental Mode
5. The Existential Mode (Cohen, *PTE* 183)

In the above typology, a plan of some "modality" to rival even that of Howard Hughes, Cohen intends to discover the private or individual motivation for the tourist experience. As above, he claims that these motivations are highly subjective and range between "the consumption of space characteristic of modern tourism on the one hand, and that of the pilgrimage on the other." Two interesting alternatives therefore present themselves: either we can analyse the individual motivations of "I," the Horse, Lil, the Poet and the Slinger one by one, irrespective of each other, or we can understand their journey as a single shared phenomenological experience, a limited collective unconscious on the move through a sometimes real, sometimes virtual landscape. Since the latter presents advantages of speed and clarity and since the individual motivation of every single member of the party is highly speculative, what follows is an attempt to place the type of spatial consumption outlined by Dorn for the whole group on Cohen's phenomenological continuum of tourist experiences. What kind of "tour of the Cumulus" (*G* 161) does the miasmal stagecoach actually offer its drugged occupants?

It would be helpful if, for a change, the constellation fitted neatly into just one of the above definitions, but as the self-referentiality and laconic play of the postmodern cuts in, Dorn's protagonists are careful to deny us such security and unity. For each of the five touristic modes Cohen outlines, therefore, we soon discover there are eclectic contributory elements in the long poem. For the sake of simplicity I have therefore identified only those two or three attributes which seem to carry the greatest overall significance in each mode, so as to highlight the specific strategies of consumption in each.

Recreational Slinger: Entertainment, Centres and Inauthenticity

Cohen's "recreational mode" is in practice far more useful a definition of the pleiad's experiences than it first appears. Three aspects in particular affect their consumption of space under this heading and these are labelled for ease of reference "entertainment," "centres," and "inauthenticity."

In general terms, the recreational experience of space is placed at the most shallow or superficial end of the continuum as that mode of travelling "most characteristic of modern tourism." In addition, we learn that "[t]he trip as a recreational experience is a form of entertainment akin in nature to other forms of entertainment such as the cinema, theatre, or television" (*PTE* 183).

Perhaps one reason for the initial feeling that the superficial "trip" or "entertainment" is not applicable to the text in question is that we are confronted from the very outset by the acute philosophizing and overt phenomenological musings of the Gunslinger and his company. On first appearance the text appears deep and intractable rather than shallow and easy to follow, and so, of course, it largely remains. Nevertheless, few would disagree that to lose sight of the shallower elements of the poem, the glorious swearing, punning, *doubles-entendres*, the word-play and laid-back humour of the piece, is to lose the whole meaning of *Gunslinger* itself. There is no-one more taxing — even pitiable — than the person who fails to recognize the jokes, ironies and satirical elbowing of the company around them by insisting on a poker-faced literality. In this light, a great deal of the "trip" is indeed, like the problem of the "three Beenville paradoxes," the "Night Letta" from "I," and the riddle of the Cracker Barrel, a combination of meta-nonsense and pure "entertainment" amongst the tourists themselves simply to pass the time. Also we should not forget that the Gunslinger demands entertainment from the Poet on a regular basis, and that the following songs are all sung aloud by that strumming, post-structural jester to the ever appreciative entourage: "the Song about a woman" (*G* 39-40); an unfinished raga called "The Coast of the Firmament" (*G* 47); "Oh Light; The Light" (*G* 48-49); the incantation "Cool Liquid Comes" (*G* 50-51); extremely important, "The CYCLE of ROBERT'S WALLET" (*G* 87-110); and "The Poem Called Riding Throughe Mádríd" (*G* 129). These songs are not, therefore, to be overlooked as pure entertainment, despite their deeper structural and cognitive significance.

Had retail consumption been selected instead of our recreational choice, it would have been impossible to ignore, under this mode the influence of "central place theory" as developed by the German geographers, Walther Christaller and August Losch.⁹ The "Christaller Model" of hierarchical spatial structure became in fact foundational to the late-twentieth-century understanding of retail (and other) distribution networks and introduced into the discipline a whole new terminology of "hexagonal hinterlands," "quantitative methods" and "threshold marketing." However, while I can well imagine endless seminar counter-arguments as to which of *Gunslinger's* nodal points should be connected to which others in terms of their overlapping centrality to the stagecoach route, I do not quite yet propose to start graphing them in the style of Douglas Oliver's *Diagram Poems*.¹⁰ I want instead to take advantage of the recreational mode in that it permits us to share for a moment the Horse's own phenomenological distanciation theory:

How far is it Claude?

Across

two states
of mind, saith the Horse.
But from Mesilla said I
to Las Vegas — Vegas!
the Horse corrected
have you been asleep
. . . Must be more like
a thousand miles.
More like? he laughed
as we waited
for the Slinger
on his long knees
facing the burning hoop
as it rolled under
the swinging doors west

Mortal what do you mean
asked the Horse lounging and yawning
More Like!
how can distance
be more like. (G 41)

When the constellation will not admit to the possibility of real, geographical distance measured in miles or kilometres, does it actually make any sense to talk of centres? Again, as the stage approaches "Truth or Consequences," the Slinger picks up Kool Everything and straight-facedly tells him to "climb in / and get yourself centered / we

approach the outskirts" (G 54); a few lines later, even more paradoxically, "We're inside / the outskirts, / announced the Horse" (G 62). Quite naturally, Slinger ends up asking Dr Flamboyant if he would like to "circle the square / of this plaza?" (G 82). Such oxymoronic wordplay is certainly used as a deliberate de-centering tactic of the text while similarly abstract phrases like "spatial cooling" (G 51) and "flowering tree space" (G 130) are used to jam Robart's transmission frequencies.

One way of understanding this predicament is to say that the company has achieved a reversal of the Bergsonian *durée*. Instead of encountering Bergson's objective "clock-time" which is famously contrasted with the private experience of the flexible *durée*, the "five missionaries" experience instead a "spatial *durée*" in which their individual measuring of material space depends not on objective ruled space, but solely on their own Olsonian "proprioception" of space.¹¹ We see Slinger explicitly criticizing conventional measured space when he admonishes the "Master Nark" (Hughes) for being "so complicated he believes / the shortest distance between two states / is a straight line" (G 118) and it sometimes seems as if the whole poem is engaged in the pastime of "laughing out an ode to space endlessly" (G 175). But Gunslinger is by no means unaware of the connections between time and space: we learn that "Time is more fundamental than space" (G 5); that there is an "enormous space / between here and formerly" (G 5); that "you suddenly are the guest of time / where the afterbirth of space hangs / in the mirror of rime" (G 114); and even, "if Time is spilled in a gravityless space That's as heavy as shit in suspension can get" (G 105). The practice of the personal spatial *durée* is everywhere in evidence and again undermines any notion of real centres in time and space that might be mapped into an objective chorology.

The problems we face in centering ourselves as readers of *Gunslinger* are made doubly difficult by Dorn's refusal to have his tourists distinguish between their consumption of the local and the global. Commentators point to such confusions between "[t]he inside real and the outside real" (G 111) and the way in which "Truth or Consequences" becomes "Universe City"; jokes are made about "The West which is The East" (G 80) and about almost "Anything? said Everything" (G 81). Not content with this, a habit of the Slinger is to remind confused mortals of their mere locality: "That's *Big*, Everything reflected / No *Local* Parallels, admitted the Slinger" (G 80) and "By the way Slinger / that printers a local printer. / Makes sense, answered the

Slinger" (G 84); even the "Night Letta" itself, in its mixture of telectronics and programming language expounds "- ALL PRESENT SCHEMA KNOWN CONFORM / LOCAL STRANDS" (G 141). The "local species," out-manoeuvred, out-scaled and out-worn, becomes the limping victim of the Slinger's galactic range.

There is nothing we can do about the poem's disavowal of a possible spatial centre, or about its perpetual jousting with the parabolic relativity of curved space which replaces it. All we can do, like I, is to submit to Slinger's "Pre-emption of the Ultra-specific!" (G 138) and be swept along in search of his ultimate goal, "Purity of the Head" (G 63).

Contrary to appearances, the above speculation on centres, of which this is truly the tip of the iceberg, is not introduced out of the blue. Erik Cohen too draws our attention to the idea of the cultural and psychological centre, and sounds in places as if he could well make use of a word like "chorophyle" to marshal his thoughts. Whatever the case, his main claim for the recreational tourist is that he "enjoys his trip" through a restorative process of "re-creating" himself by finding a "life-endowing centre":

The tourist 'enjoys' his trip, because it restores his physical and mental powers and endows him with a general sense of well-being. As the term 'recreation' indicates, even this mode of tourist experience is ultimately and distantly related to and derived from the religious voyage to the sacred, life-endowing centre, which rejuvenates and 're-creates'. . . . Though the belief in the recuperative or restorative power of the tourist trip is preserved, it is a secular, rational belief in the value of leisure activities, change of climate, rest etc. . . . Recreational tourism is a movement away from the centre, which serves eventually to reinforce the adherence to the centre. (Cohen, *PTE* 183-85)

The "reclaimed Southwest locale in which and through which the alert travellers move"¹² is in no way an indigenous cultural centre for any of the players in *Gunslinger*. Although we could be forgiven for thinking that the sociological markers of the group indicate a genuine Wild West heritage, not one of the characters can claim Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, or Colorado as their real home territory.¹³ With the possible exception of "I" who has some local knowledge due to the time he has been in the vicinity ("Years I said. Years" (G 5)), their individual centres lie in reality very far off. Of the minor characters, Tonto Pronto is from Toronto, Portland Bill from Portland (Oregon), Taco Desoxin from Mexico itself, and Doctor Jean Flamboyant — "Prie Dieu!" — from France where

he "was the flame of [his] Lyceum" ('*lycée*' we assume, *G* 81). Of the major characters, Lil will return to Wyoming, the Poet-Drifter will drift on to Montana "to be a nose-spray tycoon," Zlinger will return to his source where "our birds have two heads and sing duets" and the cows "give a substance / not unlike tasty-freeze" (*G* 199); Everything will go back to his geographical omnipresence and "I" will move around keeping his eye on that "warehouse full of peanuts" better known as mankind. Precisely because the constellation are all temporarily un-centred, and exactly because we can see that the voyage to the "4 Corners" is a postmodern construction (in the same way that Disneyland provides the "Wild West Experience"), this "trippy" episode is both recreational mode and recreational drug in one. The shallowness of external postmodern consumerist space is thus reified and consumed along with the "Mescalene" depths of internal, phenomenological space: outer space meets the "spaced out," and both are recreationally, if not restoratively, consumed.

Surely this heady mixture has a dire effect upon the authenticity of the pleiad's experience? Cohen explains that the recreational tourist,

does not really desire or care for the authentic . . . he is 'no stickler for authenticity'. . . Since he seeks recreation, he is quite eager to accept the make-believe and not to question its authenticity; after all, one does not need to be convinced of the authenticity of a TV play or a motion picture in order to enjoy it as a recreative, entertaining or relaxing experience. (*PTE* 184)

Considering the contemporary long poem chorologically lays open the text in new and forceful ways as a reading practice. Both ordinary and professional readers of the poem can relate to the passage above. We instantly recognize the full force of the phrase "stickler for authenticity" because we know that this is what unites the reader-of-space, the tourist-of-space and the consumer-of-space in one. The reader worries about the truth content of the narrative, the tourist is concerned about the fictionality of the experience, and the consumer, of course, wants to know that the Rolex or Calvin Klein T-shirt just purchased is real. Actually, however, the last thing Slinger and his presidios can bring themselves to be bothered about on their "paisaje magnífico" (*G* 180) is authenticity. To the Gunslinger of the "sicksties," no less than to Yul Brynner of *Westworld* in the 1970s or Buzz Lightyear of *Toy Story* in the 1990s recognition of authenticity is the prime danger to be avoided at all costs. Any conscious recognition of an external reality would only confirm

their own transparent existence as chimeras, "*Xiuaipa*" (G 73).

The recreation-seeking tourist, hence, thrives on what Boorstin (1964) calls 'pseudo-events'. . . .For the recreation-seeking tourist, the people and landscapes he sees and experiences are not part of his 'real' world; like other recreational settings, they are 'finite provinces of meaning' separate from reality, though this is not explicitly admitted by either the tourists or the staff of tourist establishments. Indeed, tourists as well as staff, may be mutually aware of the fact that each is playing a role in order to upkeep an inauthentic, indeed artificial, but nevertheless enjoyable, 'construction of (touristic) reality.' (Cohen, *PTE* 184-85)

Some examples of "'pseudo-events'" from Dorn's text are now required to show the company in action as they attempt "to upkeep an inauthentic, indeed artificial" relationship to the environment which surrounds them. Here Cohen's use of the wonderfully cynical phrase "'construction of (touristic) reality'" provides a memorable mantra as the onlookers take in the spectacle of Dr. Flamboyant's flamboyant arrival at the "Hill of Beans":

And just as the poet, accompanied
by Taco Desoxin and Tonto Pronto
and our Horse arrived
there was a roar from out of town
along the road to the monument
when Dr. Flamboyant, driving
a bright green 1976 Avocado
with a white vinyl top
and full hyperbolic clutch
slid into the lot and stopped
after bouncing 25 geodetic feet
straight back off the Bean
Then he got out and squished the door shut
with his foot

Stylish, the Zlinger whispered
That's a smart car you got there Doctor
whered you get it? (G 166)

If we presume that a real event requires, in some sense, real externality, it follows that the "pseudo-event" should rely upon false or supra-real objects. The Doctor's west coast "green 1976 Avocado" dream machine, more fruit than automobile, incorporating its souped up "hyperbolic clutch" thus fulfils our expectations of the term as well as parodying the American love for race-homologizing Detroit's standard products. The fact that Zlinger (and therefore the company he stands alongside) is completely unphased by the appearance of such a

contraption echoes Cohen again in that "such recreation-oriented tourists should be looked upon less as shallow, easily gullible simpletons who believe any contraption to be 'real' . . . but rather as persons who attend a performance or participate in a game" (*PTE* 184). Such game participation, involving as it does the "upkeep of an inauthentic, indeed, artificial, but nevertheless enjoyable" rôle demonstrates clearly the way in which the members of the pleiad willingly delude themselves as part of the artificial reality constructed by their touristic environment. Dorn's use of pseudo-events or supra-real tableaux confirms a phenomenological mindset which agrees to play by certain unwritten and tacit rules in order to suspend disbelief.¹⁴ Examples of this hidden-hands authority in which the company simply go along with their recreational role-playing identities when confronted by the strangeness of specific "finite provinces of meaning" are the normative mode of the game-theory with which *Gunslinger* abounds. Our five freeloading¹⁵ tourists are similarly nonchalant on the sudden death of "I," the discovery of the "Literate Projector," the arrival of the "biplane pilot" and the ultimate Napoleonic battlescape with which the poem draws to its Universal Studios close. From fantasy role-playing game to Napoleonic war game, the inauthentic collective delight in their uncentered identities in order to restore themselves to the full. Such a recreational cyberspace of possible worlds with its structure of probable outcomes, delayed pay-offs and zero-sum games accounts for the mass of probability statistics and "informational poetics" which our travellers have to consume. While Robart ponders on transmitting his tactics of disinformation upon which his capitalist reproduction of space relies, "We find 95% of it Unnecessary, He mused" (*G* 94), the very cartoon flatness of Dorn's loony tune serves only to intensify the cosmic weakness of the shock experience in this, his parallel universe.

Diversionsary Slinger: Alienation in the "theatre of impatience"

As we pointed out above, however, modern men are often alienated from the centre of their society or culture. Some of them, may not be seeking alternative centres: their life, strictly speaking, is meaningless, but they are not looking for meaning, whether in their own society or elsewhere. For such people, travelling in the mode just described, loses its recreational significance: it becomes purely diversionsary — a mere escape from the boredom and meaninglessness of routine . . . (Cohen, *PTE* 185)

Cohen's "diversionary" mode is brief and can be dealt with quickly as it has no significant relevance to Lil, Slinger, "I," the Poet or the Horse. Life for our five travelling anti-heroes is far from "meaningless." On the contrary, as we have said, all five share an obsession in the reading practice. They are a coach of critical theorists visiting the conference of existence and their ontological papers will be read, interpreted and read again. As reader-consumers of space, the constellation are truly users of the text: Rorty's strong textualists for whom the world of objects has been obliterated by the world of signs. As Husserlians have bracketed externality, so the reader-response pleiad has turned the world entirely into a text ripe for the reading process.

Secondly, nowhere in *Gunslinger* do we have the feeling that the ordinary lives of any of these dynamic characters, when not on this excursion, are comprised of "the boredom and meaninglessness of routine." The whole cast are intrinsically interesting personalities either through their allegorical complexity (Everything, "I", the Horse) or as a result of their biographical path choices and life-worlds (Tonto-Pronto, Cocaine Lil, the Drifter).

For the diversionary tourist, Cohen tells us, travelling "does not re-establish adherence to a meaningful centre, but only makes alienation endurable" and then that "it is the meaningless pleasure of the centreless person" (*PTE* 186). The alienation that is referred to here is the general condition of unrewarding malaise which has filled the lives of countless twentieth-century workers throughout the world. To make the absurdity of this existence bearable, diversionary travel is sought which does not re-create or spiritually renew as in the first mode, but provides a "temporary oblivion" as a mode of escape. As a worst case scenario, the downtrodden robots who seek such travel are therefore not merely shallow but shallow and hopeless: their proletarian lives are driven on the winds of an exploitative commodity consumption and their movements are policed by the arbitrary powers of an omnipresent militia. Where travel is permitted it is merely a short escape from the dystopian environment of the repressive state apparatus.

Dorn's company, we are pleased to find in the last two pages of the poem, are not facing anything like this level of alienation in their alternative lives. They have not only their own freedom, but their own future projects to action. The same is true of their past: whenever we get a glimpse of their former experiences, there is little to suggest lack of a meaningful existence. The Doctor, for example, did his thesis on a

"post-ephemeral subject" (it was "always a day late") namely, "*The Tensile Strength of Last Winters Icicles*" (sic, G 82). It was failed, naturally, on phenomenological grounds, because the examiners' "error lay of course / in looking for an object" (G 82); the failure does not matter: it confirms a meaningful life. Lil runs her Mae West saloon back in Mesilla where she remarks of the intruder "described" by Slinger "*That investor'd make / a good janitor . . . if I was gonna keep this place / I'd hire him*" (G 28). Slinger himself briefly recounts his history with Lil, "we were in Smyrna / together, now called Izmir" (G 21) and in the first part of Book Four we assume his childhood was happy from the song of Miss Americaine (G 172-77), memorized from his mother when he was "*just a pup*." Over the course of two hundred pages, the evidence mounts up: the material spatial centres from which the characters originate are not described as alienating, but as genuine, if hard to place, centres of psychological contact.

Experiential Slinger: Pilgrims of Otherness

The "experiential" is the first of three modes which explore a relatively deeper commitment to travel experiences. Unlike recreational and diversionary tourists, travellers in the following "experiential," "experimental" and "existential" modes all undergo a less superficial relationship to the regions in which they travel and "derive a deeper meaning from their travels." It is in this third mode that Cohen seriously introduces ideas of "pilgrimage" although he is careful to note that the experiential traveller is actually more interested in "the sheer strangeness and novelty of other landscapes, lifeways and cultures" than the pilgrim who "always undertakes his journey to the spritual centre of *his* religion" (PTE 188).

Let us take, for this argument, phenomenology as the collective religion of the stagecoach occupants. Obviously they have no recognizable theological affiliation to any earthbound belief system involving deity or deities, but their philosophical attachment to the doctrine of direct perception is nevertheless held with something not unlike reverential awe. Slinger reminds Everything after he tries to admonish the Horse for shaking the stage around too much, "Dont lower the Horse Our mission is to encourage the Purity of the Head / pray we dont lose track of our goal" (G 63). When they leave Book I, they are described as

evangelists since "by those five missionaries / Mesilla was utterly forgot" (G 42); again, when Slinger introduces "*The CYCLE of ROBART'S WALLET*" to the citizens of "Universe City" he encourages the Poet to "Make your norm / their own" and to "deliver them from their Vicious Isolation" (G 89). As "missionaries," then, intent on "delivering" the local populace into the way of rightful thinking, they "pray" to reach their transcendental "goal" of "Purity of the Head" and seem to parody the zeal of the first Spanish missionaries of the early seventeenth century. Perhaps we are right to consider phenomenology their *bona fide* religion.

If this is the case, it means that the pleiad of travellers, far from being on a pilgrimage to "the spiritual centre of [their] religion," are in fact in exactly the position of the experiential traveller who wants to experience the strangeness or "novelty of other landscapes, lifeways and cultures." As the observers of strange alien rituals of materiality, of positivist thinking and of an almost unimaginable objectivity, they are the contemporary long poem's Kibbutz volunteers in a world of mystifying otherness. But although the Gunslinger and his travelling companions witness the authenticity of other peoples' beliefs — the Mogollones, the Single-spacers, Robart and his Atalantes — none of them are convinced for a moment about the value of their alternative religion of capital accumulation, nor is there the remotest danger of their own conversion away from phenomenology. This is how Cohen explains such behaviour:

The aesthesis provoked by direct contact with the authenticity of others may reassure and uplift the tourist, but does not provide a new meaning and guidance to his life. This can best be seen where "experiential" tourists observe pilgrims at a pilgrimage centre: the pilgrims experience the sacredness of the centre; the tourists may experience aesthetically the authenticity of the pilgrims' experience. (PTE 188)

In this way, Everything, "I," Lil, the Poet and Slinger himself all undergo something that is more an aesthetic experience in the experiential mode than a spiritual communion, and manage to remain throughout their visit voyeuristic strangers at a one step remove from "these remote citizens" (G 62). The distance of their own conceptions of geography and space — for instance their "spatial *durée*" — from the ideas of the New Mexico and Colorado inhabitants whom they encounter is so great that the latter can only be understood vicariously and can never be appropriated.

As an illustration of this, Kool Everything does his very best to

understand the rational logic of the "Tampiqueno" who seeks directions to Santa Fe "as they rise / towards the land of-the crazy Utes" (Utah State, just west of Cortez, *G* 116). The questioner's grip on reality, however, is so great that it has already imprisoned Slinger's "head / in a pre-Cornel Wilde timeblock" (*G* 117) and the only advice Everything feels able to give is for him to find the best marijuana possible because his head already seems about as far "out-of-the-way" (in opposition to "Purity of the Head") as it possibly can be:

You'll need tiptop growth
Everything began to say
because your head
is almost out of-the-way
like as in some farflung passion play (*G* 118)

The tourists are thus beset on all sides by people insisting on objectivity and reality, on definition, meaning and complexity. The biggest challenge the pleiad truly face is to preserve their own simplicity while Slinger himself must take care to safeguard his ultimate, invisible speed, his draw that is faster than intuition. If anyone is to make an application to join their "Fenomena[l]" sect, they will need "tiptop growth," the Horse's very best "grass," alongside a religious conversion to remove them from the almost medieval logic of their "farflung passion play." As Lil reminds them at her saloon, "*We're at the Very begining of logic / around here*" (*G* 23). The five members of the constellation are therefore understandably reluctant to let themselves go completely in case they are stained by the taint of material positivism.

Ultimately, then, the diffidence of the experiential tourist opens up a gap which can never be bridged because he or she is unwilling for whatever reason to undergo a more complete "throwtness" into the alien culture. Even the traveller who has lived in the same foreign land for a number of years, who has learned the language and has attempted to adopt an authentic lifestyle may never progress beyond the experiential mode. Perhaps this is the fate of many Foreign and Commonwealth Office employees in consulates around the globe. For that matter, what are the Slinger and his entourage other than diplomatic envoys from a world of pure consciousness where real speed and real space are now extinct?

Experimental Slinger: seeker-drifters

The experiential tourist, while recognizing the authenticity and potential of otherness, could not get beyond his cultural and chorophylic gaps in case he lost the real spiritual centredness of his homeland. The pleiad were happy to play with the inferior doctrines of objectivity and technology but were unwilling to give up their own "sensational" (*G* 124) world-view and were not genuinely engaged in a "search for themselves." The experimental tourist, however, goes one step further again in her search for meaning and self-identity and hopes eventually, by trying out a number of possible lifestyles, sincerely to discover one that will prove largely acceptable. Once again, Cohen's definition shows us how this mode could equally well apply to Dorn's own consumers of space, having in mind as they both do, the 1960s "drifter":

this mode of touristic experience . . . is congenial to the more thoughtful among the disorientated post-modern travellers, particularly the more serious of the 'drifters' (Cohen, 1973), who, endowed with a 'decentralized personality' . . . and lacking clearly defined priorities and ultimate commitments, are pre-disposed to try out alternative life-ways in their quest for meaning. Travel is not the only possible form of their quest; mysticism, drugs etc., may serve as alternative paths to the same goal. (Cohen, *PTE* 189)

Of Dorn's constellation, the Poet-Drifter, also known simply as the "Drifter" (*G* 36) or "Drifta" (*G* 38) is obviously the closest to Cohen's experimental tourist. The latter, apart from engaging in mysticism and drugs as above, is often "in search of himself . . . in a trial and error process," an "eternal seeker" after some "resonance in himself" (*PTE* 189). Cohen's use of the word "resonance" seems especially applicable here, since, as discussed earlier, the drifter in *Gunslinger* is also the troupe's *ravi* or singer, whose songs re-sound the ontological debates of their progress. The experimental tourist engages in the often authentic, but chronologically temporary sampling of cultural space. Like Dorn's character, he tries space out in a trial and error process of consumption, singing at once of its virtues and vices before moving on to the next arena.

In response to Cohen's statement that "for those who do travel in quest of an alternative spiritual centre, travel takes up a new and heightened significance" (*PTE* 189), I would argue that the experimental tourist is thus the purest or most ideal traveller. This is the traveller

who engages in the set towards travel *qua* travel, the set towards spatial consumption in and for itself as its own *telos*, what we might call the "travelling function of space." This happily parallels the same argument used by Roman Jakobson in his delineation of the "poetic function" of language, that function which famously enjoys "the set towards the message as such, focus on the message for its own sake."¹⁶ It is no coincidence, therefore, that Dorn's "Drifter" is also Dorn's "Poet": he travels for the sake of travelling and rhymes for the sake of rhyming. On his journey into selfhood his being is both linguistically and spatially "resonant," his feet both metrical and kilometrical.

Existential Slinger: "elective external centres" & "reverse culture shock"

Hi! Digger
the drifting guitarist greeted
the Bombed Horse
who was in his saddle bags
rummaging
Heidegger? I asked
the Xtian statistician
is that who you are? (G 25)

So your name is *not*
Heidegger after all, then
what is it? I asked.
Lévi-Strauss. (G 34)

What with the "singular" solipsism of "I" asking all his questions, the pseudo-Heideggerian alter ego of the Horse, and the general condition of supra-real absurdity which prevails for much of the poem, the casual reader could be forgiven for thinking that "existential doctrines" played a major part in the philosophy of the text, and that Erik Cohen's final mode of tourist experience would therefore be of considerable help. Such is unfortunately not the case for three reasons.

First, the existential tourist as described by Cohen is a true pilgrim who is seen to emigrate to what he calls an "elective external centre," that is, "one external to the mainstream of his native society and culture." He or she has either truly found for the first time, or is seriously returning to, the spiritual or genealogical centre of authentic meaning: a sacred place.¹⁷ However, it must be emphasized that such an elected or refound external centre is not the cultural centre in which

that person was born or grew up. Cohen makes this explicit:

The centre of the 'existential' tourist, however, is not the centre of his culture of origin; it is an 'elective' centre, one which he chose and 'converted' to. Hence, it is not only ex-centric to his daily abode, but beyond the boundaries of the world of his daily existence; it does not hallow his world; hence, he lives in 'exile'. His pilgrimage is not one from the mere periphery of a religious world towards its centre; it is a journey from chaos into another cosmos, from meaninglessness to authentic existence. (PTE 190-91)

From this extract we learn that far from the tourist trip itself being a kind of temporary exile from a meaningful centre, it is the main "daily life" of the existential tourist which sadly occupies that position. His "daily existence" does not "hallow his world" but instead represents a life lived in exile and "chaos." As such, this mode is a complete reversal of the recreational tourist who is content with his own cultural centre and seeks a visit to foreign lands for mere entertainment and recreation; it is also antipodal to the diversionary tourist whom we saw seeking travel as a temporary oblivion from the mechanical *ennui* of routine. The direction of the journey in the existential mode is crucial: it is a pilgrimage whose movement is from "meaninglessness to authentic existence," the trail to Mecca, the retreat to Lourdes or the return to Jerusalem. It is not necessarily religious; Americans trace their clans in Scotland, hippies continue to find themselves in Goa and first-world multiculturalism is rarely the answer for richer members of ethnic minorities who strive often to stay in touch with their individual geographical and cultural centres. Some people, Cohen reminds us, may have two or more external centres depending on the complexity of their spiritual heritage as well as on their psychological ability to submit to alternative cultures and chorophyles:

However, what makes touristic 'existential' experiences a touristic phenomenon is the fact that there are many people — and their number is increasing in a growingly mobile world — who, for a variety of practical reasons, will not be able or willing to move permanently to their 'elective' centre, but will live in two worlds: the world of their everyday life, where they follow their practical pursuits, but which for them is devoid of deeper meaning; and the world of their 'elective' centre, to which they will depart on periodic pilgrimages to derive spiritual sustenance. (PTE 190)

Where does such existential thinking position the eminently "singleminded" company? The answer is, strangely, both "out there" in

the sense of *Dasein* and "not very close" in the sense of Cohen. Our "five missionaries" are certainly "out there" in that they stand alone as the only adherents to phenomenology in a world of mortal objectivism; as consumers of Colorado's shanty towns, however, they are not pilgrims towards a known meaningful centre, but missionaries from their own central lifeworlds, and hence nowhere close to Cohen's position. Their movement is accordingly not away from any chaos in their own practical daily lives towards a recognized spiritual haven, but, in stark contrast, represents a journey from domestic stability and towards a *terra incognita* whose inhabitants consistently fall below their own high standards of absolute simplicity by flabbergasting them with risible complexities and tortuous interrogation.

Finally, we are told that the consumer of "existential tourist space" can suffer on return to his daily cultural centre a "reverse culture shock" in which "'desirable values, . . . which were not experienced before and which may have been attained as a stranger in a foreign setting may appear unrealizable in the home situation'" (*PTE* 197). Slinger it seems will be particularly susceptible to this reverse experience on return to his own Sun world as, we may speculate, will other members of the pleiad. He has become quite fond of humanity's "marvellous accidentalism" as well as having proved throughout that "unlike the mass tourist" he has not suffered "a culture shock when exposed to the host environment" (*PTE* 197). We know also that he wants to take a souvenir of feeble mortality home with him on "the tachyon showers" in the form of the Doctor's molecularly transported hand:

Good work doctor
shows what you can do
if you persevere
Do you mind if I keep your hand
as a souvenir (*G* 200)

The most explicit passage depicting Zlinger's newly-found affection for the "local star" is to be found in his breviloquent mock-Shakespearean sonnet where he says that it "grieves" him to leave at all as he has come to "love" his host environment. "The stars look very cold about the sky" and he is by no means enthusiastic to go:

The mesas quiver above the withdrawing sunne
Among the bushes half leafless and dry
The smallest things now have their time

The stars look very cold about the sky
And I have grown to love your local star
But now niños, it is time for me to go inside
I must catch the timetrain
The parabolas are in sympathy
But it grieves me in some slight way
because this has been such fine play
and I'll miss this marvellous accidentalism (G 198)

By treating the five modish travellers in *Gunslinger* as tourists, we focused on them as consumers of space partaking variously of five phenomenological modes of tourist experience. These five modes of consumption, we recall, existed on a continuum between the recreational traveller "in pursuit of 'mere' pleasure in the strange and the novel" to the existential traveller, "the modern pilgrim in quest of meaning at somebody else's centre." Although certain distinctions between the members of the constellation could have been made, as a tribute to the American national motto and for the sake of overall clarity, it seemed justifiable to consider the stagecoach occupants synecdochically with either one standing in for the whole (*pars pro toto*) or the whole standing in for an individual (*totus pro parte*). While it has to be admitted that the flexibility of this modal approach allowed certain freedoms of interpretation to come into play, it is nevertheless possible to grade the winning modes into a provisional, typological hierarchy. The main problem here is to what extent the superficiality of the recreational and diversionary modes should be prioritized over the more meaningful depths of the experiential, experimental and existential modes. This has to be done in such a way that we are not blinded to the individual qualitative advantages of each one as outlined in the foregoing pages.

As a working guideline, nonetheless, I suggest the following order from first in critical usefulness to last: first "recreational," because the mesas and plateaux of the poem are themselves a two-dimensional geography while the arid humour and structural cantos of the text literally entertain and contain the philosophy that follows; second, "experimental," since the overall "drift" of the text is as a set towards travel in and for itself, as end and process, not means; third, "experiential" because despite initial appearances there is something of the pilgrim or missionary involved, and a vicarious empathy or interest in otherness; fourth, the "existential," for its only limited Heideggerian associations with phenomenology and Dorn's absurd "theatre of impatience"; and last and definitely least, the "diversionary" mode which

may very well work elsewhere, but, with its whole "alienation" premise of boredom and repression, fails to find purchase here. With the theological angle remaining largely conjectural throughout this long poem, one prophesy at least has come to pass by using Cohen's five theoretical modes. Thinking back, the asterisked "flashy scoreboard" of "The Winterbook," with its neon capitalization and intentionally oversized font clearly warned us about the modality of the pleiad from the start,

THE OUT*OF*TOWN TEAM IS VERY MODAL
THEREFORE THIS SHIT COULD BE

TOTAL (G 125)

3.3 The Tourist as Reader

I would observe that such triggering moments of contact . . . generally arise whenever the attentive travelers sheer off vital forms discoverable in *particular* locales and identifiable by *singular* topographic phenomena. Song signifies the triumph of the living mind over deadening matter, but such triumph occurs within a selective spatial field having its own local regionalisms, geological histories, landforms, and so forth. (Lockwood)¹⁰

Lockwood's emphasis on the materiality of Dorn's choropoetics, a stance he manages to defend with elan throughout his essay, involves our identification of "particular locales" and "topographic phenomena" within "a selective spatial field." He claims that each song is "trigger[ed]" by such contact with the material "regionalisms" the travellers encounter. While Lockwood has (correctly I think) done much of the textual spade-work linking the specificities of real geographical places to the substance of the poet's songs, I want to pull the lens back a bit and relate these "particular locales" to the reading processes at work in the whole poem. Having claimed earlier that the material spatial environment in which a reading takes place is crucial to the meaning attributed to a text, and later on that Dorn's company are obsessive reader-consumers of whatever they encounter, we need to ask ourselves firstly what kind of readers of space they really are and secondly what kind of textual menu is available for consumption.

To do this properly, we must return to de Certeau, but we should not lose sight of our recent touristic parallels. We have already posited

"The Reader as Consumer" and "The Consumer as Tourist" but now we must square the circle and follow "The Tourist as Reader." The three categories are increasingly connected and de Certeau himself makes the linking observation that "- readers are travellers; they move across lands belonging to someone else, like nomads poaching their way across fields they did not write" (*PEL* 174). This is an eloquently written sentiment which translates well from the French and goes some way perhaps to summing up the argument so far; but there comes a time in every long poem to cease general speculation and to reach for the heavy "Ordnance, Municiones" (*G* 147): the real key to the spatial reading of *Gunslinger* lies in its Eleatic heritage.

In order to find the place in which reading occurs — "But let's talk Process, not Content" (*G* 157) — and then to understand just why *Gunslinger* leaves its choropoetic competitors standing, we must enter into the dialectical problematics which surround the Parmenidean spatial metaphysic. The reality of this quest is not easy, but by overcoming certain obstacles which attach themselves to Parmenidean monism, the approach ultimately yields results that are nothing short of Sllab's message, "TREMENDOUS! FANTISTACK!" (*G* 164). These are the real unplumbed depths of *Gunslinger*, the true theories of Dorn's "chic ground loop." In an echo of "Ozymandias," we are to gaze on Dorn's sources and despair:

Lo que pasa he breathed
this place is
in the constructive process
of ruin — Gaze upon it: (*G* 16)

Parmenides and Tourism

So then, Slinger it is still not known
how deeply you have studied
this lingual springer
of the western Kind (*G* 126)

Dorn's debt in *Gunslinger* to Parmenides's own fifth century, pseudo-epic long poem, *On Nature*, and to Plato's dramatic reworking of its principles a century later in his dialogue, *Parmenides*, is far greater than most readers assume. In the extract above, Dorn wryly adopts Slinger's mask for a moment as the surviving text of Parmenides's poem becomes "this

lingual springer of the western Kind." An imaginary persona is fishing for clues as to how much of the Parmenides text is in Dorn's own long poem; nobody knows "how deeply you [ie Dorn] have studied" it. It is our question, too, and concerns the current exploration into how "actionable" the reading environment really is in Dorn's neo-Presocratic parody.

The exegetical commentaries which follow compare ideologically and chorologically related passages from Parmenides's *On Nature*, Michel de Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life* and Ed Dorn's *Gunslinger*. By taking these three key texts together, an outline of the chorophylic relation of person to place via a new material reception theory can be attempted. First, however, some background facts are desirable.

The post-Homeric, hexametrical epic poem, *On Nature*, was written by the Greek Presocratic philosopher, Parmenides of Elea, sometime between the sixth and fifth centuries BC. Estimates of Parmenides's exact year of birth vary between the foundation date of the Southern Italian town of Elea in 540 BC. (according to Apollodorus) where he was involved in government, to as late as 510, working back from the known date of Socrates' death in 399 BC.; Plato has it that Socrates died at age 70 and that he met Parmenides "as a very young man" (*σφόδρα νεον*). Such a late date is not altogether convincing, however, since we know from Diogenes (Diogenes Laertius IX, 23) that Parmenides flourished *kata tnv evatnv kai eḡnkoostnv olumniaða*, in the sixty-ninth Olympiad (thus 504-501 BC).¹⁹ It would be nice to think that he accomplished this feat with a performance of *On Nature*, but whatever his text that year, he cannot have been from six to nine years old. On balance, it is more likely that *On Nature* was written around 480 BC.

If no one is quite sure exactly when the poem was written, still less are we sure about its original length. At present, only 146 complete lines of the text survive in 20 fragments, 6 of which exist only in latin translation, along with 9 half-lines. Of these as many as 75 lines come from the historian Simplicius, "who, knowing that the original work was already in his day rare, transcribed large sections of it into his commentaries on Aristotle."²⁰ According to recent philology, *On Nature* contains "410 vocabulary entries" of which "all but thirty-nine (less than 10%) are also found in the early epic" (*RP* 5); most of the latter "new" words — one of which will prove central to this study — are taken from the spoken Greek of the period.

What we are more certain about, however, is the poem's tripartite

Eleatic reading of the real three, and the reason why they (unlike the pseudoparadoxes) cause no problem to Slinger:

Take 1 of 3 of the Great Beenville Paradoxes
Nature abhors a vacuum
but for nature, A VACUUM'S
GOT NOTHING AT ALL

Take 2 of 3
To be in Beenville Was
IS
To be in Beanville still

Take 3 of 3
The vacuum ADORES Nature
for heers abhorning

That's straightforward enough
the Slinger commented, Waht's
Heers?

That's a combining form used
here to circumscribe It, but wait

there is a matching set of pseudoparadoxes (*G* 136-7)

The irony at work here is that provided we know the pleiad are following the workings of *Aln~~o~~éins eukukleos*, 'well-rounded truth,' Gunslinger is absolutely right: the paradoxes are indeed "straightforward enough," because they are purely Parmenidean.

The first paradox, "Nature abhors a vacuum" is tantamount to saying "is-ness (as set out by *On Nature*) will not permit negation" or simply, "what-is is not supportive of nothing." We have seen this argued above already with reference to B.8. It follows that to say "for nature, A VACUUM'S / GOT NOTHING AT ALL" is the same as to assert "Being is not threatened by nothingness, because nothingness cannot exist."

