# Knowing my place:
# learning through memory and photography

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# Abstract

This arts-informed inquiry uses auto-photography, rephotography, interviews, memory work and writing about the photograph as tools to draw out of the archive an understanding of the self-in-place. I focus on memory and photography in an autotopographical (following Heddon) exploration of topographical intimacy as it relates to childhood and current landscapes, known and unknown spaces.

Using place as common ground, I interview my siblings to excavate our shared childhood place memories. I then photograph/rephotograph these remembered childhood places, looking to identify the influence of place on childhood identity. This research with siblings was a rich and storied resource.

I also enter two public spaces with my camera, the Architectural Garden of the Canadian Centre for Architecture in Montreal and the Jim Everett Memorial Park in Vancouver, to map both the place and my relationship with/in it, and in so doing, to engage with photography itself. By creating what one might call place photo albums, I attempt to create an involvement with previously unknown spaces, hoping to link past and present places.

I explore the evidential and embodied usefulness of photography in establishing topographical intimacy with/in place and confirm the importance of using place as a means of exploring identity. Photography's use as an active device of memory and its value in documenting place for inquiry is made explicit.

# Acknowledgements

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# Résumé

Cette recherche faite en connaissance des arts utilise l'auto-photographie, la rephotographie, des entrevues et un travail de mémoire et d'écrit sur la photo en tant qu'outil permettant de soutirer des archives une compréhension du soi dans l'espace. Je porte attention à la mémoire et à la photographie d'une manière auto-topographique (selon Heddon), tout en explorant l'intimité topographique liée aux paysages de l'enfance et de la vie actuelle, aux espaces connus et inconnus.

Utilisant le lieu comme cadre conceptuel commun, j'ai interviewé ma sœur et mes frères afin de fouiller nos mémoires partagées des lieux communs à notre enfance. J'ai par la suite photographié/rephotographié ces lieux de souvenirs d'enfance tout en essayant d'identifier l'influence que porte le lieu sur l'identité de l'enfance. Cette recherche avec ma sœur et mes frères fût une ressource riche en récits.

De plus, j'ai visité deux lieux publics avec mon appareil photographique, le Jardin architectural du Centre canadien d'architecture de Montréal et le Jim Everett Memorial Park de Vancouver afin de représenter le lieu et le rapport que j'entretiens avec/dans ces lieux, ceci me permettant de m'investir directement à la photographie. En créant ce que l'on pourrait appeler des albums de photos de lieux, j'essaie de créer une participation avec les espaces auparavant inconnus tout en espérant pouvoir relier les lieux du passé à ceux du present.

J'explore l'utilité évidente et incarnée de la photographie dans la création de l'intimité topographique avec/dans un lieu tout en confirmant l'importance de l'utilisation d'un lieu afin d'explorer l'identité. L'utilisation de la photographie comme outil dynamique de la mémoire et sa valeur à la documentation du lieu comme outil d'enquête deviennent alors explicites.
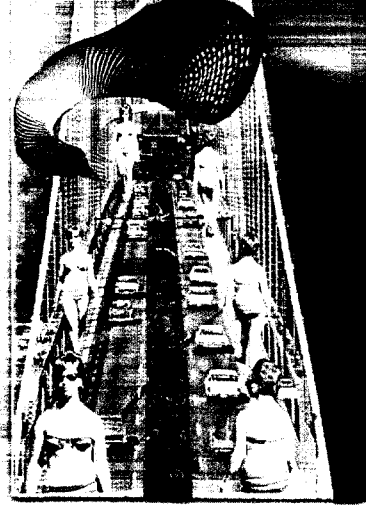
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# Chapter 1. Unfinished business

Once, when houses were new,
The inside was the outside,
Air was indifferent to place,
And a man danced anywhere
Not thinking of things to be done in rooms.

It was not like now:
Rules for the inside;
Rules for the outside.
No one thought:
The land lacks green.
Fields were vast like skies you could walk on.
No one thought:
Shall I go out today?
The world out there was not
A hallway without walls
Leading from one inside to the next.

Now we are the breath of houses:
Going in and out; out and in -
We make the cities appear to live.

Once, a man did not think
About the lines in his face
And what the outside could do
With wind and snow and rain;
There was so much room within him
He did not think it mattered where he stayed.

*A Child's Architecture*
Douglas Collin (1974)

I sit on my sofa, laptop resting on the icepack on my knee. I have wrenched my knee, and am thus physically constrained on this mild overcast winter day. My living room is where I write sometimes; this sofa and I know each other's contours. Its placement close to the three windows at one end of my small living room means I can read and write by natural light in the non-foliage season. In late spring and summer, the leaves of a tall horse-chestnut tree block the sun. Four framed rows of my Vancouver photographs hang on the opposite wall, above the low bulging bookshelves that line it. My mother's old sofa, uncomfortable for anyone except for my cats, covers another wall, and an oversized, non-working fireplace completes the short rectangular space of this room. It looks east and is up three floors on a street where most of the buildings are duplexes. I thus have a great view of roofs, and I can see far – see the dawn when I am up early – and I enjoy the littoral sense of it.

I situate myself, purposefully, writing this today because I want to bring your attention to where you are sitting as you read. Those who read doctoral theses do so for particular reasons. Most probably, those readers choose where they might read such a text – on a long plane ride to a conference, perhaps, or on a train commute, perhaps an office, at home or in an institutional setting. Are you looking out at clouds when you lift your eyes from the text, or at a familiar passing landscape, or is the phone ringing on your desk, and your eyes move to the monochrome institutional beige of your office wall as you answer? Does it make a difference to the reading, the where of it?

Place does matter. Place enters our bodies, as well as our minds and hearts. But the places we inhabit are most often background to the foreground attention that we assign to the self, the subject. Roth (2005) suggests that paying attention to the field as well as the "figure" means situating our subjectivities as educators, for instance, and as students. Situating our subjectivities means acknowledging our placed identities. Clare Twigger-Ross and David Uzzell (1996) state that, indeed, "current theories of identity …tend to present identity as disembodied from the physical environment" and add that "all identifications have location implications, place is part of the content of an identification" (p. 218). We are always emplaced; there is no body without its place in the world, no matter what that place is. Cresswell (2004) adds that "place is a way of seeing, knowing and understanding the world" (p. 11). If we do not explore our own places and situate them in a broader context, we take the risk of having our "place" assigned to us. As women, in particular, we can find ourselves constricted as to space use. Place acts on the body, and the body retains that memory. The places in which we find ourselves train that bodily memory over and over again. "Bodily lessons may be taught without [our] intellectual collaboration" (Okely, 1996, p. 137). Deborah Tall (1993) says, "a culture teaches its people how to look, what to appreciate and what to ignore" and as a result, she advocates for place "reading lessons" (p. 24).