The second paradox "To be in Beenville Was / IS / To be in Beanville still" refers to Parmenides's concept of the atemporal present in which time itself is ungenerative of is-ness in the first place and incapable of destroying it in the last.²³ Again, we have already encountered this above, and we will return to it again in discussion of the Eleatic concept of place. For now it is enough to recognize that the vowel move from "Beenville" to "Beanville" is no typographical error: it is a different locus entirely. The Doctor spends most of Book III trying bodily to bridge the gap between the two places, to transport his somatic molecules from the past to the future, from "Beenville," "a place that has

The goddess is making "a day of night" in both poems by leading Parmenides's all-knowing youth and Dorn's sagacious Gunslinger alike away from ignorance and into *alnoeia*, the "way of truth." But on this journey, what kind of truth is Gunslinger to search out? Again, *On Nature* has the whole structural answer:

*Χρῆν δὲ σε πάντα πύθεσθαι
ἤμην Ἀλνοείνς εὐκυκλεὸς ἀτρέμεσ πτόρ
ἠδὲ βροτῶν δόξας, ταῖς οὐκ ἐνὶ πίστις ἄλνοῖς.*

It is necessary that you shall learn all things, as well the unshaken heart of well-rounded truth as the opinions of mortals in which there is no true belief. (Parmenides, frag. 1.28-30, P 8-9)

The touristic journey of Gunslinger and his fellow travelers on the stagecoach is thus analagous to Parmenides's key phrase, "the way of well-rounded truth," *Alnoeíns eukukleos*. The Poet-Drifter himself uses the Greek word *kuklos* in his song "Cool Liquid Comes" (G 50) as a double reference to the physically round sun which is "blanching / the plain" as well as to their journey into the well rounded (*eukukleos*) nature of Truth (*Alnoeíns*). It takes Dorn most of the first two books to show the workings of Parmenides's "Way of Truth" and the task of recognizing which lines are pure Presocratic ontology against those which are infused or updated with phenomenology is arduous. The simplest way to approach the problem is possibly that outlined in Mourelatos's commentary on fragment B.8:

To reach the goal of the 'quest,' we must go by the route 'is.' To stay on that route, we must keep an eye on the 'signposts' along the way. To be faithful to the imagery, we might think of the signposts as imperitives like: 'always look for that which is ungenerable, for that which is simple, immobile, complete.'

(Mourelatos, *RP* 94)

The route of Dorn's pleiad is itself the route of "is-ness" or "Being." Parmenides's monist philosophy is fundamentally straightforward: all things, including the abstractions of thought, are. All "is-ness" always was and always will be. There was in the past and will be in the future no time that was not "is." The "what-is" or logical ontology of "is-ness," is therefore, as above, "ungenerable" and "complete." There is nothing that is not, and consequently no negativities that are. It is impossible to think the "not," thus all oppositions — and dualism itself — disappears.

As soon as oppositionality creeps in, so does flawed thinking, warns Parmenides's Goddess. The prime error of which men are guilty is that they have agreed to recognize that opposites exist.

It is such peddling of Pythagorean dualism, with all its contraries and complexities, which the youth and the Gunslinger must be alert to in mortals in their respective travels. We must therefore see Slinger and his company as readers, testers and consumers of "suspect space," that is, space that has been produced by people who believe in the existence of opposites and in the possibility of thinking the "not." The pleiad are accordingly best seen as readers of space on the lookout for signposts (*σηματα*) of inauthentic dualism. The essence of their tourist excursion is ultimately one in which space and location exist for them purely as they pass through it and which ceases to exist when it is not perceived. The story, route, writing and reading of the "Way of Truth" is "all of it together one, cohesive" (*ομοῦ παν / εν, συνεχες*) (RP 95), and is in some sense comparable with the Taoism of Lao-Tzu, itself making a popular comeback as *Gunslinger* was being written.²¹

The above commentary is based on Parmenides B.8.1-6 (P 85; RP 94), in which the classical Greek is able to handle the abstract concepts at hand more easily than the English language. Notice, in passing, how it is the long poem which here provides the earliest non-Homeric examples of the foundational critical terms *μῦθος*, story/account and *σηματα*, sign/semantics:

. . . μόνος δ'ετι μῦθος οδοῖο
 λείπεται *ws* εστιν· ταύτη δ'επι σηματ'εασι
 ολλα μάλ', *ws* αγενητον εδν και ανωλεθρον εστιν,

The account of the route is-ness (*ws εστιν*) remains yet all-in-one; but there are very many signs on the route that is-ness cannot be generated (from nothing) and cannot fade away (into nothing) (Parmenides, B.8.1-3, RP 94)²²

It is purely their knowledge of the above Parmenidean philosophy which makes the pleiad's reading of Dr Flamboyant's three "Great Beenville Paradoxes," as well as of "the matching set of pseudoparadoxes," possible at all (G 136). Readers of *Gunslinger* usually dismiss all the paradoxes as yet more of Dorn's obfuscatory nonsense and this is the easy way out, but in actual fact only the "pseudoparadoxes" are deliberate tracer-fire. We shall see in a moment even their "fake" significance. For the moment, however, we should concentrate on the

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The second paradox "To be in Beenville Was / IS / To be in Beanville still" refers to Parmenides's concept of the atemporal present in which time itself is ungenerative of is-ness in the first place and incapable of destroying it in the last.²³ Again, we have already encountered this above, and we will return to it again in discussion of the Eleatic concept of place. For now it is enough to recognize that the vowel move from "Beenville" to "Beanville" is no typographical error: it is a different locus entirely. The Doctor spends most of Book III trying bodily to bridge the gap between the two places, to transport his somatic molecules from the past to the future, from "Beenville," "a place that has

been" to Beanville, "The Hill of Beans" at the end of the poem. His attempt is to be "self producing" and to be his own "predecessor" (G 138) and his ultimate success gains Slinger's high praise, "Good work doctor / shows what you can do / if you persevere" (G 200). The attempt is to circumvent the concept of temporal difference, seen as a necessity by Parmenides.

The third paradox is the same as the first, but instead of positive being or is-ness holding the cards, it is seen from the point of view of the "vacuum," or "nothingness" as a kind of retort. Slinger makes sure that he has read it correctly by asking what the word "heers" refers to and he is told that "heers" is an arbitrary word "used / here to circumscribe It," that is, used in order to avoid employing the word "It." The reason for this is that many of the hermeneutic and linguistic problems encountered when translating *On Nature* arise purely from Parmenides's use of the verb *εἶναι*, "to be" and the resulting consequences. It is worth taking a moment to follow this up.

At the risk of introducing "fresh distortions" (G 18), the key difference regarding *εἶναι* is that between the "'is' of predication and the 'is' of existence" (RP 48); for this argument we might turn to Mourelatos' section entitled "The Veridical Use of 'Is'" (RP 48-9). As soon as a translator introduces the pronoun "It" to go with *εἶναι* (to provide a non-existent subject for the third person *εἶναι*) an unwanted degree of externality enters the equation which Parmenidean monism runs better without. Every use of the English word "It" is a bit of dirt in the ontological fuel line which classical Greek is never troubled by, having by design an in-line linguistic filter to strain out such philosophical distractions. As Kirk and Raven succinctly put it under their uncluttered heading "denial of time, the void, plurality," "The premise *εἶναι* is by now established as the only possibility: the only significant thought or statement is that a thing *is*."²⁴ Dorn's Horse, at this juncture enjoying one of his incarnations as Claude Levi-Strauss, is also ahead of the game: "Make *It*, Claude frownd / *It* aint nothin but a neuter pronoun" (G 170). The third Beanville Paradox should thus be visited, read and consumed by Slinger as "The vacuum ADORES Nature / for [its] abhorning," which now makes perfect sense. Nothingness loves being attached to is-ness, being both a part of existence and a part of *On Nature*, and the more nature (existence) abhors nothingness, the more the vacuum "ADORES Nature." The more the void is rejected, the more it responds by cleaving to Being.

As we observed before, the reading of the three "Great Beenville Paradoxes" is "straightforward enough" to Slinger because such thinking falls wholly within the domain of his own Parmenidean reading practice, the "Way of Truth." It is significant that Slinger cannot understand the "pseudoparadoxes" to which he never gives an answer, because they are an instance of "the way mortals speak," the "way of appearances," the false philosophy of *δόξα* to which we now turn.

To recap, we have said that Dorn spends most of Books One and Two of *Gunslinger* delineating the way in which the company, drawn by the six driverless horses, travel up the Rio Grande using Parmenides's ontological "Way of Truth" as their spirit level and guide, but also as their practice of reading what they encounter. It thus remains for us to ask what aspects of Parmenides's second analogy, the "Way of Seeming" enter the poem; this, we recall from *On Nature's* "Proem" above, is also called the opinion or doctrine (*δόξα*) of mortals who "do not comprise any authentic conviction."²⁵

As stated earlier, *On Nature* contains thirty-nine colloquial ancient-Greek words used for the first time by Parmenides. In *The Fragments of Parmenides*, Arthur Coxon traces these in detail and makes a discovery important to philologists and classicists alike: *On Nature's* use of "*τόπον*" is "the earliest occurrence of this word."²⁶ In the context of the long poem's use of spatial and topographical practices, this is clearly a significant breakthrough.

Louis Althusser argued the culturally materialist case that "a word or concept cannot be considered in isolation; it only exists in the theoretical or ideological framework in which it is used: its problematic."²⁷ The fact that *τόπον*, the ur-word or *primum mobile* sign for place, and therefore the concept "placeness" itself to some extent, should be used for the first time in western literature in a theoretical long poem, thus makes the long poem "its problematic"; it is the homing "ideological framework" to which the study of material place actually belongs. Whether or not it is defensible to attach such originary significance to a single word is of course a question which soon divides any room into historicists and post-structuralists, corner to corner, in a matter of seconds. The fact that there is no instance of the word, not even in Homer, however, remains. Until western scholarship unearths an earlier usage, a letter, a mosaic, a legal document, a play, a threnody, literally any textual fragment, place and the problematics of place are currently patented by the long poem. It could be objected that place is

a different word, as are *lieu*, *locus* and *tierra*, but where do any of these pretenders, not to mention topography, topology and most of geography really find themselves without Parmenides's "*topos*"? This "colloquial Greek" word (*RP* 5) used daily in the social practice of the pre-Christian, sixth-century inhabitants of Elea — a colonial and literally "phylic" (*φύλον*) context²⁸ — could have first appeared in any other scriptural environment whatsoever. It did not.

The key to the study of tourists as readers of space in *Gunslinger*, and the lines which I am suggesting count most towards the overall intelligibility of Dorn's seven year parodic pseudo-epic, lies in our close attention to the context of *τόπον* in Parmenides, B.8.38-41. Although Coxon provided the initial discovery (his Greek below), I am following Taran's translation and commentary for these famous lines, which, to my mind, make other readings of *Gunslinger* largely redundant:

τῷ παντ' ὄνομ' ἔσται
ὅσα βροτοῖ κατεθέντο, πεποιθότες εἶναι ἀληθῆ,
γίγνεσθαι τε καὶ ὀλλυσθαι, εἶναι τε καὶ οὐκί,
καὶ τόπον ἀλασσεῖν διὰ τε χροῶ φανὸν ἀμείβειν.

Therefore, all that mortals posited convinced that it is true will be [mere] name, coming into being and perishing, to be and not to be, change of place, and exchange of brilliant color. (Parmenides, B.8.38-41, *P* 86)

Lines 38-41 above explain three fundamental themes of *Gunslinger*: naming (*τῷ παντ' ὄνομ' ἔσται*), changing place (*τόπον ἀλασσεῖν*) and the things which mortals suppose (*ὅσα βροτοῖ κατεθέντο*).

There are as many as nineteen jokes in *Gunslinger* on the need for mere mortals, "the local species," to "name" objects or to "describe" people; for example, "Are you trying to 'describe' me, boy?" (*G* 25), "Don't describe yourself" (*G* 22) or "The mortal can be described / the *Gunslinger* finished, / That's all mortality is / in fact" (*G* 33). The arbitrary attachment of signifier to signified is their peculiar (Saussurean) weakness:

Nevertheless,
it is dangerous to be named
and makes you mortal.
If you have a name
you can be sold
you can be told
by that name leave, or come
you become, in short

a reference, or if bad luck
is large in your future
you might become an institution
which you will then mistake
for defense. (G 32-3)

The fundamental cognitive process by which humanity reads the world is thus part of their flawed doctrine, part of their "way of seeming" (*δόξα*). By providing such a commentary on the naming process in *Gunslinger*, we can now compare it with a commentary on the Parmenides fragments to see if there is any similarity. It is not long before the following passage comes into view:

'To speak names' does not in this context mean 'to utter sounds,' but rather 'to describe (meaningfully).' The immediate paraphrase is: It is this which mortals are describing when they say . . . ; mortals have called it Y, but it actually is X. (Mourelatos, *RP* 184)

We are now equating all the people whom the pleiad meet on their ontological journey into "is-ness" with "the way of seeming." The second part of Parmenides's *On Nature*, the *δόξα*, therefore comes more and more into play in Books Three and Four of *Gunslinger*, as the five tourists meet stranger and stranger examples of the reading practices employed by mortality. The "types of utterance made by mortals" become more and more challenging to the pleiad's own established "well-rounded truth" of the monist *Alētheia*. The characters they meet, and the enunciations they proclaim, become increasingly absurd to the Slinger and his entourage, increasingly (so far as they are concerned), "out of true."

Our second theme addressed by lines 38-41 was "changing place" (*τόνον αλλαοειν*), the first use of "topos" in world literature. The fact that humans believe change of place to be possible at all, Parmenides and the pleiad find laughable. It is to them just one example of the "types of utterance" crazily made by mortals and as such leads to our third category, "the things which mortals suppose." Mourelatos puts this so well in his commentary on the two lines 40-41 reproduced above that I see no other way than to quote his whole paragraph. His explanation is, in effect, an explanation not only of the *δόξα*, the false mortal "way of seeming" which Parmenides is illustrating in Fragments B.9 to B.20, but also of the plethora of idiocies encountered by the constellation as they come ever nearer "4 Corners." These culminate perhaps with the Cracker Barrel's pronouncement that "Yes, the signs are all over the sidewalk"

which prompts Everything curtly to respond "Do not deny in the new vanity / the old, original dust" (G 193). *Apropos* the way mortals read and consume — in direct contrast to the way Slinger's pleiad read and consume — Mourelatos's paragraph accounts for much of Dorn's text:

On the translation defended here, B8.40-41 appears as a list of types of utterance made by mortals. They say: (a) '___ came to be ___' and '___ ceased to be ___'; (b) '___ is ___' and '___ is not ___'; (c) '___ alters its place ___' and '___ transmutes color and/or shape.' What makes these types of judgement 'mortal,' in the pejorative sense, is not so much that they conjoin contradictory ideas; rather each of the conjuncts is objectionable by itself. This holds for the '___ is ___' of mortals as well as for the '___ is not ___.' The '___ is ___' of mortal thinking is one which can easily turn back into the '___ is not ___.' Similarly, they expect that '___ is not ___' could have a determinate sense. So the list is in effect a disjunction of six types of mortal judgement. Parmenides is telling us: No matter what it is that mortals say, they must say it with reference to what-is. (Mourelatos, *RP* 184-85)

it beats me how you mortals
can think something *is* (G 38)

Mortals then, even "I" himself in Book One before he becomes the "SECRETARY TO PARMENIDES" (G 141), is only "average fast I suppose / or maybe a little more / than average fast" (G 29). Gunslinger assesses the situation ontologically, "Which means / you gotta draw" and "I" replies, guiltily, "Well, yes." Ultimate speed, of course, deletes the Saussurean bar between sign and referent and gains direct access or Olsonian "proprioception,"²⁹ to the truth of Being itself, *AlnΘeia*. *Gunslinger* has thus split itself between two critical practices of reading space: the pure speed of divine monist Parmenideanism which makes "the out*of*town team . . . very modal" as against the mortal sloth of a dualist Pythagoreanism, Robart's "Vice-Versas" (G 125, 108) and everyone else in the poem.

As a last point in this section I want to round off with Dorn's most explicit reference to his major source. So fragmentary is the general landscape of *Gunslinger* by the time this passage appears that it is easy not to take the line "we 'ear from Parmenides, in frag.9" literally. As only one phrase in over 1500 lines "frag.9" is understandably missable. Comparing the two, however, we learn for sure that Dorn's knowledge of *On Nature* is both detailed and directed to the progress of his poem. Parmenides here metamorphoses into "the Man / on the 9th floor" not

only because the reference is to "DK fragment nine"³⁰ of Parmenides, but also because Howard Hughes famously hired the entire ninth floor of the Desert Inn Hotel in Las Vegas in 1968.³¹

Fragment B.9 is the start of the "way of seeming" and so demonstrates the way in which men's thinking is false. In this case we see how mortals insert the false opposition of Light and Night into their conceptual framework, whereas in fact, both are one. They think that by naming "Light and Darkness" (*φαιος καὶ νύξ ονόμασται*) they have understood it. Once again, we see mortals determined, after Mourelatos, to name *Y* as *X*, and therefore to make real speed, speed that is faster than intuition, totally impossible. For the clause "Mars Bar like you" read "Ed Dorn"; for the "Monte Carlo Procedure" read "Parmenidean monism"; and finally, if an atlas of America is to hand, check that the longitude and latitudes given bring us out at Cortez, Colorado (they do). The accuracies made possible by the Poet and the Slinger's instantaneous Eleatic monism can be likened to recent "smart" weaponry and they provide a laser-accurate reading of place, far unmatched by Robart's ponderous Texan dualism. As for the enemy, Howard Hughes, the Atalantes, the Vice-Versas, and Al, "[t]hey are carried farther and farther away from any possible station precisely because their goal, their aim, has not been sharply and clearly determined" (*RP 77*). Dorn has written a "SUBLIME" long poem "STARRING THE MAN," and the man it stars, singularly, is Parmenides of Elea:

"Light and Darkness, that's it"
we 'ear from Parmenides, in frag.9

And he TENDS to get in line
as long as the sign above the booth reads

SUBLIME
STARRING THE MAN
(sold out)

Your imagery is sensational
the Slinger interrupted the singer
But you know, it's also associational -

Listen, my celestial friend,
We've got it from the Man
on the 9th floor
who has been lookin all over the Milky Way
for a Mars Bar like you
if only to confirm his faith
in the Monte Carlo Procedure

And he has declared his crosshair
at 2 days minus 4 corners

37° North
109° West
more or less (G 123-124)

*αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ δὴ πάντα φᾶος καὶ νύξ ὀνόμασται
καὶ τὰ κατὰ σφετέρας δυνάμεις ἐπὶ τοῖσιν τε καὶ τοῖς,
πᾶν πλεον ἐστὶν ὁμοῦ φαιος καὶ νυκτὸς ἀφαντοῦ
ἴσων ἀμφοτέρων, ἐπεὶ οὐδετέρῳ μετὰ μηδέν.*

But once all things have been named Light and Night
and these (i.e. Light and Night) according to their meanings
have been attributed to these things and to those, all is full at the
same time of Light and obscure Night, of both equally, since there
is nothing which does not belong to either.

(Parmenides frag.9 [Simplicius, *Physics* 180.9-12]; Taran, *P* 161)

Dorn's Gunslinger, like *The Cantos*, thus favours a monist reading of
space as opposed to a mortal or capitalist (Howard Hughes) reading.
Writing to the New English Weekly on May 11 1933,³² Pound thoughtfully
intoned: "Monism is pretty bad, but dualism . . . is just plain lousy."

3.4 Consumer Choropoetics: Summary

The consumption of space joins the production of space and landscape
representation as the third core critical practice of choropoetics. As in
previous chapters, the chorological reading process I have used in this
study can be summarized by the demands it has made of the text:

- (1) *Consumer Choice*. Five modes of the geography of consumption can
be applied: reading, recreation, retailing, housing, and labour.
Each analyses the social consumption of space as a material and
regional commodity. Do two or more of the modes work together in
the long poem to be studied?
- (2) *Reading and Recreation*. What modes of reading and what modes of
recreation are major features of the text? Are they combined in
any way (as in tourism) or do they work independently of one
another? Is space consumed subjectively (unreliable reading) or
objectively (reliable reading) by the text's "users of space?"

- (3) *Travel and Tourism.* Travel has been the major re-creational mode in the tradition of the epic poem (both individual recreation and national re-creation). How does this relate to the way in which space is experienced and read by the characters involved? Are the travellers making "recreational," "diversionary," "experiential," "experimental," or "existential" readings of local space? Does one of these dominate and effect the reading of the long poem itself?
- (4) *Spatial Perception.* Is there evidence of one or more competing ways to read space in the text, for example, Parmenides's monism against Howard Hughes's capitalism? Is there intertextual or documentary material to justify this claim?

The typically self-regarding attitude of choropoetic texts results in a foregrounding of their spatial reading practices. Typographical oddities, diagrams and page-space innovations defamiliarize the reader to the space being consumed. The consumption of space — both by living readers and the readers in the text — therefore becomes an issue in and for itself. In terms of the chorological reading practice, however, attention to the consumption of material space cannot stand alone. Its proper functioning depends largely on the reading of the social space *produced* in a region (chapter 1). The production and consumption of material space have their own social economies reinscribed in, and reinterpreted by, the text of the long open form.

CHAPTER 4

Chronological Choropoetics: Timing Space and Spacing Time in Susan Howe's *Pythagorean Silence*

4.1 Time Geography and Space-Time

4.2 Space-Time Compression: Janelle

4.3 Space-Time Distanciation: Giddens

Intersocietal Systems — Distanciation Effect

Time-Space Edges

Edge One

Edge Two

Edge Three

Edge Four

4.4 Space-Time Diffusion: Hågerstrand

Innovation Diffusion

A Textual Model of Innovation Diffusion

Analysis of Three Spatial Diffusion Indicators

4.5 Chronological Choropoetics: Summary

woodcut of space time logic

(Howe, *Europe of Trusts* 92)

4.1 Time Geography and Space-Time

- (1) Edward Foster: Is time just chronology?

Susan Howe: I wouldn't say so. I would say space-time. It's the thing that isn't chaos. (Susan Howe)¹

- (2) Aesthetic form in modern poetry, then, is based on a space-logic that demands a complete reorientation in the reader's attitude toward language. Since the primary reference of any word-group is to something inside the poem itself, language in modern poetry is really reflexive. The meaning relationship is completed only by the simultaneous perception in space of word-groups that have no comprehensible relation to each other when read consecutively in time. (Joseph Frank)²
- (3) I suggest the term *spant*, an acronym for *SPace ANd Time* unit. The size of a spant could be noted as appropriate, by subscripts referring precisely to longitudes, dates and hours of the day. Several diverse understandings suggest themselves for this label. History is the study of spants. (Murray Melbin)³
- (4) Laclau's characterization of the spatial is, however, a relatively sophisticated version of a much more general conception of space and time (or spatiality and temporality). It is a conceptualization in which the two are opposed to each other, and in which time is the one which matters and of which History (capital H) is made. Time Marches On but space is a kind of stasis, where nothing really happens. (Doreen Massey, *SPG* 253)

The Susan Howe reply to Edward Foster in the *Talisman* interview (1) indicates a central concern of *Pythagorean Silence*. Howe's long poems are profoundly concerned with emphasizing precisely this spatio-temporal articulation, a "woodcut of space time logic" (*ET* 92) in which chronology and chorology are inseparably fused. Earlier in the same interview she talks at length about the formation of the poetic voice as essentially "a space-time phenomenon" and of the way in which "Sounds and spirits (ghosts if you like) leave traces in geography." She speaks of "Space and time — America and England" and, after quoting D.H. Lawrence, sums up her answer to Foster, "Trust the place to form the voice."⁴ *Pythagorean Silence* itself struggles throughout to spatialize the temporal with lines which find "time in the centre of a room" and the "Wheel of mutable time" with "(known circumference attached to a frame)" (*ET* 38). Our first premise, therefore, is easily identified: the contemporary long poem enunciates both visually and aurally the play of space-time logic.

For a second opinion, we may turn to quotation (2) from Joseph Frank's extended essay, "Spatial Form in Modern Literature" (1945). In comparison with the general dullness of much American criticism of the 1940s, Frank's insights sink a well into a desert of intellectual enquiry. The coining of "spatial form" which identifies "a space-logic that demands a complete reorientation in the reader's attitude toward language" and "the simultaneous perception in space of word-groups that have no comprehensible relation to each other when read consecutively in time" actually provides the first step in interpreting the majority of postmodern — as well as modern — long poems. Redeeming the Pound/Fenellosa "ideogrammic method" and building his argument on depth perception through the "linear-geometric styles" outlined by Worringer,⁵ Frank insists that it is an Eliadean "timeless world of myth, forming the common content of modern literature, that finds its appropriate aesthetic expression in spatial form."⁶

Strange as it may now seem, especially given the ever-increasing amount of theoretical jargon in our own time, even this argument proved too radical for some, notably Frank Kermode who wrote purposefully against all "time-defeating" criticism in *The Sense of an Ending* by objecting that "it leads directly to the questionable critical practice of calling literary structures spatial."⁷ Apart from the fact that Joseph Frank's approach was actually time enabling, Kermode's objection acts for us as a kind of test case for the real point that needs to be made: there will always be those who treat time and space as mutually exclusive categories and persist in their belief that one can triumph only at the expense of the other. It is as if some additional weight in one must necessarily tip the scales against its opponent. We shall soon see that it is against such a dimensional apartheid that the majority of spatial philosophers and geographers are now writing.

Murray Melbin's claim (3) that "History is the study of spants" where "SPANT" is the acronym for the combined reality of the "SPace ANd Time" continuum is a warning to us all of the dangers of neologization. It demonstrates the way in which the need for a spatio-temporal linguistic shorthand is genuinely required while the practice of its implementation is open to ridicule.

The fundamental principles of Melbin's argument are not at fault. Recognizing initially that "four-dimensional density is conceptually and methodologically superior to three-dimensional density in dealing with experience" he recommends that "one would have to set the sizes of the

space and time boundaries per [spant] unit."⁸ Where Melbin does err, however, is in his ability to select a suitable acronym: to the lay reader "spant" is an unfortunate mixture of "pant" and "spent" — not to mention an anagram of "pants." Are the associations of panting, spending and underwear somehow unclear to time-geographers?

Setting aside such lively associationism three more serious advances may be made through Melbin. First is the context in which his paper on "the spant" occurs. His own title is "The Colonization of Time" and deals with labour expansion in the extended 24 hour day, but more importantly the essay itself appears in the three volume collection *Timing Space and Spacing Time: Human Activity and Time Geography* (1978).⁹ Of the fully twenty-eight articles in these volumes, as few as two or three fail to cast light on the strategies of the contemporary long poem. This may seem an exaggerated claim to readers of language poetics and open form works, but such initial scepticism underestimates the extent to which space-time relations are explicitly theorized in the texts themselves.

Second, Melbin reminds us that time-geographers share exactly the same technical problem as that faced by contemporary poets. Both parties share the impossible task of displaying in 2-D (at best 3-D) the activities and experience of the "human occupation of space . . . the four dimensional space-time context of social life."¹⁰ Finding the clearest way of displaying such space-time condensation becomes a reflexive obsession of time-geographers and poets of open form alike. Although length and breadth can both be topographically approximated with some level of accuracy, depth and temporal duration continually resist such representation. As soon as chorological data hits the page, whether it be poetic or geographical, time and depth are visually implicated in a process of deterioration and deferral according to the mimetic accuracies and ideological practices of their new formal container. To squeeze four dimensions into two cannot be done — at least not without considerable explanation of the processes involved.

Melbin's final contribution serves to remind readers that the four-dimensional spatio-temporal sphere, the "spant," is a strictly measurable unit which can provide a ratio of the ebb and flow of densities. While it is true that Melbin has in mind the graphing of urban population densities, there is no reason why his spatio-temporal practice should not be applied to the long poem. It may prove beneficial to compare the time-space compression ratios of long poems by plotting word and letter

densities against page-space and performance-time criteria. Having set the boundaries of what Melbin calls the "unit spant," instead of yielding "people-per-spant" ratios, the long poem could produce lexeme or letter-per-spant results. This would be a particularly useful tool for comparing intra-long poem sections of writers like Howe and Scalapino whose page-space practices seem visually to defy any quantification whatsoever. Codices or shorthand symbols for diagonal, upside-down, reversed or overscored words/letters could easily be devised and the results could be plotted or hypertextually layered against one another for comparison. A graded index rating would then denote the level of spatio-textual practices anticipated in the textscape ahead.

In the last intertext (4) above, Doreen Massey takes Ernst Laclau¹⁰ to task for promulgating the same spatio-temporal apartheid discussed in Kermode's response to Joseph Frank. Her criticism of Laclau's opinion that "Time Marches On but space is a kind of stasis, where nothing really happens" encapsulates the core issues outlined so far. Massey is as determined as Howe to "say space-time" and in the final chapter, "Politics and Space/Time" she makes her own survey of the male voice-field from Berger and Jameson to Urry and Braudel, all of whom seem to have arrived on the doorstep from other subjects to dispute geographical issues:

In some ways, all this can only be a delight to someone who has long worked as a 'geographer'. Suddenly the concerns, the concepts (or, at least, the *terms*) which have long been at the heart of our discussion are at the centre also of wider social and political debate.

And yet, in the midst of this gratification I have found myself uneasy about the way in which, by some, these terms are used
(Massey, *SPG* 249-50)

What we learn from "spatial form" (Frank), the "spant" (Melbin), "an alternative view of space" (Massey) and from the host of newly arrived spatial commentators still wiping their feet from various wintry disciplines (including poetics), is that for all social research in the humanities "the outside is also a space-time phenomenon" (Howe). Treating the human occupancy of socialized space as anything less than 4-D not only does a disservice to surface/depth, space/time and data/text interrelations, but makes interpretation of contemporary long poems practically meaningless. Chorological readings of the long poem's regional spatial practices cannot afford to ignore the temporal in any way.

4.2 Space-Time Compression: Janelle

Time-space compression is defined by David Harvey as a collection of "processes that so revolutionize the objective qualities of space and time that we are forced to alter, sometimes in quite radical ways, how we represent the world to ourselves."¹² As such, the most important observation from the outset is that the processes of both "time-space convergence" and "time-space divergence" fall equally under the conceptual aegis of time-space compression. Although time-space convergence has been the dominant mode in postmodern capitalist societies, it would be easy to overlook the fact that divergence in time-space relations is still possible and that it too is an issue of compression, albeit a decompression. In the present context it is the contemporary long poem which is regarded, after Harvey, as revolutionizing "sometimes in quite radical ways, how we represent the world to ourselves" and for a more detailed understanding of how these twinned concepts of convergence and divergence affect Howe's open form poetics we must turn to the early work of their originator, Douglas G. Janelle.

In the year before, and the actual year of Apollo 11's first manned lunar landing — the beginning of the "Space Age" proper — Janelle was appropriately outlining his theories of "distance-convergence," "time-space convergence" and "convergence rates" in relation to "central place theory" and "location theory."¹³

Janelle famously illustrated his concept of a "time-space convergence rate" in a graph which showed the progressive shortening in the time it took to travel from Edinburgh to London between the years 1658 and 1966. The graph showed that although the expected shortening of journey times between the age of the stagecoach and that of the aeroplane took place, far from this rate being continuous in time, it was irregular and discontinuous. So although Janelle demonstrated conclusively that "as a result of transport innovations, places approach each other in time-space"¹⁴ he also showed that we should expect discontinuous "convergence rates" in minutes per year. Related terms like "friction of distance" denoting the inhibiting factor of distance on human agency, and "distance decay" referring to the "lapse rate" of any interaction as distance increases, soon sprang up in response to Janelle so that geographers could address such issues in spatio-temporal convergence and divergence with ever-greater accuracy. In recent years the theory has been improved upon by Abler's identification of "cost-

convergence" (1971), Forer's introduction of "plastic space" (1978) and Janelle's own recent emphasis on "space-adjusting technologies" (1991). These theoretical innovations have affected thinking in almost all fields where human activity is perceived as an event on the space-time continuum¹⁴ — which is all well and good — but how exactly is time-space compression reflected in the contemporary long poem? Lines like the epigraph to *Pythagorean Silence* hold the answer:

we that were wood
when that a wide wood was
In a physical Universe playing with

words

Bark be my limbs my hair be leaf
Bride be my bow my lyre my quiver (*ET* 17)

Space-time convergence may be represented by the poet in a number of ways on the page. The most obvious way, as in the first two lines above, is to shorten or collapse the space between lines. In this example the lack of material space in the primeval wood is shown in the textual crowding of the alliterative letter "w." In combination with the fact that these lines are read at speed with the words almost stuttering¹⁵ on top of each other, the net result is space-time convergence. Conversely, as the lines which follow widen out into the "Universe," there is space enough for capital letters ("I," "U," "B"), less need for alliteration and room for the reader accordingly to slow in pace: this is space-time divergence. Line space is thus crucial to Howe:

It takes a poet to see how urgent this subject of line breaks is. But then how often do critics consider poetry as a physical act? Do critics look at the print on the page, at the shapes of words, at the surface — the space of the paper itself? Very rarely.¹⁶

In homage to George Butterick's editing of *The Maximus Poems*, Howe remarks:

George's editing of Olson has to be one of the most generous gifts to poetry in my time. Priceless. I have learned, because my own writing is so concerned with gaps and spaces, words that run

together, etc., that typesetters who pay attention to such deviations from the norm are few and far between . . . That's what Butterick saw so clearly. He printed Olson's Space.¹⁷

It is for this reason that the typography of John Taggart's essay on *Pythagorean Silence* should be discussed. From his six quotations of Howe's text, no less than five are incorrectly transposed. Whereas Butterick so conscientiously printed "Olson's Space," Taggart has failed miserably to print (or to oversee into print) Howe's space. A certain leeway is naturally given for the understandable variation between base fonts, but Taggart's citations are hardly recognizable: they are, in effect, a different poem. In considering the self-same epigraph to the poem discussed above, he prints:

we that were wood
when that a wide wood was
In a physical Universe playing with
words
Bark be my limbs my hair be leaf
Bride be my bow my lyre my quiver¹⁸

Not only does this make a mockery of the space-time convergence of the first lines, but it fails to read the space-time divergence of line 4's single lexeme "words" to which the Sun and Moon Press correctly give extra line space above and below. It is not necessary to dwell too long on Taggart's dismal typography — suffice it to say that only his third citation¹⁹ escapes unscathed. No doubt this reflects some bizarre reversal of the usual margins of statistical error; or perhaps it is just all part of the "significant play" he claims for Howe which is — unfortunately in the circumstances — the "sovereign principle of composition and the source of all our closest attention to poetry."²⁰

In two other places space-time convergence in *Pythagorean Silence* is indicated by the near overprinting of two lines on top of one another ("ceremony" *ET* 78; and "human-child" *ET* 82) and the practice becomes more, not less, marked a year later in *Defenestration* (eight times) where letters also begin to defy their own line boundaries completely.²¹ *The Liberties* contains no examples of this device at all for two reasons: first it is controlled largely by the requirements of dramatic form and second it was written in 1980, well before its two companions in this volume.

Beside the radical rupturing, mirroring, and palimpsesting of Howe's later open forms, notably *Articulation of Sound Forms in Time*

(1987) and *A Bibliography of the King's Book or Eikon Basilike* (1989), *Europe of Trusts* appears positively outdated. Before 1980, however, such typesetters' nightmares are almost non-existent and we must remember that although *Frame Structures: Early Poems 1974-1979* contains "House in glass with steel structure" which is surely the ultimate sorry test for Caxton and Gill's descendants,²³ this section is part of the "Preface: Frame Structures" poem written in 1995 and thus represents the latest high-tech development, not the earliest example, of Howe's space-time convergence repertoire. In terms of the creative use of page-space, Howe displays a surprisingly regular learning curve throughout the duration of her career.

Space-time convergence is again in evidence at the level of the page with Howe's practice of running two or three words into one. If the latitudinal space between different lines is an indicator of 4-D convergence, so also is the longitudinal space between words. This is evidenced at both ends of the scale with word-phrases like "Flora(of secrecy)" (*ET* 82) and "berry-blood(secrecy)" (*ET* 83) which attempt to hide the truth away by leaving fewer space-bar holes for escape, to having Part III's vast and variable gaps between substantives, "ancientry yoke thraldom" (*ET* 82) so that we focus on specific signified concepts and isolate the ancient referents.

This is a question not only of how closely to articulate word-forms, but of how to provide boundaries for them. The challenge is one of picture-framing the words on the page by carefully choosing the correct frame-mounts: too large a mount and the image gets lost with the viewer straining toward the canvas; too small and the image suddenly dominates the room, shooing the viewer away. The spaces between letters and words in *Pythagorean Silence* thus become a forceful device in their own right; they demand a recognition which is used to un-silence the female historical voice. Where words fall closely about one another with short gaps, heavier hyphenation or increased parenthesis (space-time convergence), they can be taken in one breath and seen as a visual whole: the time of their cognition through live or silent reading is short. Where, however, the gaps and spaces increase (space-time divergence), so does our oral performance time and so does our visual awareness space: cognition becomes a longer and less finite process.

Every page of Howe provides examples of this essentially simple relationship between space-time convergence and space-time divergence and of the way in which pace and rhythm are produced accordingly in

the long poem. The contrast is naturally most stark in transitional passages which change gear from one to the other, from, for example, convergence to divergence:

soon forgotten-
moves home again-
is herself again-

Leaning in enclitic ne
I cannot
call presence and in its
absence

fold in one hand

a few
what
fragments
holds us to

what
(ET 24)

or the other way around, from divergence to convergence:

crop wattling revelry brink
curlew

dark
a bare

whine down hungry rang (smitten)

Little girl in your greed
come down

come down

ivy and roses ourself
will be (ET 78)

Certain passages include brief shifts in and out of both modes, as the very first page of the poem conveniently demonstrates:

HE

(Comes through the hall door.)

The research of scholars, lawyers, investigators, judges
Demands!

SHE

(With her arms around his neck
whispers.)

Herod had all the little children murdered! (*ET* 21)

The last page, where the poet's voice breaks into the manuscript transposition of previously used words, is even more effective. Again we experience divergence-convergence-divergence:

den sealed ascent flee

chariot interpret flame

hot arc chaff meridian

in the extant manuscript SOMEONE
has lightly scored a pen over

diadem dagger a voyage gibbet

sheaf (*ET* 84)

It should be clear by now that the above are all examples of Janelle's discontinuous convergence rate in terms of words per time-space unit. We move from slow-page deserts of very few words to fast-page urban densities of expression not on a regular or predictable basis, but as and when the text encounters newly found information. In fact, we have already noted in chapter 2 the political and ideological consequences of such a shift in the "landscape of the page," but now we are taking into account the additional dimension of time. Discontinuous convergence rates in passages which move at will between high and low density resolutions of word and word-phrase units not only keep the reader on his toes, but contrast starkly with those sections of the long poem which employ a regular or more standard metrical pattern. In the entire seventeen sections of Part II, for example, the time-space convergence rate is far more predictable and much less assaulted by the four-dimensional distortions of the rest of the poem. Here, ignoring the

prologue page (*ET* 35) Janelle's time-space convergence is extremely regular with each and every full page unit using 20-22 lines and every half-page unit sticking to the same word-line frequency ratio. Strictly speaking, and were this constant velocity of space over time to continue ad infinitum (pages divided by words), we could measure no time-space convergence or divergence at all and Janelle's term would become effectively meaningless.

4.3 Space-Time Distanciation: Giddens

The danger with presenting a new way of understanding the formal and visual layout of words in a text is that such a reading practice, so keen to introduce the temporal dimension, risks losing the dimension of depth. Put more bluntly, we could say that Howe is so involved in mimicking the complexities of the postmodern environment on the flat space of the page that she misses out on Smith's "deep space," that is, on "quintessentially social space . . . physical extent fused through with social intent."²⁴ But anyone who has read *Pythagorean Silence* knows that it is exactly this dimension of depth that is particularly present in Howe in comparison with the deliberate surface-resident techniques used by other language poets. Where does this feeling of textual depth emerge from and how does it relate to social spatialization in terms of time-space distanciation?

I want to make two claims: first that Howe's long open forms derive their depth of reference from exploring issues of "time-space distanciation" as outlined by the social theorist Anthony Giddens; and second that her choropoetic practice depends on exploring the "time-space edges" of various chorophyles. Although it will not be possible to provide a full exposition of the multiple ways in which Giddens's highly influential structuration theory impacts upon our interpretation of the long poem, some provisional attempts will be made to bridge the theoretical divide between structuration and poetics.²⁵

Time-space distanciation in itself is not difficult to grasp. In its simplest guise it is nothing more than a way of measuring the amount of social interaction between human agents against the backdrop of differing social systems and rules. In this way a tribal or primitive society is regarded as having a low position on the time-space distanciation continuum because relatively few inter-communicational possibilities exist for its individuals, while a much greater distanciation is felt in class-

capitalist societies of the developed world where an increased "system integration" allows for almost limitless interaction between human agents. Historically speaking (in the West), as a result of new technologies and communications networks, time-space distancing has thus been the story of "the expansion of interaction over space and its contraction over time": we can all interact with more people over wider spaces in less time.