## The inquiry

> To step into the visual is not to engage in theory as systematic explanation of a set of facts, but to practice theory, to make theory just as the photographer materially makes an image. (Hirsch, 1997, p. 15)

This inquiry uses auto-photography, rephotography, interviews, memory work and writing about the photograph as tools to draw out of the archive (my archive) an understanding of (my)self-in-place. I focus on memory and photography in an autotopographical (see below) exploration of "topographical intimacy" as it relates to both childhood and current landscapes. Lucy Lippard (1997) uses the term "topographical intimacy" (p. 33) to describe the layering of experience that occurs when one lives in a place for a long time and become intimate with it through long usage and passage. She considers palimpsest a useful term to convey how our many place experiences layer on and partially cover over previous experiences, building on but also erasing them, so that as time passes, it is difficult to excavate one incident, one view, from another. The familiarity that comes from passing through, walking on, turning the corner of the same place creates that intimacy she speaks of. Yi-Fu Tuan (1977) speaks of a movement from space to place. Space is "that which allows movement" and place is "pause; each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed into place" (p. 6).

This is one way in which place and space are "spoken." Space, place, and landscape, three words that are used liberally in this thesis, are very broad concepts. They are full of literal and metaphorical meaning. It is virtually impossible to summarize their multiple meanings, and as Bruce Janz (2008) makes clear on his website on place, every discipline takes a somewhat different stance on the meaning of these three "categories."

Space has been considered both relative and absolute (Rose et al., 1997a). Objects exist absolutely in space and can be found; however, space can also be seen as the "relative placement of objects to other objects" (Rose et al., p. 6). Tim Cresswell says, "it has been seen in distinction to place as a realm without meaning – as a 'fact of life' which, like time, produces the basic coordinates of human life" (2004, p. 10). It is now seen "not only as socially produced but also as an integral part of social processes," in other words, as "something that is changed by human activity" (Rose et al., p. 7). We thus use the word space metaphorically as well. The word space is used in association with public, as compared to the idea of property, which is considered private. Personal space is another association, attached to proxemics theory. Our understanding of space

as a cultural entity, as constructed social space, emerges from a qualitative assessment of our identity environments.

The meaning of public space, another term I use frequently, is also in flux and problematized (see for example Ruddick (1996) and Valentine (1996)). I do not attempt to grapple with the breadth of these issues. In Chapter 5, I discuss some meanings in public art, and in that discussion, the idea of "public." Many "public" spaces in an urban setting are privately owned and extensively controlled and regulated; examples are commercial enterprises such as stores, art galleries, malls, amusement parks, cinemas. Other public spaces, apparently without a commercial purpose and usually at least partially funded by public monies, such as museums, libraries and community centres, are regulated in implicit and explicit ways by cultural expectations and values. These are all interior public spaces. Public transportation in Montreal, where I live, contains both interior and exterior public spaces: the subway cars and stations and buses. Exterior public spaces, such as the street, parks, children's playgrounds, the waterfront (in this city) appear to be the least regulated, and spaces where the fabric of the city can be experienced at its loosest. There are, too, even in our urban environments, unregulated spaces, the spaces in-between. The examples I can point to in Montreal, from my own limited experience, are parts of Mount Royal and spaces under raised autoroutes. There are many more, as evidenced by websites which document adventures by graffiti artists and other urban adventurers.

Public is usually counter posed to private; public implies spaces shared with others and most often, regulated by others. Because of this, public spaces are often seen as transitory places; we are passing through, and have limited expectations as to the possible uses and meaning of those spaces. Private often connotes the domestic, the intimate, inside place where the inhabitant is in control of their environment. This too is problematized, particularly for women whose domestic space may be a setting for violence, and for children who may be more regulated in private spaces like home than in outside spaces.

Lyn Lofland (1998) adds an in-between category, "parochial" and defines public, parochial and private thus:

[private] world of the household and friend and kin networks;

[parochial] world of the neighborhood, workplace, or acquaintance networks;
[public] world of strangers and the 'street'. (1998, p. 10)

These definitions relate to interactions and relationships, the constitutive nature of space.

Kristen Day (1999) argues for a gendered look at "privatized" public space, common in our urban environments, and an understanding of the constrained and constraining uses of such spaces by women. Women and men have historically had very different space experiences, and these continue to differ in important ways. She suggests that authentic public spaces have become rarer as urban development has expanded. However, women's experiences in these spaces vary based on ethnicity, class, age, mobility and so on. My own limited goals in the photographic investigations of public space which I undertook were to explore the possibilities for topographical intimacy in public space, to create that pause that Tuan speaks of, and attempt a move from space to place.

Place, Cresswell says, "is a word wrapped in common sense" (2004, p. 1). We use it daily. Historically, in geography, it carried the "concept of a region as a geographical area" (Rose et al., 1997a, p. 7). Following on Yi-Fu Tuan and other humanistic geographers, place encompassed "spaces given meaning by human feelings" (Rose et al, p. 8). Cresswell suggests place is "a meaningful location" (2004, p. 7). There are many metaphorical uses of the word, such as a sense of place, finding one's place, etc.

Landscape, according to Rose, Kinnaird, Morris and Nash (1997b), "usually describes some kind of clearly delimited geography, very often a framed visual image of an environment... some kind of organized scene is almost always implied" (p. 167). This word is also used metaphorically, as in a cultural landscape. Landscape's purely geographical meaning is more of location, but seen in a broader context, more a view than a location and containing the shape of the land viewed. Aesthetically, it generally means land viewed from outside of itself, both "seen" and "scene." Cresswell says, "we do not live in landscapes – we look at them" (p. 11).

In this inquiry, I play rather loosely with these three terms, which as noted have multiple meanings. In general, I use place in a more local, situated way, though I also use it metaphorically in terms of identity. I use landscape relatively concretely to mean a

grouping of the actual spaces and places of childhood, and because of my use of photography, the play is on the seen/scene aspect of it. When I speak of childhood landscapes, I mean what a child would see materially as they view the spaces around them, their range of seeing/looking/moving. Space I find most difficult to define and I am not alone in that. I sometimes use it as place(s), carrying specificity, and I sometimes use it as the surround, carrying metaphor. The spaces we move through are not neutral. Spatial organizing deeply reflects the social. Leslie Weisman (1992) suggests that space is like language in that it is constantly communicating values. But place, space or landscape all depend on where we're looking. When we decide to look in one direction, we already carry our interpretive stance.

Place (*topos*) and its relationship with the self finds one home in the term autotopography, used by Jennifer González (1993, 1995) and Deirdre Heddon (2002a, 2002b, 2007, 2008), among others (Bal, 2002; Peña[1], 2005; Petrelli, Whittaker & Brockmeier, 2008).[2] The two seminal authors use the word in different ways. For Jennifer González, the originator of the term, it carries a domestic, interior, meaning:

> The terrain of an individual ideal construction of material-self-representation, the "autotopography" or "museum of the self" is a space in which objects (souvenirs, gifts, photographs, childhood keepsakes, icons, and other traces of a personal life) can be collected and displayed in private spaces (curio-cabinets, boxes, drawers, shelves, niches, altars). This collection forms a compendium of symbols and indices that represent personal links to other times, locations and individuals. (González, 1993, p. 82)

Deirdre Heddon, who developed the idea of "autotopography" separately from González, uses it in the context of performance and place, mainly in exterior space. She takes the idea of "the crossing of space with identity – the self in place" and explores site-specific autobiographical practices and performances.

> Autotopography resonates richly in the context of site-specific practice since to add *auto* to topography is to admit the self that writes every place. Topography, like autobiography, is a creative act of interpretation, of perspective, of location.

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[1] Peña (2005) uses autotopography in a very concrete sense. He suggests that the community family garden-making (*huerta familiar*) of Mexican families in L.A. is autotopography – "life-telling through place-shaping or place-making." The food plantings are a way to bring the former home (Mexico) to the new home (LA), and to tell the story of home through "vernacular foodscapes" (Baker, 1999).

[2] Perhaps (ph)autotopography or ph(auto)topography would most fully express my projects, but the English language carries implicit limits to word building.

While the myth of place might be that it simply exists, is fixed and knowable, places, like selves, are made. (Heddon, 2007, p. 41)

I take up these similar, but not same definitions, to bring space/place/time lessons to the surface for examination in two ways. First, through interviews, engaging with old photographs, and rephotography, I explore my own and my siblings' memories of our childhood landscapes, as known spaces. Then, I enter two public spaces with my camera, one in Montreal and one in Vancouver, to try to map both the place and my relationship with/in it, and in so doing, to engage with photography itself. By creating what one might call place photo albums, I attempt to create an involvement with previously unknown spaces, hoping to link past and present places and their influence on identity.

In considering metaphors for my inquiry, I thought of the photo album – a place photo album. This appears to engage with autotopography both as a "museum of the self" and, since I am engaging with place through my photography, as a site-based form of the performing self-in-place. A photo album might seem too static to be considered performance; most think of a photo album as an archive rather than an active endeavour – all those photographs frozen in time, having little meaning to anyone outside a small circle. But photo albums almost always document movement. The movement might be of aging, as in the cataloguing of a child's or family's activities as they grow; it might be a travel album, showing places one has visited. But movement and change are implicit in the seemingly static photo album. There is an element of performance, which adheres to the photo album in the posed and snapshot portraits of family and others. And beyond even performance, as Annette Kuhn (1996) suggests, "in the process of using – producing, selecting, ordering, displaying – photographs, the family is actually in process of making itself" (p. 475).

Thus, we cannot ignore how the photo album also expresses meaning through its exposition. We have all found ourselves pinioned in place by relatives or friends with a photo album thrust in front of us. We are not expected to just look at it. This is, as Martha Langford (2001) suggests, a ritualized performance, with a strong oral aspect. We must sit and listen, as much as look, to the loving explanations which are an integral part of the experience. And those frozen moments, as some think all photography is, though placed in an apparently fixed chronology by the compiler of the album, create the

possibility of more than one narrative. As Kuhn says, the photographs "may affect to show us our past, but what we do with them – how we use them – is really about today, not yesterday" (1996, p. 475). The archive is open: to interpretation, to change, to reforming and reframing.

In this creation of a photo album, I am perhaps following in a gendered[3] tradition of women being the chief keepers of memory, and the curators of one of memory's main material objects, the photo album. Deborah Chambers (2003) calls this a form of "visual dialogue between the domestic values that shaped their [female] private lives and the public world which invented these values" (p. 114). The separateness of the public and private was bridged, or "symbolically reconnected," by the photographs of the family in public space which were entered into the private family photo album. "The early family album signified the feminine desire to re-historicize the peripheralized and 'private' world of the family, to reconnect it to public history and public space" (Chambers, 2003, p. 114).

This visual dialogue that I have engaged in not only links private and public spaces through rephotography and the photograph, it also engages with narrative memory – my own, those of my siblings, and through the artefacts of their journals, those of my parents. I engage in what appear to be overtly autobiographical acts, although I use place rather than the self as the opening wedge. In exploring the archive of place memory, and in creating a new archive, I have used arts-informed methods[4] in a purposeful conflation of method and material, to experience the simultaneity possible in arts-informed research.

**The beginning alphabet. Where _do_ I begin?**

I identify myself as a privileged, educated white adult woman, living in a highly urban setting, Montreal, Quebec, in an overly developed[5] nation, Canada. My early years were spent in a much smaller city 100 miles southwest of Montreal: Sherbrooke. My

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[3] Luc Pauwels (2008), in a study on web-based family photography, indicates there is a gender shift to men as the family album compiler on the Web. He suggests this is temporary and related to the "more technical environment of the Internet" (p. 40).

[4] Image-based, arts-based, a/r/tography, and arts-informed are some of the labels that are used by various researchers to describe inquiries like mine. I discuss this further in Chapter 2. I use the term arts-informed, as I believe it speaks more to my process of inquiry and my own non-art based background.

[5] I struggle with the language marking development. "Western" is irritating; I use "over" or "overly" and "under," inevitably signaling my privilege.

family of origin lived as middle middle-class through culture and self-education though never economically. I have lived my economic life from a range of the relative and thus fearless poverty of a student, of alternative life-styles, through to lower middle-class by occupation, education and economic situation. I have been a single mother for almost two decades and I am a daughter no more.