Giddens' model is obviously more complex in design in that it attempts to account for variations in societal structures including political "authoritative resources" and economic "allocative resources" which permit the possibility of transformations along the distancing continuum. The attempt is ultimately to provide a unified theory of intersocietal systems by a careful plotting of such material factors as surveillance, writing, commodification and monetarization, but more important to this study is simply the recognition that "the extension and 'closure' of societies across space and time is seen as problematic."²⁶

Functionalism had assumed that societies were closed and bounded systems employing coherent internal laws and being subject to intra-regional or intra-national indices of ideological legitimation. Post-functionalist structuration theory, with its emphasis on time-space distancing and inter-relational agency focuses in contrast on the "time-space edges" between types of society and therefore between different chorophyles. By identifying various "time-space episodes" in the constitution of modernity, some of which have been mentioned above, Giddens hopes to show how spheres of regional social spatialization are subject not only to the internal constitutive sanctions of a particular social system, but also to endogenous spatio-temporal activities operating at the edges of all time-space episodes.

The above précis would have little relevance unless it could be shown to be analogous to the workings of the contemporary long poem in general and to the progress of *Pythagorean Silence* in particular: this is where structuration becomes a choropoetic practice. The poetic text identifies different societies by setting out to compare intersocietal systems but it also makes consistent use of a metaphorical discourse of boundaries, ends and dividing-lines in order to sign forth "time-space edges." Moreover, the open form is particularly suited to pursuing and displaying the data of system integration whose valency depends on monitoring interaction between agency, power and social structure. Worked examples of these arguments follow in the two Giddensean

sections below, the first taking "intersocietal systems" as its focus, the second, "time-space edges."

Intersocietal Systems — Distanciation Effect

17.

Thales
supposed the earth to float on

water
Infinite matter

(Anaximander)
Ocellus of Luciana and his work on
the Universe

(Entelechy)
actuality of the body Texts
torn from their context

Forms
back into names

Newton's sailor paces three miles
an hour

while the ship sails west

Doomsday overturns and milleniums
riddance and rest

Blind wisdom wanders along
(arrows for thought

left side of the world) (*ET* 67)

Pythagorean Silence identifies six societies and six respective social structures; it then proceeds to trace the history of "HE" and "SHE" through the differing time-space distanciation episodes of each. These six are, chronologically: preclassical Greece, Arthurian Britain, the Norman Conquest, the Early Renaissance, Jacobean England and modern U.S.A. (Buffalo and Hawaii, 1941). It would be very neat if the sections showing the greatest linguistic time-space convergence (Janelle) corresponded with the societies of highest time-space distanciation (Giddens) and vice-versa (time-space divergence equalling low distanciation), but this is not

the case. The places where language is highly condensed and seems to stutter, bracket and trip over itself are not necessarily concerned with the high technologies of twentieth-century America; and from the reverse angle, those lines which describe and use the discourse of the Arthurian Dark Ages ("Arthur," "Igraine," "Excalibur," "omen" *ET* 48-50) are not always isolated and given the most page space. This is initially frustrating for those critics in search of a unified chorological reading with a watertight hull. What we actually experience, however, as demonstrated in section 17 above (*ET* 67-8), is often a merging of different spatio-temporal societies or possible worlds into a fairly regular section of text. The result is a space-time tension with space-time edges.

Taking the lines in order, we have Thales, Anaximander and Ocellus transporting us back to Presocratic Greece, followed by Isaac Newton's Jacobean experiments on gravity and longitude in pre-Enlightenment England, and then a return to the Doomsday Book ("millenium's riddance") and King Harold's death ("arrows for thought") marking the Early Norman period. Over the page, however, we encounter a typically Howean passage of the disembodied narrative voice, a female Everywoman or Joycean Anna Livia Plurabelle moving severally "through [the] measured / velocity" of the open form:

We hear her walking in her room
moving through measured

velocity
Passing away according to restless

necessity

Irascible unknowable disorderly
irrational

Poverty my mother and Possession

my father
Time to set our face homeward

Shadow-emperor (*ET* 68)

As if this collapsing of societies' neatly contoured edges into one another was not hard enough for the reader to follow — an anathema to the old sociological functionalism — there are also some disconcerting lines which seem to come from Howe herself as she is writing the poem in 1982: "Texts / torn from their context" and "Time to set our face

homeward." If we take this last contemporary persona seriously we now have seven possible worlds, levels or episodes on which to engage the poem.

With such an array of different historical episodes constantly fighting for position, we are forced to recognise that no matter the level of system integration between agents that is possible within the separate societies referred to by Howe, once they are lifted into *Pythagorean Silence* they must reconfigure their own level of time-space distancing in relation to the other societies invoked around them. The juxtaposition of certain recognisable events within the seven time-space societies hailed by the poem enable us not only to identify and recuperate the past voices of that particular culture, but also to contrast the high or low levels of mediation which exist at the borders where they meet. Although this sounds like a long-winded way of saying that Howe simply compares the social elements of seven different cultures in order to verify the tactical male exclusion of the female voice (Sappho, Helen, Eve, Persephone, Igraine, Ophelia, Cordelia), it is important to recognize that no matter the level of intercommunicative availability which distancing traces, the end result in every case is consistently silence: *Pythagorean Silence*.

Discourse of Boundaries — Time-Space Edges

Edge One

Apart from the page-space margins, which *Pythagorean Silence* so obviously exploits, and leaving aside the text's relationship to the vast body of theory which explores marginalization as a focal practice for themes relating to powerlessness, subaltern studies and the wider feminist critique of phallogentrism (DuPlessis, 1990), Howe's long poem explores first and foremost the margins of time and space themselves. By exploring "The stress of meaning" (ET 29) which is encountered at the perimeter of Giddens' time-space edges, *Pythagorean Silence* not only utilizes the anticipated vocabulary of the signifier "edge" itself with the "edge of a hole" (ET 21) and the "empty edge / Father's house forever falling" (ET 41) but also of the metaphorical boundary situation in all its figurations: "Boundary of day" (ET 54); "glaciers dividing" (ET 56); "lines bisecting" (ET 58); "A border-rider's kingdom" (ET 61); "measure a

million to margin" (*ET* 66); "lintel" (*ET* 78).

Although we have now come to expect such idiosyncratic brinkmanship of Howe in the phraseology and lexicography of her poetic practice, writing almost a thesaurus of the beginnings and ends of teleology or "(Entelechy)" (*ET* 67), little attention has been paid to the deeper, sometimes silent, time-space edges encrypted between the various "fictive sphere(s)" (*ET* 49) of the poetry. These are of four kinds.

The first type of time-space edge is one in which Howe uses the above metaphorical vocabulary of the boundary explicitly so as to expose the tensions which exist between the spatial perspective of the individual and the temporal constraints of social structures. These can be seen in action in section 10 of Part II.

10.

Each sequent separate musician
(harmony

a passion)
across a deep divided deprivation

(enchantment captivity
a paradise-prison)

seems to hear a voice walking in the
garden

who seems to say
I am master of myself and of the

Universe

These characters observe are known
successively withdrawn

Those passages as myth in Myth
remain a fiction

Ever tolling absence homeward Words
toil their way forward

a true world
fictively constructed

Boundary of day and day
Symmetry I cannot see

Perspectives perish with ourselves

end of a house stretching its walls
away (*ET* 54-5)

The edge here is between successive generations of women as they pass through their own historical eras cut off from their mothers and grandmothers in the past and from their daughters and granddaughters in the future. In this case the time-space edge is very clearly a socially constructed boundary fulfilling patriarchal strategies of exclusion. Whether or not this argument from sexual politics is convincing, by emphasising the bricking up of the female voice between generations of women so that "Each sequent separate musician" has only her own "true world / fictively constructed" to go on, Howe locates the boundaries of day (time) along with unseen symmetries (space) and explains just why "Perspectives perish with ourselves" in the "end of a house stretching its walls / away." This, then, is the first type of time-space edge: a boundary situation between agent and society that is explicitly presented through the use of liminal vocabulary as well as openly addressed in its substantive content. Of all four categories, it is consequently the easiest to identify and tends to contain, as above, a veiled rhetorical polemic.

Edge Two

The second time-space edge marks an invisible split between the whole numbered sections of the poem. The most obvious is that between sections 12 and 13 of Part II and is initially signalled by the sudden lack of a second page in Part II (12). In the dated language of new criticism we would have to say that the reason for this was a mirroring of form and content: one generation's will "To see through all things clearly" only advances in the end "towards the aim of / standing still" (*ET* 58); the standing still thus causes the form of the poem to pause before another generation bursts forth in section 13 in absolute ignorance of its predecessor:

One generation falling asleep

another waking up Memory
harmony multiplicity

sheen of sacramental mystery

intellection of fate and fame
unfathomable visionary dream (*ET* 59)

The deletion of the text between the two sections in order to mimic the

gap in knowledge between the agents of one epoch and the next who only see the past as an "unfathomable visionary dream" as if some "sacramental mystery" has been at work, reminds us how carefully we must attend to the sudden skids and swerves of Howean space. It is here that the advantages of serial poetics and the sequential long poem reside. Not only is it the perfect form in which to display self-reflexive messages which mirror the relationship between the word and the world and take the reader, for example, "Steadfast into this sliding / no sequence seen," but the contemporary long sequence, with its lacunae, hiatuses and edges can teach the reader as he or she goes to become more aware of spatio-temporal textuality in itself. Howe's deliberate exclusion of some text which we had learned to expect at the end of section 12 (because of the eleven previous instances) forces us to read a lack of printed space, that is, to provide an answer for the type's disappearance. Any textual spatial expectations are naturally brought up short by such ploys. Major time-space edges which often coincide with section breaks thus constitute our second framing category: edges which shift the cognitive direction of the poem by providing a temporary resolution or resting point between socio-spatial episodes of the text.

Edge Three

Differing only in scale of execution, the third time-space edge is harder to identify but more prolific. It is another way in which Howe can imitate the stutter of American history, the start-stop struggle of a nation trying to voice itself into existence through script which constantly runs away and sound which drifts only into silence. Ninety per cent of the time the minor edge is indicated by parenthesis and functions in the same way as the stage direction or intra-textual note. When reading the few words of these edges, the experience is one of coming across material that should somehow have been edited out of the poem. It is as if the deliberate non-deletion of such bracketed clauses in some way signals a retrieval of meaning in time and space or a reluctance to edit out deictic information. Howe insists on retaining in her poem material, spatial and temporal information which others would hive off. Section 2 of "Pythagorean Silence" itself contains three close examples:

Wheel of mutable time Fortune fabled
to turn

(known circumference tied to a frame)
Thoughts are born

posthumously

Dark as theology's secret book
the unsphered stars

are touchstones at a gallop Dark
irrevocably dark

(written on a stray sheet) years ago
and the chained beast

stamping
But I am wandering off into irrational

magnitudes

Earth has turned away from the sun
and it is night

(Seventy lines about fields in the dark)

so dark seems pleasant land
so dark seems national (*ET* 38-39)

These three examples are all minor time-space edges because they contain information that is marginal to the reading of the main poem and seems to be voiced from a different — possibly Susan Howe's own — time-space dimension: "(known circumference attached to a frame)" is a comment on the volumetric, spatial geometry of the "Wheel of mutable time"; "(written on a stray sheet)" describes the location of a misplaced quotation, which addresses theories of light metaphysics, "Dark / irrevocably dark"; and "(Seventy lines about fields in the dark)" similarly marks the existence of an ancient manuscript or document encountered and read by an unnamed scholar. The bracketed material is described as a minor time-space edge because it provides information from elsewhere, from the perspective of an alternative time and space that is not present or available to the main body of the narrative. They are unexplained blips on the spatio-temporal progress of the poem, textual worm-holes to a future dimension.

Not all minor time-space edges are parenthetical, however, and we have already encountered one such example of this in the previous discussion of time-space compression with the unbracketed lines, "in the

extant manuscript SOMEONE / has lightly scored a pen over" (ET 84). Equally, not all parentheses contain enough data to trigger a proper edge or a fully formed warp in the curve of the poem's space-time logic; Howe makes extensive additional use of the single bracketed word or phrase and also of the codicillary comment more commonly associated with the parenthetical function of language. Nevertheless, it remains largely true to say that this third bordering device, the minor time-space edge, is characterized by: first, the bracketing of text from one to three lines in duration; second, the inclusion in that supplementary text of temporal, spatial or textual information; and third, the voicing of an oral register of elsewhere, the audible ironic ripple of a distant, momentary and Othering time-space environment.

Edge Four

The fourth and final type of time-space edge has closer affinities to Giddens' original formulation in that it confronts the extent to which the "fictive spheres" of the seven societies of *Pythagorean Silence* are "disembedded" from the textual presence of the reader's "here and now." According to early Giddens (1981, 1984) any increase in scriptural communication entails a necessary increase in surveillance to police such networking while any sophistication in a society's economical system of monetarization involves a similarly heightened process of commodification. As the networks of the word and the coin expand, the extent to which the individual agent is relieved of any depth of personal attachment to his own immediate lifeworld identity increases until the here-and-now of regional presence melts entirely into the there-and-then of global deferral.

Recently, it has been the human geographer, Derek Gregory, who has struggled most interestingly with the progress of Giddens' thinking on social spatialization and distancing/disembedding models. His summary of the key issues involved in Giddens' approach are a helpful reminder of the dialectics at stake in Howe's own poetics. Gregory's work also brings together many of the new terms in the discourse of space whose transition into non-geographical disciplines Doreen Massey found so questionable:

Giddens attempts to mark the traces of "absence" in the conceptual register of structuration theory in quite another way: by identifying system integration with a process of *time-space distanciation*, which is supposed to establish the conditions which connect presence and absence. One of the most significant consequences of crossing the threshold of modernity, so he argues, is the generalized "disembedding" of spheres of social life from the immediacies of the here and now. This does not mean that social life is no longer anchored in place — it still "takes place" in the most obdurately physical of senses — but those mooring lines become "stretched" across variable spans of time and space. Giddens attaches particular importance to the *generalization* of this process because neither time-space distanciation nor disembedding are in themselves diagnostic of modernity Presence and absence are interleaved in a "local-global dialectic," whose restless animations are channeled through systems of mediated interaction that dissolve and recombine local networks of interpersonal relations across an increasingly global space. (Gregory, *GI* 118)

We can relate a number of suggestive phrases here to the fourth type of time-space edge exhibited by *Pythagorean Silence*. This final edge, as we have said, concerns the distance between the here-and-now of the long poem's fictive spheres as they bend in and out of focus during the ongoing sequential movement of the long open form. Just as human agents become increasingly disembedded from their personal attachment to the regional social habitat, so the reader of the long poem suffers varying levels of distanciation or disembeddedness in relation to Howe's seven fictive spheres. It is the time-space edges between the episodic spheres which are particularly important to the dimension of depth, consideration of which we have been gradually stressing in this study.

In recasting Giddens, Gregory says that time-space distanciation between the "spheres of social life" and the "immediacies of here and now" takes place when the "mooring lines become 'stretched' across variable spans of time and space." The long poem is naturally well-suited to displaying this stretching out or elongation which occurs between the poles of local presence and global absence since it can in theory put any one social episode or regional representation on conceptual hold for a relatively long period of time, only to return to it from within the framework of a different global location or chorophyle. In so doing the contemporary long poem can readily mimic Gregory's disembedded "stretching" of the local into the global and of the regional into the national. For this reason also the word "perspective" is continually used in *Pythagorean Silence* to remind us of such trans-societal spatial shifts — Gregory's "variable spans of time and space."

In the process of this disembedding from, say, the Greek Presocratic society of "cataclysmic Pythagoras" in Part II (2) to the return of the "long pythagorean lustrum" in Part II (15) we have witnessed how although "Perspectives enter / and disappear" on the "Hoop / of horizon" ultimately "nothing new can come into being" since "(heavenly systems move monotonous / motion)" (ET 63). While the Presocratic, class-divided social model has been analogically stretched from pillar to post across tribal Anglo-Saxon, feudal Norman Conquest, city-state Renaissance, and class-capitalist modern American episodes, it remains essentially framed or bounded by the parameters of its own time-space edge. The same thing can be said of the meanderings of Howe's other social systems "whose restless animations" returning to Gregory, "are channelled through systems of mediated interaction that dissolve and recombine local networks of interpersonal relations across an increasingly global space."

4.4 Space-Time Diffusion: Hågerstrand

Innovation Diffusion

The diffusion of innovations — the origin and dissemination of cultural novelties — is an area of study which concerns all sciences dealing with human activity . . . (Hågerstrand, *ID* 1)

Torsten Hågerstrand worked on the spatial diffusion of "material manifestations of culture" from the early fifties onwards and gradually the conceptual refinements which arose from his own adaptations and his associates' critical extensions resulted not only in improved approaches to contextual and communications theory (uneven development, world systems theory) but in time-geography's major influence upon spatial science (statistical geography) and land information systems. Again, in pursuit of our spatial reading of *Pythagorean Silence*, the choropoetic argument still depends upon our ability to visualize the contemporary long poem as a simulation model of real-world situations, events and interactive possibilities. These are as much in evidence at the textual level as they are in the time-space social systems of the 4-D taken-for-granted world.

In bringing cultural and time geography into the arena of the contemporary long poem, no single spatial theory is better suited to

tackling the specific problematics of the genre. The extent to which the processes of the contemporary long poem can be known and comprehended by readers depends to a large extent on an understanding of some basic diffusion concepts. These include the "mean information field," "stochastic processes," "distance decay," "neighbourhood effect" and "non and biased diffusion models." Although a comprehensive history of spatial diffusion is not fully appropriate here, it may help briefly to paragraph below some of the key authorities and concepts.

Study of the "spread of a phenomenon over space and through time" began with the German environmental determinism and *Lebensraum* theories of Friedrich Ratzel's *Anthropogeographie* (1882/1891);²⁶ these were usefully built upon by Carl Sauer's early twentieth-century studies at Berkeley into the effects of how "new crop[s], crafts or techniques" were involved in "the filling of the spaces of the earth."²⁷ Sauer introduced the idea of plotting "diffusion pathways" which could map the routes of such new cultural traits and so could discover how their spread was influenced by physical "barriers." While Sauer and others (Wagner and Mikesall, 1962) continued their pursuit of diffusion models in the hopes of relating the cultural agency of mankind to the natural landscape, in 1954, J. Leighly, one of Sauer's colleagues at Berkeley, introduced Hågerstrand's more formal approach to the problems of cultural innovation in what the latter had begun to call "innovation diffusion as a spatial process." Ironically, the book of this title, a highly innovative work in its own right, was not itself translated into English for fourteen years, until its final appearance in English in 1967. It is thus its own example of the delaying mechanisms at work in innovation diffusion.

Derek Gregory manages to compress the time-space theorization which responded to Hågerstrand's diffusion model into roughly four areas: a firming-up of the mathematics connecting the mean information field to the form and speed of diffusion waves (distance-delay studies); the growth of more complex "epidemic" models inspired by the research of Haggett, Cliff and Ord (spatial processes); the institution of hierarchical diffusion models (central place theory); and "the incorporation of rejection and removal processes and the modelling of competitive diffusions" (biased and post-positivist diffusion networks). Little of this headway would have been accomplished without Hågerstrand's initial diffusion model which incorporated the new terms "interaction matrix," "resistances," "innovation waves" and "adoption

surface." A lot is to be gained in transferring the concepts, if not the mathematics, behind these terms to the study of *Pythagorean Silence* and in fact they have far reaching consequences for the spatial reading practice of any choropoem.

In theory, the study of the spread of new phenomena and techniques within the text of the long poem can be compared to the study of the dispersal of new long poems in the text of the real world. Both new words in the work and new works in the world are subject to the "physical and social distribution" and "stochastic processes" of Hågerstrand as well as to the "Wheel of mutable fortune" or "mechanical necessitarianism" of Howe. In *Pythagorean Silence* and other choropoetics, the innovatory chance element at work in social systems is made manifest by a mirroring of the unexpected in the use of new linguistic patterns. Howe's interest in Pythagoras who famously claimed that "all things are numbers" and whose potent brew of mathematics and mysticism was to make numerology an indissociable companion of astrology, oracular guidance and the whole hermetic tradition,²⁹ thus makes the mapping of "possibilities and probabilities" a central issue of her text so that the question of predication is both linguistic and social, local and global.

In the world, innovation diffusion is concerned to predict the future spread of epidemics (AIDS, influenza), new technologies (internet, satellites), military danger zones (global hot-spots) and tectonic threats (earthquakes, tornados) but in the long poem we can use it to predict future language use (vocabulary), future figuration (tropes, devices), future sound (phonetics) future rhythm (metrics) and future content (thematics). It asks the question "What is the pattern of the spatio-temporal distribution of words in the text in terms of new information, new data, new signs, and new agency?" Known dispersal velocities, division quotients and distribution rates of human innovations in the real-world historical past are an obvious guide for our spatial expectations in the real-world future. Equally, known agent-sign dispersal, division and distribution behaviour in the past and present of the long open form are a guide to likely spatial practices and the pending distribution of signs in the future of the text. L=A=N=G=A=G=E poetry and time geography are both thoroughly implicated in the business of spatio-temporal diffusion and predication. Hågerstrand says that he wishes to make "a purely descriptive treatment of the spatial process of innovation diffusion as expressed by a number of available indicators" (*ID* 132).

A specific feature of the contemporary or postmodern long poem is exactly this — it contains so many novel, innovative or experimental indicators. The constant innovating and updating textual process of procedural or disjunctive poetics is marked throughout by changes in discourse, linguistic register, syntactical alignment, rhythm, sequence and line length and these "available indicators" are diffused throughout (a) the poem itself and then (b) other long poems and long open forms. In undertaking such a project of general "areal distributions" in which the whole poem becomes the mean information field and in which we observe the spatial behaviour and patterning of words on the page as if they were people in a crowd or plants in a landscape, we are also

proceeding then to study how the process of change unravels itself within subareas, and paying *special attention to how every new change relates to the previous ones*. In so doing it is naturally of particular interest whether or not the changes generally evince any developmental regularities in relation to the points of origin of the process, and whether it is at all possible to detect any spatial order in the general diffusion process.

(Hågerstrand, *ID* 11)

The three parts of *Pythagorean Silence* comprise three separate "subareas" of the overall mean information field represented by the poem in its entirety. Each of these can be thought of as an "information matrix" which structures the way in which information circulates via agent-signs and flows through the local text; these flows are modulated by visible semantic barriers and invisible figurative resistances which together "check the transformation of information into innovation and so shape successive diffusion waves which break onto the adoption surface."³⁰ Such Lund barriers and resistances may then disrupt narrative, defer reference and delay potential closure, but the diffusion waves caused by innovative poetic practices spread out to the adoption surface of the whole genre where they may either be permanently taken up, temporarily utilized or absolutely rejected. In this sense Hågerstrand speaks of people as "innovational pioneers . . . reluctant acceptors . . . and intractable resistors" (*ID* 132). Determination of the category to which an individual (or poet) belongs relies for the most part on the individual's own "sense of place" as outlined, for example, in the work of J. Eyles. We will return to this argument in greater detail in the next chapter where a full analysis of place will be made in relation to Robert Kroetsch's *Completed Field Notes*

The extent to which such innovatory techniques are taken up outwith the bounds of the current mean information field (long poem) depends on what Hågerstrand calls "receptiveness factors," "acceptance agglomerations" and "private information fields." Additional to these are: the possibilities of the "migration" of the entire field (for example, if a specific long poem became translated or published in another country); the movement of "migration units" (if all the long poems of a single author or single anthology moved away together); and a combined "neighbourhood or proximity effect" which occurs when high densities of innovation acceptance gather around key, often urban, areal locations (San Francisco Language Poets, New York Language Poets, Black Mountain School).

I do not propose to follow up these highly suggestive but external chorographies of social influence which themselves begin interestingly to verge on a poetics of Lund diffusion theory. Instead we should recognize these external concepts as a measure of the potential contribution that a fully augmented "spatial diffusion criticism" could make to textual studies. There are convincing reasons for applying even these latter terms to the internal functioning of the open form. Agent-signs do indeed exhibit migration, receptivity, agglomeration and proximity effects within the field of the contemporary long poem on a regular basis. The careful criteria for selection that a poet uses for the inclusion or exclusion of a certain word should be seen more as a testimony to the spatial allocation of resources for innovatory collateral processes, than as a simple choice of signifiers along the axes of Jakobson's syntagmatic and paradigmatic chains.

The application of Hågerstrand's innovation diffusion model to the long poem may seem either bewildering, inappropriately scientific, or both. We should therefore take a moment to retrace the general argument: the long poem is defined by its use of textual spatial practices; spatial practices are best read chorologically and chorology involves central concepts in cultural/human geography; Hågerstrand's graphic models of innovation diffusion share both the conceptual vocabularies and cognitive processes of the long poem which both represent human activity in space over a period of time.

Spatial diffusion after Lund is helpful to any study which stresses the textual materiality of spatial reading practices because it stresses human agency as the significant "link between the social distribution of landscape or material cultural elements and the social distribution of

immaterial cultural elements" (ID 305). By converting Hågerstrand to a critical textual practice we can make a timely reintroduction of agency of the kind desired by Homi Bhabha and others in the post-deconstructionist diaspora of the 1990s without lapsing into the psychological speculation often associated with subjectivist ethics. In shifting Hågerstrand to the domain of textual theory we gain on the one hand from the formal quantitative analysis of innovation diffusion (of specific benefit to the quantity of the long poem) and on the other, as we shall see, from the return of agency in biography formation.

In the section entitled "The social distribution as a basis for combining elements normally regarded as highly dissimilar" Hågerstrand pays his debts to Sigfrid Svensson's *Bygd och yttervärld* (1942)³¹ and demonstrates how this proposition works:

For each individual we can envision an inventory of characteristics which would include both material and materially intangible elements. The location of all these characteristics could be assigned to the place-of-residence of their bearers. If this outlook is adopted, it becomes possible, where appropriate, to juxtapose such vastly dissimilar elements as arable fields, buildings, implements, farming practices, political and religious affiliation, language, etc. The bearer of the characteristics constitutes the natural bond among them.

This way of looking at things is not new. It has long been practiced by cultural anthropologists. Thus Svensson (1942), in keeping with the traditions of his discipline, simultaneously considered such dissimilar elements as mode of dress, house types (a landscape feature!), and rhymes. . . . While certain of these features, e.g., crops, may be influenced by physical conditions in one way or another, this does not alter the fact that they are primarily *cultural phenomena*. A geographical study of cultural phenomena which places its emphasis on quantitative results should use the population distribution map and links with the other social sciences as points of departure. (Hågerstrand, ID 9)

This is clear enough, and again shows similarities with certain paratactical, disjunctive and ideogrammatic poetics which also seek to "juxtapose such vastly dissimilar elements as mode of dress, house types" and so on. The fact that Svensson chose to study the regional distribution of "rhymes" is relevant as is the way Hågerstrand directs us to the population distribution map as the potential starting point for any number of quantitative cultural studies. What, then, is to prevent us from constructing out of the spatial diffusion model a textual critical practice referring to agent-signs rather than human agents? Why should we not trace the textual distribution of words throughout the landscape

of the page in the same way as the social distribution of phenomena throughout the landscape of southern Sweden? Are lexemes not regional cultural phenomena; do the same rules not apply in the domain of the text?

A Textual Model of Innovation Diffusion

Provided a few initial adaptations are made, it is not difficult to build a model of innovation diffusion which is able to display, quantify and analyse the new spatial processes associated with the contemporary long open form. In order for the model to work five key stages should be followed in sequence.

(1) **QUALIFICATION:** The selection of available innovation indicators can only be accomplished after at least two readings of the entire mean information field or base text. Selection should be limited to no more than six indicators and these should largely comprise the outstanding innovatory, disruptive, strange or delaying techniques which a specific textual field is typically seen to be using. For example, it is not useful to select the use of numerals as an innovation indicator if only two or three citations exist in the entire long poem. Possible innovation indicators are split into four tables: formal/punctuation; metrical/rhythm; figurative/tropes; and thematic/content. While there are no guidelines for the combination of these categories, in practice it has been found that extra time spent here in discussion and legitimation of indicator choice can prevent severe analytical paralysis in stages four and five.

(2) **REPRESENTATION:** In most occidental typography, the textual landscape is obviously one that scrolls vertically from the top of the page to the bottom (North to South) with textual space being visually consumed from left to right, (West to East). Our model must take this into account and unlike Hågerstrand's representations which can map the physical landscape in matrixed squares, any display of the landscape of the page must be adapted accordingly. Apart from the statistician's usual armoury of graphs, time lines and Venn diagrams which seriously restrict the 4-D chorological imagination, four other visual displays have been found unhelpful: (a) the square matrix; (b) the lateral cell-sequence; (c) the recto-verso mirror; (d) the topographical diagram. These are

reproduced overleaf (figure 1) with brief reasons for their rejection.

The preferred mode of representation, the "scroll text diffusion model" (figure 1[e]), offers specific advantages: it represents the page as a true oblong space; it follows the north to south scroll of the printed text; it includes the accurate representation of "dead" white space; it has removed the page-cell dividing lines; it can if required use internal isarithmic lines as per Hågerstrand (*ID* 19-20);³² and it is easy to juxtapose or overlay for comparison of different indicators in stage four. Note, however, that the same scale must be preserved throughout the compilation of textual data and especially between different sections of the same information field.

(3) **QUANTIFICATION:** Once all occurrences of a particular innovation indicator have been graphed from the text, they can be totalled for that specific section of the poem so that an innovation-per-page ratio can be generated for future comparison with other sections of the same text and other long poems in general. For example, the eleven occurrences above (or "events" as they are called by Hågerstrand) appear in two main acceptance agglomerations over five page-cells of the text section. This yields 11/5 events per cell and hence an innovation ratio of 2.2 for that section of text. This is a fairly average figure. High spatial diffusion fields may yield means as high as 15 — 20 events per cell while exceptionally low ratios suggest that the wrong available indicators were chosen in stage one. When quantifying letters per line, words per stanza, rhymes per page and other high event-yielding indicators (which are interesting but not necessarily innovatory), it is sensible for one point on the model to represent two, three or multiple citations in the text; mathematical adjustments must be made accordingly before the final ratios are generated.

(4) **COMPARISON:** If each scroll text diffusion model is printed out on acetate transparencies, the results from different indicator surveys (and different long poems) can be superimposed upon one another and projected on an OHP. This is the procedure recommended here as it provides the resulting data with a large number of combinations for discussion in a familiar medium. It is not impossible to imagine a hypertext computer programme which could be written to carry out the whole diffusion analysis from the initial scanning in of the poem to the final display of results on the internet — and this may become available

in the future. The simple use of graph paper and a ruler for use with the base text can produce very accurate results, not to mention full 1:1 scale tracings of complex individual pages spatially to isolate the indicators from the rest of the text. As readers begin to do this, sudden respect is gained for both poets and typographers alike and a real sensitivity to the spatio-temporal process of the contemporary long poem can be gained. This is the best way of understanding the full significance of Howe's assertion that Butterick "printed Olson's space."

(5) ANALYSIS: Care must be taken to avoid false or invalid conclusions. Having taken such trouble to graph the areal occurrence of the innovation indicators, and having thus provided the kind of "hard" incontrovertible evidence that is so rare in literary theory, speculation in this final stage should also be kept to a minimum. A dot-distribution model of, say, alliteration will happily support analysis with other figurative devices in emphasizing the writerly or poetic or self-aware nature of a text, but it may only be superimposed on a thematics indicator with great care. Any correlation found between high alliteration and the theme of abstract love, and high alliteration and the theme of shelf-stacking is likely to be arbitrary and erroneous. On the other hand, a high event ratio for metaphysical imagery combined with a high incidence of archaic spelling may well indicate parody or intertextuality. Rules for the analysis of the information matrix, its barriers and agglomerations are not, therefore, written in stone but should become available to the spatial diffusion analyst as experience increases. We may finally have generated an absolute map which distinguishes the relative and physical distribution of innovation indicators within a mean information field, but the only sure conclusion we may draw is likely to relate to the difficulty or readability of that text. The higher the innovation diffusion ratio for a section, the more challenging that section of the text will be for the reader; the lower the ratio, the more literal, referential and narrational that section is likely to prove. The great strength of the innovation diffusion model when applied to choropoetic texts is that it charts very visually movements in the poem between high and low semantic complexity, between high and low readability (depth) and between high and low time-space compression or distanciation. For this reason we may now appreciate the importance of the stage one qualification process. The key criteria for choosing any single innovation indicator thus verges on the oxymoronic: it must first be innovatory but

secondly stereotypical. Fortunately, the contemporary long poem has no difficulty in providing stereotypically innovatory indicators one after another.

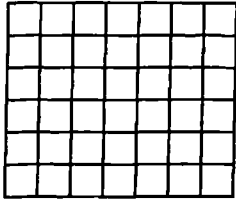
Finally, some of the most interesting analysis of diffusion data comes from an absence rather than the presence of innovation events. Non-correlation should not therefore be seen as a failure but as providing identification of a positive lack. This process is particularly useful for the elimination of the usual suspects. If we are finding a section of Zukofsky's "A" especially complex or associative, running a diffusion analysis will dispel possible causes and highlight others. This is not to say that in our own normal close-readings of the poetic text we are not acutely aware of possible reasons for finding a passage obscure, but spatial diffusion will at least quantify our problems and confirm our fears in an instantly readable and factually reliable way.

Analysis of Three Spatial Diffusion Indicators

The selection of which innovation indicators to map in *Pythagorean Silence* was unusually straightforward. The reason for this is that although Howe uses hyphenation, quotation marks and italic font more heavily than many contemporary poets, there are three further formal devices she employs with even more obvious frequency: parenthesis, capitalization and intra-linear (horizontal) white space. After setting a few basic parameters these were accurately graphed according to the methodology customised from Hågerstrand and the results can be seen below. For the quantification of parenthesis each individual bracket was traced as a single event in that page-cell and this accounts for the number of closely paired points on the diffusion map. With capitalization, each single letter was counted as a single event so that "HE" and "SHE" are displayed ".." and "..." respectively. Intra-linear white space was defined as a space between words or letters longer than a single space bar. This varied between the short bar-and-a-half "nick / in time" preceding this phrase in cell 25r and the long sixteen-bar space of 82v between "yoke" and "thraldom." The spatial diffusion maps which result from the analysis are shown on the following pages (figures 2-4).

Models of Spatial Diffusion Maps

(a) *Matrix Model*



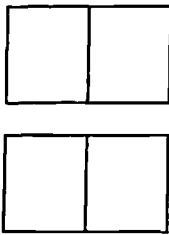
Matrix: gives false impression of juxtaposition of page-cells which are not connected at all.

(b) *Lateral Model*



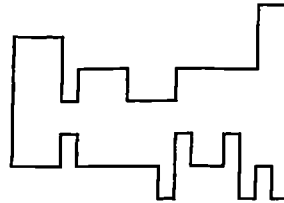
Lateral: visually connects square pages horizontally instead of vertically.

(c) *Recto-Verso Model*



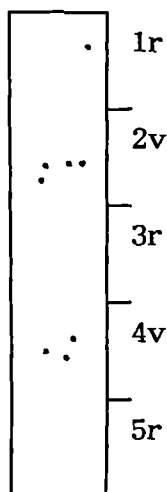
Recto-Verso: means that divisions of false space exist between pairs.

(d) *Topographical Model*



Topographical: removes white space from each page and only graphs black type space.

(e) *Scroll Text Diffusion Model*



The page-cell dividing lines have been removed and each page is now an oblong quadrilateral instead of a Lund square; pages are still recognized by a small external line and are numbered with their correct page number in the text followed by the letter r(ecto) or v(erso); the relevant innovation indicator is marked with an exactly placed point as per the Hågerstrand innovation model; each point stands for one occurrence of the innovation in the text; the text scrolls vertically from north to south.