I come to this research through a long-felt and finally understood awareness of my particular, though not unique, sensitivity to the physical environments that surround me. I have always paid distinct attention to place. How does one turn one's life · questions into an academic inquiry? The evolution of the story is not a straight line; it doesn't unroll neatly. The terrain is bumpy, and continues to be so. But I could say that I started this part of the story with personal questions, as do most researchers. I wanted to understand more about the influences on female identity. My master's research had looked at some of the "voice" lessons we take in as girls. I wanted to broaden that understanding for myself, by looking at what the female body (my body) has learned and memorized as it moves through time and space. In the 70s, my spiritual master said "what you see, you become." Though he didn't say so, he was talking about inscription, the social, psychological and physical embodiments of our social, psychological and physical environments. At the time, my understanding of inscription was limited. I took this instruction of his to mean that if you want to become a certain way, you must structure your environment thus. You must choose where to put your attention, who to surround yourself with. Struggles ensued between 'the where' and 'the what' of this; economics, fears and insecurities all impacted on choices and places. But this dictum stayed, floating like a mote in the eye. There was always something new to understand about it.

Inscription took on a different weight, both personal and political, when I returned to university to undertake Women's Studies. My understanding of inscription broadened and deepened. I spent many years writing semi-autobiographically – my spiritual (or at least religious), intellectual, and body stories – trying to fathom the depths of inscription. One story was always missing – the fourth leg of the table: place.

Carl Leggo (2005, p. 179), in his poem *Winter Alphabet*, writes

> ...a monochrome world
>
> like the alphabet on paper,
> a text I am learning to read again
> reminded how quickly I grew
> illiterate, lost my language

He is describing a winter landscape, experienced when he went "home" to Newfoundland, during a sabbatical leave year, from his current home in British Columbia. Although he grew up in Newfoundland, he had lived "away" for most of his adult life. Spending a winter in his childhood landscape brought him back to that alphabet, the beginning alphabet, the one he appeared to have forgotten.

Losing our place language can happen quickly but learning it (again) can be productive. We have many maps inside us, many layers of place experiences. Georges Perec (1997) kept a list of all the beds he had ever slept in (though it is not actually that long). I have kept a list for some decades now of the addresses where I have lived, the rooms I have slept in, and the places I have visited. I remember most of the rooms <u>and</u> the beds. Have I been particularly un-nomadic? Zygmunt Bauman (2004) says that it is only the under-privileged who stay in one place. By this, he does not mean that the millions of peoples displaced by war, famine, drought and other disasters are privileged. Rather he is suggesting that the current view of identity as multiple and multi-placed, as not fixed either in time, space or place, is a privileged view, and not one shared by much of the world. As Clifford Geertz (1996) notes, "no one lives in the world in general" (p. 262). Choosing vernacular places consciously as a focus for a gathering of photographs, a photo album, brings our attention to the particular and permits us to engage in place reading lessons.

**This chapter**

In this introductory chapter, I describe the terms and tools of this inquiry. I situate myself as researcher, as one of the tools. Other tools are memory and photography. I describe the field works which both emerged from and contributed to the questions I explore here. And lastly I situate the field works in the chapters which follow.

Although I embarked on this entire process with "what you see, you become" in my mind, my questions emerged from the actual doing of the various "field" works described below. Thus I describe the field works first.

My engagement with place is underlined by my interest in the photograph which emerged in my master's thesis work (see below), my own use of photography – beyond the family snapshot – and my concomitant interest in the littoral, in boundary places and portals. Because of that imbrication of photography and place, my focus on "what you see you become" started to modify to "how do you document 'what you see you become'?" Too, Jo Spence's (Spence & Solomon, 1995) seasoned but still pertinent question "what can a woman do with a camera?" permeates my practice.

Throughout this inquiry, I have found myself juxtaposing, both through discovery and intention, the past and the present, text and images, process and product. Foucault (cited in Lippard, 1997, p. 4) has said, "we are in the epoch of simultaneity; we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed." I explore the simultaneity I experienced during these photographic processes in Chapter 2. That simultaneity has been the most challenging and entrancing of discoveries. As I wove together photography, memory work, and place, I treated them at times as tools, and at times as subject matter; I started to use the visual, mostly the photograph, to document my place in time and space. At different times, in these projects, one would dominate the others. Each took turns in being the predominant focus or method. I briefly locate my projects below, both visually and textually.

**Field works**
**Place quilt (2001)**

My first attempt to use the visual to address place was through the creation of a "quilt" composed of my own Vancouver photographs and a photograph by Jo Spence and Terry Dennett (Spence, 1988, p. 122). Its difficult assembling reminded me of an experience in a raku ceramics class. As I
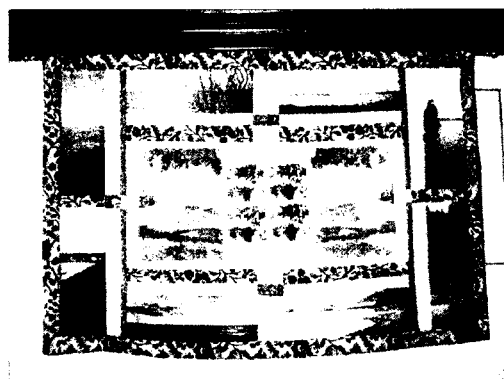
worked with the rather different clay medium required for raku, I felt a need to interrupt my standard bowl creations. With a fluid but violent motion, I broke into the edge of one of my bowls and in so doing, freed myself (at least temporarily) from my own ideas of what was beautiful. Now, as I created this "quilt," despite its very evident linearity, I was doing the same thing, acknowledging my own limitations, while simultaneously trying to breach them.

In this quilt project, for the first time, I turned around and looked at my past through a visual lens and engaged directly with my self in/through place. In titling this work, I realized that the dilemma of captioning is never over, but must be explored actively for its relationship with each visual component. I started to engage with Virginia Woolf's contention that photographs "are not an argument" (cited in Sontag, 2003, p. 26). I made the decision to place photographs in this thesis text uncaptioned. (A list of the photographs is attached as Appendix B).

In this, I follow on Elizabeth Chaplin's (2006) suggestion that "the lack of captions meant that attention focused instead on the relationship between photograph and surrounding written text – a much looser relationship than between photograph and caption" (p .48). Although the text she discusses is an apparent work of fiction (by W.G. Sebald), I felt that the looseness she suggests not-captioning creates was appropriate to my purpose in using photographs in this inquiry.

The influence and potential of the photograph was becoming clearer. The photo-elicitation I had engaged in with the participants in my master's research had started to penetrate my doctoral topic, as yet undefined. I thought that I had "done" my own photographic self-exploration alongside 'my'[6] participants, but I realized I had just been skimming the surface. There was much more to do. I also began to both appreciate and enjoy the simultaneity of process/product (of which more in Chapter 2). Can we learn anything well unless we are directly involved in its production? I found this endeavour to be a way of being the subject of my being-in-the-world, rather than an object – a way around the quotation marks, a way to obviate some of the irony that seems inherent in a post-modern research world, and with which I struggle.

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[6] I put quotes around the 'my' in referring to the participants in my master's inquiry, a potentially irritating conceit which I felt was necessary to make evident that they were not mine (de Waal, 1993).

### Drawn map (memory map) (2002)

I drew a map of my childhood property. My purpose at the time was to formalize or put on paper my memory of the 75 Heneker Street location where I grew up. Through this deceptively simple act, I discovered the idea of mapping childhood landscapes for the first time. Although it was created for another purpose, I placed this weighted map in my Commonplace Book (see below). Later, I read Sharon Sbrocchi's (2005) thesis where she made extensive use of what she called a "memory map" of her own childhood neighbourhood. I took this phrase to describe my own map. Robin Moore (1986), too, in his work with children on their use of space, asked children to make drawn maps of their territories, though these were not drawn from distant memories, but rather from the current spaces they inhabited. These examples of mapping also seem to express what my map did – place as felt rather than seen, though markers like trees, houses and roads are drawn. My drawn map remained a touchstone of subsequent photographic mapping, as it represented my home's outside space and thus the beginning of all childhood spatial explorations.
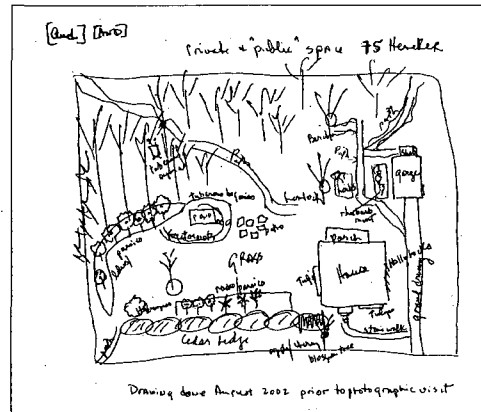
### The use of photography

I used photographs and the act of photographing in three ways: firstly, looking at existing photographs (Commonplace Book, see below), which then provoked my rephotography of known spaces, and finally photographic "mappings" of not-yet-known, but knowable spaces, in an attempt to create topographical intimacy. The existing and made photographs were also used in conversations with my siblings (Chapter 4).

#### The photograph and the act of photographing

I show, both explicitly and implicitly, differences between the act of photographing and the photograph itself. The act of photographing is an embodied

practice, a being-in-place, which is the invisible companion to the photograph, one of its products. Throughout this text, I discuss the meaning of the being-in-place, the process of photographing, and the challenge of having the product, the photograph, express that process.

There are 156 photographs in the thesis, and they are used in different ways. My own photographs and rephotographs of place act as an anchor to the text, and a witness to my presence in those places. They illustrate but do not, and perhaps cannot, explain the intensity of the experience of place (I discuss this further in Chapter 2). As Patricia Holland (2001) notes of family photographs, "users bring to the images a wealth of surrounding knowledge" (p. 121) which "readers" do not have. Nonetheless, I hope through the photo-text experience inscribed here, my readers do not find the photographs a "mysterious text" (p. 121), but rather a companion and illustration to our shared itinerary.

The family photographs not taken by me are used as a device of memory both for myself and my siblings, and as a partial guide to rephotography. I do not attempt to read the photographs themselves, but rather I project away from them into the space of memory. I also conjecture on their place in my family's "museum of the self."

I emphasize the importance of the act of photographing in this work. Although I must end up with a product to show my readers, the process is of more than equal value. (I elaborate on this in Chapter 2.) As Jonas Larsen (2008) states, "photograph*ing* is absent from most theory and research that jumps straight from photography to photographs" (p. 143). He speaks of "*practices* of photography," which include "framing and taking photographs, posing for cameras and choreographing posing bodies... post-practices of editing, displaying and circulating photographs... and the unpredictable flows of photographs as they travel through and take (momentarily) hold in wires, databases, emails, screens, photo albums and potentially many other places" (p. 143). (Larsen is discussing digital photography in particular; "momentarily" has more resonance with digital than film photography, as the materiality of digital photographs is often not realized.) Thus, the production of the photograph starts long before the clicking of the shutter, and never really ends, as long as it is in circulation. Our "optical unconscious" (Benjamin, 1931/1999, p. 512) is at play throughout this continuum.

Larsen suggests that photography be "conceptualized as a hybridized, embodied performance" (p. 144). I would add, lest it go without saying, as a performance in place.

### Commonplace Book (2002-2003)

The Commonplace Book and its photographic work is foundational to this thesis. I write more about this in Chapter 3. It was both a creative and curatorial undertaking. I started by attending to my own existing photographs of place, and to being the subject of my own writing. I dug into my own photographic archive, I started using rephotography, and I wrote memories which emerged in the process. In a sense, I captioned my own photographs through writing I did around them. As my childhood landscapes started to emerge as important, I realized I had to return to those spaces and photograph them.

My dislocation, or translocation, emerged as a strong theme. I understood, through these visual and textual means, how profound and wrenching was the wound of displacement that I had experienced in my teens. This seeming small story, unique in no way, had been in the margins of my consciousness, but work on my Commonplace Book work brought it up to the surface for exploration. Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) suggest that the "grieving" that can result from displacement, particularly unchosen, "can be long-term" (p. 208).

Simultaneously, the theme of the potential influence of childhood spaces on current perception and place emerged. My commitment to using arts-informed inquiry grew stronger in this process. This reflective project also contributed to a decision to use 'my' self as the subject, which I discuss more in Chapter 2.