Spatial Diffusion Map 1: Parenthesis

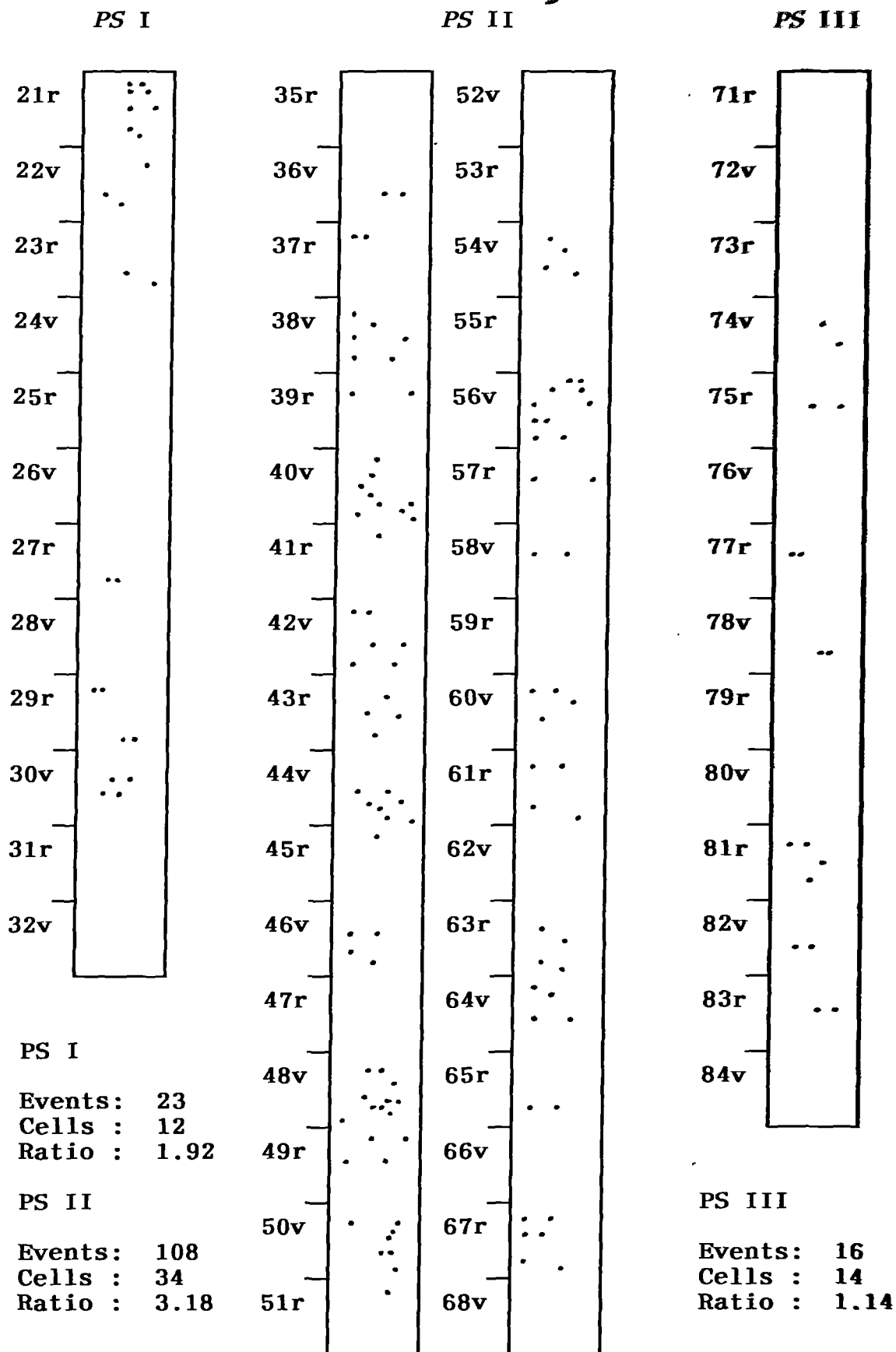


FIGURE 2

Spatial Diffusion Map 2: Capitalization

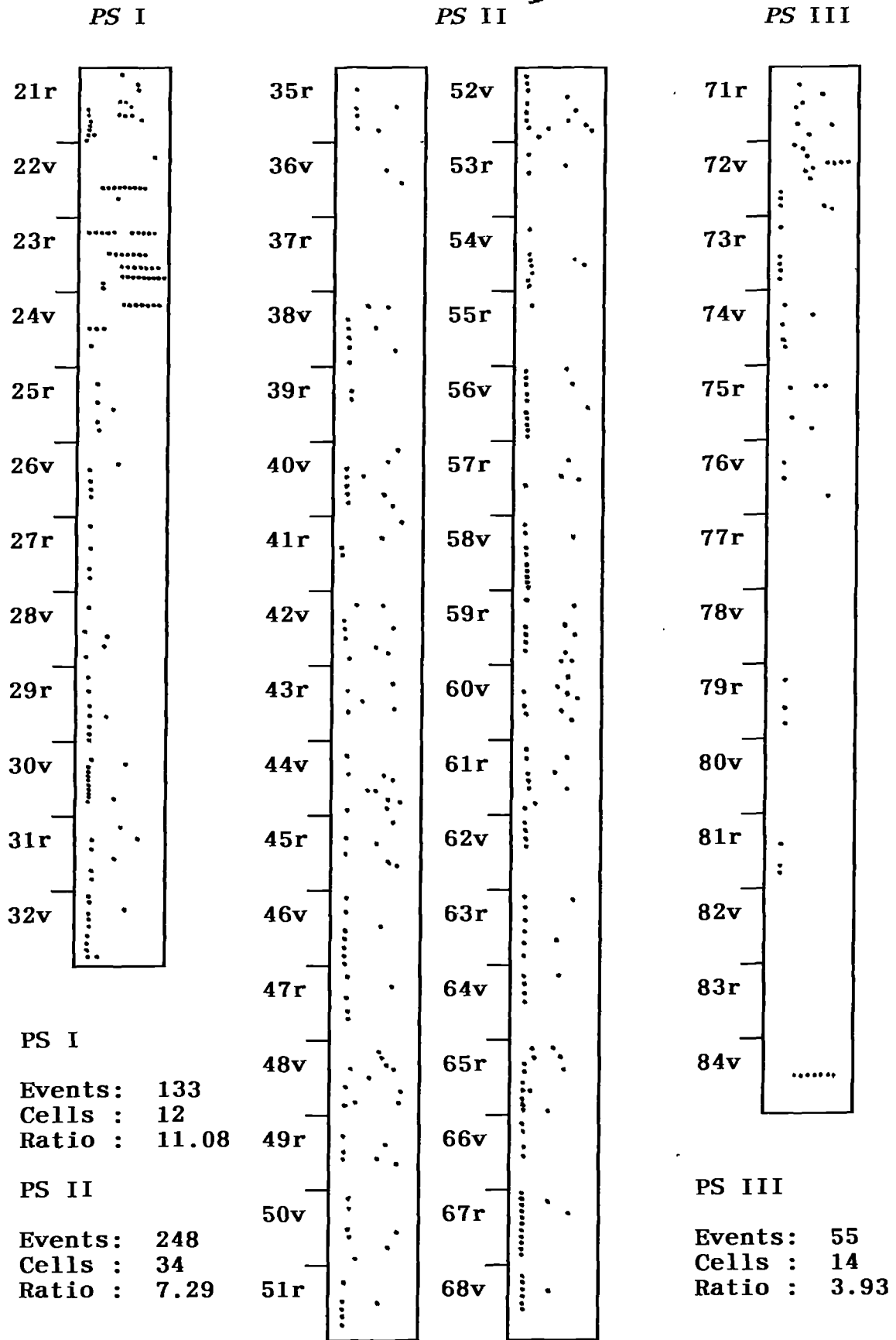


FIGURE 3

Spatial Diffusion Map 3: White Space

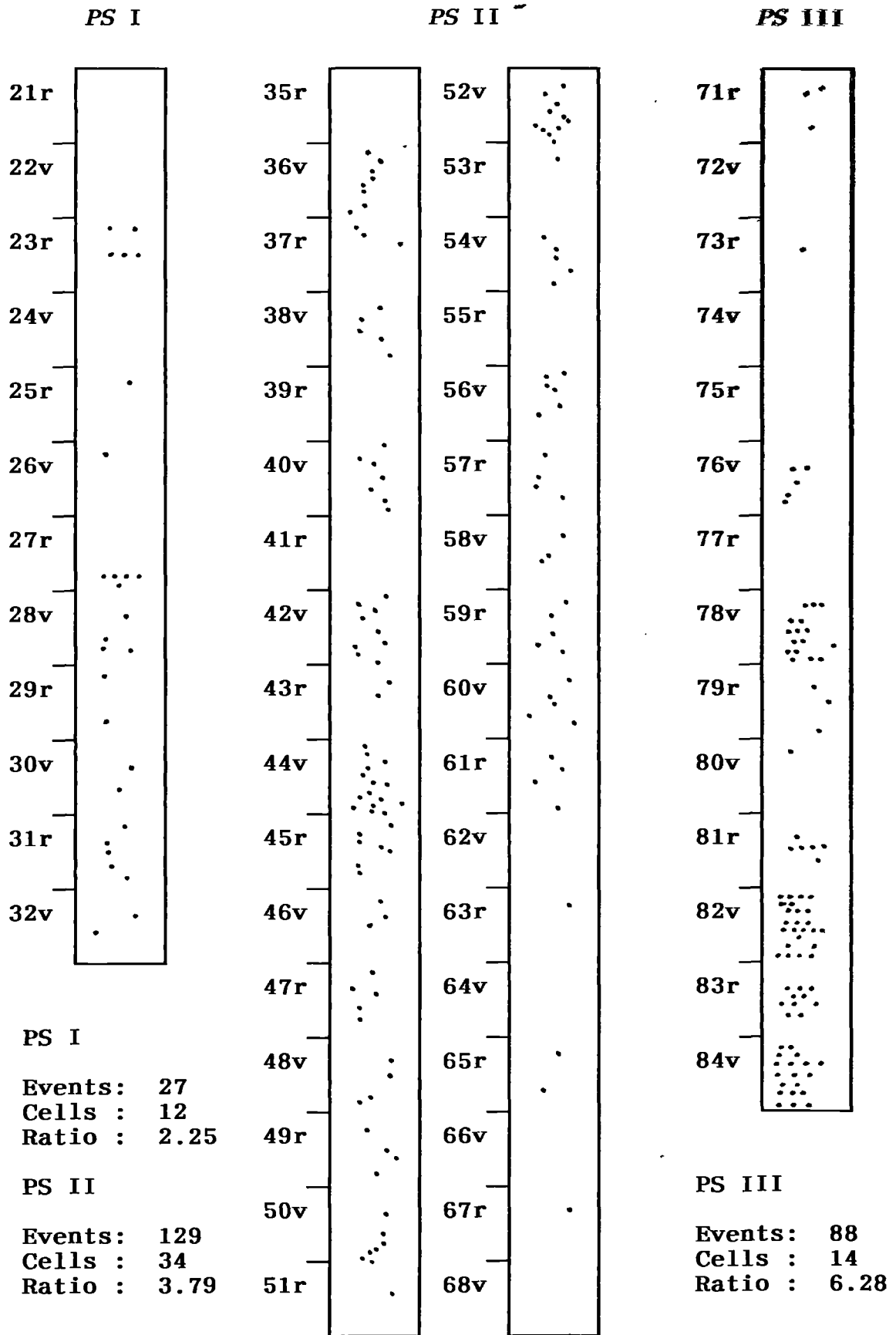


FIGURE 4

Map 1 (figure 2) demonstrates quite clearly the way in which the scroll diffusion model makes information instantly available to the textual critic. A number of interesting conclusions can be drawn from the visual display of the parenthesis events. First, we see that the most dense section of the poem is Part II (ratio: 3.18) and that this is itself bracketed by the much lower incidence of parenthesis in Parts I (1.92) and II (1.14). Second, it is very obvious that the "acceptance agglomerations" — cells where many events group together — in Part II seem to flash on and off: on for the verso pages and off for the recto, at least until cell 58 where the switch-over to section 13 of the poem occurs. This is what we would expect since any indicator can only occur in the presence of accompanying text. Third, the narrowly-paired events of Part III and the end of Part I show us the extent to which Howe is using very short parentheses of just a single word or phrase; this is far less the case in Part II where there is a lot more text available in each cell to be bracketed off. Fourth, we notice that there is an odd number of events in "Pearl Harbour" which means either that one parenthesis must open and remain open or that one must close twice: the answer is seen in cell 22v. Fifth, the evidence of cells 48v and 56v where a maximum event rate occurs, suggests that we should not expect more than five pairs of brackets per page in Howe's poetic practice. Sixth, there are 22 empty cells from a total of the 60 available and as many as 14 with only one pair of brackets; this leaves 119 brackets (147 minus 28) in the space of just 24 highly complex pages. Last, we learn that the spatial distribution of parenthesis is in no way regularly patterned; unlike capitalization, there is no diffusion bias to the East, West, North or South of each cell.

By excluding the first person pronoun "I" from the quantification process, Map 2 (figure 3) shows the spatial diffusion of capitalization in such a way that *Pythagorean Silence* can be read in terms of allegorical space. While it is impossible to say whether Howe uses every capitalized word with allegorical inflection, so extensive is the use of symbolic and universalizing substantives (Eden, Sound, Light, Darkness, Real, Imaginary, Thralldom, Parlance, Memory, Secret, Ruin, Oblivion) and mythological and divine personae and their metonymies (Helios, Lucifer, Mother, Guardians, Penelope, Odyssey, Pythagoras, Igraine, Arthur, Nomads, Barbarous) that to trace the capital letters in the text becomes, in practice, a tracing of the textual sites of the poem's allegorical depth. Of the three indicators undertaken, therefore, Map 2 is the clearest guide -

to the associative complexity and cognitive depth of the different parts of the poem.

Again, the briefest look at the scroll model prompts powerful departures. Note the sustained diffusion bias to the West indicating capitalization correlation with line openings; the radical fallout rate from 11.08 in Part I, to 7.29 in Part II, to only 3.93 in Part III; the massive total of 436 allegorical or semi-allegorical usages; the almost complete loss of capitalization from 77r to the end of the text; and the desperately difficult opening configuration of cells 21r to 24v. Also significant are: the very marked event-shift eastward from Part I to Part II where suddenly capitalization migrates to mid and end-line sites in considerable numbers; the autographical signing of the poem with a capitalized "SOMEONE" in 84v as if to write the biological author out of the text by underlining the closure of the long poem with a gestural level of agency; and the potential difficulty of cells 44v, 48v, 52v, 56v, 59r and 67r where high acceptance agglomerations warn of low referentiality and high allegorical depth.

Map 3 (figure 4) demonstrates how the scroll diffusion model can be utilized to graph the absence as well as the presence of ink deposits in the landscape of the page. Readers are often worried by vague advice to "read the space between the lines" or to link the concrete form of the text to its themes, imagery or narrative, but a system for actually accomplishing this is never actually proposed. By glancing at the diffusion of intra-linear white space (exactly the same could be done for inter-linear vertical space) Howe's spatial practice for the entire duration of the text is broadly simplified. Analysis of the results show a reluctance to use this device at the beginning of the text where we have already seen readers having to struggle with heavy capitalization, but a frightening finale of innovation acceptance in the agglomerations which cluster from 78v to the end.

The diffusion ratios tell exactly the reverse story to those we discovered for capitalization in Map 2 with which it therefore enjoys an inverse correlation. Instead of a fast fallout of mean events per cell we are faced with an increasingly high innovation ratio like a pressure gauge about to explode. Here is a dangerous poetic device which inserts radical rhythmical tremors, outlandish visual disturbances and severe semantic panic in the place once occupied by smooth narrative progress and reliable signification. The advance warning systems are sounding for an earthquake of Kristevan proportions as the genotext starts to

overpower the phenotext. The negativity figures have begun to curve out of control: 2.25, 3.79, 6.28. If *Pythagorean Silence* had a Part IV, the lines would be blown apart from within on a gradient into space.

4.5 Chronological Choropoetics: Summary

The study considered three chorological practices including "time-space compression" (Janelle), "time-space distancing" (Giddens) and "time-space diffusion" (Hågerstrand). The dimension of spatial depth in the text was seen as a necessary corollary of these and other choropoetic strategies designed to mimic and replay everyday connectivities in the lifeworld. The long poem was seen to be a textual representation of the spatio-temporal agency exhibited between individuals and their regional environment.

Janelle's time-space compression which charts the convergence and divergence rates of words per line, lines per stanza and stanzas per page, is a genuinely powerful tool for those long poems which vary considerably in this respect. For long poems of very regular or unmoving page-space arrangements — choropoems which change gear infrequently or not at all — Janelle is of little use. Although radically spatial and experimentally concrete open forms benefit greatly from critical readings of time-space compression, sonnet sequences, prose poems and metrically aligned long poems render Janelle almost impotent.

Giddens's time-space distancing theory, on the other hand — with its readings of high and low system integration in the societies represented by a long poem, its visible and invisible time-space edges between differing cultural spheres or episodes of the text, and its mobile levels of lexeme disembeddedness — applies equally well to both sets of poetic practices above. Even this particular approach, though, which has the potential to influence future theorization of the long poem quite considerably, is subject to two stringent requirements. First, we are required to treat the long poem as an autonomous world in its own right, a move which strengthens the boundary between word and world. Yet this is precisely the boundary which many open forms seek tirelessly to erase. Second, for the text to support such an approach, the long poem in question must make several contesting representations of different social systems in the first place. Without both these conditions being in place — and occasionally we are faced with procedural poems which do

not provide possible worlds or fictive spheres — even time-space distanciation struggles to find purchase. Accordingly, the Giddensean approach to a spatial critical theory of the text is far more dependent on the thematic content and referential signification of the argument in a long poem than that of Janelle's purely formal criteria. Better models for the distanciation approach tend to be "life-long poems" like *The Cantos* or *The Maximus Poems*. These exceptionally long poems move through identifiably different cultures in time and space ("Pisan Cantos," "China Cantos"; Massachusetts in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries) and provide maximum opportunity for distanciation analysis. Difficulties arise, however, with pure surface poems, one dimensional representations of a single real or imaginary location at a single time.

The advantages of a return to Torsten Hågerstrand in combining the formal practices of Janelle with the thematic dimensionality of Giddens in one meta-theory of quantitative and behavioural space-time criticism have been largely signalled already. In Lund we appear to have quantity, agency, temporality, depth, regionality, society and practice covered in all aspects. However, the full vocabularies and statistical formulae of the Lund School are yet to be transferred into a fully operational textual practice. Until this is accomplished the full potential of the web model, biography formation and innovation diffusion can only be approximated.

PART III

CANADIAN PLACIAL PRACTICE

Introduction to Part III

In the first four chapters the claim was that the contemporary long poem should be read as a chorological text in the light of recent advances in the material theorization of space. The primary concern was to explore the relationship between regionality and spatiality, and the extent to which this relationship is actually contingent on the veiled or taken-for-granted ideologies of production, landscape awareness, consumption and chronology. But the reassertion of the regional in any literary text depends on more than just space and spatial practice - it also depends on the definitions we attach to "place" and "placial practices." Along with the new emphasis on human geography and spatial behaviourism, the last fifteen years have seen some remarkable changes in the way we think about place. In the first of two chapters on the contemporary Canadian long poem which both address the importance of place to regional representation, I begin by focusing on the thematics of topography, a field of study which conveniently draws out many of the key placial strategies associated with the long poem.

Chapter 5 considers the work of the Albertan academic and poet Robert Kroetsch (b. 1927) and in particular his long poem *Completed Field Notes*. In section 5.1 the endnote to *Field Notes* is used as a starting point to situate the text in the tradition of recent Prairie Poets. It introduces Kroetsch's oppositional style of composition and sets the stage for the four-fold "failures of place" analysis that follows.

"Failures of Place (1)" (5.2) considers Kroetsch's undermining of "system and grid" and explores the impossibility of closing the Albertan narrative of place. The poet's proposed topography of the prairies finds no sign of either origins or destinations: it cannot orient its mapping. *Field Notes* is therefore restricted to telling the story of the absence of place rather than its presence. This absence becomes the story of the long-poem form as well as the narrative of a nation. The section demonstrates the anti-teleological strategies of "The Ledger" and "Seed Catalogue" before seeking explanations from the related concepts of the "Topical, the Atopical and the Toponymical."

"Failures of Place (2)" (5.3) turns to archaeology as a possible means of uncovering Kroetsch's "bindertwine of place." However, this is an environment in which the poet seeks to lose his identity rather than

rediscover it through any real attachment to the land. The stronger the felt absence of place becomes — through the uncovering of objects and oral evidence that once held placial significance — the more Kroetsch's archaeology fails to write a meaningful history. The poet gradually writes himself out of the land and reneges on his quest for "the ground of the ground." To lie about place becomes the only believable strategy. The paradoxical creation of an "imagined real place," a place that is ever more absent as the weight of regional evidence increases, is a task for the long poem.

"Failures of Place (3)" (5.4) explores the techniques Kroetsch uses to un-invent and un-name the place of the nation. I argue that the language of *Field Notes* conceals a uniquely Canadian experience which Kroetsch accesses through a de-topographizing process. Such a process rejects the toponymical project of imperialism which seeks to essentialize place as the permanently named-place, and "re-replaces" it with three more mobile models. These alternative theories of place are supplied by two cultural geographers and I convert their thinking into placial reading practices to read *Field Notes* as a depiction of "placelessness" (Edward Relph) and "non-place" (Marc Augé). These new approaches are compared, and related back to Hillis Miller's concept of the "atopical" in *Topographies*.

"Failures of Place (4)" (5.5) explores issues concerning the doubling of place. By referring to the work of Edward Casey who speaks of a "double-tracking" of place and a "counter-place," the section outlines the importance of these concepts in relation to Kroetsch's use of notation in the poem. In particular the study makes a reading of "The Frankfurt Hauptbahnhof" passage in *Field Notes* and analyses the various forms of placial othering in operation. Once again the text refuses to write the story of singular place, preferring instead a "heterotropism" in which the poem writes its own internal critique of place and identity in order to prevent closure. According to Tim Cresswell, this form of writing which writes different places on top of one another, constitutes an ideologically transgressive practice. For Kroetsch it is a doubling of topography where nomadic journeys are made between the "near" and the "elsewhere." The section closes with a reappraisal of Deleuze and Kamboureli who have both written on this subject.

Section 5.6 summarizes the components of this new placial reading practice in terms of its general contribution to the understanding of *Completed Field Notes*. After suggesting several alternative geographies

of place which also have the potential to improve critical approaches to the long poem, I found topographical choropoetics as the fifth element which the chorological reading practice must investigate.

From 1972-1973 the New Zealand-born poet, Daphne Marlatt, was living and working in the Vancouver and Steveston districts of British Columbia on the Pacific coast of Canada. She was employed during these years as an "Oral historian collecting & editing interviews, largely on Steveston, for the Oral History Project / Reynoldson Research, located at U.B.C."¹ As Fred Wah rightly points out, this "resulted in her major work of the seventies, *Steveston*."² After returning to Capilano Community College to teach composition and creative writing, she was for the second time a paid oral historian (1977-1979), this time "collecting & editing interviews on the history of the Strathcona district of Vancouver for the Aural History Division of the Provincial Archives." So although Marlatt's official job title was "Oral historian" (sic), and the Steveston Project was an "Oral History" for the University of British Columbia, the Vancouver interviews for the Provincial Archives were an "Aural History." This distinction between the orality of the mouth and the aurality of the ear would be of little importance if the publishing history of *Steveston* was simpler to follow, but this is not the case.

No-one has succeeded in graphing the genesis of the twenty-two parts and 968 lines of *Steveston*³ more succinctly than Brenda Carr:

It evolves from the uncollected little magazine poem sequence, 'Steveston. Support? Fish.' (1973) to the first edition of her well-known long poem/photography collaboration with Robert Minden (*Steveston* 1974), to the aural history documentary radio play commissioned by and aired on CBC (*One Life. Steveston* 1976), to the inclusion of the text without photographs in Michael Ondaatje's *The Long Poem Anthology* (1979), to the revised edition of the Minden collaboration (1984).

Most recently, Marlatt has written a number of new Steveston pieces to be collected in a volume entitled *Salvage*.⁴

Although Carr's genealogy is accurate as far as it goes, it still misses two important editions of the poem. Not to be neglected are: *Steveston Recollected: A Japanese-Canadian History* (1975)⁵ and the seven-part short *Steveston* condensed for *Net Work: Selected Writings* (1980).⁶ Studied side by side, these eight editions — periodical, photographic,

dramatic, aural, scriptural, archival, condensed, and anthologized — give some idea of the textual challenge involved in confronting this process poem. Together, the editions provide a bird's eye view of just one geographical place: the town of Steveston, lying south of Vancouver at the mouth of the Fraser River in British Columbia. Marlatt's personal collaboration with the residents of Steveston in the interviews which comprise these editions is reflected in the reader's collaborative reconstruction of the eight editions themselves. This re-layering of the already layered or re-framing of the already framed, far from clashing with the textual genre in which such jostling and realignment takes place, is actually an integral part of the whole project of the unendable long poem. On the one hand it demonstrates the strategic democracy of the collective voice often at work in procedural choropoetics; on the other it reconfirms the generic impermanence of all contemporary long poems, an impermanence on which they are paradoxically founded.

In chapter 6 I maintain that *Steveston* is a feminist chorology — a gendered choropoetics of place. I also claim that *Steveston* activates the reader's chorological imagination in order to recreate both a physical and cultural sense of the town through the maps of meaning provided. Finally the feminist and imaginative geographies outlined raise wider questions about the future of the long poem as a form. Possible connections between choropoetics, cyberspace and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) are traced, linking geographies of gender to concepts of the "geographical imagination" and "geographical futures."

Section 6.1 works from the idea of the Canadian "resource town" (as conceived by mainstream geography) to discuss the types of geographical enquiry which might prove suitable for an analysis of Marlatt's poem. It focuses on two complex passages from either end of the text ("Steveston as you find it" and "Steveston, BC") and demonstrates that the regional techniques employed have geographical explanations. The main thrust of this long first section asks whether *Steveston* provides a specifically feminist geography of place according to recent definitions of the term. Once the larger questions relating to epistemology and methodology have been covered, I argue that Marlatt's placial awareness in the poem relates to six characteristic practices in recent feminist geography: the use of collective testimony; the delineation of the "lifecourse;" women in the workplace; the representation of masculinity; the geography of fear; and the bodily performance of place.

Section 6.2 is a linking section which posits *Steveston* (and the

long poem in general) as an example of the "chorological imagination." Returning to the larger idea of a "geographical imagination" in order to make a more accurate definition, I maintain that texts like *Steveston* re-sensitize the reader to the materiality of place as a constructed and gendered concept. In so doing, they signal the possibility of new geographical futures beyond the confines of the written word. With the help of an article by Andrew Gibson, I suggest that the development of the "interactive long poem" (ILP) is one version of the choropoetic future worth serious exploration. The "real" chorological imagination in which people relate their own biographical connections to the social place-world could be linked to a "virtual" imagination or "cyberplace." This interactive environment would not be fictional (like that of interactive fiction) but would rely on constantly updating and inputting data from a physical region. This leads into the discussion of GIS that follows.

Section 6.3 posits *Steveston* in its current form (interrelated published editions) as a non-automated spatial information system. It is a way of displaying the local geographical data of place which has been gathered, organized and layered for analysis through a process of documentary field work. By comparing the similar modelling, components and operations of GIS, I assess the functions and advantages of reading the long poem beside its virtual companion and consider ways in which the two may shortly be integrated.

The final section (6.4) argues that only the contemporary long poem, with its formidable flexibility, its corralling of everyday documentary evidence and its geo-historical commitment to regional perception, can accomplish a convincing depiction of the material place-world. The way it achieves this, time and again, is chorologically. Having gathered the regional evidence of production, consumption, landscape, time, topos and place, the choropoem updates the collective chorophyle of the locality, the spatial "tale of the tribe" and reinscribes it in the latest (always momentary) poetic bulletin.

CHAPTER 5

Topographical Choropoetics: Mapping the Failures of Place in Robert Kroetsch's *Completed Field Notes*

5.1 Prairie Space all over the Place

5.2 Failures of Place (1): Topographical Implications of Teleological Failures in "System and Grid"

The Topical, the Atopical and the Toponymical

5.3 Failures of Place (2): Archaeological Failures in Oral Topographies of the "Imagined Real Place"

Placelessness: Edward Relph

Non-Place: Marc Augé

5.4 Failures of Place (3): Un-inventing the Failed Topographies of Canadian Nationhood

5.5 Failures of Place (4): Topographical Doubling and the Notational Failure of Singular Place

5.6 Topographical Choropoetics: Summary

Let place do the signing for us

(Kroetsch, *Completed Field Notes* 237)

5.1 Prairie Space all over the Place

We are going to a place where things are only what they are. Or, with the barest exception, something else, but only just something else, hardly. Words are not allowed at all. (CFN 246)

I wear geography next to my skin (LTW ix)

Although this study is about a three hundred page poem, its emphasis tends towards the quality rather than the quantity of the interpretations that can be made, the topographical quality, more accurately, of what the cultural geographer Derek Gregory has called "social specialisations — how ideas of space take a concrete form both on the ground and in images."¹ The task at hand is to explore the ways in which Kroetsch himself and other readers of *Field Notes* constantly relate their apprehension of the text to notions of place, to the territorial, to the Prairie itself.

Kroetsch is the perfect example of the Canadian long poet. He makes the right wrong moves, he uses the expected unexpected forms, he has made resistance to narrative an art form in an art form that resists all narration; blending biography with deconstruction, he abhors genre yet writes paradoxically within it. All this he does from a uniquely Canadian perspective and with no small amount of style. Indeed, he claims that to write like this is, uniquely, the Canadian perspective: the recuperation of an all-but unnameable settler-identity. In addition he provides, as the contemporary critic of the long poem has come to expect, a marvellously complex assemblage of theories to cover all aspects of his poetic practice. *Completed Field Notes* (1973-1989), in three books and twenty sections, complete with contents page, prologue, and author's note end-piece, is the last word in self-regarding Canadian choropoetics.

. . . a series of related poems that would in devious ways seek out the forms sufficient to the project (I leave it nameless) announced by Wordsworth and Whitman and rendered impossible by the history and thought and art of the twentieth century. Since the eloquence of failure may be the only eloquence remaining in this our time, I let these poems stand as the enunciation of how I came to a poet's silence. And I like to believe that the sequence of poems, announced in medias res as continuing, is, in its acceptance of its own impossibilities, completed. (author's note, CFN 269)

This author's endnote which claims, significantly, that "the eloquence of failure may be the only eloquence left in this our time" is both central to the argument of this chapter and a useful point of entry stylistically. The prose here is oppositional, corrective, balanced. It is the kind of writing that constantly seems to be seeking its double, its *doppel*, its other. We move from the nineteenth to the twentieth century, from the expectancy of naming a "project" to "nameless," from "eloquence" to "failure," from "enunciation" to "silence," from "continuing" to "completed." Such oppositional progress is highly ratiocinative in its structure, displaying the same contrapuntal strategies which form such an important part of the main body of the poetic text itself. The words seem to lie in wait for their partners, to anticipate their semiotic other, and it is this anticipation which drives the text forward as much as the weighted metrics of traditional poetic texts. As George Woodcock has rather clumsily observed, "[i]t is a two-steps-forward-one-step-backward kind of poetry."² The writing desires simultaneously to affirm and deny in the same instant of enunciation and this schizophrenic challenge informs *Field Notes* at every turn. It lies deep at the heart not only of the double-and-split absence and presence of the linguistic sign, but at the heart of what it means to write the geographical identity of Canadian place:

Canadians seek the lost and everlasting moment when chaos and order were synonymous. They seek that timeless split-second in time when the one, in the process of becoming the other, was itself the other. The city of such dreams is unrealizable; the poem of the occasion becomes the unendable long poem . . . (*LTW* 68)

For Kroetsch, this sense of "space all over the place"³ is the Prairie space of his Alberta childhood, and the "vast but contained environment [of] endless land and towering skies"⁴ of the Northern Territories where he worked on inland riverboats from 1948-51. This is "the geography of middle space," where "the very act of speaking announces space" (*LTW* 36, 164) and which Kroetsch contrasts so openly with the capitalised West in these extracts from his "Upstate New York Journals":

Sunday, October 31, 1971
The old/new struggle in the capitalistic West: land as earth and land as commodity. The connection lost,

we find it. My deep longing of recent days for the west of my blood and bones. My ancestral west, the prairie west, the parklands. (LTW 141)

Sunday, January 14 1973

In the west we are possessed of a curious rhetoric. A rhetoric that goes back to religion and politics, to the outcry, to the curse, to the blessing, to the plea, to the song. Not to the educated man, imagining himself to be reasonable. (LTW 146)

We now know that the writing of this opposition between the urban, metropolised West and the wide open landscape of the "prairie west" had no tangible poetic tradition in Canada until the 1960s when a community of "Prairie Poets" gradually appeared from various western provinces, all with the common aim of in some way recuperating the lost "curious rhetoric" of which Kroetsch speaks. Apart from Kroetsch himself, the work of Eli Mandel, John Newlove, and Dale Zieroth was instrumental in beginning to re-place the Canadian west in a form that was neither fictive nor necessarily naturalistic. The Canadian realist novel which had in many ways made its home on the prairies ("This fiction makes us real" as Kroetsch has said),⁵ seemed in no position to deal with the socio-economic changes which were remorselessly turning the family-run prairie smallholdings into the vast horizonless voids of multinational agribusiness. For that task the sixties Prairie Poets had to "seek out the form suitable to the project," a project which has been strenuously continued since that time in the work of a new generation of western poets: Andy Suknaski, Roy Kiyooka, Glen Sorestad, Lorna Crozier and others.

Disregarding some relatively minor operational modes, four major strategies can be recognized as organizing principles within *Field Notes*. These are all placial⁶ in orientation and tend towards what might tentatively be called an identifiable set of placial markers generic to the Canadian long poem. Although Kroetsch has openly recognized the importance of "system and grid," of the "imagined real place," of "un-naming" and of "doubling" in his own texts, it would help to understand how these codifications function together as a chorological reading practice. The answer here proposed is a four-fold mapping of topographical failure: teleological; archaeological; national; and notational.

5.2 Failures of Place (1): Topographical Implications of Teleological Failures in "System and Grid"

The first strategy by which Kroetsch undermines placial certainty is by hijacking the narrative of place, the story of "system and grid." There are clearly a number of ways of interpreting this phrase: as the Name-of-the-Father; as western rationalism; as the symmetry of traditional metrics; as phallogentrism, Logos, orthodoxy and so on. It is all these, but given Kroetsch's preference for geographical usages, I am taking "system" as a certain delimiting and organizational mindset towards the logical ordering of space and "grid" as the geometric enclosing of physical land mass; both represent — either through economics or agriculture — naive attempts to deal with the infinitudes of the prairie. Taken together, the definition is therefore both literal and figurative, both "after the letter" and "allegorical" as another long poet once supposed.⁷ The signified domain of the discourse, however, is fundamentally the attempted surveying (through systematization and gridding) of regional land mass.

Be this as it may, *Field Notes* starts from the somewhat Lyotardian position that Canada, unlike most colonial and settler territories, has no meta-narrative available to itself from which to construct its national identity. It is possessed of no real hour of birth, of no significant originary moment, of no single time at which someone could say without argument "Canada started here." Lacking a coherent narrative, the country is seen as stranded in a Godot-like *aporia*, its presence as a nation being characterised singularly as an absence. With this in view, Kroetsch sees two possible exits. One is to take on a delayed, but nevertheless heroic, "Adamic task of naming" of the kind Derek Walcott and others have initiated in St. Lucia and elsewhere in the Caribbean; the other is to highlight the very fact that Canada has no demonstrable narrative of place and out of that lack, by the very telling of that lack, to give presence to the genuine reconstructed sense of place which is emergently Canadian:

Canadians, from the beginning of their history, have been unwilling or slow or even unable to locate the overriding stories, persistent and recurring narratives, that allow for the development of a national meta-narrative. (*LTW* 182)

Canadian literature, at its most radical, is the autobiography of a culture that tells its story by telling us repeatedly it has no story to tell. (*LTW* 193)

If this sounds wilfully obscure — and it has been heralded by even its supporters as "sophisticated"⁸ and as an "oblique . . . glass of stance"⁹ — it does at least explain some of the chapter headings of Kroetsch's critical essays which include, "No Name Is My Name," "Unhiding the Hidden," "The Grammar of Silence" and "Reciting the Emptiness." So extensive, indeed, is Kroetsch's scripture on methods for hijacking the conventional, causal narratives of "system," and the importance of concentrating on "beginnings" in order to delay what fellow Canadian poets have termed "the terminal urge," that readers are forced to relinquish any residual hold they may have been reserving in ending per se.

This is a new country. Here on the plains we experience the hopeless and necessary hope of originality: constantly we confront the need to begin. And we do — by initiating beginnings. We contrive authentic origins. From the denied Indians. From the false fronts of the little towns. From the diaries and reminiscences and the travel accounts. From our displaced ancestors. (LTW 82)

The theory of answers, for us, is a dangerous one. We must resist endings, violently. And so we return from content to the container. It is the form itself, traditional form, that forces resolution. In our most ambitious writing, we do violence to form. (LTW 108)

. . . the question, then: not how to end, but how to begin. Not the quest for ending, but the dwelling at and in the beginning itself. (LTW 118)

In each of the twenty sequences that constitute *Field Notes*, it is possible to demonstrate at length the "violence to form" and "the need to begin" of which Kroetsch speaks. In "Stone Hammer Poem," for instance, no fewer than twenty-one parentheses are opened but only seventeen of them close. The four question marks in the lines of section six precede their questions, so we encounter interrogatives like "?WHAT HAPPENED" (CFN 4). Again, the line gaps familiar from Howe's language poetry are here in quirky abundance:

where I begin
 this poem was

 (the hand is gone —

 a boy playing lost it in (CFN 2)

We should be mindful that, "That gap may have something to do with how we do or don't read nature. It may have something to do with the collapsed narrative of empire" (*LTW* 40).

In "The Ledger," on the other hand, we are continually referred back to the very definition of the word "ledger" itself. At first this acts as a timely reminder that "Delay, in the contemporary long poem . . . has devolved upon the language itself" (*LTW* 133), but by the sixth definition, the reader wonders whether this devolution will ever end. For some writers, this torture laid on narrative would be enough, but even this is adumbrated by the poet's obsessive desire to get the accounts of the ledger itself to balance, to make the incoming cash match the outgoing inventory, and to balance any spatial deficiencies in the text's concrete delineation.

"Seed Catalogue," often held up as the paradigmatic sequence of stereotypical Kroetschian poetics, is indeed a seed catalogue. More accurately, it is a parodic transposition of a real life seed catalogue which Kroetsch found in the basement of the Glenbow Archives in Calgary in 1975. Its documentary use of intertext, its anecdotally disjointed associations, its humorous, emphatic and mock-emphatic lapses into and out of italics, and its spontaneous use of typographical spacing on the printed page, all testify to what Kroetsch calls an "elaborate grammar of delay":

No. 25 — *McKenzie's Improved Golden Wax Bean*: 'THE MOST PRIZED OF ALL BEANS. *Virtue* is its own reward. We have had *many expressions* from *keen discriminating gardeners extolling our seed* and *this variety*.'

Beans, beans,
the musical fruit;
the more you eat,
the more you virtue. (*CFN* 33)

The above pointers are some mild examples of the "violence to form" wreaked by Kroetsch in only the first three sequences. To see the poet really opening up against "system and grid" we would need to look at the "and . . . but" parataxis of "The Sad Phoenician" (*CFN* 57-72) with its A - Z soliloquy on the poet's lot, or, still more impressive, "Mile Zero" (*CFN* 125-137) with its full-page-width brackets and editorial arrows. But other than in concrete terms — that is, in the spacing of these anti-

narrative strategies on the page — how does this "dream of origins" link up with the placial form of the prairie and the colonial history of "our displaced ancestors"?

For an answer to this question, we need to think more geographically about what it means to start and restart, to commence and recommence the narrative of place so continually, and about what it means deliberately to fragment and defer the ending of place again and again. What is the ultimate threat of the named place, the place-name, and what happens when the inscription of place succeeds only in beginning and fails, everlastingly, to end?

The Topical, the Atopical and the Toponymical

It may sound strange to speak so matter-of-factly about failures of place in the long poem. How, after all, can place be said to fail? Something surely either is or is not in place — where is the disputed ground in such an assertion? The answer I am proposing lies in our approach to three distinct concepts: the topical, the atopical and the toponymical.

We discovered in chapter 3 that the first recorded use of the word *topos* was by the Greek philosopher Parmenides in the fragments of his own long poem, *On Nature*. It was used in the accusative case in the context of his argument that the very possibility of changing place (*τοπον αλλαοειν*) is actually an illusion held by ignorant mortals. Once we admit that change of place is possible, we discovered, we admit a dualism that is obviously anathema to the is-ness of Parmenidean (and Platonic) monism. If we add to Parmenides's rhetorical argument the one put forward by Aristotle a hundred and fifty years later in his *Treaty on Rhetoric* (Aristotle's section on the topics, *τα τομικα*) we gradually reach the same conclusion as Lynette Hunter in *Toward a Definition of Topos* that "[t]he classical focus on topos or the topoi was concerned with ways of structuring arguments as analogical reasoning from a probable rather than a factual basis" and that "a topos provides a general setting for a discussion, a framework for arguments rather than a fixed set of rules, standards or axioms."¹⁰ In this way the long poem becomes the natural home of *topos* in two etymologically linked ways; not only is it the first historical and generic home-place for discussing matters regarding the philosophy of place per se, but it also posits the long poem as the key topological setting for rhetoric itself, "the art of persuasion on probable

grounds." Far from accomplishing anything new or experimental in *Completed Field Notes*, Kroetsch, no less than the majority of twentieth-century long poems which treat place as the very foundational problematic of their existence, is actually looping back to a pre-classical and almost proto-purist orthodoxy of the form.

It would be comforting if we could leave the long poem's recent chorological reconnection with *topos* here, but if the continuing Canadian explosion in interest in this specific form shows anything, it demonstrates clearly that the rhetoric of place, the process of inscribing and re-inscribing the persuasion of place, is still further in debt to *topos*, to the topical and to all matters topological (in the non-algebraic sense) than anyone has yet indicated.

By replacing the logically deductive mode of reasoning with a new epistemological framework that depends on *topos*-as-analogy and the art of poetic persuasion in the long open form, we may begin to appreciate how Kroetsch's signing of *topos*-as-place writes Canadian identity into the prairie west. System and grid is no longer figured as a logical chorological requirement in the mapping of place into region and region into place. The logical cartographic notation of Kroetsch's birthplace "one and a half miles west of Heisler, Alberta" as "the home-place: N.E. 17-42-16-W4th Meridian" is about to be replaced by the rhetoric of association and persuasion in the form of the question: "How do you grow a prairie town?" (*CFN* 38). Objective, materialist mapping of place in the guise of systematic mathematical cartography is to be sacrificed for the subjective cognitive model. A rhetorical figuration or imaginary mimesis of place is thus to hold sway over the standard Mercator projection. However, matters of projection are not the same as modes of reasoning and such metaphors trespass unhelpfully on the larger question of mapping the environment.

The important recognition in the present context, then, is the idea that *topos* cannot be said to fail deductively, mathematically or logically even though something is literally not in place, not where it was mapped to be: this is not a failure of place but a mis- or sometimes a displacing. My pen is either on the table or not on the table, but to say that it failed to be on the table, apart from sounding odd, would attribute an unfair expectation of animate intentionality to the object, not to mention the implication of a wider contextual framework in which my pen being on the table could be seen as "successful" according to certain rules of engagement. In this way we can see that it only makes

sense to talk of the "failures of place" in terms of rhetorical analogy and poetic disputation; and these only within the expected bounds, rules and limitations provided by a specific textual discourse — the long poem.

In this last sense the contemporary long poem very often becomes what Hillis Miller calls "a place you cannot get to from here" and, at last, this is an area in which I suggest place can be said to fail. It is certainly commensurate with Kroetsch's holiday-brochure introduction that in *Field Notes* "we are going to a place where things are only what they are. Or with the barest exception, something else, but only just something else, hardly." In Kroetsch's use of "hardly" lurks Miller's "place you cannot get to from here" and with this in mind, we turn to a more detailed consideration of our second distinct concept: the "atopical."