### Rephotography (2002 ongoing)

Rephotography has been used in different ways (Chapter 2) by various researchers and photographers. In essence, it is taking a photograph again. Rephotography confronts the palimpsest, the imbrication of time and space, most firmly. One could consider that family photo albums contain rephotography of a kind, though a

more formal definition might be taking a
photograph again of the same
thing/person/place. In the process of creating
my Commonplace Book, I went back to my
childhood landscapes to photograph, in some
cases for the first time, remembered places. I
challenged the images in my mind's eye by
photographing places as they are now.  Subsequently, I have engaged in more traditional
rephotography by photographing those same places again. I also sought out a childhood
place, Salmon River, remembered almost solely through photographs (Chapters 4 and 6).

### Photographic "mapping" (2002, 2006)

I call my photographic examination of place, "mapping," because I aimed to
systematically examine an unknown space using photographs. Traditional mapping uses
tools like surveying to capture minutely what the eye itself cannot accurately measure.
The photograph is not a mathematical surveying tool, but it does capture elements that
the eye misses or fails to locate. In that sense, then, its usefulness comes into play.

My first deliberate entering of a public space to photograph for inquiry purposes
was the lobby of an institutional building. I created a stitched together photographic
panoramic of the lobby and interviewed several people who were in the lobby while I
was photographing it. I then applied some of Stephen Harold Riggins' (1994) analysis to
the material objects in the space to generate a
discussion of its overall affect as a place. My
second application of this "technique" was in an
exterior space, the Architectural Garden of the
Canadian Centre for Architecture in Montreal.
Since it followed directly on the interior
exploration, the difference between examining an
interior and an exterior space was immediately apparent. Topographical intimacy
became a dominant theme. My third exploration, four years later, was of an exterior

space in Vancouver, the Jim Everett
Memorial Park. The mapping of these
two public spaces is elaborated in
Chapter 5.

**Memory work (n.d.)**

Memory is implicit, explicit and
complicit in all these projects. I have sought out firstly my own memory, the memory of
my siblings, the archive of my father's extensive journal and my mother's less extensive
one. Secondly, I have looked to the memory of (and in) photographs, and the public texts
and archives which lend us memory, such as the history of the Architectural Garden and
the Jim Everett Memorial Park. Memory is untrustworthy, partial, fleeting, changeable,
and contextual. It is also what we have and what has created us and it is what gives
meaning to our current and future identities. Memory sits in all our inquiries, quietly,
whether invited or recognized. I have chosen to forefront memory, to acknowledge it
and still more, to create it. Photography is always engaged with memory, and thus
photography and memory are overarching "theories" in these inquiries. Memory and the
photograph are not the same, complicit as they may sometimes seem. Palimpsest is also
a concept that is inherent both in memory and photography

Memories are almost always visual, says Helen Chapman (1997), and "memory
and recollection are processes that involve imaging the past" (p. 4). The complex
relationship between memory, photography and history (personal/social) is something
with which we are engaged on a daily basis. As Martha Langford says,

> Memory cannot be inscribed in a still photograph, it can only be felt as a mode of
> consciousness vying with the merely visible for mental ascendance, *for attention.*
> Moved by this force that the photograph has activated, the spectator moves into
> memory. (2007, p. 9)

Catherine Keenan suggests that photography "can serve the end of history" by verifying
the fact that something has happened, but it can't "fulfil the end of memory, which is
primarily one of understanding and identity creation" (1998, p. 63). In this work, I have

built on the mind's eye imaging of memory through rephotography, while simultaneously trying to understand the convergent meaning of memory and place.

**Collage (2001 ongoing)**

For seven years, I have been working with the Artful Analysis and Representation Research Collective (AARRC). The collage creation and analysis work I have done with this group of graduate students and professors in the field of education has contributed a great deal to my use of the visual as a reflective and analytic tool. Our continuing analysis of the themed collage work we create has led me to value deeply the intuitive and emotional components of arts-informed inquiry.

Lynn Butler-Kisber (2007) discusses the use of collage as a form of memoing, as another sort of text, which can contribute directly to analysis. Over the years I have been working on these thesis projects (which not coincidentally are the years I have been involved with AARRC), I have done collage to help me tease out the question "what am I thinking now?" The expressive visual form of collage contrasts with the more mundane photography and rephotography I have  been pursuing. The understandings that continue to emerge through our use of semi-traditional analytic approaches with our non-traditional self-created research material (Butler-Kisber et al., 2003; Allnutt et al., 2005) have been a back story to my thesis inquiry. I do not use those collages as a tool directly in this thesis – that would seem to be a whole other project. Their influence however has informed this inquiry substantially, so I have placed a collage on each chapter's cover page, without further comment. (See Appendix C for collage list.)

**Getting to the questions**

My thesis projects had their genesis in more than the interrogation of "what you see, you become," of course. I had many questions, some of which were formed during my work on my master's thesis. That inquiry was informed by Frigga Haug et al's (1987) "memory work," a critical feminist methodology which invites the revisiting of important, though apparently mundane, memories in an attempt to alter their inscription.

In my master's work, I asked women to remember their body passage from childhood to adolescence. The tools I used to elicit their stories were interviews, their writing in the third person of an adolescent 'body incident' of their choosing, and photo-elicitation. Photographs proved an essential part of the memory story and were a key factor in the resulting narratives.

I asked 'my' participants to bring photographs from the period of their transition from pre-adolescence to adolescence, the ages I wanted to explore. They responded by bringing a great number of photographs, representing the span of their lives. I realized the photographs represented a resonant history and I could see how profoundly they marked 'my' participants and their stories. Their usefulness in constructing the life narratives cannot be overstated, nor can the meaning the photographs held for 'my' participants.

There were many layers to this meaning. First, 'my' participants had to go through their own personal photographs to find those which would tell their story to me. I did not explore this first layering of their experience in my subsequent analysis. Photo-elicitation was very new to me, and my understanding of its usefulness came in my own subsequent reflexive projects. My then rather simple idea of the photograph as "aide-memoire" has been expanded substantially since (Allnutt, Mitchell & Stuart, 2007; Mitchell & Allnutt, 2008). In hindsight, I acknowledge how this ignorance shaped my "outcomes." Secondly, the "fingering over" of the object of the photographs with the researcher was meaningful in and of itself. This "third party" (Collier & Collier, 1986, p. 105), the outside element or witness, gave urgency and a prompt to the narrative, which would have been absent otherwise. Thirdly, the memory stories that emerged were, interestingly, often contradicted by the photographs, and led to thoughtful insights on the part of 'my' participants. Lastly, the visible evidence of the photographs in the final product, the thesis, gave both resonance and meaning to the representation of the narratives for the participants, the researcher and the readers.

During this research, I used the idea of the "looked upon," the gaze which is usually directed at girls (and women). Rosalind Coward suggests that when we ourselves gaze, "we can feed off appearance, and reclaim the visible world" (1985, p. 52). By looking together at the photographs and by eliciting a third person story, I hoped to

gesture us away from being the recipient of the gaze. I thought changing the direction of the gaze was a way to empower 'my' participants (and myself) to look upon our own selves from a cultural standpoint, as producers of knowledge, to acknowledge our bilingualism[7], in hopes of integrating it. Becoming an active 'looker' is not without problems. Laura Mulvey, in a pioneering and well-known treatment of the gaze (1975, cited in Nash, 1996) suggested that there were only two positions for the female viewer. Catherine Nash summarizes these as: "female viewers can either identify with the object of the gaze or adopt a masculinist viewing position" (Nash, 1996, ¶ 13). Women have been consciously grappling with the challenge of finding other positions ever since.

Gillian Rose (1993), following on Mulvey, has suggested that the geographic look, the look at landscape, is a masculinist gaze, a gaze of ownership. A landscape is often conceived of as nature (though now we have urban landscapes, with the idea of the flâneur (never female) owning the streets he walks). Nature (as compared to culture) has been seen as female (Ortner, 1974); an example is the land – to be owned, ploughed, used, surveyed. That surveillance itself expresses a visual ideology because of the power relations contained in the gaze. Rose thus suggests the pleasure of looking at landscape is complicated by these issues, and that "the metaphor of landscape as text works to establish an authoritative reading" (1993, p. 100) that resists an emotional response. Counterposed to this, she offers some feminist counter-readings of landscape. Among these is Susan Ford (1991) who suggests that one way of "recovering the right of women to look" (p.154) is to focus on detail and regard "a different scale, a different aesthetic… which differs from more masculinist interpretations" (1991, p. 154). Ford argues that gardens invite such close looking: they are "the detail of landscape" (p. 154). Judith Okely (2001) argues that "ways of experiencing the landscape have been linked disproportionately with the gaze of the privileged or objectifying outsider" (p. 100) and suggests "there is a difference between surveillance and a receptive, absorbing experiential seeing" (p. 103). Catherine Nash suggests too that the looking, the images of landscape which can be generated by women, "are not finally determined by the representational tradition to which they belong, evoke or work through" (1996, ¶ 5). In

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[7] In Brown and Gilligan's (1992) study of girls, one participant called the move from the straight vision of childhood to the double vision (seeing/being seen) of female adolescence, "being bilingual" (p. 207).

other words, we are not captive to the dualism of being the object or taking the position

of the masculine subject, though it requires strong reflexivity when engaged in viewing

practices, like photography for instance, to create a new position. In Chapter 2, I discuss

some of these positions, most particularly Photovoice.

Although it was not the focus of my study in my master's work, one of the

emergent ideas was a girl's "geography," how personal and social geographies were

implicated in the construction of our embodied identities. There were hints of the

influence of space and place in 'my' participants' life narratives, but the main focus was

on interiority. I found this absence interesting, telling. I wondered whether girls and

women take into consideration their daily physical environments. Domestic space and

"street" safety are issues that have been well investigated, and they have thus moved into

our awareness. But the more mundane aspects of our daily lives, our movement through

daily space, what does that mean to us? 'My' participants' comments about place,

peripheral as it might have seemed to the stories they were telling, began to gather

meaning for me.

The master's inquiry was individual work, however, and differed from Haug et

al's concept of collectively re-writing the individual's story from a critical social

perspective. I continued to hold the ideal of doing a group project, which would critically

address inscription. However, now I wanted to explore the influence of place on identity

and link the gaze with the photographic. In Chapter 2, I discuss how my thesis project

evolved from that position to this autotopographical work.

## Writing the self and/in place

Writing place autobiographically can carry the same problematized issues as

autobiography. Women and private autobiography (journal writing) are traditionally

linked, and have been devalued, prior to a feminist rereading of those practices

(Anderson, 2001; Personal Narratives Group, 1989; Smith & Watson, 1992; Stanley,

1992). Such linking still carries a sometimes-feared stain. However, as Bronwyn Davies

(2000) suggests, "autobiographical writing can achieve something quite other than this

[individualistic aspect] in its search for writing that goes against the grain of usual ways

of telling lives" (p. 41). She cites Trinh (1991) on the potential of autobiographical writing:

> Its [autobiography] diverse strategies can favour the emergence of new forms of subjectivity: the subjectivity of a non I/plural I, which is different from the subjectivity of the sovereign I (subjectivism) or the non-subjectivity of the all-knowing I (objectivism). (Davies, 2000, p. 41)

Memory, the basis of autobiographical work, and the complicit companion to all auto-ethnographic inquiry, is currently understood to be not the factual recording of past events, but "actively produced, as *representation*, and as open to struggle and dispute" (Radstone, 2000, p. 7). Susannah Radstone sees memory work as occupying a "doubly liminal position" (p.12) in that it situates itself between the self and the world, "between the individual and the social; subjectivity and objectivity; the inner world and the outer world" (p. 12). In addition, she posits that it carries the liminal "belief in the relationship between remembering and transformation" (p. 12), thus "re-membering" (p. 13), either as a collective or individual experience.

Annette Kuhn (2000) argues that this form of memory work differs from the traditional autobiography genre, which carries certain rules about the construction of the life story. This is a construction with which we are familiar, since even in our daily lives we follow tacit rules when telling people our own stories, and we learn these rules very early. "By the end of the preschool years, most children are able to provide a reasonably coherent narrative of a personally experienced event" (Fivush, 2008, p. 52). These rules direct the genealogy and chronology of our tales. This "causal logic," with "events ordered retrospectively from the standpoint of the present," means that "the story is ordered and read as if this life could have been lived in no other way" (Kuhn, 2000, p. 180). However, since the self's story is constructed in this way, it can also be deconstructed. Sidonie Smith's (1987) description of the work of autobiography makes obvious the room we have to move about in our life stories if we choose to. She says that autobiography is "both the process and the product of assigning meaning to a series of experiences, after they have taken place, by means of emphasis, juxtaposition, commentary, omission" (p. 45). Memory work (or "revisionist autobiography" – Kuhn uses this phrase as well) addresses these same four means to investigate and explore the silences, contradictions, cultural inscriptions and alternatives sitting inside our stories.