For me, Hillis Miller's introduction of the new term "atopical" is much the most important contribution made by the entire text of *Topographies*. Although he himself is reluctant to make full use of the term or expand upon its direct connection to legislation, performance and encryption, its theoretical relation to very many contemporary long poems, and in particular to the failure of systematic mapping in *Field Notes* can instantly be seen:

In attempting to investigate my question I have found myself encountering in different ways within each topography the atopical. This is a place that is everywhere and nowhere, a place you cannot get to from here. Sooner or later, in a different way in each case, the effort of mapping is interrupted by an encounter with the unmappable. The topography and the toponymy in each example, in a different way in each case, hide an unplaceable place. . . . This strange locus is another name for the ground of things, the preoriginal ground of the ground, something other to any activity of mapping. . . . It generates the opacities of storytelling. Why can no story ever bring the things it narrates wholly into the open? The encrypted place generates stories that play themselves out within a topography. (Miller, *T* 7-8)

Miller's theoretical definition of the atopical which here includes his notions of the "unmappable," the "unplaceable place," "the preoriginal ground of the ground" and the "encrypted place" provides remarkably close parallels to Kroetsch's own theoretical choropoetics. Still more important is the way in which Miller recognizes the interruptive function of the atopical in terms of an impossible teleological closure and the "opacities" of narrational progress. Kroetsch too speaks of "the place where I might have been" (*CFN* 79), "my misreading of their map" (*CFN*

194) and above all, "the forfeiture / of ending" (CFN 93). In every sense Kroetsch would love "to become a postman, / to deliver real words / to real people" (CFN 40) but at each turn he discovers an address he "cannot get to from here," an "unplaceable place," the atypical. His uniform desire to reach "a place where things are only what they are" is commensurate with Miller's recognition of "the preoriginal ground of the ground" and this is precisely why Kroetsch eventually advertises the ban that "Words are not allowed at all" (CFN 246). Linguistic, placial and subjective inauthenticities, those signalled by ruptures in reference, orientation and identity formation, become mixed and embroiled in the same wry ironies of otherness we have already attributed to previous long poems. In *Field Notes*, however, the very self-recognition which emerges from the writing of such an impossibility of reaching the "strange locus" — the process of inscribing the failures of topography and place — yield a failure that is far more interesting than a successful representation of place could ever be. With the recognition of Miller's atypical at work in *Field Notes*, we may better appreciate just why Kroetsch's "eloquence of failure may be the only eloquence remaining in this our time" (CFN 269).

Speaking as a Canadian in his essay "Beyond nationalism: a Prologue," Kroetsch says "we wish to locate our dislocation, and to do so we must confront the impossible sum of our traditions" (LTW 65). Apart from the concepts of *topos* and the atypical, there is a third way in which such location of dislocation can be effected. This is through our understanding of what it means to name place through the denominative process of toponymy; and "topographical considerations, the contours of places," Miller enjoins "cannot be separated from toponymical considerations, the naming of places" (T 1). The colonial history of British and French Canada which imposed the logic of "system and grid" on the topographical history of the prairies (through the assignation of old world toponyms to new-world locations) can therefore be challenged by the use of anti-toponymical strategies.

The importance of the place-name as Bakhtinian "chronotope" or place-holder is outlined by Ed Casey as "a locution [which] acts both to designate a particular city or region and to institutionalize this name in a geographic and historical setting" (GBP 23). Furthermore, he draws our attention to the way in which toponyms link event to episode (narrative to place) in the fact that "The Odyssey, that ur-epic of Western tradition, is densely place-beset in its structure":

Homer 'speaks with names' — with local place-names — and in his epic the land and sea are at once sources of names and ethical preserves, realms of values and virtues as well as mnemonic resources. For archaic Greek bards as for contemporary Western Apache storytellers, places provide permanence, a bedrock basis for situating stories in scenes that possess moral tenor.

The *Odyssey* is therefore at least as much a narrative of place as it is a narrative of events. It is a narrative of *events in place*.
(Casey, *GBP* 277, original emphasis)

Again we witness the theoretical association of narrative and place in the context of the long poem, a shared sense not only that "places provide permanence" but also that place-names seem to be "ethical preserves, realms of values and virtues" entertaining a "moral tenor." Kroetsch himself recognizes that "the bindertwine of place" (*CFN* 134) implies "a complex ritual of place and culture" (*CFN* 154) and that even in travelling huge distances we cannot fully rid ourselves of our own chorophylic set towards place: "Even here, now, today, this afternoon in the Yorkshire Dales, I locate my pain in the descending lines of a prairie coulee" (*CFN* 235). So we must say that toponymy contains certain moral imperatives as well as merely mnemonic or cartographic functions. Place-names provide an encapsulated narrative of morality waiting to be decrypted by every passing consumer of space; just as the language of everyday speech understands very clearly what is meant by a moral failing or failures in morality, so toponymy too can be said to inhabit the realm of cultural and topographical failure.

While I do not wish to be so pedestrian as to rework Charles Olson's famous Beloit Lecture on the relationship between "*topos* *tropos* and *typos*" into the proceedings,¹¹ we should not underestimate the extent to which "place names seem to be intrinsic to the places they name." Hillis Miller goes on to update the Olsonian triangle via the concept of Cratyism:

The names are motivated. By a species of Cratyism they tell what places are like. The place is carried into the name and becomes available to us there. You can get to the place by way of its name. Place names make a site already the product of a virtual writing, a topography, or, since the names are often figures, a 'topotropography.' (*T* 4)

Although I think Miller takes rather too much for granted in expecting his readers to have read Plato's Socratic dialogue *Cratylus*, in which the arbitrariness of attaching names to objects is the central

dialectic ("motivated" versus "unmotivated" naming), nevertheless "topotropography" does hold something positive in store for *Field Notes* as a place "you can get to" from here. You can get to the place through due attention to its name: the place "becomes available to us there." In this it is the polar opposite of the atypical, "a place that is everywhere and nowhere, a place you cannot get to from here." Toponymy therefore promises much in anchoring the semantic swell of the long poem. The most remarkable Olson-Miller Cratylism used by Kroetsch is probably his description of "Outlook" in Saskatchewan. Outlook as a place-name contains its own associative and figurative definition; it is a place from which we literally "look out" into the treeless wilderness in the same way that Newcastle once enjoyed a new castle and numberless shallow-streamed villages still enjoy the name Ford:

West of Outlook, Saskatchewan, you can drive straight into the end of the world. There's a law against shade in that country. Trees are considered improper. Sometimes the cattle graze, for a whole week, in a mirage. (CFN 241)

Not just through his use of the Cratylism which brings the phenomenal experience of the poet's own body senses to bear upon the realization of place, but through a constant emphasis on the materially personal processes of moving through the toponymical landscape, Kroetsch regrounds the journeying subjective experience of place against the faceless systematic appropriation of corporate agri-business, insisting that "On the prairies the small town and the farm are not merely places, they are remembered places" and that "we demand, of the risking eye, new geographies" (LTW 7-8, 12). The failures of toponymy in *Completed Field Notes* are not the moral failures of Kroetsch to write an ethical text against the hectare-flattening geometries of the combine harvester, a gridding which removes the urban layout of Canadian cities to the wilderness of the western provinces in the hopes of subordinating the vastness of prairie space to the narrow-mindedness of the town-planner, but the deliberate championing of the failure of the financial colonists ever to name themselves into the event-history of the same place. Kroetsch will always have access to Moose Jaw, Dawson Creek, and Battle River through the oral history and catalogue of events attached to the Albertan place-name, so the expression of his own private ability "to get to that place from here" only ridicules the failure and inability of his adversaries to do so. The "situatedness of the personal" as Peter Baker

puts it in relation to Olson, is never more stark than in the poet's own personal use of the place-name and nowhere better than in *Field Notes* do we see proof that "the geographical stems directly from the personal."¹² Just as Olson had said in *Maximus* that "I come back to the geography of it, / the land falling off to the left" and "I am making a mappemunde. It is to include my being" (*Maximus* 184, 257), so Kroetsch, for equally toponymical reasons, is able to say in *Field Notes*, "The scarred earth / is our only / home" and "Let place do the signing for us" (*CFN* 218, 237).

5.3 Failures of Place (2): Archaeological Failures in Oral Topographies of the Imagined Real Place

How do we lift an environment to expression? How do you write in a new country?

The great sub-text of prairie literature is our oral tradition. . . .

Archaeology allows the fragmentary nature of the story, against the coerced unity of traditional history. Archaeology allows for discontinuity. It allows for layering. It allows for imaginative speculation.

I am aware that it is the great French historian Michel Foucault who has formalized our understanding of the appropriateness of the archaeological method. But the prairie writer understands that appropriateness in terms of the particulars of place: newspaper files, place names, shoe boxes full of old photographs, tall tales, diaries, journals, tipi rings, weather reports, business ledgers, voting records — even the wrong-headed histories written by eastern historians become, rather than narratives of the past, archaeological deposits. (Kroetsch, *LTW* 6-7)

Archaeology, for Kroetsch, is the key principle that links the genealogical history of Canada's displaced peoples to the above-mentioned "bindertwine of place" (*CFN* 134). For Kroetsch, the "unity of history" has been "coerced" by "eastern historians." The poet's mission is therefore to recover the "small town and the farm" of the west which "are not merely places, they are remembered places" and to write, accordingly, "the poems of the imagined real place" (*LTW* 7-8). The most authentic method which can be employed in the completion of this venture is naturally enough deemed "archaeological" in that it brings together both oral history and cultural geography in an inscription of place via shared fragmentary relics. In this approach it bears

considerable similarity to its twentieth-century celtic counterpart, *The Anathemata* of David Jones. The quiddity of documentary relics, the things left over or held up before the great transcendental absolutes of belief systems, are valued beyond their mere utility to the extent that they function as textual mediators in the recuperation of a mythic consciousness.

It is here that the persistent strength of Kroetsch's poetics is encountered. Beyond the theoretical cover, there is no doubt that in *Field Notes*, we witness a text being shaped into place, into a form, and into a certain semantic attitude which is above all else suited to the experience of the prairie as a material and social spatial complex. "The poem as long as a life. The lifelost poem" as Ondaatje quotes Kroetsch in *The Long Poem Anthology* (1979), is the ideal vehicle for the Canadian anti-narrative of the west, for only such a fragmentary and complex form can authentically reflect the spatial palimpsest that is the excluded middle of the prairies and of Canada's concealed nationhood. As the poet insists, "in some perverse way, this very falling-apart of our story is what holds our story together" (*LTW* 21-22).

It is this oxymoronic aspect of Kroetsch's statements to which Rosalind Jennings draws our attention in her article "Disappearing Doubles and Deceptive Landscapes."¹³ She says that her aim is to "demonstrate how Canadian writers' perception of their own prairie topography means that a loss of self is virtually inevitable in this landscape" and in so doing to discover "why the Canadian quest should differ so widely in its intent from that of the American search, involving, as it does in Kroetsch's work, actively losing rather than finding the self."¹⁴

Jennings's arguments, which on the one hand explore Kroetsch's demythologizing of the male prairie-hero figure in the light of his 1995 fictional autobiography, *A Likely Story: The Writing Life*, and on the other focus on the trope of disappearance in relation to "The Frankfurt Hauptbahnhof" in *Field Notes*, are useful in the present context more for what is left unsaid than for the points which are actually argued. However, just at the moment when the important concept of archeology is obliquely introduced (in the final paragraph) the whole reading breaks off. This leaves the potentially archaeological reader in a state of unfulfilled and tantalizing expectancy; I want now to respond to Jennings's choice of quotations from *A Likely Story* by removing them to the arena of what may be termed a "failed archeology." In so doing I

hope to go some small way towards supplementing the Jennings approach by showing that failures in identity (disappearance) are linked to failures in archaeology (disinterring) through failures of place (displacement). Jennings's suggestive eleventh-hour passage from "Disappearing Doubles" which just begins to sense a connection between Kroetschean archaeology, disappearance, failure and place, is reproduced below:

In *Badlands*, as in 'The Poetics of Rita Kleinhart,' Kroetsch deploys a female Western quester, Anna Dawe, as an apparently liberated foil to a failed male quester, her archaeologist father, William Dawe. Kroetsch's strength comes in his ability to humorously mock the shortcomings of men, himself included, even as he acknowledges his inability to completely escape such failings. In true Canadian prairie fashion his own quest in *A Likely Story* is not a total success. Kroetsch recognizes that 'by borrowing fragments of other lives I borrow an autobiography of my own,' enabling him simply to 'disappear, only to discover that I have, once again made a turn in the labyrinth' . . . (Rosalind Jennings)¹⁵

Like William Dawe in *Badlands*, *Completed Field Notes* speaks of the failed archaeological process which attends and ensues a genuine quest for orientation of the self. This drawn-out process involves a disinterring of regionally representative oral and cultural fragments (seed catalogues, ledgers, tipi-rings) which continue to fall short of indicating an absolute presence-in-place, but which in the very process of that falling/failing wryly acknowledges the "inability to completely escape such failings." Kroetsch's description of his own Albertan prairie placehood "is not a total success" but should instead be seen as a "borrowing" of other biographies of identity-in-place, a telling of that pre-literate and imaginary real place. The chorological deposits, "the characteristic expressions and modes of our own speech" which are the record of this archaeological dig for placial authenticity, "the ground of the ground" become the wavering sections of the choropoem *Field Notes*: they are in a very real sense the unrecoverable biographical deposits of a desired but irrevocable ancestry who are too far out, too far gone into the badlands, and not wavering but frowning.

Robert Kroetsch's failure to turn either archaeology into field work or to turn field-notes into a reliable record of regional place ends in — or even aspires to — a chorology which resists its own formation. The result is a reciprocal resistance between producer and product so that although "there are adverbs, you may remember, of manner, of place, / of time" (*CFN* 64), "the poem must resist the poet, always, I can't help

/ thinking" and "the poet must resist the poem, if you know what I mean" (CFN 61-2). This resistance between archaeologist-quester and his defiant field note-book effectively effaces both body and voice of the actual poet himself, which, given that place and space are profoundly somatic constructs in every sense, is serious indeed:

As for the poet himself
we can find no record
of his having traversed
the land/in either direction

no trace of his coming
or going/only a scarred
page, a spoor of wording
a reduction to mere black (CFN 43)

The poet himself, then, has left no archaeological deposit of his own as a field note to Heisler, Alberta, a situation which becomes still more obvious in "Mile Zero" when critical commentary itself becomes a part of the main text, complaining that "The westward (and return) journey that fascinates Kroetsch is here turned / entirely into implication without adequate substance (i.e. / ground), into, at best, intertext . . ." (CFN 134). The dissimulation that Kroetsch practices by pretending that he can leave no personal or autobiographical archaeological deposit in *Field Notes* returns us again to Rosalind Jennings and the trope of disappearance:

We're too busy lying to ever be autobiographical, I think. You write the poem with your life by not creating a safe boundary between poetry and life. It would be nice if there sometimes were a clear boundary, but in fact the two keep spilling back and forth; exchanging. (Kroetsch quoted by Jennings)¹⁶

Jennings uses the quotation above (in which Kroetsch was interviewed by Kristjana Gunnars for the *Prairie Fire* anthology)¹⁷ to make a point about sexual difference. In the relationship of "RK" to Rita Kleinhart, a symbiosis reflected in the repetition of their initials, Kroetsch's imaginary muse seems to change places with him "with the possibility that the Self is Other, the Other is Self."¹⁸ This seems (to me at any rate) a tired Lacanian waste of a hard-won and significant piece of evidence. A far more interesting and — to readers of *Field Notes* at least — more believable interpretation of this statement is to relate Kroetsch's "lying" link to autobiography with the known sense of place

experienced in the text. If *Field Notes* truly is a choropoem in which "we're too busy lying ever to be autobiographical" (and it is hard to deny this in the face of the archaeological method employed above), the lies are far more concerned with placelessness than gender, and with displacement than Otherness. Lying becomes far more believable as a textual strategy when it is equated with the deliberate and seasoned failure to tell the truth of place — and every telling of Canadian identity is a lie for the place it does not and cannot tell. In this way the lie becomes the only real truth of the prairie, the truth of the unwritten, unsilenced "source that was at once / oral and local" (*CFN* 134). It is for this reason that *Field Notes* is a bad dream of place, the reason why "A nightmare, one like yours, / would ground me in potential" (*CFN* 140); or, alternatively, the reason why *Field Notes* is "A kind of mad poem. Or perhaps it really is a / travel journal. I don't know" (*CFN* 146). But this interpretation takes us well beyond the confines of Kroetsch's archaeological method which, we are reminded "is a kind of archaeology that makes *this place*, with all its implications, available to us for literary purposes" (*LTW* 7). The lie of archaeology is therefore the lie of "this place" and when place is seen to lie it becomes its opposite, "placelessness," which is another question entirely.

5.4 Failures of Place (3): Un-inventing the Failed Topographies of Canadian Nationhood

The third and most semiotically fundamental of Kroetsch's theories has to do with "un-naming" the land in order to make a more genuine recuperation of national (but not nationalist) selfhood.

At one time I considered it the task of the Canadian writer to give names to his experience, to be the namer. I now suspect that on the contrary, it is his task to un-name. (*LTW* 58)

My thesis: "My thesis is simply this: it is the first task of the Canadian writer to uninvent the world."
To uninvent the world. To unconceal. To make visible again.
That invisible country, Canada. Our invisible selves. (*LTW* 147)

We have seen how *Completed Field Notes* "uninvents" the world through its ceaseless rupture of spatial narrative, and we have witnessed

the fusion of time and space called "archaeology" which Kroetsch uses to "unconceal" the cultural fragments of "the particulars of place." Now we must confront the duplicity of the homonym, which, despite being the same arrangement of letters to form the same word, represents to Kroetsch and other Canadian settlers the nadir of the displaced colonial experience and the very reason why "We are our own ghosts" (*LTW* 57). Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin are right to foreground this problem as "more than a simple mismatch between language and landscape":¹⁹ it is the inescapable silent void of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. It is significant, also, that of all the contemporary Canadian poets, they should choose Kroetsch as their prime example. Canadian English, to all appearances, seems to be the same language, the same vocabulary, and the same sign as the English of Empire, but what the words of that provincial, territorial English necessarily hide (no option in this) is the rootedness of the "sometimes British, sometimes American" web of signification and experience:

The Canadian writer's particular predicament is that he works within a language, within a literature, that appears to be authentically his own, and not a borrowing. But just as there was in the Latin word a concealed Greek experience, so there is in the Canadian word a concealed other experience, sometimes British, sometimes American. (*LTW* 58)

The important word here is "borrowing." Western consumer capitalism fears borrowing and the sense of community which depends upon such a non-contractual economy of exchange. Ownership, private ownership, and even better, temporary private ownership resold at a premium each time is the mythology on which the European and New World West (Kroetsch's east) is founded. If the Prairie Poets can highlight the sense of borrowed land, of generational, genealogical space, they can start, "the radical process of demythologizing the systems that threaten to define them. Or, more comprehensively, they [can] uninvent the world" (*LTW* 58).

"Stone Hammer Poem" is effective for Kroetsch because it does just this. It continually points to the fact that "this stone maul" and the field on which it was found (stress "found," not bought) pay no heed to the repeated commercial exchange value which imperialism placed on it. Thus is centre decentred and colonial narrative symbolically demythologized as being only contingent to the spatial, genealogical history of the place itself. Through the satirical iteration of the phrase "for a price," the

following quotation clearly describes how the implicit aesthetic value of the stone hammer as artefact has transcended any suggestion of financial advantage to be gained by ownership of the land on which it was discovered.

Now the field is
mine because
I gave it
(for a price)

to a young man
(with a growing son)
who did not

notice that the land
did not belong
to the Indian who
gave it to the Queen
(for a price) who
gave it to the CPR
(for a price) which
gave it to my grandfather
(for a price) who
gave it to my father
(50 bucks an acre
Gott im Himmel I cut
down all the trees I
picked up all the stones) who

gave it to his son
(who sold it) (prologue, *CFN* 5)

Here and elsewhere, *Field Notes* unravels the history of place layer by layer gradually exposing the various sign-systems which have held sway over the naming of the prairie land. This process, Kroetsch's explicit project of un-naming the Canadian wilderness, un-placing the specific qualities of place which have shackled it to the lies of a false history, cannot therefore be seen as a conventional topography but must instead be thought of as a profoundly de-topographical or de-topographizing project. No longer a case of seeking to place Albertan towns by guying down signifiers to "The palimpsest of prairie" (*CFN* 49), transient towns for which "The gopher was the model," *Field Notes* becomes more a question of un-placing Canadian space, a quest, as we shall shortly see, for Edward Relph's "placelessness," for Mark Augé's "non-place" and for Nicholas Entrikin's "betweenness of place."

How do you grow a prairie town?

The gopher was the model.
Stand up straight:
telephone poles
grain elevators
church steeples.
Vanish, suddenly: the
gopher was the model. (CFN 38)

As "Professor / of Nowhere at some place or other" (CFN 73) we can now begin to understand Kroetsch's sly obsession with "the place where I might have been" (CFN 79) and why "secretly at night I turn signs around, I point / all travellers in the wrong direction" (CFN 77). Canadian identity can only be found on the never-ending prairie road because "This road is the shortest distance / between nowhere and nowhere. / This road is a poem" (CFN 43). By locating Arcadian identity and presence only in absence (the de-topographizing of place), Kroetsch claims to be fulfilling Margaret Atwood's famous dictum from *Surfacing*, "Now we're on my home ground, foreign territory."²⁰ There would be no reason to believe such intentionality if *Field Notes* was just another reworking of Williams's place-bound "local pride" or Olson's use of "the local as a stick to beat you,"²¹ but Kroetsch's long poem takes us from Canada to America, from Greece to China, from Austria to Switzerland, from Fiji to Australia, and from New Zealand back to Canada again. Its "home place," its "archaeology of dream" and its "bindertwine of place" can only be presented and focalized from afar. In this respect Kroetsch's Canadian chorology differs profoundly in form and voice from its American, Whitmanesque counterpart — the relentless moral affirmation of the humanist bill of rights which founds self as self-in-place.

Such recognition of the movement away from Kroetsch's early poetry of the sixties in which a genuine Mandelian regionality dominated his representation of the prairie, towards the de-topographical complexities and archaeological method of *Completed Field Notes* is unexceptional; it has been suggestively graphed with both autobiographical detail as well as critical commentary by Ann Munton, Shirley Neuman and Smaro Kamboureli. Here, for example, is Munton drawing attention to Kroetsch's geographical aspirations:

Kroetsch, then, is both a literary nationalist and a literary internationalist. . . . His imaginative vision is inexorably that of his time and place: ' . . . as a kid, the one science that tempted me

was geography" (LV, p.9). Place is much more than a static, physical location; for Kroetsch geography is kinetic: ' . . . every journey across it [geography] or through it is another reading in a way' (LV, p.8). In *The Crow Journals* he asks, 'Is not landscape an event as well as a setting?'"²²

Quite apart from Munton who has further considered the link between place and autobiography in the context of Kroetsch's relation to other Prairie Poets,²³ Russell Brown's paper at the Long-liners Conference in 1985, "On Not Saying Uncle: Kroetsch and the Place of Place in the Long Poem," also took up the locative question. Robert Enright and Dennis Cooley's interview with Kroetsch in *Essays on Canadian Writing* further concentrate, in various ways, on the idea of place as the significant structuring principle of Kroetsch's texts. So much is not, therefore, in dispute. What can be accomplished, however, is a more chorologically geographical and less literary reading of place in *Field Notes* through the work of the geographers mentioned above.

Placelessness: Edward Relph

Although it comes as no surprise to the present study, it is one of the more closely guarded secrets of modern human geography that the whole concept of "placelessness" was actually invented in Canada. Furthermore, it is fair to say that both cultural geography and contextual theory is still reacting to chapter 6 of Edward Relph's doctoral thesis submitted to the University of Toronto in 1973. The shock waves from Relph's identification of a postmodern, kitsch, reiterable and disposable sense of place are still being felt today. Initially formulated in response to Heidegger's *Being and Time*, Yi-Fu Tuan's concept of "topophilia" and lacklustre trends in 1970s environmentalism, Relph effectively changed the direction of social research so that quantitative analysis was downgraded in favour of studies which charted "the wholeness and indivisibility of human experience" in the "profoundly human and meaningful" arena of the "lived-world" (PP 7). In terms of regional and behavioural geography, Relph's *Place and Placelessness* is still recognized as the *primum mobile* text of a host of related chorological studies into the phenomenology of place. So, while many literary critics have some vague feeling that Jameson, Lyotard or perhaps Baudrillard should be credited with such notions as transferability and simulation of place,

geographers rightly continue to cite the originary Relph:

An inauthentic attitude towards places is transmitted through a number of processes, or perhaps more accurately 'media', which directly or indirectly encourage 'placelessness', that is, a weakening of the identity of places to the point where they not only look alike but feel alike and offer the same bland possibilities for experience. . . . What is important is that these are powerful processes of landscape modification which do little or nothing to create and maintain significant and diverse places. (Relph, *PP* 90)

The obvious way to fight "placelessness" as defined by Relph would be to provide a critical reassertion of "significant and diverse places" in space and time, and this, in fact, is what Relph himself argues for in his concluding chapter, "Prospects for Places" where he warns us of the dangers of ignoring "a deep human need [which] exists for associations with significant places" (*PP* 147). Kroetsch, however, does exactly the opposite; or, rather, goes even beyond the opposite. Having made the reader acutely aware of both the physical, wilderness-placelessness of Heisler, Alberta as well as of the redoubled cultural experience of placelessness, so endorsed by the horizonless wheatscape of corporate agribusiness, Kroetsch proceeds neither to reaffirm the significance of place by ekphrastic description, nor even to fight placelessness on its own terms with alternative visions of placelessness by shifting his geographical readings around the globe; what *Completed Field Notes* actually does is to make the reader aware of the futility of both these options by lodging its complaint firmly in the deconstructed middle of this conventional oppositionality. Having pointed out the negative dialectics of place (Heisler) and non-place (not Heisler), placelessness (prairie) and non-placelessness (non-prairie), the supremely self-regarding place that is the text of *Field Notes* deconstructs the suppositions upon which these oppositions are based. Unwilling to fall into either trap, and many critics have assumed that the extensive globe-trotting of the pseudo-autobiographical narrator is merely an exiling or Othering of place (ie an affirmation of placelessness), *Completed Field Notes* is, instead, a "literature of dangerous middles."²⁴ In simple terms, then, where is this middle?

Non-Place: Marc Augé

Thanks to a recent explosion of interest in this very area, a number of

answers are possible to the question posed above. The problem is analogous, in spatial terms, to Lacan's attempt to locate the constitution of the split ego in the linguistic realm between self and Other; or Kristeva's concept of the *sujet-en-procès* between semiotic and symbolic. The discourse of place is somewhat more material than that of psychoanalysis, but the goal is in effect the same: to locate an invisible *beyond* between "here" and "there" whence the phyllic returns some sense of fractured identity to the individual. This is not necessarily a job for deconstruction/reconstruction — the light in which Kroetsch's long poems have traditionally been approached. Instead, it is a task more suited to the anthropological and topological discourse of the "Near" and the "Elsewhere" as outlined by Marc Augé.

In his comparatively short survey, *Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*, it is significant that Augé begins his thinking on this subject in the wake of the same place/non-place negative dialectical cul-de-sac that I am claiming is experienced by Kroetsch. What Augé is trying to avoid in setting up his own definition of anthropological place is the "existing negative definition of non-place." This is a crucial and not overly difficult point to grasp in terms of the contemporary long poem in general, although in Augé's somewhat parenthetical style it comes over to the reader as more opaque than it really is. Thinned out, the latter's argument runs that although "we might be tempted to contrast the symbolized space of place with the non-symbolized space of non-place" this is to malign the attributes of place by default. Non-place too can include the positive cultural symbols of space, just as "original" notions of place can include negative symbols of space (outer space, abstract space, geometric space). This is altogether an interesting move, and it worth unpacking for clarification.

The service Augé performs is twofold: he warns us of the existence of what I'm going to call "placial essentialism" and he shows us how it can be warded off by clearly operative anti-essentialist manoeuvres. For these purposes I am using essentialism in the same way as it is used in arguments relating to class and gender difference. Under such a rubric, a biological male is only assumed to be able to produce a masculine cultural text and a biological female, likewise, a feminine cultural text. Cross-fertilization between the two physiological sexes is considered impossible, just as class essentialism precludes a member of the upper-class social formation from producing a middle- or working-class text. By nature, the individual is what he or she is, quite literally, born to —

regardless of the possibility of cultural transformation. Such a formulation of essentialism, as, in essence, nature over nurture, is of course far from unfamiliar to most academic discourses of the last twenty years. To accord with essentialism in any form has become an untenable and dangerously reactionary position, and hence an unfindable one (because it undercuts the whole *raison d'être* of the cultural imperative).

Placial essentialism would be the view that place was always a naturally symbolic given space, an unchanging place of naturally significant space. The opposite of place, non-place, is therefore similarly figured as the locus of all non-symbolic space; non-place deals with the "non-symbolized surfaces of the planet" (NP 82). Place equals a *heimlich*, supportable habitat; non-place, an *unheimlich*, insupportable chaos. It is upon the somewhat sentimental grounds of such placial essentialism that critiques of Relph, Appleton and others have been variously founded, although the phrase "placial essentialism" itself has not been pressed into service.

An anti-essentialist view of place, of the type favoured by Augé and many of the new wave of cultural geographers, is thus one which includes the attributes of non-symbolic as well as of symbolic space, just as non-place can now include the attributes of symbolic space alongside its own more obvious non-symbolic space. While sounding slightly abstract at first, such an anti-essentialist concept of place has the advantage of opening up a new middle site for displaying the fissures between conventional topographies of place and non-place, as well as the benefit which Augé was originally seeking, that of avoiding a dialectically negative definition of non-place. I have referred to this earlier as the idea of an *espace-en-procès*, but it should now more properly be termed *lieu-en-procès*, as it is place, not space which is now "on trial." It is the site both symbolic and non-symbolic where Kroetsch's "literature of dangerous middles" is written and it is precisely because we deal always with a spatial *lieu-en-procès*, a cognitive sense of the war that is waged between significant and insignificant place, that the chorophyle can indeed be perpetually updated.

Equipped only with an essentialist or partially dead apprehension of place as purely the symbolically legitimate or local, the *genius loci* actually loses its power to grant the wishes of placehood. Under such circumstances the chorophyle would remain completely unable either to alter or to update itself. The phyllic thread itself would possess no artificial intelligence, no smart systems, no sense of the virtual and the

contemporary long poem would remain forever stuck as the archetypal American long poem of place, with Paterson as a "local pride," Gunslinger's tutees as the "local species" and Gloucester, Massachusetts as "local as a stick to beat you with." It is because the reader's sense of place is momentarily on trial between wider symbolic and non-symbolic modes of space, "now here," now "there" that the djinn of place retains its power to fulfil our placial desires. *Completed Field Notes* is thus symptomatic of the Canadian long poem in general. It shows a marked tendency to be both mimetic and diegetic of the chorophyle itself.

In *Topographies* Hillis Miller posited the existence of "the atypical . . . a place you cannot get to from here" (T 7) and this provided our starting point for the study of Kroetsch as a complex of failed placeholders. The irony Miller overlooks, however, is still more important, and provides the hidden apparatus for his remark: there are non-places "you cannot get to from here" either. If we could provide a topography of the non-place we might be able to bring place into clear focus. It is not because we cannot reach certain other places that we encounter the atypical, but because we cannot reach certain non-places. For example, it is very easy to imagine the existence of a real place you could not reach from here. To the prisoner in his cell, as to Robinson Crusoe, all places are potentially atypical, "unplaceable places." It seems more likely that what Miller really meant to say was that there is a "non-place" (after Augé) which you cannot get to from here. To repeat, therefore: the atypical is not the place you cannot get to from here, but the non-place that cannot be gained. Miller does eventually make this clear in discussion of Derrida's "cryptic enclosure as a place that is not a place, a place-no-place, where events take place without taking place" (T 307). Peter Thomas has read Kroetsch in the same way, admitting the difficulty of defining his poetry in terms of a place-specific agenda:

Even when he appears to be defined by place, it is clear that the 'Alberta' which is the nominal territory of his work contains little that is local or specific. It is a region of fictive forms and mad pursuits, tall tales, emblems, distances and strange devices.²⁵

Ann Munton similarly draws our attention to this question of the middle distance between places, "the discord between this celebration of the erasure of distance with the complaint against the reestablishment of distance."²⁶ This is part of her reading of "Letters to Salonika" (CFN 138-66) and Kroetsch's statement there that "Yours is a complex ritual of

place and culture. I come from huge silences." This is the section of *Field Notes* which denigrates the Greek epics for their specificity and "exactness":

But the Greek stories, for all their passion and violence, spoke *exactly* to me. I could find no mismatching between me and them. Except for the distance. The actual place of those stories was distant. Except that you erased that distance. (*CFN* 154)

The idea that the very distance between Augé's "unnamed or hard-to-name places" (like Miller's "place-no-place" and Derrida's "crypt") should also be a "mismatching" is an important part of Kroetsch's scripture of topographical failures. Exactness in the description of both place and the distance between place is a colonial truth to be bottled, shipped and sold; it speaks of the quantity, utility and serviceability of land apt for economic exploitation. As such the exactitude of the travelogue becomes a lie and *Field Notes* has to become "A kind of mad poem" (*CFN* 146), Thomas's "region of fictive forms and mad pursuits." Such combined mismatches of distance/non-distance, place/non-place and here/elsewhere speak more closely of Canadian nationhood than the exact field notes of the European invaders. Decoded, the success of European and American topography exactly to map the reality of Canada's middle places says more about their topographical failure than it does about their success. Land surveys map only land, but long poems map the chorological identity of nationhood. The conventional failure of the former is thus re-placed by the unconventional success of the latter. This, in effect, is the major transgressive purpose of the majority of contemporary Canadian long poems. In the process of unmapping the conventional failed topographies of place and remapping them with the mimetic mismatch of the atypical, Kroetsch becomes more than poet, archaeologist or geographer and becomes instead Augé's "field ethnologist" inhabiting the region between the near and the elsewhere:

it is a matter of being able to assess what the people we see and speak to tell us about the people we do not see and speak to. The field ethnologist's activity throughout is the activity of a social surveyor, a manipulator of scales, a low-level comparative language expert: he cobbles together a significant universe by exploring intermediate universes at need, in rapid surveys; or by consulting relevant documents as a historian. He tries to work out for himself and others, whom he can claim to be talking about when he talks about the people he has talked to. (Augé, *NP* 13)

Given the documentary evidence of the ledgers, seed catalogues, letters and sketches, the oral tradition of the prairies' trickster, the construction of "intermediate universes" as Kroetsch travels the globe from Trier to the Hibiscus Coast, and the whole problematics of displaying fieldwork in any social science, it might be thought hard to find a better analogy than Augé's, above, for *Completed Field Notes*. Yet in turning to a third cultural geographer, Nick Entrikin — and by importing some behavioural "nomadology" of Deleuze and Guattari — improvements in placial analysis can be achieved.

5.5 Failures of Place (4): Topographical Doubling and the Notational Failure of Singular Place

Not only do I *keep track* of my journey, I *double-track* it, heeding not just two separate sets of cues but their continuing interrelationship as well. A particular perception in the here of my proto-place takes on its full significance only as it links up with what is in the there of an oncoming com-place or counter-place. Conversely, I cannot grasp what is there in the next stage of my journey except in relation to the here of where I am just now. My journey, in other words, is not simply from here to there but from here to here to here, or more precisely from the here-in-view-of-there to the there-reached-from-here. A dialectic of place ensues a given place is what it is only in relation to other places.
(Casey, *GBP* 278-79)

Fourth and final in this exploration of the social spatialization of Albertan place is a return to the notion — and notation — of the "double." This is the domain of "The Frankfurt Hauptbahnhof" (*CFN* 198-208), which appears to run along its own parallel tracks in eleven short parts and forms the sixth section of the very international sequence, "Advice to my Friends," stopping at Frankfurt, Vienna, Graz, and Trier. The theme of the journey is a kind of reply to Eli Mandel's impressive long poem of place, *Out of Place* (1977),²⁷ and is brought to the reader as a meditation on the idea that the critical notation included in the body of *Field Notes* actually represents the "double" of the poem. For the first time the theory is itself a part of the poem and is physically contained within the main corpus of the text:

Notation is the double of the poem. Or: we are the poem, and cannot hear except by indirection. We can only guess the poem by encountering (by being surprised by) its double. The notation announces the poem to the poem.

Perhaps every poem is a poem lost (in the poet, in the reader), and can only find itself in the

broken
(the remaining)
lines (*CFN* 206)

In "The Frankfurt *Hauptbahnhof*" the reader encounters a kind of parallel text, mirroring the railway lines themselves, where the main text (if it can be prioritized at all) tells the autobiographical anecdote of Professor Kroetsch in Europe, travelling to Austria to give a lecture at the University of Graz, whilst the paratext attempts to provide the reader with a running commentary on that travelogue. It is a schizophrenic, sideways-glancing kind of strategy in which "the poet meets shadow, or vice versa" in "an encounter with the double who can be seen but cannot quite be imagined" (*LTW* 128). On another level it enacts the impossibility of the poem ever to "announce" itself without the use of a Derridean supplement, and, on a third, it is part of that stereotypical migratory urge so dear to the Canadian chorophyle.

The double as a motif only makes sense in *Field Notes* if it is read in the context of a spatial/geographical materialism, rather than by submitting to the lure of the more obvious psychological interpretation. The Lacanian split between the imaginary and the symbolic will give a fair exposition of the identity crisis felt by the New World settler, but it will not, ultimately, grasp what Kroetsch and others, as poets, have had to grasp: the primacy of the fact that "[a]s we come to the end of self, in our century," the long poem, "whatever its inward turn, [is] finally the poem of outward" (*LTW* 132).

The outward manifestations of the theory of the "double" are twofold. On the one hand it is a recognition of the so-called pioneering spirit by which "Europe made an easy other of the New World," with Canada figuring as the shadow of the European Empire. On the other, it is representative of Canada's North/South divide, which witnesses the *horror vacui* of the uninhabited Northern Territories as the spectre of the very much inhabited borderlands towards the U.S. frontier. We should be mindful here of the demographically based statistic that in 1987, roughly 80% of Canada's manufacturing industry was based directly on U.S. investment along the 50° latitude frontier line.

Canada as material landmass is Kroetsch's double for Europe, while Canada's own silent north is the doppelgänger of its south. To be born

in Heisler, Alberta, then, is a twofold silencing, and we begin to understand why for Kroetsch in *Field Notes*, "The geography of middle space is a peculiar problem The middle space becomes, if you will, unquotable" (*LTW* 36).

The unquotable silence that is Canada's middle space has to meet its own aporetic double in the hopes of making itself visible to the world. This is not, perhaps, the most straightforward of theories, but it is central to the poetics under discussion, and runs as follows. The absence that places like Moose Jaw and Dawson Creek experience — in the authorised history of space that is provided by French, American and British narratives of colonial settlement — can find, through Kroetsch, a useful double in the vacuum that lies behind the linguistic sign. If language can be seen to stand in for that which it is not and yet carry meaning, then the physical geography of the prairies, to all intents and purposes representing the "is-not" of the place we call Canada, can do exactly the same. If *Completed Field Notes* can include, at various intervals, the story of its own lack, the story that the poem itself can never make that thetic push through to referential transparency, two nothings can, in this case, add up to something. Richard Lane has suggested that "the intersection of legacy (literary/critical heritage) and the creative or artistic 'leg-work' of Kroetsch's texts" provides the reader with "a plexus composed of structural enclosures and the creative, internal critique (of such enclosures)."²⁸ The text of this plexus enacts in writing the double and split of the displaced Canadian psyche, but in the process of creation, what Kroetsch has called "[t]he placing of place" (*LTW* 121) nationality is announced.

Again, the failure of the poem to write the singular identity of place must be seen as another example of a failed topography. Any attempt to seek the double of place, a placial *Doppelgänger* or a supplementary place announces a failure in signification at the level of mapping the unity of place. Homotopism is replaced by heterotopism and the double-tracking, doubling back, and double telling of place systematically employed by Kroetsch (simultaneously focalized through both poet and critic) needs in fact to be read in such terms. It should also, however, be read in the light of the practically omnipresent Canadian consensus that the moment of discovery of this doubling strategy was the publishing of Sheila Watson's imagist novel, *The Double Hook*.²⁹ The appearance of the latter, in 1959, occupies a position no less important in the Canadian canon than that of Eliot's *Waste Land* in

Britain in 1922. Since the relevance of the double has become so universally recognized in terms of Canadian literary and national identity in the wake of *The Double Hook* and the kind of writing it inspired, it is actually Casey's argument about the "doubling and redoubled structure of ordinary journeys" that constitutes the more important approach here.

Casey's argument builds on the premise outlined in the section-opening quotation above: all journeys are never made simply from one place to another, but from "a here-in-view-of-there to the there-reached-from-here." The argument assembles in a very short passage (below) a number of the modes previously encountered in relating the 1990s cultural discourse of place to the contemporary long poem: Casey's vocabulary of the "near" and the "far" reflects Augé's earlier use of the "near" and the "elsewhere" (5.3); his unwillingness to forego the four-dimensional and temporal relates closely to Doreen Massey's analysis of space-time (chapter 4); his focus on journeying through places of "immersion" rhymes with Erik Cohen's "phenomenology of tourist experiences" (chapter 3); and his stress on place as reminder and retainer mirrors Hillis Miller's concept of toponymical "placeholders":

It would be more accurate to say, then, that as a journeyer I perform a *double* double-tracking. Not only do I relate the near to the far in terms of place. I also tie together the double placial ambit thus achieved with the double temporal outlay just described . . . I accomplish the redoubled tracking by traversing various particular way stations on my journey. These way stations serve as condensed reminders and retainers of my journey's placio-temporality. As such, they (along with beginning- and end-places) are designated by extremely economic toponyms. . . . The use of such place-names is no contingent matter, something I could do without. They are locatory units of everyday journeys, indices of attachment to the land (or sea or air) through which such journeys are made. Signs of literal progress in one sense, these 'local signs' are also insignia of just where and when we are and have been in the place-world. (Casey, *GBP* 279-80)

It is because of the text's "double placial ambit," its "double double-tracking" in time and place, its heterotopic *lieu-en-proces* that contemporary long poems like *Completed Field Notes* can be read as "insignia of just where and when we are and have been in the place-world." The doubling of topography itself, a kind of parallel mapping which seeks to set place against non-place in the quest for a national or chorological identity between the two, is not merely a feature of the Canadian long poem. A very brief retrospective survey of the four

previous studies reveals topographical doubling to be a key feature or trope in each.

In Brathwaite's *X/Self*, "Coulibri decay" is systematically doubled against the topographies of fallen imperial centres — Rome, Athens, Alexandria, Constantinople; in *Another Life* Walcott's own childhood sense of place pits itself against its adult counterpart, a redoubling simultaneously played out between the St. Lucian topographies of land and sea, paint and word; Dorn's *Gunslinger* maps the double journey of Howard Hughes and the stagecoach incumbents as they both head west across the Mesa Verde; and Susan Howe's strategic emphasis on borderlines, unseen symmetries and liminal topographies in *Pythagorean Silence* makes any singular conception of Buffalo, New York State impossible to sustain. Every one of these attempts at mapping place — and Marlatt's *Steveston* will prove no exception — is implicated in Casey's "double placial ambit," a topographical duplicity which writes the representation of place against itself in anticipation and inclusion of possible critical counter-topographies.

The whole idea of writing place against itself in order to fend off any permanent or absolute concept of regional emplacement has been well explored by the American geographer Tim Cresswell. In his recent work, *In Place / Out of Place: Geography, Ideology and Transgression*, for example, he argues that such moves as the juxtaposition and overwriting of heterogenous places in the same site (physical or textual) constitutes a kind of placial transgression. By disrupting the conventional codes of placial singularity and uniformity, such transgression is potentially threatening to the conventional symbolism and ideology of a specific locale and ultimately deadly to the state apparatus which relies upon Irigaray's logic of the same no less in construction of place than in construction of policy, law or national identity. According to Cresswell, therefore, the contemporary long poem would be a site of transgression and revolutionary potential purely as a result of its complex palimpsesting of place. However, not only does this transgressive reading rely too heavily on Stallybras and White and late-eighties thinking in general, but it could all too easily lead to a misreading of the function of the contemporary long poem which is essentially chronotopic and ontological ahead of political or polemical. The long poem makes a very strange manifesto and while it may indeed be topographically transgressive, the threat it poses as political tool is far outweighed by its unpredictable ransom of conventional perception, rational ways of

seeing, and the whole notion of a single legislative ego. *Completed Field Notes* is precisely "a kind of mad poem" full of "mad pursuits and strange devices" as its very existence is simultaneously in place and out of place, that is, conventionally useless.

The useless place, the product of a perfectly constructed useless topography is the ultimate schizophrenic threat to capital accumulation and Lefebvre's concomitant reproduction of space. T. S. Eliot, Edward Casey and Deleuze/Guattari all trace this alternative topology to non-Western chorophyles: to China, to Basho and to the Bedouin respectively. In their eyes, and in the eyes I suspect of Robert Kroetsch, the true infallible topography is achieved not by going out to map place, but by place presenting itself to be mapped only to the immobile subject who is chosen and prepared to receive the mapping. It is not a question of striding out with compass and square to plot the useful, rational cartography of yesterday's here or tomorrow's there; rather it is a willingness to remain in the one place which becomes the immersed focus for all places, a locus of engaged motion whither the elsewhere momentarily arrives for mapping. Only by remaining motionless will place present itself to be mapped; thus Eliot, Casey, and Deleuze, respectively:

Only by the form, the pattern,
Can words or music reach
The stillness, as a Chinese jar still
Moves perpetually in its stillness. (Eliot, *Burnt Norton* 14)

Movement is therefore intrinsic to place — thus to what is often taken to be the very paradigm of the lasting and the *unmoving* in human experience. As holding and marking the stages of a journey, places exhibit notably stationary virtues. But as the loci of engaged motion — both the more conspicuous motion of moving-between-places and the more subtle motion of being-in-place — places show themselves to be remarkably nonstatic. They are the foci of flow on the pathway of the journey. (Casey, *GBP* 280)

The life of the nomad is the intermezzo
It is therefore false to define the nomad by movement. Toynbee is profoundly right to suggest that the nomad is on the contrary *he who does not move*. . . . The nomad knows how to wait, he has infinite patience. Immobility and speed, catatonia and rush, a 'stationary process,' station as process — these traits of Kleist's are eminently those of the nomad. (Deleuze and Guattari)³⁰

For all Kroetsch's apparent extra-Albertan journeying in *Field*

Notes, the real condition is stasis: a motionless lying in wait for mapping whilst places and territories pass by beneath the poet. The migrant chorophyle of the European colonists which sets out to map is countered by the "stationary process" of the nomad which stays in to map. This argument does provide a pleasing solution to the unutterable middle space of Canada: in-betweenness of place (Augé, Entrikin, Miller)³¹ has become nomadic *intermezzo*. The territory of such an *intermezzo* is deterritorialization in and for itself. Whereas the migrant settler reterritorializes himself in a new place after every emigration from his old home-place, "the nomad reterritorializes on deterritorialization itself." Finally, therefore, following Deleuze and Guattari to a finish, it is actually "the earth that deterritorializes itself, in a way that provides the nomad with a territory."³² Encountered first as a doubling textual device in which the poet meets his *doppel*-critic in the poem itself, and second as a doubling geographical device which introduces foreign counter-places, Kroetsch's entire project of the topographical doubling of place gradually moves the reader towards a "remarkably non-static" position of nomadic heterotopism. Ultimately it is the very fact that *Field Notes* has provided so many incomplete topographies that renders it, under erasure, placially complete. Only to nomads will the prairie present itself to be mapped.

5.6 Topographical Choropoetics: Summary

Topography is the fifth core element of the long poem's choropoetics. Beyond its immediate concern with the mapping of place, it paves the way for the related theories of *topos*, the "atopical" and the toponymical. It questions who has the initial power to map place and seeks evidence of how such authority can be challenged. Since contemporary long poems are as often the site for a de-topographizing of place as they are for its inaugural inscription, arguments relating to "sense of place," "topophilia" and the *genius loci* are relevant. In addition, the cultural and symbolic investments in place can be traced through attention to textual topographical practices. A chorological decoding of placial practices proceeds along the following lines:

- (1) It locates the long poem as the earliest genre in which topographical issues were argued. It seeks topical "persuasion on probable grounds" (commonplace) rather than deductive reasoning.

- (2) It analyses the regional narrative of places and placenames in order to reveal historical evidence of indigenous, settler or colonial identities.
- (3) It pays attention to the oral history of place through recordings, reminiscences and "tall tales" as well as to its documentary evidence in diaries, ledgers and travelogues (or *Field Notes*).
- (4) It identifies the "atopical" or "unplaceable place." This is an attempt to gauge the unmappable or hard-to-map places of a region. Unexpected relocations, dislocations and reiterations of a place in the text may signal depiction of the atopical.
- (5) It addresses place-names as "motivated" or "unmotivated" according to the region they name, and traces the meaning of toponyms through gazeteers and local history. This is part of an "archaeological" placial practice.
- (6) It looks for evidence of un-naming through differences in regional usage of place-names. A native experience may lie concealed behind a colonial sign.
- (7) It explores whether places in a long poem are represented as essentialist and unique or anti-essentialist and transferable. How far outside the locality are the named places from (inter-state, inter-continental)? What topographical comparisons are made?
- (8) It analyses the transgressive placial strategies of doubling of place and heterotopism. Is there a palimpsesting of place in the long poem, or a geography of middle space ("betweenness")? Perhaps a nomadic sense of place is more appropriate?

This rudimentary synopsis of the placial practices of the long poem begins to demonstrate why topography is so important to the chorological reading practice. Human geography's theories of "betweenness" (Entrikin), "non-place" (Augé), "placelessness" (Relph) and "topophilia" (Tuan) are particularly focused ways of addressing the placial practices of the extended poetic form. Topography provides a theoretical arena in which such readings may feature, and at the same time returns us to one of the oldest functions of the genre. A specific shortcoming of the praxis as listed here, however, is its unwillingness to address the connection between gender and place. Since this is an issue addressed at some length by both feminist geography and female long poems, a final choropoetic practice invites plenary discussion.

CHAPTER 6

Gendering Choropoetics: Feminist and Future Geographies of Place in Daphne Marlatt's *Steveston*

6.1 Feminist Geographies: Toward a Renewed Understanding of *Steveston's* Place-World

Epistemology

Methodology

Practice

Testimony, Witness, Evidence

Everyday Life, Life History, Lifecourse

Gender, Work, Workplace

Masculinity, Metaphor, Place

Salvaging Steveston: The Geography of Fear

Bodily Performances of Gendered Place

6.2 The Chorological Imagination

Interactive Fiction, Interactive Fact and the Interactive Long Poem

6.3 Geographical Futures: *Steveston* and GIS

ILP/GIS: Shared Models

ILP/GIS: Shared Components

ILP/GIS: Shared Operations

6.4 Gendering Choropoetics: Summary

the physical matter of
the place (what matters) meaning, don't get theoretical now, the cannery.

(Marlatt, *Steveston* 51)

6.1 Feminist Geographies: Toward a Renewed Understanding of *Steveston's* Place-World

Another Canadian feature has been our long tradition with resource towns and with the particular form of urban planning associated with this kind of community. In the early period, the creation of the resource town was very much the responsibility of the private company interested in exploiting the resources. What little planning took place was done by the company. . . .Some of the particular features of resource towns — a narrow range of employment possibilities, usually dominated by traditionally male occupations; a social hierarchy tightly focused on one's place in the workforce of the major company; a high level of social problems — are of obvious import to a study of gender relations.

(Caroline Andrew and Beth Milroy)¹

The passage above is a text from the field of human geography. It was published in 1988 by the University of British Columbia, the same institution for which Marlatt worked on the Steveston Oral History Project. Readers of Marlatt's long poem will find an interesting correlation between the two texts: it is not an exaggeration to say that Andrew and Milroy could be paraphrasing or summarising *Steveston* itself. Their identification of "our long tradition with resource towns" puts Steveston in a recognized national category for geographers;² "urban planning" suggests the type of cultural geography most suited to its analysis; the "social hierarchy tightly focused on one's place in the workforce" recalls issues of place/community found throughout Marlatt's text; and "male occupations . . . gender relations" suggests the delineation of a feminist chorology. But there is no need to make such imprecise claims for this geographical summary — the following extract from "Steveston as you find it" condenses each aspect of the geographical overview in full:

Or how the plant packs their lives, chopping off the hours, contains *them* as it contains first aid, toilets, beds, the vestige of a self-contained life in this small house back of the carpentry shed, where two woodburners are littered with pots & hot plates, & the table still bears its current pattern of dominoes. Where a nude on the wall glints kittenish at one of the two small rooms inside, each with iron bed. Some sleeping place between shifts? Dark. Housing wet dreams, pale beside the clank of forklift, supply truck, welding shed. (*S* 52-53)

As a "resource town" the fish cannery packs not just salmon, but "their lives"; as "urban planning," "this small house back of the woodshed" proves that "what little planning took place was done by the company";

"some sleeping place between shifts" hints strongly at "the social hierarchy tightly focused on one's place in the workforce"; while the "nude on the wall" returns us once more to "a study of gender relations." In the most extreme example, even the single three-word phrase "housing wet dreams" indicates the fish resource, urban planning, the working-place conditions and an erotics of place. It is a gender-specific poetic representation of a regional human geography (oral fieldwork). The example thus qualifies this part of *Steveston* as a gendered chorology, but Marlatt's poem is extensive and a second illustration is required:

Steveston: home to 2,000 Japanese, "slaves of the company": stript of all their belongings, sent to camps in the interior away from the sea, wartime, who gradually drift back in the '40's, few who even buy back their own homes, at inflated prices, now owning modern ranchstyle etc, & their wives, working the cannery, have seniority now, located. ("Steveston, BC," S 88)

"Steveston, BC" also provides all four regional geographies together. The historical geography of the resource town is noted in the statistics of the demographic shift as "2000 Japanese" move from interior "wartime" camps and "gradually drift back in the 40's." Urban geography is well covered by the recognition of different types of dwelling, "their own homes . . . modern ranchstyle." Social hierarchy in the work-place is exposed through those who are "located" and gain "seniority" in the company — a social geography. Lastly, the geography of gender posits the new status of "their wives" within both the domestic and working environment. Although few passages in *Steveston* exhibit all four regional aspects indicated by Andrew and Milroy earlier, every single page of the poem carries three or more of the above chorological markers.³

Unfortunately, although mainstream geography does better than in-house literary criticism, the above examples still fall short of proving the initial argument of the study which claimed *Steveston* to be a specifically *feminist* choropoetics. For this task we must draft in specialist help from another collaborative collective: the Women and Geography Study Group of the Institute of British Geographers (WGSG). By comparing this group's theoretical strategies for locating feminist geographies with stylistic, thematic and methodological analyses of how place is textualized in *Steveston*, it is possible to outline the key features of feminist chorology.

The potential number of readings made available through the gender-chorology link to *Steveston* is so large that some initial

categorization is needed. The section which follows on feminist geographies is therefore strictly policed under three familiar headings: epistemology, methodology and practice. The last of these parts is necessarily the most extensive and comprises the main thrust of this final chorological component. In each of its six sub-sections, it moves from a theoretically prescriptive base to a feminist chorological stand through worked textual examples. Before "practice," however, the wider stage is set through consideration of feminist placial knowledges and methods.

Epistemology

An oral history project, such as that funded by Reynoldson Research on Steveston from 1972-3, carried out by a paid oral historian, and written up as a series of interview transcripts in objective prose (corresponding to the expected academic registers and presentation protocols of the University of British Columbia in 1975), hardly provides a radical critique of dominant geographical knowledges. Still less does the consideration that 80% of the material was supplied by male participants alleviate in any way the thoroughly mainstream epistemological framework.

A thousand-line process poem, collaboratively written on the same themes, however, which reverses the original gender bias, replaces the objective norms of voice, syntax and punctuation with a completely subjective and intermittent long line, and refuses ever to close as a resolved artefact or project, is another matter entirely. This is not, apparently, an adequate or legitimate way of recording valid fieldwork information. On the same tack, the inclusion of the interviewer's own voice which "stresses the non-neutrality of the researcher and the power relations involved in the research process" (FG 87) raises more eyebrows; furthermore, there is no doubt at all that Marlatt's poetic version "contests boundaries between 'fieldwork' and everyday life, arguing that we are always in the 'field'" (FG 87); and finally, the piecemeal selection of marginal and fragmentary gender material shows no evidence of a premeditated "process of selecting problems deemed to be significant for geographical enquiry" (FG 86). These factors can only be seen as a red rag to conventional phallogentric Geography, the more so since the poetic *Steveston* "questions notions of 'truth' and validates 'alternative' sources of knowledge, such as subjective experience" (FG 87).

Methodology

On the methodological challenge *Steveston* poses to man-made geographical practices, much the most important aspect relates to the area the WGSF call "Ways of writing." Here attention should be drawn to four independent gender-related topics. First:

Feminist geography methodology expects that the positionality of the author(s) will be acknowledged in the writing of the research; not to do so would revert to positivist or masculinist assumptions about the distance and objectivity of the researcher. (FG 106-7)

Steveston's "Notes" (S 91) are the obvious place to look for the existence of such acknowledgements, and this search soon yields a positive result. Three of the five names mentioned in the notes are those of interviewees, duly "acknowledged in the writing of the research" so as to avoid "masculinist assumptions." Of obvious interest for their bibliographic details, the complete endnotes to *Steveston* are worth reproducing:

Notes

'Not to be Taken': quoted material from the Richmond Art Center's oral history files — interviews with William Gilmore and Les Gilmore.

'A by-channel; a small backwater:' with thanks, Inez Huovinen.

'Intelligence': quoted material from 'Steveston-by-the-Fraser,' Garnett Weston, *British Columbia Magazine*, August 1911.

'Life Cycle': paragraph quoted from Dr. J. P. Babcock's treatise on Pacific Salmon in Appendix 3 of Cicely Lyons' book, *Salmon: Our Heritage*, B.C. Packers Ltd., 1969. Other material in this poem quoted from the same book. (S 91)

The special acknowledgement of Inez Huovinen for her material in "A by-channel" returns us to the full list of ten interviewees to be found at the beginning of the 1974 edition of *Steveston* where her name first appears. It seems that the interviews with William and Les Gilmore for "Not to be taken" were not with Marlatt herself but were already on file in the Richmond Art Centre: their names do not appear in the list. Brenda Carr is right to point out the significance of gender here in terms of the overall subject-matter: "More than half of the twenty-two poems weave the connections between the women of Steveston and their

experience of place. This is an impressive figure considering that only two out of ten people interviewed for the Steveston aural history were women."⁴ Far from taking any of the aural material for granted, we can see that Marlatt is very explicit in thanking the contributors at both ends of the text, "For their time, their stories, their interest and kindness" (S 5). Even "the evocative work of those early photographers of Steveston" is acknowledged. The clear recognition of the above obligations positions Marlatt closer to the subjects of her field work and helps to erase the distance of the researcher — a feminist practice.

The second challenge to standard geographical — hence chorological — methods is extremely widespread in Marlatt's poem. This is the "use of personal pronouns in the text to highlight the partial nature of the research, rather than hiding behind a distant third person which depersonalises the research process" (FG 107). *Steveston* makes unusually extensive use — for a long poem — of the lyrical first-person and *Salvage*, the volume which revised *Steveston* in 1991, uses the first-person pronoun in lower-case only. Marlatt's stream of consciousness novel, *Ana Historic*, (but not *Zocalo* or *Our Lives*) also uses the conspicuous "i."⁵ Although this is only a half-convincing attempt to minimize the importance of the first-person narrator and to effect "a rebellion against the tyranny of the lyric 'I,'"⁶ it does draw attention to the personalization of the research process and "highlight the partial nature of the research."

A third "technique is to use the respondents' own words and to integrate transcript material throughout the final written version" (FG 107). According to the WGSF such heterogeneity "is invaluable both to theory and also to the empowerment of participants — all of them have something important to contribute" (FG 107). This is a method used in most sections of Marlatt's salmon text, sometimes in parentheses, "('she / knew a little bit about such things')" (S 67) and sometimes to open whole sections: "'Seems like, with men around, you're always at the stove'" and "'I think the fish like their water clean too'" (S 72, 76). Often, however, as in the following example from "Or there is love," interview quotations are used mid-paragraph to reinforce the descriptive claims of the stanza:

But the place itself, mapt out, a web, was grass:
tall, bent grass swaying heavy with seed. Cottonwood whose
seeds make a web in the wind. "It was a wild place — where foxes

might live," this marsh persistent bending windswept lines of force, current, men drag their nets thru to recover (as if they could) wealth (*S* 85-86)

In addition to the expected theorization of "place," we again experience what the WGSG termed "the empowerment of participants" through Marlatt's intertextual use of an original quotation. By introducing the voice of a female interviewee throughout "Or there is love" with interjections on the wildness/isolation of the place, Marlatt's own unseasoned representation of the Steveston environment is counter-weighted by the register of lived experience. Since this particular section of *Steveston* is the most explicit in linking substantive issues of place, gender, housing and power ("house" and "place" used sixteen times in two pages), a further example of the gender-specific participatory intertext might prove useful. The following quotation shows the high level of conceptual connectivity between the physical properties of the fields, ditches, river and sea and the town Steveston, a place in all senses "At the end of the road":

Unseen, how lines run
from place to place, How driving from town she follows the water's
push, the fields, drained by ditch to river to, the sea at,
where she lives . . . 'At the end of the road,' she says
Steveston is. At the mouth, where the river runs under, in, to the
immanence of things.

To live in a place. Immanent. In
place. Yet to feel at sea. (*S* 85)

Apart from the three examples given of acknowledgement of contributors, pronoun personalization and quotation empowerment, a fourth and final challenge to the conventions of phallogocentric methodology relates to the WGSG's category of "ways of writing" discussed above. This point was originally raised in a journal article for *The Professional Geographer* by M. Gilbert in 1994. It has a surprisingly marked bearing on Marlatt's choropoetic methods in *Steveston*:

Gilbert (1994) discusses some of the techniques that have been used to equalize the power relations between the researcher and the researched with respect to the final written product. One is to present any conflicts between the researcher and the research community in the final version. . . . Such collaborative ways of writing are not, however, without problems (*FG* 108)

Part of the feminist methodology in geographical fieldwork is "to equalize the power relations between researcher and the research community" and it is thus desirable "to present any conflicts between the researcher and the research community in the final version." From this we learn a great deal about some of the key conflicts in Marlatt's text, though *Steveston* is never quite available to us in a "final version." Two instances of exactly this type of conflict are exposed in the fieldwork situations below; the "Charlie" episode comes from "End of Cannery Channel" (part 9) while "sexual obsession" belongs to the appropriately titled "Work" (part 11). Notice also the further use of participatory quotation:

'Hot day huh? You want something to drink? (The others laugh.)
You wanna beer? We give you beer & maybe you dance for us eh?
Charlie get her a drink."

.....

I'm clearly a woman on their float. Too weak to lift the pole,
old enough to have tastes — 'you know what I mean?' He eyes me
across the rift of language, race, & sex. Should I go?
("End of Cannery Channel," S 60)

Who will insist (so are you married? no? how's this?
patting my crotch) my presence haunts the dock,

.....

Vision. Seen by them
as sexual obsession?

.....

But still, his hand pushing
down there, the teasing smile, 'Next time I fish West Coast I take you
with me eh?' that persists, that isn't meant to tease but to imply ...
(S 65)

In her deliberate inclusion of evidence that stresses "the rift of language, race, and sex" and by her refusal to edit out such moments of conflict in her research, Marlatt achieves more than merely breaking down the barriers between researcher and the research community, insider and outsider. Read like this, *Steveston* can be understood as a "geography of fear," a concept which reaches beyond the confines of purely methodological issues, and will be reintroduced under "practice" shortly.

To summarize, *Steveston Recollected* (the 1975 prose transcription

of the oral history interviews) makes no epistemological challenge to traditional geographical knowledges. *Steveston* (1974, 1984), however, the contemporary long poem, challenges conventional expectations by reversing the original gender prejudice, recasting the definition of field work, re-evaluating the quality of data deemed serviceable and refusing outright to close the project. Both prose and poetic versions are equally chorological but the latter is a feminist chorology.

Apart from the obviously collaborative and qualitative leanings of *Steveston*, Marlatt's methodological contestation of phallogentric geographies can be summarized in four ways relating to her "way of writing": acknowledgement of the voices within the final text seeking a more collective responsibility; avoidance of third-person pronouns to avoid depersonalization; direct inclusion of respondents' own words to signal participation; and the built-in use of conflict situations to remove barriers between researcher and researched. Taken together, these strategies can be said to pose a threat to the positivist, essentialist and quantitative methods more usually applied in the field.

Although it is sometimes necessary to group certain aspects of process together such as epistemology, methodology and practice, we need to recognize that such a grouping too easily creates the illusion of indivisibility. This is especially the case when dealing in textual examples which appear so concretely fixed to the page in their neatly-boxed classifications. The truth of the matter is rather messier than it appears. For the long poem in particular which deals so completely in willed disunity and interpellation at every level, it is easier to underline this same messiness rather than to sweep it under the carpet of conventional versification. Thus elements which are about to be discussed under "practice" may well have methodological and even epistemological bonds while the forerunning methods and knowledges will almost certainly resurface in unusually hands-on contexts. From the reader's point of view, the inevitability of this dissemination can more profitably be seen as a celebration of the chaotic social integration which the process poem reconstructs from the outside world.

Practice

Apart from challenging patriarchal representations of place in terms of epistemology and methodology, *Steveston* rewrites place through the same

strategic practices used by feminist geographers: it provides a collective testimony to women's experience of place; it actively journals the everyday place-life, lifecourses and life histories of place, as perceived diaristically by women; it recognizes and blurs the placial boundaries between researcher and researched, outsider and insider; it reclaims both the place of work and the workplace for women (division of labour) and relates this to workshop security; it foregrounds the plight of internally and ethnically displaced female refugees and indicates a geography of fear; it makes specific place-comparisons between traditional and non-traditional gender roles; it provides a critique of the "so-called man-made built environment"; and it re-evaluates the domesticity of the home-place by reclaiming the formal side of the formal/informal gender dichotomy. In addition, *Steveston* can be said to enact the liminality, process and nature of place through both implicit and explicit metaphorization of the sexualized body. All these strategies are necessarily chorological since they accomplish their goal by stressing the social materiality of the regional environment without being blind to global, chronological, or spatial integration. Neither are they insouciant of masculinity and gender difference — masculinities in the poem are etymologically decentered and destabilized by the performative language of the text. These aspects of Marlatt's poem are less easily traced than those of method and episteme and explore the finer details of *Steveston's* choropoetic practice.

Testimony, Witness, Evidence

Testimony and the whole concept of bearing witness to people and place is a strategy which Marlatt herself openly acknowledges. In an interview with George Bowering she states unequivocally, "I take it that a writer's job is to continue to give accurate witness of what's happening."⁷ *Steveston*, as a text which collects evidence through the personal testimony of the town's residents, is clearly a part of this process, and even the language of testifying creeps into the lexis of the poem. In "Slave of the canneries" for example, "the four / walls testify to" the poverty and degradation of the Japanese immigrant workers; these workers "shed a / mass of memoirs that evidence their real estate" (S 68); and in "Steveston, B.C." we are asked to "witness these / gapped monument pilings, pile stumps of ghostly canneries" (S 89). Not content with the aural witness of living participants, *Steveston* also includes

many notices that bear silent witness to the place-world. In common with the five previous long poems discussed, such "found"⁸ notices are usually prohibitive or deictic, but they always give evidence of place:

In Memoriam
Steveston Post Office
Doors closed
May 13th 1972 (S 54)

The collective result of including so much testimonial material — by those interviewed, by Marlatt herself and by found notices — locates us in the specifically autobiographical experience of place associated with humanistic geography. As a practice in itself, moreover, such extensive use of the personal testimony goes further than this and establishes *Steveston* as a feminist geography. By including eight guest testimonials in their own work, feminist geographers Nicky Gregson and Gillian Rose have explored historical reasons for the subversive power of the personal testimony in some detail (FG 13-48). Principal among these are the high levels of unwelcome personality and felt experience which testimonies allow, along with an autobiographical emphasis frowned upon by many male geographers:

if we are to challenge the dispassionate, disembodied, distant, masculine voice and to contest the ways in which this marginalises and trivialises the personal as feminine, then we have to both expose the former and reclaim the latter, for writing personally is central to notions of situated knowledge and to fully contextual versions of writing history. (FG 24)

Everyday Life, Life History, Lifecourse

In supporting the use of the colloquial testimony above as a feminist geographical practice, the phrase "mass of memoirs" was encountered and this anticipates a further feminist technique. The practice of using the long poem as a journal, diary or memoir is particularly widespread in Canada and this generic approach also forms the basis of much criticism.⁹ However, *Steveston* is unlike many long poems in this respect, for instead of dating individual diary entries, it continually lays emphasis upon the routine activity and the everyday life of women-in-place without formally signalling time's passage. Feminist geographers like Katz and Monk, Momsen and Kinaird and Doreen Massey¹⁰ have paid particular

attention to these studies of "lifecourse differences" and the way men and women behave in relation to their situated-environment throughout their lives. Such readings, like Marlatt's poetic representation of Steveston, set out to recognize the "diversity and commonalities of women's experiences across the lifecourse, and testify to the importance of context (of space and place) in shaping how women experience the lifecourse" (FG 71). Apart from being more sensitive to same-gender differences in the experience of place in the same location, what feminist geographers

are attempting to do . . . is to use the concept of the lifecourse to challenge the essentialism inherent in feminism's (and feminist geographers') traditional emphasis on women in the childrearing years and the consequent (inadvertent) portrayal of these years as *the* defining experience common to all women. (FG 71)

It is for this reason that Marlatt is determined in *Steveston* to demonstrate that "There's a dailiness these lives revolve around" (S 52) and why "day after day" the "*Sea Trek, Elma K [and] Miss Nikko 70*" await the right conditions to put to sea (S 56). It is the whole lifecourse experience of place that the "Men. & Women" (S 53) of Steveston face from youth to old age which the text must capture, more than the "screwing / behind their door" or "the fishy / odour of cunt" (S 53). Through poetic condensation and spacing of the long line on the page, the long poem is able to contain the whole felt experience of a life-time's engagement with place. The unceasing and irresistible progress of place through time is also seen in the lifecourse of the Fraser itself, "a river [that] pours, uncalled for, unending" through "an endless waste" where "water swills, / endlessly out of itself to the mouth" of the Pacific rim (S 43-44). *Steveston* is "the life-long poem"¹¹ — the poem as long as a life.

The endless routine flow of both river and resident compiles a feminist regional geography through the lifecourse study of both animate and inanimate place. This chorology is guided throughout by the text's explicit attention to gender difference, not only between masculinities and femininities but between different individual men and women. By focusing on daily work, housing, conversations and the sea, Marlatt de-emphasises "the traditional emphasis on women in the childrearing years," children who, as it happens, are conspicuously absent in the poem.

Gender, Work, Workplace

If the use of collective testimony (witness) and the journaling of everyday commonalities (lifecourse) are important elements of practice in *Steveston's* representation of place, so too is the way Marlatt reclaims the workplace for women. This is not some workerist or idealistic portrayal of the kind associated with social realism, nor does any political argument for the cannery as a female workshop collective come across; the workplace in *Steveston* is not a particularly secure environment and fulfils no apparent social function. For instance there is no evidence that the workshops of B.C. Packers can be considered as extensions of the domestic domain, still less that, as in Mexico, "for young women, employment in a workshop can be considered as providing protection within a surrogate family until marriage" (FG 145). On the other hand, it is precisely the all-pervasive imagery of women at work in *Steveston* that is largely responsible for our being able to read it as a feminist chorology.

The gender implications of the workplace — and some practices to be on the lookout for — are neatly summarized below by the WGSF. In working with the following categories, however, it is needful to think of the cannery workplace as not just the material place of work on its watery stilts in "Cannery Channel," but also as Marlatt's larger symbolic representation of the place of work for women in society:

- Feminists have reclaimed women's contribution to both formal and informal work.
- Feminists have stressed the significance of home, the undervalued side of the home-work dichotomy, and the different meanings which are inscribed in this site.
- Feminists have undermined the home-work binary by showing that the boundaries drawn between home and work are blurred.
- Feminists have shown how workspaces are frequently spaces in which gender identities are negotiated, resisted and changed; where new and old, dominant and resistant, forms of femininity may be found alongside one another. (FG 126)

Even after a cursory glance at *Steveston*, the power of the above statements as part of a gender-focused chorological practice is obvious. Consider the following passage from "Finn Road" in the light of the third bullet point above, that "the boundaries between home and work are blurred":

It's her day off. She went to town to pay the bills, 'somebody's got to look after that.' But tomorrow she'll be up when the tide's full, at 3 or 4 in the morning, down to Finn Slough where her boat's moored. Been out fishing for 20 years now. And walks, from counter to stove, with a roll. (S 72)

So intertwined are the subject's work at home and work at sea that she "walks, from counter to stove, with a / roll." At sea, then, in both kitchen and boat (note "her boat"), just a few yards of place, Finn Slough, becomes the familiar everyday nexus of both her domestic and working lifecourse. The boundaries between the "home-work binary" have been undermined "for 20 years now." Moreover, the fact that "She / went to town to pay the bills" — another participatory testimony ("somebody's got to look after that") — serves to demonstrate and personalize an economic task which would conventionally be thought of as a masculine role. This returns us to bullet-point one, that "feminists have reclaimed women's contribution to both formal and informal work."

The second example, taken from "Steveston as you find it" confirms that "workspaces are frequently spaces in which gender identities are negotiated, resisted and changed; where new and old, dominant and resistant, forms of femininity may be found alongside one another":

TOILETS. & here they flood in together, giggling, rummaging thru bags, eating grapes, girlish even ("I've worked here 20 years") under severe green kerchief like Italian peasants, except that they are mostly Japanese, plunked under a delicate mobile of Japanese ribbon fish in their gumboots & socks. Break, from routine, with the ease of tired bodies laughing, for what? "It's life." *Their* life? (S 52)

There is another water metaphor for the female gender, "flood," the gendered *mise en scène* of the women's cue for the "TOILETS" and clearly a general enactment of stereotypical femininity according to cultural mythology: the "giggling" of chat and gossip, "bags" stuffed with incidentals, "girlish" behaviour and yet more lifecourse testimonial material, "I've worked here 20 years." This is an ideal arena in which for gender identities to be "negotiated, resisted and changed"; a place where "new and old, dominant and resistant, forms of femininity may be found alongside one another." But is Marlatt not simply reconfirming gender stereotypes with such a presentation of women on their daily "[b]reak, from routine" in the workplace? No — because in this case the actual presence of women on the factory floor confirms an expansion of formal

waged work in resource towns, represents same-sex solidarity in the absence of working men, and maintains a "greater sense of collectivity with their companions" (*FG* 145). These are chartered practices in the feminist re-evaluation of gender roles in the workplace.

The text of *Steveston* could also be subjected to a complete analysis of the "spatial division of labour" at work in the town: the poem is dominated by passages which juxtapose the everyday working movements of both sexes. Indeed, it was principally through such analyses of the spatial division of labour that feminist geographical practices first came to challenge the dominant mode of urban geographical knowledge.¹² It is no coincidence that the beginnings of this new type of feminist regional geography date to the same time as the Steveston Oral History Project. The initial call for gender research into unequal development between the Canadian provinces and into paid labour inequalities between the sexes had been made as early as 1970 by the Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada:

1. Women, like men, spend a substantial portion of their lives in the production and consumption of goods and services, and there is no reason to believe that their activities are any less essential to the economy than those of men. Nonetheless, there is great confusion about the contribution of women in the economic sphere,¹³
(Florence Bird, et al.)

Thirty years on, the language of such reports seems woefully outdated but if there was a perceived confusion about "the contribution of women" in society at large, there is no question of "confusion" about the microeconomics of female productivity in Marlatt's long poem:

She runs in the

throat of time, voicing the very swifts & shallows of that river, urging, in the dash of it, enough to keep up, to live on. When nets are up 50%, fuel's up, & the packers taking chum salmon, undressed, at 20 cents a pound, 'the same they sell in the stores dressed at \$1.20, while they're selling the roe they don't even pay us for at \$2.20 a pound, clear profit' . . . (*S* 75)

Since recognition of economic, documentary or informational data is the stock-in-trade of the process poem, the fisherwoman's canny deconstruction of Imperial Packers' profit margins fits snugly into *Steveston's* worldly scheme of things. Again voice, specialist lexis ('chum salmon, undressed') and the commonalities of everyday life work together

to connect gender to labour and the processes of regional production.

Masculinity, Metaphor, Place

The descriptions of work and the workplace are not confined to women only, however, and Steveston's male population is not omitted as an object of behavioural research into place. Evaluations of traditional, as well as non-traditional gender roles are made in the poem and these are mapped without favouritism alongside more vividly progressive sections. The principal earner in "Work" is happier to be out of the house in his boat, "a tight and familiar space that's known" than to be subjugated to the domestic control of "his wife's domain":

Despite a house furnished with cannery pay, his wife's domain. But his, at sea a tight & familiar space that's known, the way the poles are set, how well she handles given uncertain weather; given fuel, a reliable engine, she'd travel to Japan and back. (S 64-65)

The fisherman has control over this working environment, and it is his speech we hear in gendering the boat as "she." His ability to master and control at least one feminine environment in "uncertain weather" gratifies his male ego by repressing the domestic emasculation suffered in "his wife's domain." In the same way that this cannery employee has mastered and controlled his feminized workplace, the sons of the higher social classes in Steveston seek to enter, dominate and smash a second symbolic genderscape. The text of "Low Tide. A beached vessel" which describes the enthusiastic vandalism of a grounded light trawler, symbolizes the erotic rape of the working class in Steveston by the "orders of power" — those "of hoarded wealth." Caught in the act, the boys go "Back to the joyous act of 'making' her, their secret catch" (S 58). The Freudian significance of gang violence upon the doors of a beached vessel with a metal pipe is still related to place:¹⁴

Hey you guys, is there a metal pipe in there? If you find a metal pipe I could smash every door in the place.

The place? These kids, who live by the sea & know nothing of boats. But orders, orders of power, of hoarded wealth. (S 57)

Salvaging Steveston: The Geography of Fear

With the publication of the new volume of poems, *Salvage*, in 1991, adding a further six parts to *Steveston* by redrafting earlier "failed" poems of the 1970s, Marlatt's choropoetic strategy becomes more explicitly feminist. This was an intentional move to shift the whole Steveston project towards a more radical (and theoretical) representation of place. According to the author's foreword, it signals "a second 'take' based on my feminist reading and thought of the late eighties and re-read in that light" (SA 9). The edginess, liminality and anti-patriarchal thrust of the new poems, combined with the process of "salvaging" female language from past documents, is a practice comparable with that of Susan Howe:

These are littoral poems, shoreline poems — and by extension the whole book — written on that edge where a feminist consciousness floods the structures of patriarchal thought. They began as a project to salvage what i thought of as 'failed' poems. But the entire book attempts to salvage the wreckage of language so freighted with phallogocentric values it must be subverted and re-shaped, as Virginia Woolf said of the sentence, for a woman's use.
(SA 9-10)

So long as the text of "Litter, wreckage, salvage" reinforces these stated intentions, the current argument that the contemporary long poem is not just a chorology, but a chorology which confronts ideological issues of gender and place, is also strengthened. The new texts of *Salvage* are particularly significant in returning to the idea of a "geography of fear." Encountered in discussion of Marlatt's methodological use of conflict situations, above, the recognition of fearful places — places perceived as dangerous due to the threat of male violence — becomes a recurrent theme in these rescued texts:

fear of the marketplace, of going outdoors, fear of public places, crowds, of leaving home. "the phobia of every day." she trembles like a leaf. has jelly legs. her stomach is a churn, fear stirring her into separate parts: the whip of the superego, the cowering ego, lack of will.

imagine opening your front door and standing on the step. how strong is your fear? relax, take a deep breath. imagine walking down the path to your gate. how strong is your fear now? relax. imagine opening the gate . . .

i want to imagine being in my element, she said.
("Litter, wreckage, salvage" ii: SA 17)

Various factors make section two more than just an agoraphobic's perception of the local environment. Firstly, the female subject is unable to discover the "element" for her gender because of the threats imposed by social forces allied to places outside the home. The actual naming of "her element" has to wait until section six of "Litter. wreckage. salvage" which answers the enigma "what attaches her to the world?" (SA 16) by proposing a "blurring [of] the boundary." Marlatt takes care to insist that "it's not that she wants to blur difference, to pretend that out is / in" but that in successfully passing through the gate into the street "she's past his point of view as cen- / tral (hook/lure) to a real she eludes" (SA 23). Female subjectivity can elude that threatening patriarchal reality constructed in certain places by the male gaze. Now "free, she multiplies herself in any woman" (SA 23) and takes "the measure of their plural depth" (SA 23). The fish has found its cultural environment, its elemental place in the world.

Secondly, contextual explanations of section two are provided in the adjacent sections of the poem:

If *the woman is within*, if that's her place as they have always said, can she expect her walls not to be broken open suddenly: Flood, Lightning, Nuclear Light — what attaches her to the world?

("Litter. wreckage. salvage" i: SA 16)

and the opening of section three:

I want to walk down the street as if I had the right to be there, as if it were not their construction site and stoop, slipping the net of their casting eyes, slipping the net of their market price. The street belongs to the men who live *outside*, whose small acts accrete (concrete) unspoken claim, a territory that cannot be trespassed except you hurry through, for loitering indicates a desire to be caught,

or caught already, prostitute, destitute, alcoholic, the street is where you swim for smaller fish

("Litter, wreckage. salvage" iii: SA 18)

As indicated by these quotations, the geographies of fear explored by Marlatt in these late additions to the earlier version of *Steveston* are extensive. There is no secure place in the locality where the female

subject feels safe enough to walk on her own: both specific places, "their construction site and stoop" and general spaces—"The street" prescribe "a territory that cannot be tres- / passed." Such places all "belong[s] to the men who live *outside*" (original emphasis). Those women who do fall into the trap of stopping are apparently indicating a desire to be hooked on the metaphorical fishing line; those caught long ago are the "prostitute, destitute [and] alcoholic."

Such retrospective re-gendering of *Steveston* through place and point of view is nothing exceptional — just another long poem including regional and phenomenological information on the local; but in what sense is this practice an expressly feminist geography, a "geography of women's fear"? Again it is necessary to consult recent movements in theoretical feminist geography: in the chapter "How do feminist geographers work with gender" the WSGS open up Gill Valentine's eponymous article "The geography of women's fear":

the author focuses on women's fear of male violence and their perception and use of public space. Various types of public space are highlighted as perceived by women to be 'dangerous places' at 'dangerous times', notably open spaces (for example, parks woodland, waste ground, canals, rivers and countryside) and closed spaces (for instance, subways, multistorey car parks, and alleyways). . . .All women are argued to be fearful of male violence, to associate this with certain types of public space and to inhibit their use of space accordingly. (FG 73)

Here again a passage of detailed feminist geography could be a conference paper on *Steveston* itself. Even the named environments which dominate *Steveston* are held up as prime examples of "'dangerous places'": the "waste ground, canals, rivers." These are important readings of the urban landscape not because they draw particular attention to place, but because gender is the primary concern. This type of gendered chorological reading has interesting similarities with some of the practices outlined in analysis of Derek Walcott's use of landscape (chapter 2). As with *Another Life*, both Jay Appleton's analysis of "habitats of prospect and refuge" and Yi-Fu Tuan's "landscapes of fear" promise much for future approaches to feminist urban geographies.¹⁵

Bodily Performances of Gendered Place

The final practice which relates to feminist geographies in Marlatt's long

poem can also be demonstrated by the rewritten texts of *Salvage*. There is evidence to suggest that the difficulty of writing a geography through the body, an *écriture féminine* of place, is what Marlatt is seeking to achieve in *Steveston*. Pamela Banting, Christina Cole and Frank Davey have all written extensively on Marlatt's practice of embodying place,¹⁶ whilst feminist geographers have begun looking at the way in which bodily "performances themselves constitute spaces and places":

feminist geographers wish to produce feminist geographies which break away from the notion of biological natural sex, male and female sexed bodies, and there seems little doubt that their interests and concerns will focus increasingly on embodied performance; on bodily display; and on the acting out of multiple, fluid sexual identities. . . . Instead of understanding space and place as a pre-existing location in which performances take place, they argue that performances themselves constitute spaces and places in ways which are at once material and cultural.

(FG 196)

Many passages from Marlatt's long poem have already been used which show that it is the gender performances of the women involved in the text that constitute Steveston as a place and not vice-versa. The town Steveston gains its materiality as a place not only through the layout of housing, concrete and dykes, but through the gendered perception and performance of male and female bodies-in-place. The female body is the ultimate performative resource in the cultural construction of this resource town. Whereas the first 'take' of *Steveston* (Talonbooks, 1974) included a huge amount of gender performance in the bodily construction of place (home/work; safety/fear), however, *Salvage* deconstructs the more metaphorical figuration of the earlier poem in recognition of the fact that this strategy has not worked. The very process of performative metaphorization has merely reinforced the power of phallogocentrism without undoing or dis-placing the male language of place. The new poem "River run" strongly suggests that in the first edition Marlatt thought herself guilty of overusing traditional natural metaphors (river, flood, tides, sea) as well as traditional man-made metaphors (machinery, boats, channels, ditches) as the female embodiment of place. By being explicitly political and by recognizing that the construction of place has shifted from place as sexual metaphor to place as gender performance, "River run" of the 1990s salvages *Steveston* of the 1970s with the forceful retraction, "she is not a river. she is not a boat":

her they said and she, speaking of the
boats they were married to.

.....

at high tide only,
high and buoyed by the tide "she" crests on through . . .

she is not a river. she is not a boat.

*what's at issue here is whether women can enter the culture
AS women.*

finding a way to write her in, her and her, write she, write
suck and rush, high and daring to be, attaches her body to
words where they stick to her licking at old holes, tongue
lashings, lashings of rain as at no one. writing their all,
splashing around in the muck, allure of the current she
rides their rushing out, her and the words all/uvial.

("River run": SA 25)

Male speech which continues to polarize female subjectivity either
in objects that are finitely controllable or in nature that is infinitely wild
is suddenly challenged by a woman's voice which "attaches her body to
words" to find out "*whether women can enter the culture / AS women.*"
Female writing floods out over the symbolically male barriers which had
formerly contained the river ("dammed 'er up") and as the newly
liberated words themselves rush towards the mouth of the sea "writing
their all" the multiply-feminine gender identities represented by a
universal everywoman ("she") ride out alongside. A joint transfiguration
of body and word has occurred, the words no longer geologically
"alluvial" as they had been in the speech of men, but "all/uvial," literally
"clustered together like grapes." Scientific, phallic singularity has been
washed away by a fluid subjective collectivity; language has been
embodied in "this amphibious place, / half earth half water, half river
half sea" (S 73).

It has become popular in recent studies to follow discussion of
bodily geographies with consideration of the geographical imaginary.
Whether or not this reflects some new attempt to ally the material with
the utopian in our definition of the local remains to be seen, but in the
context of choropoetics there is little reason to alter the normal order of
proceedings. The relation of the material body to the cultural
environment via the geographical imagination will be seen in the changing
definitions of the term in the examples used.

6.4 The Chorological Imagination

In this section I want to suggest that the contemporary long poem makes use of a "chorological imagination." Although similarities will be seen to extend beyond mere scale, for the time being this term is introduced as the regional equivalent of the widely-used "geographical imagination." Since even the latter may need some introduction — especially in relation to the long poem — let me borrow David Harvey's influential definition of 1973:

[the geographical imagination] enables . . . individual[s] to recognize the role of space and place in [their] own biograph[ies], to relate the spaces [they] see around [them], and to recognize how transactions between individuals and organizations are affected by the space that separates them . . . to judge the relevance of events in other places . . . to fashion and use space creatively, and to appreciate the meaning of the spatial forms created by others. (David Harvey)¹⁷

Derek Gregory reminds us that Harvey was inspired to invent the term "geographical imagination" in response to what Mills (1959) had called the "sociological imagination"; the latter, in turn, had been decided upon in an attempt to reunite history with biography "and the relations between the two in society." The geographical imagination, therefore, brings together ideas about place, space, biography, history and society in an interactive arena where narratives of placial and spatial relationships are continually performed. In recent years the explosion in textual theory has not forgotten the term's heritage but has nudged it in three further directions: as an imagined political community (Benedict Anderson), as a critical human geography (Derek Gregory) and as a grounded feminist project (Gillian Rose; the WGSG).¹⁸ Despite (or precisely because of) the huge influence of Benedict Anderson's "imagined communities" on the geographical imagination, I only want to give examples of the second and third "nudges" here, filling in some essential background thinking:

The task of a critical human geography — of a geographical imagination — is, I suggest to unfold that utopian gesture and replace it with another: one that recognizes the *corporeality of vision* and reaches out, *from one body to another*, not in a mood of arrogance, aggression and conquest, but in a spirit of humility, understanding and care. (Derek Gregory)¹⁹

. . . the embodiedness of imagined geographies is not specified carefully enough

Several feminist geographers have therefore called for 'imagined geographies' to be understood not simply as imagined, not simply as cultural, but also as materially grounded . . . they insist that such imaginings always take place through a highly differentiated set of power relations, and that feminists should consider the material context of these when engaging with imagined geographies. (WGSF, *FG* 198)

The geographical imagination, then, has a rich and varied history as a term, originally formulated in response to sociology and gradually rewritten by discursive collisions with anthropology, cultural theory and feminism. As the above passages show, however, bodily matters are never far from view. Recently somatic issues have even been leading the charge in reactionary outbursts which question "the claim that everything is a cultural construction, that everything is an effect of representation" (*FG* 197).

By stating that *Steveston*, for example, is both utilizing and utilized by the chorological imagination, I am not rejecting the attributes of the full-scale geographical imagination, but rather emphasising the local side of the local/global dialectic. The focus on region-specific performances of place, in terms of both gender and culture, deliberately underlines the materiality of these situated knowledges by grounding them in a local (but not "provincial") chorophyle. As Derek Gregory reminds us, so long as the existence of other situated knowledges on place and space is fully recognized, that is, other chorological imaginations, the danger of adopting a neo-colonial superiority can be avoided. Any individual vision of the "'global' is not the 'universal', in other words, but is itself a situated question."²⁰

From Marlatt's opening title onwards, "Imagine: a town" which tells us to "Imagine a town running / (smoothly?" (*S* 43) we enter the chorological imagination. Like the ruins of the "Japanese Fisherman's Hospital (1858-1942)" it soon becomes "this ghostly place we have (somehow) entered" (*S* 82) a place for "dreaming of the source of things" (*S* 86). This is a miasmal, diasporal imaginary, a region half coping, half failing to support first- and second-generation, Japanese-Canadian refugees. The imagery of "Unpaid work," the very last part of *Steveston* in its most recent form, leaves two unnameable women still lost in the "fog on the edge of its lifting abandon" (*SA* 34). The reader is stuck in

the chorological imagination of a "rain osmotic world" in "a sort of pearlgrey nothing." The long poem has again "returned to an absurd Beckettian *lieu vague*, an imaginary geography of fear, a place where even punctuation dissolves away:

cloud so low a sort of pearlgrey nothing houses across the
road silhouette against this no-seam settling everywhere
darker imperceptibly late the rain osmotic world a sort of
sponge taking it in seeping out they sit two women in a
darkening room (SA 34)

The chorological imagination is activated in *Steveston* through a merging of material (physical, real) and cultural (reported, experienced) representations of place. If, by the end of such a process poem, readers have been successful in creating a regional, imaginative geography of the place through the physical and cultural maps of meaning provided, the following questions arise: (1) what sort of experience is it that the contemporary long poem has set in motion through its use of the chorological imagination(s); and (2) is there a future for this type of choropoetic experience?

The answer about to be proposed is not obvious, partly because it merges the fictive and the real and partly because it falls between disciplines. That said, it does have the advantage of already being underway and of already being an active part of the nineties chorological imagination. The solution is distant, but can be reached quite effectively by using a cybercritic, Andrew Gibson, as a stepping stone.

Interactive Fiction, Interactive Fact & the Interactive Long Poem

In "Interactive Fiction and Narrative Space," a recent article exploring appropriate models for narrative in the virtual environment, Andrew Gibson writes as follows:

IF [interactive fiction] puts the user in the place of the creator in one very specific way: it makes him or her choose from among a set of radiating possibilities in a manner hardly ever available to the reader of a novel. In other words, the shadow of the excluded possibility becomes part of the narrative itself. In interactive narrative, the possible always shadows the actual, as a kind of virtual space. (Andrew Gibson)²¹

Gibson has found a stylish way of putting the computer in the place once occupied by the twentieth-century long poem. It is actually the reader of the long poem who for a long time now has been able to "put the user in the place of the creator" and "choose from among a set of radiating possibilities in a manner hardly ever available to the reader of the novel." In this respect, the long poem could be seen to resemble the adventure role playing game (RPG) in which the user takes on an interactive persona to move through the cyberspace environment. Apart from the overdue move into cyberspace, however, the reasons for pressing Gibson into service are twofold: first, his point that "the shadow of the possibility becomes part of the narrative itself" relates to the chorological imagination and second, his careful use of the term "interactive fiction" requires a definition of "interactive fact." The latter is the essential move in terms of a virtual choropoetics and is the major step towards the eventual destination of GIS.

Continuing to use *Steveston* as the example, though the same goes for the previous choropoems, Marlatt's reader moves through a textual environment in which "the shadow of the possibility" of experiencing alternative events-in-place "becomes part of the narrative itself." In order to explain what he means, Gibson cites Revolution Software's state-of-the-art system, "Virtual Theatre." This new software creates a virtual environment in which various parallel dimensions (i.e. chorological imaginations) run at once. The interactive user (or reader of the long poem) is thus able to drop in on other narrative fictions in which he or she is not currently involved. The passage is quoted at length since the implications are directly relevant to the future of the long poem and because it contextualizes "what the present narrative situation is excluding." That which is excluded in Gibson's schematization must be replaced by what we have been calling the chorological imagination:

Revolution Software have developed an innovative system called Virtual Theatre in which all characters and objects continue to move about the game whether they are on-screen or not, turning up after the initial encounter in modified forms and different locations. Indeed it is even possible to watch characters carrying on their actions in 'other worlds', as it were. The user 'peeps in' through observation windows on what the present narrative situation is excluding. In fact, IF therefore effectively derealizes narrative, in containing within itself and making us immediately aware of a range of narrative alternatives which might equally become or have become the narrative itself. (Andrew Gibson)²²

Some unspoken connections should be made explicit at this point: (1) the chorological imagination can clearly function in the reconstruction of both real and virtual places, based on either factual or fictionalized data; (2) both text and hypertext support the reconstruction of regional place/space through use of this chorological imagination; (3) the future of the long poem may well be interactive and hypertextual; and (4) the "other worlds" and "excluded narratives" which the user can "peep in" on are always "*eventualized*" narratives as *events-in-place*.

All these advances are in the process of being accomplished at the present time. Interactive poetry sites are increasing in number on the world wide web (WWW), the majority of canonical long poems are available on CD-ROM (at some cost) and many academics are building silent hypertextual (HT) libraries of their chosen digital authors. Living poets are being employed as virtual poets-in-residence, residing in their own cyberspace sites, and cyberpoems are being written interactively on various international home-pages. The question is not "will the long poem become the cyber-long-poem?" — it already has — but rather, "can these virtual choropoetics be steered²³ to the expert cyber-sites they truly belong?" Two options present themselves. Either writers of long poems can "factionalize" IF or fictionalize interactive fact. In spite of initial indications to the contrary, and although it would seem to be the natural place for it, the domain of IF is actually completely ill-suited to the generic qualities of the contemporary long poem. This is because long poems trade largely in fact rather than fiction, and geo-social data as opposed to the fantastic.

Turning the problem on its head, we could ask what kind of space the ideal software package might be required to provide for the writing of a future, virtual *Steveston*, given the long poem's idiosyncrasies and generic demands. The system would need to map real locations, to condense and layer geographical data, to plot local activities and movements in space, to monitor environmental and landscape conditions and to reproduce real-world spatial relations. In addition it would need to incorporate a narrative (or anti-narrative), a focalizer (or enunciator) and an ability to be verbalized aloud. It would be required to do all this through a practical, meaningful time-frame, recognizing local/global relations and leaving room for the creative expression of a chorological imagination based on cultural differences. Finally, it would have to be recognizable as a poem via aesthetic, prosimetric or other rhythmical uses of language and, like all choropoems, would have to be able to draw

reflexive attention to the very processes by which these usages operated. On top of these basics an interesting critical engagement with substantially original material would be desirable, not to mention the personal (auto)biographical details that have recently characterized late-twentieth-century long poems. If the new millennium is to see these things accomplished, the starting point should not be Interactive Fiction, Role Playing Games, CD-ROMs, Hypertext or the World Wide Web. For the Interactive Long Poem (ILP) to become a reality, a far more suitable hardware option is already available in the form of Geographic Information Systems.

6.5 Geographical Futures: *Steveston* and GIS

Geographic information is information which can be related to specific locations on the earth (Dept. of Environment)

Geographic information systems are information systems which are based on data referenced by geographic coordinates (Curran)

Geographic information systems are here assumed to be automated systems for the handling of geographic data. (David Martin)

(GIS) Integrated computer tools for the handling, processing and analysing of geographical data. (Mike Goodchild)

with the emergence of Geographical Information Systems (GIS) at the core of a new technical geography — it seems we may no longer be gazing at the world-as-exhibition but rather traveling *through* the world-as-exhibition. (Derek Gregory)²⁴

Steveston, again standing in metonymically for the contemporary long poem, is already a non-automated GIS. It is a text for the "handling, processing and analysing of geographical data" in which "we may no longer be gazing at the world-as-exhibition but rather traveling through the world-as-exhibition." In the words of Marcos Novak, whereas once "such information [was] external to us . . . we are now within information."²⁵ What remains to be accomplished by those long poems which are destined to go digital — oral and textual forms will not disappear²⁶ — is simply the automation process itself. In order to discuss the route this particular geographical future should take through GIS, shared models, components and operations relating specifically to *Steveston* are outlined below.

ILP/GIS: Shared Models

All GIS deal in mapping four data types — points, lines, areas and surfaces — but most have a programmed handling bias towards one of two poles: *raster* or *vector* models. Although this distinction is currently dissolving as increasingly powerful systems come onto the market, it is as well to consider which of the two (in theory) might be better suited to modelling poetics.

The raster approach works by dividing the area to be studied into grids of rectangular cells: it then describes the content of each cell. Having sliced up the field into its geometric array, the raster model shows what is at every place; what kinds of things are in each cell. In effect we have already seen a version of this model in action with the scroll diffusion model and *Pythagorean Silence* (chapter 4). Mike Goodchild sums it up as follows: "Broadly, the continuous view of space embedded in the raster approach is most commonly associated with environmental and physical science applications of GIS." Given a page of a conventional long poem, the raster model will tell the reader what kind of themes, images and language is continuing or "going on" in that space. A raster model would clearly be useful for the reader of the ILP who wanted make particular decisions about what kind of digital environment to head for in the poem; a part of *Steveston* that deals in the workplace ("Steveston as you find it"), a part that describes housing ("Or there is love") or a part with six lines of text in it ("Response"). For issues relating to content and containment, the raster model will guide interactive readers to the kind of detailed environment they are looking for in the ILP.

Knowing what is in a specific place in the ILP, however, would not give the reader an overall picture or map of where that part fitted into the overall landscape of the poem: for this type of approach, we need the vector model. Vector-based GIS show the distribution data of a number of discrete objects (rivers, shorelines, roads, dykes, boats, dams, sea levels in the case of *Steveston*) often in the form of a map. Whereas the raster data showed what each part of the poem contained, the vector approach shows "where everything is at" in relation to the total regional landscape. A GIS which was more powerfully programmed in vector capabilities would enable the interactive reader to see the overall placial and spatial relations of the ILP: a digital representation of the geographical area of the poem rather than a conventional analog (paper)

map. Using the vector model, interactive readers could wend their way through all twenty-eight parts of the current "Steveston,"²⁷ seeing for themselves what Marlatt's seagull saw:

Put yourself inside the head of a bird as he's flying down a channel of water. Okay. Now the image would be what you see if you're outside on the bank looking up at him. That's not what I'm interested in. I'm interested in getting you inside his head in flight. And everything's moving. There is still no reference point because he's in flight, you're in flight. Whoever's reading.²⁸

It becomes clear from the above considerations that neither the raster nor vector approaches are in any way dispensable. For the production of even a modest ILP, both models would need to be resident in the same software. At the other end of the scale the utilization of the full chorological power of a combined raster-vector GIS could result in a very long poem indeed. In many ways the first GIS ILP has already been deployed: the digital texts of the Gulf War of 1990-91, "the first full-scale GIS war,"²⁹ which were made so readily available by CNN, can be read chorologically as a contemporary long poem. Again it is easier to fictionalize interactive fact than to factualize IF and once more postmodern subjectivity finds itself "inside information." As the gap between real and virtual space continues to narrow, there could be no more ancient subject matter for the future long poem than epic virtual wars.

Returning to the supposedly securer imaginary provided by the PC or small network computer typical of university geography departments, however, there is still a hardware wish-list to be fulfilled before *Steveston* can go live as an ILP. These include: a fast modem/server for online long-line access to the GIS environment; a voice synthesizer for the voiced testimonial material (aural history interviews); a digital video camera (or cameras) for positioning in the cannery channels in Steveston, British Columbia; and preferably some form of artificial intelligence programme to update the virtual reality of the ILP *Steveston* as it happens. Apart from the latter which would enable the system to perform "what the present narrative situation is excluding" as per Revolution Software, the rest of the list is currently available. To be more ambitious than this would run into issues of boundary surveillance, national security and remote-sensing via satellite uplink — arguably beyond the remit of the long poem, though very much part of the current "tale of the tribe."

ILP/GIS: Shared Components

In his widely read coursebook discussing the socioeconomic applications of GIS, David Martin identifies four components essential to the everyday performance of GIS. My argument here is that *Steveston* includes the same specific components and for that reason a dedicated GIS "cyberplace" would be preferable for an ILP to the quick solution, multi-media cyberspace. Whereas multi-media offers brief and superficial access to info-bites from a variety of different virtual spaces, GIS offers the possibility of creating a local and substantial cyberplace evolving over a far longer period of time. Shortened definitions of the components identified by Martin are used here for ease of comparison:

1 *Collection, input and correction* are the operations concerned with receiving data into the system, including manual digitizing, scanning, keyboard entry of attribute information, and online retrieval from other database systems. . . .

2 *Storage and retrieval mechanisms* this database storage may be physically remote from the rest of the system, and may meet the requirements for other, non-geographic database systems. This module includes the software structures used to organize spatial data into models of geographic reality

3 *Manipulation and analysis*These are the core of a GIS, and are the features that distinguish GIS from CAC. A library of data-processing algorithms is available for the transformation of spatial data, and the results of these manipulations may be added to the digital database and incorporated in new visual maps. . . .

4 *Output and reporting* involves the export of data from the system in computer- or human-readable formThe techniques involved here include many of those of conventional cartography, which seeks to maximize the amount of information communicated from the map maker to the map reader. (David Martin)³⁰

Taken in the order above, *Steveston* too is a textual site that is the result of extensive "collection, input and correction": Marlatt as pedestrian poet³¹ physically goes out into Steveston to amass geographical data; the data, documentary evidence,³² aural interviews, signage and "retrieval from other database systems" is then input into the text; finally the material is edited, condensed and corrected. In addition we should note Martin's use of the word "attribute." This is a specialist usage in GIS since the systems recognize data as either that of spatial analysis or "attribute data": whereas the first is distribution-

forming, quantitative information, the second is qualitative, defining the (possibly human) characteristics of a location. In sum, a three-in-one procedure, this is the initial component and material start not just of *Steveston* but of many procedural choropoems.

The key significance of the versatile "storage and retrieval" component is undoubtedly that this module "may meet the database requirements of other, non-geographic" systems. This not only bodes well for the conversion of the long poem to the ILP through GIS, but again mirrors the processes already at work in *Steveston*. Just as GIS can be adapted through its data retrieval software to accept programming from non-geographic databases (literature, poetics), *Steveston* adapts itself to information from non-geographic sources as well (primarily gender studies and history). Neither Brathwaite's *Second New World Trilogy*, nor Walcott's *Another Life*, nor Dorn's *Gunslinger* stored purely geographical (chorological) information: colonialism, autobiography and American politics played significant data roles respectively. Poetic software structures, designed to store and retrieve spatial data in alternative ways to those currently used, may make a significant impact on the retrieval programming of other research areas.

"Manipulation and analysis" of the data collected and stored is the third component common to both GIS and *Steveston*. Roughly equivalent to the psychological function performed by the brain in cognitive and mental mapping, the creation of "new visual maps" clearly plays a significant role in GIS and choropoetics. Just as the computer system must be able to transform the spatial and attributive data into a format suitable for analysis, the long poem must organize or partition its material into a generically recognizable format for interpretation. However, mapping the data in order to analyse it is not in itself absolutely necessary to either GIS or *Steveston*. In fact those facilities which enable both computer and long poem to bypass the mapping element are precisely "the features which distinguish GIS from CAC" (Computer Aided Cartography). It is not so essential for the textual arrangement (sectioning, paragraphing, format) of *Steveston* to create a *bona fide* realistic mental map of Steveston the town, as it is to juxtapose and insert levels of analysable information on place in a more Boolean mode. If the reader of the long poem was simply setting out to recreate a cartography of the text, CAC would be the single effective answer to displaying the virtual environment. GIS, however, manipulates data without having to map the region first. As David Martin insists, "there

may be applications in which the visual image is not necessary, as the answer to a question may be derived directly from the digital database."³³ As we have already seen, the "direct" answers literary criticism or cultural theory may be seeking from *Steveston* (feminism, gender, embodiment of place) are not necessarily dependent on a cognitive mapping of the resource town as on the chorological imagination.

Conversely, however, it cannot be denied that much of *Steveston* harks back to the *descriptio loci* tradition of the (pseudo)epic and, as indicated in Martin's final component "Output and reporting," many of Marlatt's techniques are those of conventional cartography, which seek[s] to maximize the amount of information communicated from the map maker to the map reader." *Steveston* spends a considerable part of its energy in selecting, condensing and metaphorizing exactly the right textual coordinates for the reader to redraw material place. In spite of the phenomenological and etymological strategies in much of the poem which speak directly to the chorological imagination, an accurate remapping of the physical area of the resource town is another discrete goal of the project. Moreover, "output" has obvious analogies with the realm of the publishing, archiving and distribution of *Steveston*, as outlined earlier in the chapter. The future online benefits of access to an ILP in GIS format are likely to be considerable: flexibility in output media in particular looks promising (computer imaging, collaging, digitizing; remote printing, screening, photographing and so on).

By comparing the shared components of GIS and *Steveston*, we can see that the analog long poem operates according to the same basic rubric of data collection, data storage, data analysis and data output as that of its digital counterpart. The move into cyberspace would therefore be more suited to ILP demands if structured along GIS guidelines rather than those of interactive fiction or multimedia. Apart from component similarities, moreover, GIS offers operational benefits which answer specifically to the requirements of the chorological long poem.

ILP/GIS: Shared Operations

It is one thing for GIS and *Steveston* to share the same formative components, another to say that they operate and function in the same way. If it is going to be possible to envisage a future for the long poem

in interactive form, the cyberspace environment of choice will need to arrive ready-rigged to perform similar operations. It would be helpful, therefore, if digital GIS were already capable of completing like tasks to those performed by existing analog choropoems. In short, what are the everyday basic tasks that GIS are good at? What do GIS do?

1 *Reclassification operations* transform the attribute information associated with a single map coverage. . . .

2 *Overlay operations* involve the combination of two or more mapsAn example would be the overlay of an enterprise zone on to a base of census wards. . . .

3 *Distance and connectivity measurement*Some systems will include sophisticated networking functions tied to the geographical database

4 *Neighbourhood characterization* involves ascribing values to a location according to the characteristics of the surrounding region. . . .These techniques are directly analogous to contextual image-classification techniques to be found in image-processing systems,
(David Martin)³⁴

This is strangely familiar terrain. *Steveston* too "reclassifies" place through transforming its attributes (re-gendering place); *Steveston* too uses extensive "overlay operations" to map one place in the town over another (palimpsesting place); *Steveston* too is continually involved in "sophisticated networking" through connectivity measurement; *Steveston* too is about "image-processing" through "neighbourhood classification" (the Robert Minden photographs in the first edition). These correlations point to something well beyond coincidence: both GIS and long poems are fundamentally designed to display regional geographical data. They are, resoundingly, chorological information systems.

Reclassification, overlaying, connectivity and neighbourhood characterization: if the list of operations performed by long poems ended here, the key placial practices of the genre would already be accounted for. To concentrate on any one of these functions in *Steveston* alone would involve considerable time and effort. Even the explicit references to nets, knots, weaving and network which belong to "connectivity measurement" run to over fifty citations in the poem, and this before any critical material has been weighed. Palimpsesting again has its own substantial history in the female long poem, going back through Leslie Scalapino and Rosemarie Waldrop to H.D., Gertrude Stein and beyond.³⁵ Neighbourhood characterization is practically synonymous with chorology

while reclassification, or attribute swapping is a stylistic inevitability in the long poem which relies so heavily on the repetition of key words, rhythms and places as a thematic *aide memoire*.

In reality, however, there are a number of subtler functions performed by both GIS and long poems which promise just as much for the future of the ILP. Taking one example, "the very fact that the GIS is able to encode both locations and attributes makes possible the development of techniques which incorporate explicitly spatial concepts such as adjacency, contiguity and distance." The list of possible operations goes on, gathering a few more relevant functions in one commentary, still more in another:

As a set of software processing routines in a hardware setting they [GIS] are a new kind of toolbox for practical problem solving. As a new resource compared with paper based map making, they represent a new technology; and, through their emphasis on spatial data, they stand, for many people, for a different approach to thinking about problems and knowledge. (Laurini and Thompson)³⁶

Laurini and Thompson recognise not only the greater inter-disciplinarity which should shortly be available between subject groups but also the reciprocal fact that "there is much to be learned from non-automated spatial information systems."³⁷ Perhaps choropoetics itself could be beneficial to an improved GIS by humanizing or enlivening the face of future spatial analysis. At the very least, GIS offer new ways of thinking about chorological poetics and in terms of virtual reality they open up real geographical futures for the progress of the long poem.

6.6 Gendering Choropoetics: Summary

Feminist geography has been instrumental in founding gender as the sixth core feature of choropoetics. This is because mainstream geography has ignored issues of gender, but because it has streamlined its concerns into areas which do not regularly appear in recent long poems by women. The second decade of research by the WGSF collective (among others) has cemented feminist practices into a more usable inter-disciplinary format. The chorological reading practice makes full use of this new research:

- (1) What knowledges and assumptions about place does the contemporary long poem make? Does the text assume certain universal truths about gender and place or does it recognize the difference between isolated and collaborative knowledges?
- (2) How strong are the boundaries between the data of place collected for the poem and the people whom it concerns? How personalized and colloquial are the descriptions of place? Does the text integrate the voices of other women and, if so, are their contributions acknowledged?
- (3) Are the power relations between the poet and the subjects of the poem privileged or equal? Are any conflicts reported or built into the general progress of the poem? How are men and women represented in relation to their domestic/working environments?
- (4) Does the choropoetic text include any of the following issues: testimonies of place; women's "lifecourses" in place; the workplace; gender-specific metaphors of place/space; geographies of fear; writing place through the body?

These four starting points are by no means exhaustive but, as we have seen, provide the kind of placial readings required to found gender as the sixth core element of the chorological reading practice. Since increasing numbers of long open forms are currently being written by women — and as the late 1990s have also seen new interest in masculinities and queer theory — the gendering of place is now of fundamental importance to counter-traditional chorologies. Given the explicitly phallogocentric history of the epic poem as the ur-genre for imperial expansion and national identity formation, the need to incorporate the gendering of place as the final chorological component is of paramount importance.

Six core features of choropoetics have now been outlined, along with six chorological reading practices with which to disclose their employment in the contemporary long poem. To recall these from the previous summaries, the full set of spatial practices is as follows: the production of space; landscape and space; the consumption of space; space-time; topography; and the gendering of place. Together these comprise the full complement of choropoetic practices involved in the writing of a contemporary long poem. If choropoems are to be decoded, readers should therefore use the chorological reading practice.

Conclusion

The first aim stated in the general introduction was "to identify and study the core spatial practices of six contemporary long poems from the Caribbean, America and Canada." Rather than identify miscellaneous spatial practices in every poem, however, I have opted to use each long form as the basis for one full choropoetic account. Although this approach has enabled the conversion of six distinct geographies into six critical models, it would be wrong to think that all six are equally crucial to every long poem. For example, *Gunslinger* favours the geography of consumption because it satirizes American capitalism and Vietnam War profiteering; *Another Life* lends itself to landscape geography because Walcott depicts the visual landscape with a trained artist's eye; *Steveston* responds to the geography of gender because of the large female workforce in the Canadian resource town. The choice of which spatial practice to use, therefore, should not be thought of as an entirely arbitrary matter. Although all six chorological reading strategies should be held in readiness for the first analysis of a new long poem, it is inevitable that the text itself will set certain parameters which indicate the benefit of one or more core practices over the others. The mechanical application of all six regional approaches to every long poem encountered is unnecessary: the resulting readings would still not be comprehensive. Material spatial practices thus provide a range of critical insights by identifying the powers and authorities behind social space, but make no claim to provide a final, absolute or determinate reading.

The second explicit aim was "to bring geographical and literary theories together by exploring shared critical investments in the existence of a choropoetics." In the process of completing this task unexpected evidence came to light about the relationship of the two knowledges. The fact that literary theory should provide so many opportunities for geographical research practices was not surprising, but that cultural geography had already been using poetic texts so extensively as a spatio-material resource was unanticipated. Human geographers are frequently encountered who are not only studying long poems as a major component of their own field work, but who are also writing up their own academic research in the form of long poems. It is a matter of genuine debate whether long poems should actually be seen as the field work of human geography or as traditional poetic narratives

for literature departments. Considered simply as "texts" or signifying practices they can be read as both, and this has been my approach.

The final aim was "to demonstrate a new chorological reading practice for the contemporary long poem." Given the amount of research performed by regional geography and the options available, the founding of the reading practice was not in itself under threat. The area which should, however, be treated with some scepticism concerns the boundaries of such an interpretive practice. Are we going to reserve chorological modes purely for the critical analysis of the long open form, or is there the potential to read any text in this way? Clearly certain parts of the process outlined could be transferred to the interpretation of novels, paintings, buildings or any signifying practice at all. This is likely to become a common project between future interested parties, especially since contextual theories of place and space continue to disseminate between academic subject groups. It should be reiterated, however, that the six core spatial practices that I have been concerned to identify are the ones most frequently used by the recent long poem. This particular critical chorology has been formulated in specific response to their spatial features and designs.

If a conclusion as such is to be reached about the shared spatial practices of the six long poems discussed, it is one of "betweenness." The concept of "betweenness" affects the social construction of space, place and the environment in all the texts of the thesis. For this reason the type of regionality outlined in the general introduction (Strabo and Kant) remains the recommended theoretical approach.

In chapter 1, Brathwaite's island-region of Barbados is seen to mediate between ideal/abstract space (*res cogitans*) and real/social space (*res extensa*). It tells the spatial narrative of islanders caught between the reproduction of "dominated" colonial space and the production of their own "appropriated" space. It inserts itself between the space of planning and technocracy ("*representations of space*") and the space of living and dwelling ("*representational space*"). Regional identity is thus written between Lefebvre's realm of the "conceived" and the realm of the "lived."

Chapter 2 shows Walcott's island-region of St. Lucia being depicted first, as an open landscape of "prospect" (horizons, verandahs, the sea) and second, as a closed landscape of "refuge" (rainforest, climate, harbour). The focus on the "reusable spatial topoi" of *Another Life* witnesses descriptions of the region which vary between the *locus*

amoenus (the tree catalogue, the verdant landscape) and the *locus vilis* ("*Malgré tout*"). Attachment to region is also inscribed between the cultural landscape of the text and the text of the natural landscape.

The climactic regionalism of Dorn's *Gunslinger*, the home of "the local species," is symptomatic of geographical "betweenness" *par excellence*. "Four Corners" where the characters observe the battle between the "Mogollones" and the "Single-Spacers" is an old waggon-trail town situated on the intersection of four state lines: Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona and Utah. In addition the whole book depicts the difference between two regional outlooks, the Goddess's "Way of Truth" (the route of Parmenides) and the mortal's "Way of Seeming" (the route of Howard Hughes). Regionality is perceived to exist in the hinterland between "[t]he inside real and the outsidereal" (G 111).

Chapter 4 depicts the space-time memories of Howe's childhood in the region of Buffalo, New York State. Here regional awareness is represented in a concrete use of language which alternates between time-space "convergence" and time-space "divergence," and which operates on time-space edges between seven "fictive spheres." The page-space itself becomes the regional limit of the text where word-forms diffuse between margin and centre. Crowds of ancient words people this liminal space.

Robert Kroetsch's Alberta of chapter 5 exists between place and "placelessness;" place and "non-place;" the topical and the "atopical." It is a province that falls between the "named-place" and the "hard-to-name place"; "isotopism" and "heterotopism"; the "Near" and the "Elsewhere." The regional identity of the poet is simultaneously founded both in and out of place: these are the loving, essentialist senses of place ("topophilia") and the fearful, transgressive "landscapes of fear" ("topophobia"). Kroetsch "like[s] to believe that the sequence of poems announced in medias res as continuing, is, in its acceptance of its own impossibilities, completed" (CFN 269). This paradox in which "failure becomes the only eloquence remaining in this our time" accounts for the poem's "betweenness" of place. It is the Albertan identity which fails to choose between self-in-place and self-out-of-place.

Daphne Marlatt's *Steveston*, addressed in chapter 6, is a region constructed in the space between oral history and aural testimony, between land and sea, Japan and Canada, and "Man. & woman." It is further caught in the "betweenness" of workplace and domestic place; fearful place and secure place; outside place and inside place. At a third level, the representation of the region is mediated between the work of

the researcher and the researched, poetry and photography, and narratives of singular and collective point-of-view. Since one future of the long poem seems likely to lie between real and virtual space and between "interactive fact" and "interactive fiction," the future of place in the long poem is also likely to be one of "betweenness."

Since the publication of *The Betweenness of Place* in 1991, Nicholas Entrikin has made the area under discussion, — the area between idiographic and nomothetic conceptions of the region — very much his own. The distinction he draws in his own words is actually that between "existential and naturalistic conceptions of place." He also refers to these as "decentered" and "centered" views, terms reminiscent of Cohen's "five modes of touristic experience" (chapter 3). Footnoting Thomas Nagel's description of the ideal viewpoint as a "non-egocentric respect for the particular," Entrikin takes this phrase to be a potent description of what he himself means by "betweenness." He concludes that it is the aesthetic dimension which can provide access to "both sides of the divide:"

To seek to understand place in a manner that captures its sense of totality and contextuality is to occupy a position that is between the objective pole of scientific theorizing and the subjective pole of empathetic understanding The closest that we can come to addressing both sides of this divide is from a point in between, a point that leads us into *the vast realm of narrative forms*. From this position we gain a view of both sides of the divide. We gain a sense both of being "in a place" and "at a location," of being at the center and being at a point in a centerless world. To ignore this dualism is to misunderstand the modern experience of place.

(Entrikin, *Betweenness* 133-34, emphasis added)

The dualisms listed earlier in discussion of the six long poems' chorological "betweenness" — dualisms arising from the production, landscaping, consumption, timing, topographizing and gendering of space and place — are attempts in various guises simultaneously to create "a sense both of being 'in a place' and 'at a location,' of being at the center and being at a point in a centerless world." To find texts that can perform this "double, double-tracking" (see chapter 5), Entrikin suggests we look to "the vast realm of narrative forms." The contemporary long poem is particularly suited to this task.

Further than this, it should only be stated that the new way of interpreting the contemporary long poem proposed in this thesis is still in the early stages of development. It is truly, to borrow Robert Duncan's phrase, "The Opening of the Field."

NOTES
&
BIBLIOGRAPHIES

NOTES TO GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1. For chorology, see: Robert Sack, *Conceptions of Space in Social Thought* (London: Macmillan, 1990) 87-95; Nicholas Entrikin, "Place, region and Modernity," ed. Agnew and Duncan 30-43, and *The Betweenness of Place* (London: Macmillan, 1990) 14-18, 38-40; R. J. Johnston, Derek Gregory and David Smith, eds. *The Dictionary of Human Geography* 64-65; Carl Sauer, *Land and Life* (Berkeley, CA: U of California P, 1974) 318-20; Torsten Hägerstrand, *Innovation Diffusion* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1967) 6-7; and in full, D. de Jong, *Chorological Differentiation* (Gröningen, Neth.: Walters, 1962).
2. For the standard translation of Strabo condensed into three volumes see, H.C. Hamilton and W. Falconer trans. *The Geography of Strabo* (London: Bell, 1903).
3. See Derek Gregory, "chorology," in Johnston, Gregory and Smith 65.
4. Gregory, in Johnston, Gregory and Smith 65.
5. The standard German text for this is Immanuel Kant, "Logik. Physische Geographie. Padagogik." *Kant's gessamelte Shriften*. Band 14. Berlin: Grunter, 1923. 151-436.
6. See, for example, Jill Vance Buroker, *Space and Incongruence: The Origin of Kant's Idealism* (Dordrecht, Neth.: Reidel, 1981): 50-59. Also see Christopher Browne Garnett, *The Kantian Philosophy of Space* (Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat, 1939): 109-118; 119-163. The passages marked include detailed discussion of Kant's spatial philosophy during the relevant period, 1768-1770.
7. Jonathan Z. Smith, *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1987) 27.
8. Immanuel Kant, "Concerning the Ultimate Ground of the Differentiation of Directions in Space." 1768. Ed. David Walford. Vol. 1 of *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant*. 14 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992) 361-72. Quotation from page 365. One of the problems here is that *Gegend* can be variously translated as either "region" or "direction."
9. Kant, "Concerning" 365-6.
10. See discussion of this passage in Jonathan Smith, *To Take Place* 31-35. The quotation is from page 31.
11. See discussion by Entrikin in Agnew and Duncan 38-40. See also entries "idiographic" and "nomothetic" in Johnston, Gregory and Smith 273-74, 422-33.
12. Jonathan Smith 33.
13. Both this quotation from Massey and the following one by Johnston in Johnston, Gregory and Smith eds, 274.
14. William Hartshorne, *The Nature of Geography: A Critical Survey of Current Thought in the Light of the Past* (Lancaster, PA: AAAG, 1939).

30. See: J. N. Riddel, ed., "The Long Poem in the Twentieth Century," special issue, *Genre* 11.4 (1978); *Sagetrieb* 11.1-2 (1992); *Open Letter*, Long-Liners Conference Issue, 6th series 2-3 (1985).
31. D. M. R. Bentley, *Mimic Fires: Accounts of Early Long Poems on Canada* (Kingston, ON: McGill-Queen's UP, 1994). Between the use of this text and that of Smaro Kamboureli (1991) a full picture of the 300 year history of the Canadian long poem can be built.
32. Köhring, Klaus Heinrich. "Die Formen des 'long poem' in der Modernen amerikanischen Literatur." *Jahrbuch für Amerikastudien Beiheft*. Vol 21. (Heidelberg: Carl Winter UP, 1967). Since it is the English terms I am interested in here, and since Köhring is merely listing the different expressions that have been applied to the long poems of Whitman, Crane and Benét, a full translation is perhaps unnecessary. "Meditation" is the same word in English, "Lehrgedicht" might be translated as "didactic poem" and "Prosehymne" as "prose anthem." Perhaps his best find, however, is omitted from the list: "tale in verse and voices."
33. Editor's comment on Act II, scene ii, 378-79 of *Hamlet*, ed. Bernard Lott (London: Longman, 1968): 80-81.
34. For 'found poetry,' see note 8 to chapter 6. Also see Preminger and Brogan eds, 423-44.
35. Robert Oeste, *Arno Holz: The Long Poem and the Tradition of Poetic Experiment* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1982) 50, 183.
36. Both this and the following reference are from Edwin Morgan, "Long Poems — But How Long?" (Swansea: U of Wales, 1995) 1-2.
37. See Wallace Stevens, *Collected Poems* (London: Faber, 1984): 'The Comedian as the Letter C' (CP 27-45); 'The Man with the Blue Guitar' (CP 165-88); 'Esthétique du Mal' (CP 313-26); 'Notes Toward a Supreme Fiction' (CP 380-408); 'The Auroras of Autumn' (CP 411-21); 'An Ordinary Evening in New Haven' (CP 465-89).
38. Georges Poulet, "Criticism and the Experience of Interiority," ed. Seán Burke 106-07.
39. Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Chatto, 1993) xvii.
40. See Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (London: Routledge, 1990).
41. Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading*, Ed. Selden 214-15.
42. Norman Holland, *5 Readers Reading* (New Haven: Yale, 1975) 209.
43. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley, CA: U of California P, 1984) 170-71.
44. Edgar Allan Poe, "The Poetic Principle," in James A. Harrison, ed. *The Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe* (New York: AMS, 1965): 266; 268.
45. William Oxley, ed., *The Long Poem Group Newsletter* 1.1 (1995) 4.

NOTES TO PART I INTRODUCTION

1. See Havinden and Meredith, *Colonialism and Development* (London: Routledge, 1993) 13-15, 30-35.
2. Since Brathwaite's first long trilogy was subtitled *A New World Trilogy* it seems reasonable to refer to *Mother Poem*, *Sun Poem* and *X/Self* as the "Second New World Trilogy." Strictly speaking, however, the quotation marks must remain in the place of italics. Oxford University Press currently have no plans to produce the single volume collection.
3. See Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin *The Empire Writes Back* (London: Routledge, 1989) 1-13.
4. Lefebvre's phrase is *espace-en-process*, mirroring Kristeva's *sujet-en-process*. The sense of it is "on test" or "on trial" rather than simply "in process."
5. For an excellent discussion of "soundscapes" see Paul Rodaway's comprehensive section, "Auditory Geographies" in Rodaway, *Sensuous Geographies* (London: Routledge, 1994) 82-114.
6. Literally, this is the German for a "long saying." See Robert Oeste, *Arno Holst* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1982) 27.

CHAPTER 1: BRATHWAITE

1. Portuguese for "the bearded isle," after the distinctive hair found at the top of the Indian fig-tree discovered growing there in the fifteenth century. According to Havinden and Meredith, however, it was the Spanish who discovered Barbados in 1518, although they failed to populate the island: "the island was still uninhabited when the first English settlers arrived in 1627" (*CD* 33).
2. For the initial concept of "COMPOSITION BY FIELD" or "FIELD COMPOSITION" see Charles Olson's essay of 1950, "Projective Verse," in *Charles Olson: Selected Writings*, 1966. Also see: Robert Duncan, *The Opening of the Field* (London: Cape, 1969).
3. Brathwaite, *MP* preface. This quotation, as much of the preface, points forward to the discussion of "dominated" and "appropriated" space in section 1.5.
4. Kamau Brathwaite, "History of the Voice 1979/1981: The Development of Nation Language in Anglophone Caribbean Poetry, an Electronic Lecture," reprinted in Brathwaite, *Roots* (Michigan: Arbour, 1993) 259-304.
5. See Brathwaite, *Roots* 271-2. For the language and ideology of the pentameter, see Antony Easthope, *Poetry as Discourse* (London: Routledge 1990) 51-77.
6. See, for example, "Re-Placing Language: Textual Strategies in Post-Colonial Writing," Ashcroft et al., *Empire* 38-77; W. H. New, "New Language, New World," ed. Ashcroft et al., *Post-Colonial* 303-08; Elleke Boehmer, "Imperialism and Textuality" *Colonial* 12-59.
7. Brathwaite, *Roots* 277. Brathwaite uses the phrase in discussion of the "Clarendon syllables" of Jamaican poet, Claude McKay (1889-1940). According to Brathwaite, McKay wrote in dialect, not nation language, which prevented him from ever reaching true "environmental expression."
8. "Trans/fusion," (Latin: *trans* + *fundo*, 'a pouring out across') captures in one word the whole trans-linguistic process of nation language. The Greek for breath/soul, 'phusis' is part of the etymology, which may account for its use with reference to Caribbean performance poetry.
9. Basil Bunting, "The Use of Poetry," unpublished essay, Mountjoy Collection MS. 13/6, Basil Bunting Poetry Archive, University of Durham.
10. Wilson Harris, *History, Fable and Myth in the Caribbean and Guianas*, quoted in Brathwaite, *Roots* 231-2.
11. Brathwaite, "The African Presence in Caribbean Literature" (1970-1973), rpt. in *Roots* 190-258.

12. For Walcott's own critical writing on the use of Adam as a Crusoe figure, see, for example: "The Figure of Crusoe" (1965) in Hamner ed., *Critical Perspectives on Derek Walcott* 35-6; "He is Adam because he is the first inhabitant of a second paradise."

13. T. S. Eliot, *Collected Poems* 16; Ezra Pound, *The Cantos* 797; Samuel Beckett, *Trilogy* 382; H.D., *Helen in Egypt* 86; David Jones, *Anathémata* 29.

14. Ronald Segal, *The Black Diaspora*, 162.

15. Segal 161.

16. William Carlos Williams, *Paterson* 118.

CHAPTER 2: WALCOTT

1. Three problems in particular remain unsolved: Fitter has almost nothing to say about non-Eurocentric environments; the chronology is arbitrary and suggests that the three ages are exclusive; the categories seem insufficiently related to his "five socio-historical determinants of the aesthetic taste for landscape" (posited by him in the second chapter).
2. See the work of Immanuel Wallerstein which effectively began with *The Modern World System: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World Economy in the Sixteenth Century* (New York: Academic Press, 1974). The Annales School have been associated with this approach which stresses the relationship between historical materialism and dependency theory.
3. "Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks! rage! blow! / You cataracts and hurricanoes, spout / Till you have drenched our steeples, drown'd the cocks!" (*Lear* III.ii.1-3).
4. Speaking of Omeros's advice to "forget the gods" at the end of Walcott's second long poem, Mary Lefkowitz writes that in the place of divinity ". . . Walcott puts forces even more pitiless and unpredictable than the gods of Olympus: nature, the sea, violent changes of weather, lizards and iguanas and the jungle foliage that casts debris and disorder onto the landscape." (403) "Bringing Him Back Alive," ed., Hamner 400-403. There are clearly similarities between the two poems' representations of the landscape.
5. Nana Wilson-Tago, "History and Style in *Another Life*," ed. Stewart Brown, *The Art of Derek Walcott* (Glamorgan: Seren, 1991) 58.
6. See the same imagery at work in the urban landscape of Hart Crane's Modernist long poem, *The Bridge*: "cordage tree . . . heaven's cordons" and "spiring cordage." *The Bridge* (New York: Liveright, 1992) 7-8, 76.
7. Walcott, quoted by D. J. R. Bruckner, "A Poem in Homage to an Unwanted Man," ed. Hamner 398. In the same essay Walcott is explicit about the newness of the St. Lucian landscape: "And there is no history for the place. It's pristine. You feel like Piero della Francesca" (396-397).
8. Cosgrove, in Agnew and Duncan, *The Power of Place: Bringing Together Geographical and Sociological Imaginations* (London: Unwin, 1989) 105.
9. Denis Cosgrove and Stephen Daniels, eds., *The Iconography of Landscape: Essays on the Symbolic Representation, Design and Use of Past Environments* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1988).
10. Cosgrove and Daniels, *Iconography* 8.
11. Richard Payne Knight, *The Landscape: A Didactic Poem in Three Books Addressed to Uvedale Price, Esq.* (Bulmer, 1794) Facsimile of second edition, (Farnborough: Gregg, 1972). For an interesting critical analysis of the poem, see Frank J. Messmann, *Richard Payne Knight: The Twilight of Virtuosity* (The Hague, Neth.: Mouton, 1974) 59-84.

12. Thomas Love Peacock, *Headlong Hall and Nightmare Abbey* (Herts.: Wordsworth, 1995) 14. See, in particular, chapter 4, "The Grounds" (14-18) where "A long controversy now ensued concerning the picturesque and the beautiful, highly edifying to Squire Headlong."

13. "The cave was sheltered by a verdant copse of alders, aspens, and fragrant cypresses, which was the roosting place of feathered creatures, horned owls and falcons and garrulous choughs, birds of the coast, whose daily business takes them down to the sea." Homer, *The Odyssey*, trans. E. V. Rieu (London: Penguin, 1981) 89.

14. Not to be confused with *peripeteia* which derives not from the verb *patein* 'to tread,' but from *piptein*, 'to fall.' The peripeteia, the way a plot suddenly 'falls' or 'turns out' at the end of a drama, has no etymological connection to the physical travelling round of the characters.

15. The journeys made by Achille's boat, the *In God We Trust* in *Omeros*, are also pseudo-epic: no trireme for waging wars, but a small fishing boat hauled up onto the beach at night. *Omeros* 324.

16. Ann Bermingham, "System, Order and Abstraction: The Politics of English Landscape Drawing around 1795," ed. W. J. T. Mitchell, *Landscape and Power* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1994) 83, 86.

17. Carl Sauer, "The Morphology of Landscape," rpt. in *Land and Life*, ed. Leighly 342-43.

18. Richard Keene, quoted by John Taylor, "The Alphabetic Universe: Photography and the Picturesque Landscape," ed. Pugh, *Reading Landscape*.

19. "More than twenty volcanoes are still active today, making Kamchatka [modern spelling] one of the busiest, most threatening volcanic regions in the world. . . . The landscape is the result of relentless geothermal activity. . . . a remote 1300 kilometre-long peninsula that sits in the Pacific breach between mainland Russia and Alaska. . . its forests so dense they are impenetrable but for the wildlife that inhabits them." *Kamchatka — Russia's Eden* (film, prod. Katya Shirokow, Catspaw Pictures/Channel 5. 1998).

20. "Also it has a safe harbour, in which there is no occasion to tie up at all. You need neither cast anchor nor make fast with hawsers: all your crew have to do is to beach their boat and wait till the spirit moves them and the right wind blows. Finally, at the head of the harbour there is a stream of fresh water, running out of a cave in a grove of poplar-trees." Homer, *The Odyssey* (Bk.9 ll.136-41) 142-43.

21. The phonological difference between 'ship' and 'sheep' here recognized by Brathwaite is a frequently used example for teachers of English as a foreign language. See, even, Ann Baker, *Ship or Sheep: An Intermediate Pronunciation Course*, Cambridge Language Cassettes (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1982).

22. Curtius, *European Literature* 201-02.

23. William Carlos Williams, *Paterson* 43-61; 95-112.

24. According to Buttner, the "lifeworld" is "the culturally defined spatio-temporal setting or horizon of everyday life." Human geographers also use the related terms *Lebenswelt* and "taken-for-granted-world." See: Ann Buttner, "Grasping the Dynamism of the Lifeworld," *AAAG* 66 (1976) 277-92; David Seamon, *A Geography of the Lifeworld: Movement, Rest and Encounter* (New York: St. Martin's P, 1979).

NOTES TO PART II INTRODUCTION

1. Ed Dorn, *Gunslinger* (Durham, NC: Duke, 1989). Perloff's otherwise readable introduction has one important preposition at fault. She claims that "I" is embalmed *in* (not *as*) a five gallon can of LSD (*G* x). However, the poem makes it deliberately clear that the contents of the can are physically poured into "I" via a complex of tubes suspended from the stagecoach ceiling: "All that I will hold / we will put into him" (*G* 61). Thus "I" actually functions *as* the container himself.
2. For a brief overview see Peter Jackson, "The 'Berkeley School' and its Legacy," *Maps of Meaning* (London: Routledge, 1989) 10-13.
3. Ed Dorn, *Idaho Out* (London: Fulcrum Press, 1965).
4. Poems from 300 - 670 lines in length: see generic arguments in introduction.
5. Edward Dorn, *Geography* (London: Fulcrum Press, 1965) 24-37.
6. The whole first page of *Idaho Out* condenses the new cultural geography proposed by Sauer. See Carl Sauer, "The Morphology of Landscape" (1925), rpt. in John Leighly, ed. *Land and Life: A Selection from the Writings of Carl Ortwin Sauer*, 5th edition (Berkeley, CA: U of California P, 1974)
7. Edward Dorn, "Oxford," *The North Atlantic Turbine* (London: Fulcrum Press, 1967) 26-46.
8. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley, CA: U of California P, 1984).
9. Douglas Messerli, 'LANGUAGE' *Poetries: An Anthology* (New York: New Directions, 1987) 3.
10. United Kingdom readers must remember to reverse the American date format of the opening deictic '12.7.41' (ET, 21): the Pearl Harbour raid took place on the 7 December (not the 12 July) 1941. Even this detail demonstrates how the conventions of spatio-temporal representation differ between chorophyles.
11. Gertrude Stein, *Stanzas in Meditation and Other Poems* (1929-33), (New York, 1956). Stein's early influence on Howe and other language poets was mainly channelled through Robert Duncan, one of the few Black Mountain alumni to prioritize Stein's poetry over her fiction. See, by comparison, Duncan, "THE FIRE / PASSAGES 13," *Bending the Bow* (1968); or part III of "A Poem opening with a line by Pindar," *The Opening of the Field* (1960); or more recently, "IN WAKING" *Ground Work II: In the Dark* (1987). These poems all reprinted in Robert Duncan, *Selected Poems*, ed. R. J. Bertholf (Manchester: Carcanet, 1993).

CHAPTER 3: DORN

1. My own random survey of post-war English anthologies yields a figure of less than five per cent dealing with any single one of these categories, much less a combination of two or more.
2. In *Gunslinger* the sections "The Interior Decorator Runs / the Scenario of the / Wingèd Car" (98-101) and "The I.D. Runs the Actual Furnishings" (102-10) provide a detailed inventory of the bought commodities in Robart's railway carriage.
3. Marjorie Perloff, introduction to *Gunslinger*, vii.
4. Nigel Thrift, "consumption, geography of," ed. R.J. Johnston et al., *The Dictionary of Human Geography* 89. See also Robert Sack, "Places of Consumption" *Place, Modernity and the Consumer's World* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins UP) 134-73.
5. *Gunslinger's* parallels with the Pop-Art of the sixties are often indicated but rarely detailed by critics. This is an area which still awaits the definitive journal article. The cartoon strips of Roy Lichtenstein, for instance, are palpably close to Dorn (instead of "Oh Brad" we have "Oh my *Gunslinger*," G 19). For theoretical consideration of kitsch, however, see Calinescu, *Fives Faces of Modernity*.
6. William J. Lockwood, "Art Rising to Clarity: Edward Dorn's Compleat Slinger," ed. Wesling, *Internal* 150-207.
7. Norman Holland, *5 Readers Reading* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1975) 60: "a reader responds to a literary work by assimilating it to his own psychological processes, that is, to his search for successful solutions within his identity theme to the multiple demands, both inner and outer, on his ego." As noted in the introduction, readers' identity themes are partly the result of the chorophyle of the region in which they live.
8. See: J. Urry, *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies*, (London: Sage, 1990); Erik Cohen, "Authenticity and Commoditization in Tourism," *Annals of Tourism Research* 15 (1988): 371-386. S. Britton, "Tourism, Capital and Place: Towards a Critical Geography of Tourism," *SS* 9 (1991) 451-70. For a still useful collection of anthropological readings, see V. L. Smith ed., *The Anthropology of Tourism* (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1977).
9. See in full: W. Christaller, *Central Places in Southern Germany* (1933), (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1966); A. Losch, *The Economics of Location* (1940), (New Haven, CT: Yale UP, 1954).
10. Douglas Oliver, "The Diagram Poems," in *Kind* (Allardyce/Burnett, 1989). Pen and ink sketches map each section of the sequence.
11. Charles Olson, *Additional Prose: A Bibliography on America, Proprioception, and Other Notes and Essays*, ed., George F. Butterick (Bollinas, CA: Four Seasons, 1974).
12. Lockwood, "Art Rising," ed., Wesling 152.

13. Although it is true that the Horse was "born in santa fe / of a famous dike" (G 34) and Santa Fé, NM is the oldest state capital of all the United States (founded 1610), there is no suggestion of any upbringing there. On the contrary, "The Winterbook" follows the "elegant geneology" of the horse's universalism (G 119-120).
14. For "pseudo-events" see Daniel Boorstin, *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America* (New York: Atheneum, 1961). See also Kimberley Dovey, "The Quest for Authenticity and the Replication of Environmental Meaning," ed., Seamon and Mugerauer 40-45. Also, Peter Berger, "'Sincerity and Authenticity' in Modern Society," *Public Interest* (1973): 81-90.
15. "Start*to my tremble life was basically a freeload*Stop" (G 95). The discourse of "game theory" an interdisciplinary hybrid of geography and economics invented by von Neumann and Morgenstern in *The Theory of Games and Economic Behaviour* (Princeton, 1944) floods *Gunslinger*. Trevor Barnes comments in "game theory": "free-rider effects are most likely to break down within small groups of people such as found within specific locales" (213), ed. Johnston Gregory and Smith 212-3.
16. Roman Jakobson, *Language in Literature* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 1987) 69.
17. For mythic geography and the importance of 'sacred' and 'profane' space/place see, among others: Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane* (New York: Harcourt, 1959); Jonathan Z. Smith, *To Take Place: Toward Theory in Ritual* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1987); Belden C. Lane *Landscapes of the Sacred* (New York: Paulist, 1988) 11-36.
18. Lockwood, "Art Rising," ed. Wesling 155.
19. See G. S. Kirk and J. E. Raven, *The Presocratic Philosophers* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1957) 263-4.
20. Kirk and Raven 265-6.
21. Lao-Tzu, *Tao Te Ching* (London: Penguin, 1963) 57: "The way that can be spoken of / Is not the constant way; / The name that can be named / Is not the constant name." Many other passages of the *Tao Te Ching* can also be studied beside sections of *Gunslinger*.
22. I have reworded Taran's translation here to reintroduce the concept "is-ness." Taran (P 85) has it as follows: "There is a solitary word still left to say of a way: "exists"; very many signs are on this road: that Being is ungenerated and imperishable, whole, unique, immovable and complete."
23. For Parmenidean temporality see: Mourelatos, "Parmenides' Awareness of Tenselessness" (RP 105); G. E. L. Owen, "Plato and Parmenides on the Timeless Present," *The Monist* 50 (1966) 163-190; and A. H. Coxon, *The Fragments of Parmenides* 196 notes 5-6.
24. Kirk and Raven 272.
25. Arthur Coxon, *The Fragments of Parmenides* (Maastricht, Neth.: Van Gorcum, 1986) 50.

26. Coxon 211.

27. Louis Althusser, quoted by Peter Jackson in his notes to "A Materialist Cultural Geography," *Maps of Meaning* 45.

28. See my definition of 'chorophyle' in the general introduction: 'phulon' was the word used to designate a Greek colony abroad, along with its inhabitants — hence a group of people sharing a removed or alternative concept of place and space.

29. For "proprioception" see Charles Olson, *Additional Prose* (Bollinas, CA: Four Seasons, 1974) 17-35.

30. Hermann Diels's *Parmenides Lehrgedicht* (Berlin: Griechisch und Deutsch, 1897) is still the standard text for numerical arrangement of the originally nineteen, now twenty fragments. His pioneering work was seconded by Walther Kranz, hence all the fragments carry a 'DK' or Diels-Kranz number.

31. In 1968 Gordon Margolis was Hughes's personal aid. Hughes was on the run from the IRS for not paying tax from TWA (Trans World Airlines) and his other companies for seventeen (17) years. Lyndon Johnson was conducting nuclear testing in the Nevada desert 150 miles from the Desert Inn Hotel. Margolis speaks of the time as follows: "Course the whole 9th floor was his, he took over the whole 9th floor — and some of the aids lived on the lower floor, on the 8th floor below. The only way, of course, up here was on the elevator which had a special key." Film, dir. Steve Ruggi, *Secret Lives: Howard Hughes* (Channel 4 Television, 11 July 1998). For the "'gross manipulation' of the man on the ninth floor" see: Harry Brown and Pat H. Broeske, *Howard Hughes: The Untold Story* (London: Warner, 1997) 344-60. The full links between Howard Robard Hughes and *Gunslinger* are yet to be traced.

32. Ezra Pound, quoted by William Cookson, *A Guide to the Cantos of Ezra Pound* (London: Croom Helm, 1985) xvii.

CHAPTER 4: HOWE

1. Susan Howe, *Talisman Review* 4 (1990), rpt. in *The Birth-Mark: Unsettling the Wilderness in American Literary History* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan, 1993) 173.
2. Joseph Frank, "Spatial Form in Modern Literature" (*Sewanee Review*, 1945) rpt. in *The Widening Gyre: Crisis and Mastery in Modern Literature* (Rutgers, 1963) 13.
3. Murray Melbin, "The Colonization of Time," ed. Carlstein et al., *Timing Space* 101-2.
4. Susan Howe, *Birth-Mark* 156.
5. See Worringer's 1908 essay, "From Abstraction to Empathy" in Kolocotroni et al. eds. *Modernism: An Anthology of Sources and Documents* (Edinburgh UP, 1998): 72-76
6. Joseph Frank, *Widening Gyre* 60.
7. Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending* 52.
8. Melbin, "Colonization," ed. Carlstein et al., *Timing Space* 102-3.
9. T. Carlstein, D. Parkes and N. Thrift eds., *Timing Space and Spacing Time: Human Activity and Time Geography*, (London: Edward Arnold, 1978).
10. Melbin, "Colonization," ed. Carlstein et al., *Timing Space* 100.
11. Ernst Laclau, *New Reflections on the Revolution of our Time* (London: Verso, 1990).
12. David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989) 240.
13. For an introduction to such terminology see Johnston, Gregory and Smith eds., *The Dictionary of Human Geography*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1994.
14. See Douglas Janelle, "Spatial Reorganization: A Model and Concept." *AAAG* 59 (1969) 348-64.
15. For 'event' see Stephen Hawking, *A Brief History of Time: from the Big Bang to Black Holes*, (London: Bantam, 1988): 15-34.
16. See Howe on Olson in *Birth-Mark* 180-81: "There you have Charles Olson at his wisest. 'The stutter is the plot.' It's the stutter in American literature that interests me . . . All the broken dreams."
17. Howe, *Birth-Mark* 157.
18. Howe, *Birth-Mark* 174, 180.
19. John Taggart, "Play and the Poetry of Susan Howe" *Songs of Degrees: Essays on Contemporary Poetry and Poetics*, (Tuscaloosa, AL: U of Alabama P, 1994) 114.

20. Taggart, 118. The correctly spaced citation is of part 10 (ET 54).
21. Taggart 114.
22. The eight references are: (1) "diminuation / distortion" (ET 90); (2) "Pleasure / pleasure" (ET 92); (3) "word made flesh before fall / plummet-deep dimension of my soul" (ET 92); (4) "Webs beyond the reach of shallow / To foot hazard in the dark" (ET 95); (5) "run" (ET 96); (6) "Calling attention to honor / May trace brute health" (ET 95); (7) "hours out / Wanderer" (ET 141); (8) "Secret isle and mortal father / Shell half of my face" (ET 146).
23. "House in glass with steel structure" (*Frame Structures* 27-28) contains near-impossible half letters, fadeout print and deliberate double-italic printing which only computer publishing can really achieve.
24. N. Smith, *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital and the Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990).
25. For structuration and responses, see: Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society* (Cambridge: Polity, 1984); chapters 4 and 5 of C. G. A. Bryant and D. Jary, *Giddens' Theory of Structuration: A Critical Appreciation* (London: Routledge, 1991); I. Cohen, *Structuration Theory: Anthony Giddens and the Constitution of Social Life* (London: Macmillan, 1989); Nigel Thrift, "On the Determination of Social Action in Space and Time," *SS* 1 (1983): 23-57.
26. Giddens, quoted in Johnston, Gregory and Smith 630.
27. In *Politische Geographie* (1897), Friedrich Ratzel formalized the concept of *Lebensraum* as "the geographical area within which living organisms develop." In France the term became associated with Vidal de la Blanch's "*genre de vie*" (life milieu) and in Sweden with Torsten Hågerstrand's "*rum*" (room, living space). Recently its frame of reference has been extended by Buttimer as "lifeworld," (*Geography*, 1993), by Ley as the "taken-for-granted world," ("Social," 1977) and by de Certeau as "everyday life" (*Practice*, 1984). These are all regional and material — hence chorological — usages. Contemporary long poems are a *langes Gedicht* or 'long saying' of *Lebensraum*.
28. Sauer, "Foreword to Historical Geography," *AAAG* 31 (1941): 1-24.
29. Bertrand Russell: "He [Pythagoras] soon became a mythical figure, credited with miracles and magic powers, but he was also the founder of a school of mathematicians," *History of Western Philosophy* 50. Russell's chapter on Pythagoras is particularly lively, reprinting Burnet's fifteen rules of the Pythagorean order from "abstain[ing] from beans" to "ris[ing] from the bedclothes." Little Pythagorean text is actually used by Howe — he is as "silenced" as the title suggests.
30. Derek Gregory "diffusion," ed. Johnston, Gregory and Smith 133.
31. Sigfrid Svensson, *Bygd och yttervärld. Studier över förhållandet mellan nyheter och tradition*. Nord Museets Handl. 15 (1942).
32. See Hågerstrand, *Innovation Diffusion* 19-20, 142. Isarithms have not been used in this study for reasons of scale. Given a larger display, it is not difficult to calculate percentages of events per cell and then to graph areas of like results with connecting contour lines.

NOTES TO PART III INTRODUCTION

1. Special thanks to Daphne Marlatt for providing a copy of her curriculum vitae for the quotations in this paragraph (Durham, 1 March, 1996): both citations are from page 3. "U.B.C." is the University of British Columbia.
2. Fred Wah, introduction to Daphne Marlatt, *Net Work* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1980) 12.
3. In both of the poem's most widely recognized stable forms (Talonbooks, 1974; Longspoon, 1984), the text comes in at this same length, as it does in the long poem anthology edited by Ondaatje. *Steveston* (1974), as indicated in the abbreviations, is the base text for this study and page references are to this first complete (twenty-two part) edition.
4. Brenda Carr, "Re-casting the Steveston Net: Recalling the Invisible Women from the Margins," *Line 13* (Spring 1989): 83. Carr's six publication citations are as follows: "Steveston. Support? Fish." in five parts, *Is 14* (Toronto, 1973); *Steveston*. Photographs by Robert Minden (Vancouver, BC: Talonbooks, 1974); *One Life. Steveston*, prod. John Reeves, (CBC radio broadcast, 1976); "Steveston" in Michael Ondaatje ed., *The Long Poem Anthology* (Toronto: Coach House Press, 1979); *Steveston*, rev. ed. (Edmonton: Longspoon, 1984); and *Salvage* (Alberta: Red Deer College Press, 1991).
5. Daphne Marlatt, *Steveston Recollected: A Japanese-Canadian History* (Victoria, BC: Provincial Archives of British Columbia, 1975). Douglas Barbour summarizes this culmination of the formal Aural History Project research at UBC as follows: "Marlatt's own sketches in this work reveal a more public prose style. This is a true "documentary," in which the documents - the transcripts of the taped interviews - are the central focus."
6. Daphne Marlatt, *Net Work: Selected Writing*, ed. and introd. Fred Wah, (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1980). In effect this selection gives us a "short *Steveston*" and indicates that the seven sections chosen are those Marlatt was happiest to sanction as representative of the whole poem: "Imagine: a town" (part 1); "Steveston as you find it:" (part 5); "*Sea Trek*, etc" (part 7); "Finn Road" (part 14); "Response" (part 16); "Or there is love" (part 21); and "Steveston, BC" (part 22).

CHAPTER 5: KROETSCH

1. Derek Gregory, Ron Martin and Graham Smith eds., *Human Geography* (London: Macmillan, 1994) 154.
2. George Woodcock, *George Woodcock's Introduction to Canadian Poetry* (Toronto: ECW P, 1993) 168.
3. Woodcock 166.
4. Woodcock 157.
5. This is a famous remark in the field of Canadian narratology, allegedly made to Kroetsch's friend, Margaret Laurence, and reprinted in *Creation* (1970): ". . . we haven't got any identity until somebody tells our story. The fiction makes us real."
6. Although the adjective "placial" is not yet to be found in most dictionaries, it is now frequently used across the social sciences to countermand or redefine the term "spatial."
7. Dante, "Letter to Can Grande" (1319): "for there is one meaning that is derived from the letter, and another that is derived from the things indicated by the letter. The first is called *literal*, but the second *allegorical* or *mystical*." Rpt. in Selden 292.
8. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *Empire* 140.
9. Woodcock 166.
10. Lynette Hunter, *Toward a Definition of Topos* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991) viii.
11. See Charles Olson's well-known discussion of "*topos tropos* and *typos*" in *Poetry and Truth: The Beloit Lectures and Poems* (San Francisco: Four Seasons, 1971) 41-53. The terms are used for the first time on page 42.
12. Peter Baker, *Obdurate Brilliance: Exteriority and the Modern Long Poem* (Gainesville: U of Florida P, 1991) 102.
13. Rosalind Jennings, "Disappearing Doubles and Deceptive Landscapes in the Writing of Robert Kroetsch," *LJCS* 12 (1996): 20-34.
14. Jennings 21.
15. Jennings 33.
16. Kroetsch in Jennings, "Disappearing," 29.
17. Kristjana Gunnars, "Meditation on a Snowy Morning: a Conversation with Robert Kroetsch," *Prairie Fire: A Special Tribute to Robert Kroetsch* 8.4 (1987-88): 54-67 (quotation from 67).
18. Jennings 30.

19. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 140.
20. Margaret Atwood, *Surfacing* 11; quoted by Kroetsch in "No Name Is My Name," *LTW* 50.
21. Charles Olson, *Maximus* 24.
22. Ann Munton, Robert Kroetsch and His Works (Toronto: ECW P, 1980) 8-9.
23. See Anne Munton, "The Structural Horizons of Prairie Poetics: The Long Poem, Eli Mandel, Andrew Suknaski, and Robert Kroetsch." *Dalhousie Review* 63 (1983) 69-97.
24. Kroetsch, introduction to *Beyond Nationalism: The Canadian Literary Scene in Global Perspective*, special edition *Mosaic* 14.2 (1981) xi. See also Heather Murray's use of this quotation in discussion of the Canadian pseudo-wilderness, "Women in the Wilderness," ed. Neumann and Kamboureli, *A Mazing Space: Writing Canadian Women Writing* 75.
25. Peter Thomas, *Robert Kroetsch* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1980) 1.
26. Munton, *Robert Kroetsch* 71.
27. One of Mandel's poems in *Out of Place* (Erin, ON: Porcepic 1977) is titled "The Doppelgänger" and seems to have had a profound effect on Kroetsch who reprints it in his essay on the contemporary long poem, "For Play and Entrance" (*LTW* 127-8). Whether it does actually say anything axiomatic about the human condition is open to question. For a reading of *Out of Place* which includes discussion of doubling, see Kamboureli, *OEG* 123-46.
28. Richard Lane, "The Double Guide: Through the Labyrinth with Robert Kroetsch," *JCL* 28.2 (1993): 20.
29. "Watson created in The double hook [sic] a highly poetic and elliptical work written in biblical rhythms, in chapters that resemble stanzas, and in images that dwarf plot and action." Frank Davey, "Sheila Watson," ed. William Toye, *Oxford* 823.
30. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* (London: Athlone, 1988) 380-81. Kamboureli has this to say on the subject: "Kroetsch's troping with contradictions, the referentiality of locality in his long poem is constantly suspended by the metonymic nature of his writing and by his nomadic movement from place to place," *OEG* 112.
31. See Nicholas Entrikin, *The Betweenness of Place* (London: Macmillan, 1990) 6-26. I will return to Entrikin's contribution after chapter 6.
32. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* 381.

CHAPTER 6: MARLATT

1. Caroline Andrew and Beth Moore Milroy eds., *Life Spaces: Gender, Household, Employment* (Vancouver: U of British Columbia P, 1988) 6.
2. See, for example, A. Gill, "Resource Towns in Canada: Issues of Planning and Sustainability," ed. Davies 118-130.
3. This is in fact true for every page, but can be most seriously put to test by sampling the three briefest sections of *Steveston: "Sea Trek, etc"* (11 lines; *S* 94) "Finn Road" (12 lines; *S* 107) and "Response" (6 lines; *S* 111).
4. Brenda Carr, "Re-casting the Steveston Net," *Line* 13 (1989): 85
5. As does the pronominal character "i" in Dorn's *Gunslinger* (*G* 141) and Brathwaite's x/placed poet "i" in *X/Self* (*XS* 40-47; 80-87).
6. Peter Baker, *Obdurate Brilliance: Exteriority and the Modern Long Poem* (Gainseville, FL: University of Florida Press, 1991): 11. For more explicit gender theorization of the first person English/French pronoun, see Monique Wittig's essay "The Mark of Gender," *The Straight Mind* (New York: Harvester, 1992): 76-89.
7. George Bowering, "Given This Body," *Open Letter* 4.3 (1979): 82.
8. "Found" notices, signs and placards that end up in long poems often constitute "found poetry" in themselves. See Franz K. Stanzel, "Texts Recycled: 'Found' Poems Found in Canada," ed. Kroetsch and Nischik 91-106. The latter includes Louis Dudek's definition: "the found poem is really a piece of realistic literature, in which significance appears inherent in the object — either as extravagant absurdity or as unexpected worth. It is like driftwood, or pop art, where natural objects and utilitarian objects are seen as the focus of generative form or meaning" (91).
9. See, for example: Ann Munton, "The Long Poem as Poetic Diary," *Open Letter* 6.2-3 (1985): 93-106; Robert Kroetsch, "Towards an Essay: My Upstate New York Journals," *LTW* 135-50.
10. Cindi Katz and Janice Monk, *Full Circles: Geographies of Women over the Life Course* (London: Routledge, 1993); Janet Momsen and Viv Kinaird, eds. *Different Places, Different Voices: Gender and Development in Africa, Asia and Latin America* (London: Routledge, 1993); Doreen Massey, *Space, Place and Gender* (Cambridge: Polity, 1994): 177-190.
11. Robert Kroetsch, *LTW* 119.
12. The work of Doreen Massey has been crucial in this field. For what has become the standard text on the approach, see: *Spatial Divisions of Labour: Social Structures and the Geography of Production* (London: Macmillan, 1984).
13. Bird, Florence et al., *Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada* (Ottawa: Royal Commission, 1970) Ch.2, 1.

14. For discussions of desire, sexualities and place, see the excellent collection by David Bell and Gill Valentine, eds., *Mapping Desire: Geographies of Sexualities* (London: Routledge, 1995).
15. Jay Appleton, *The Experience of Landscape* (Chichester: Wiley, 1976) and *The Symbolism of Habitat* (Seattle: U of Washington P, 1990) 25-27; Yi-Fu Tuan, *Landscapes of Fear* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1980).
16. Pamela Banting, *Body Inc.: Daphne Marlatt's Translation Poetics* (Edmonton: U of Alberta, 1993); Christina Cole, "Daphne Marlatt as Penelope, Weaver of Words: A Feminist reading of Steveston" *Open Letter* 6.1 (1985): 5-19; Frank Davey, "The Country of Her Own Body: *Ana Historic*," *Post-National Arguments: The Politics of the Anglophone Canadian Novel since 1967* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1993).
17. David Harvey, *Social Justice and the City* (London: Edward Arnold, 1973), quoted by Derek Gregory in Johnston, Gregory and Smith, eds. 217.
18. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983): 5-6; Derek Gregory, "Imaginative Geographies and Geographical Imaginations" *Geographical*, 203-205; Gillian Rose, "The Geographical Imagination: Knowledge and Critique" *FAG* 62-85; WGSJ, "Rethinking the Material and the Imagined" *FG* 197-199.
19. Derek Gregory, *Geographical Imaginations* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1994): 416.
20. Gregory, *Geographical* 204.
21. Andrew Gibson, "Interactive Fiction and Narrative Space," ed. Chernaik, Deegan and Gibson, *Beyond the Book: Theory, Culture and the Politics of Cyberspace* (London: Office for Humanities Communication Publications, 1996): 84.
22. Gibson 84.
23. "Steering" as in *gubernator*, 'the helmsman,' the etymology of cyberspace (Latin: *guber[nator]* + *spatium*).
24. In order quoted: (1) DoE, 1987: 1; (2) Curran, 1984: 153; (3) David Martin, 1996: 51. First three references in David Martin, *Geographical Information Systems: Socioeconomic Applications* (London: Routledge, 1996): 51. (4) Mike Goodchild, "GIS," ed. Johnston, Gregory and Smith 219; (5) Gregory, *Geographical* 63.
25. Marcos Novak, "Liquid Architectures in Cyberspace," quoted by Gregory, *Geographical* 66.
26. Oral poetry did not disappear with the arrival of printing in the fifteenth century, nor radio with that of television on the twentieth. The likeliest scenario will involve competition between oral, written and computerized long poems, each preserving their own characteristics.
27. The twenty-two parts of *Steveston* (1974) plus the new six from *Salvage* (1991). The poem may yet increase in size.

28. Marlatt, in interview with George Bowering, *Open Letter* 4.3 (1979). Quoted by Wah in introduction to Marlatt, *Net Work* 14.
29. The phrase comes from Neil Smith, "History and Philosophy of Geography: Real Wars, Theory Wars," *Progress in Human Geography* 16 (1992): 257-271; used by Gregory, *Geographical* 65.
30. Martin, *GIS* 57-58.
31. See Smaro Kamboureli, "The Poet as Pedestrian: Daphne Marlatt," *OEG* 114-122.
32. See Dorothy Livesay, "The Documentary Poem: A Canadian Genre," ed. Mandel, *Contexts of Canadian Criticism* (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1971) 267-281.
33. Martin, *GIS* 56.
34. Martin, *GIS* 59-60.
35. See: H. D., *Palimpsest* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1968); Susan Friedman *Penelope's Web* 236; DuPlessis, *Career* 111.
36. Laurini and Thompson, quoted by Martin *GIS* 68-69.
37. David Martin, *GIS* 68.

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This is a short-title guide to indicative source material arranged by chapter. It is intended as an easy reference aid to key further reading.

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Journal Abbreviations

- AAAG *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*
BJCS *British Journal of Canadian Studies*
GPC *Gender, Place and Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography*
JCL *The Journal of Commonwealth Literature*
LJCS *The London Journal of Canadian Studies*
SS *Environment and Planning Department: Society and Space*
TIBG *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*

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