Annette Kuhn uses photographs in her own memory work; she says, "images are just as much productions of meaning as words, even if the 'language' is different" (2000, p. 182).

Our understanding of that production (and thus possible deconstruction) has been enhanced by the autobiographical photographic work of Jo Spence (as one pioneering example) in her restaging of childhood experiences, and in later work around her medical experiences with cancer (1988, 1995). Spence's meshing of the personal and the political in her photographic work remains a benchmark. A more recent example is Chun-Shan (Sandie) Yi (2005), a differently abled woman, who restaged her childhood medical experiences, through photographs and video, in order to take back and revision those disempowering events – to "rework the hurtful gaze" and return the gaze through "making art out of yourself." Kuhn says of these forms of exploration,

> In their staging of memory, revisionist autobiography and visual autobiography can encompass a therapeutic aspiration. These practices often embody, though not always explicitly, a wish and a conviction that the wounds of the past be healed in the very activity of rescuing memory from the oblivion of forgetfulness and repression. (2000, p. 184)

It is suggested too that "any photographic work is autobiographical" (Langford, 2007, p. 126) "because it consists in the recording on film of a situation that the photographer necessarily has witnessed" (Pontbriand, 1979, cited in Langford, 2007, p. 126). The use of the word 'film' dates this comment, as does the idea that photographic work results from non-manipulated and self-taken photographs. However, my projects do engage with my self as the witness/biographer of the place images that are presented here. "The photographs give proof of the subject" (Langford, 2007, p.126).

The imbrication of place, photography and memory plants us most firmly in autobiography. We cannot ignore the haptic center from which we feel, touch, hear, and look out. Ourselves. In a room, on a street, in a car, in a mall, beside a lake. Photography as a tool to explore the view from ourselves is always autobiographical as well. It says we were there, we took this photograph, we saw this place. We felt the air, we sat on the bench, we heard the birds. Memory as a tool is distinctly autobiographical. Like a photograph it frames a partial reality, and its selective story must be told. "The personal past and the personal future might be compared to the photograph, whose paper-

thin surface is literally an interface between projection and reflection" (Dennis Grady, cited in Adams, 2000, p. 81). Memory too is an interface; it drives us, and it is there in all inquiry whether we deal with it specifically or not.

In using place as the starting point from which to explore both memory and the photograph – the wedge into the story – I realized I would interrupt the traditional narrative. Chronological narrative conventions are strong, and were sometimes present in my siblings' stories. However, the use of place as the 'hook' for the memory story allowed for a different kind of narrative, one that was non-sequential but quite resonant. Additionally, of course, I was asking for memories decades old, and that, too, contributed to the sometimes-disjointed nature of our place memories. Memory, Chapman suggests, operates disjointedly in any event. She adds "life cannot be understood in terms of continuity and sequence; rather, contemporary life is experienced as fracture and dispersal. Therefore, it is necessary to find a means of documenting the past which takes this dispersion into account" (1997, p. 28). The rephotography I engaged in followed this place-connected trail of narrative. However, I embraced the episodic nature of the memory work and rephotography; it seemed to complement the ways in which the family photographs of our youth were so sporadic and lean. In trying to fill some of these gaps, by bringing together fragments through rephotography, I felt I was creating both a remembered and an imagined space.

The episodic natures of memory and photography are thus replicated in the projects listed above. They did not follow a chronology, but overlapped and informed each other, over and over. The result was the back and forth mentioned above, a juxtaposition of images, memory and ideas that fed into one another over time. In fact, that length of time was necessary and led to a layering and remembering that is similar in some ways to the palimpsestual idea of topographical intimacy which links these projects.

In my photographic expeditions, whether to known or unknown places, I was enlivening the space between myself as photographer, and that which I was photographing, to create a learning or re-learning of place, a creation of intimacy. Too, I was pushing at history and memory, creating a tension between the imagined yet real past and the seemingly real present – present which is inevitably past, even as I/you are here –

acknowledging the fluidity in which I am constructing this apparently static thing, a thesis.

My multiple original questions were aimed at exploring links between girls and women's experiences of public environments, our historical disempowerment in public space, auto-photography and its potential for empowerment and the creation of topographical intimacy (or as I sometimes called it, comfort). I sought to understand the value of photography in these endeavours. Can we make space talk to us through the image? Would intimacy develop? Could photography become part of that movement from "space" to "place" that Tuan addresses? Would the photographic practices used in this inquiry be meaningful in deepening engagement with place?

Two beginning questions emerged: how can photography inform an inquiry into girls and women's perceptions of public space, and how do childhood landscapes inform my perception of public space?



In my ear, Jo Spence murmured "what can a woman do with a camera?", as I explored my first question. In my struggle to transition from iconic to laconic photography (Chapter 2), I realized I was making my mark on my environment, 'tagging' like the graffitists do, not with a spray paint can, but with my camera. I was moving from what John Stathatos (2000, p. 104) called a "conditional presence" in the landscape (he was speaking of women in European landscape photography) to a place of my own construction, of my place. And as I tagged, particularly in the unknown spaces, showing my perspective, right here, right now, I became a part of what a woman can do with a camera, saying I am here, I was here. See. While simultaneously tagging, I am also working to question my own language of photography, that inherited iconic language of "the horizon, the high vantage point, the gaze of acquisitional ownership" (Wells, 2000, p. 136), and to create intimacy rather than ownership. Donna Haraway discusses situated feminisms as being "interpretation, translation, stuttering, and the partly understood" (1991, cited in Rose,

1997, p. 318). I began to understand the process and power of stuttering, and to become more comfortable with both.

In Chapters 2 and 3, I explain the evolution of my research process, in terms of the move to auto(topo)biographical work. Again, this evolution took place over time through the doing of these projects. I began to feel that the only way to learn well what I was trying to explore was to do it myself, first. Eventually I understood that this rich ground of "doing" **was** my inquiry, learning through my own production, a simultaneous production of the inquiry and of the subject. I wanted to be the subject, rather than use the subject of another; I wanted to produce a new subject, a new "I." I moved away from the more distanced "girls' and women's perceptions" and positioned myself at the centre of this work. The "my" of the second question moved into the first: how can photography inform my (woman's) perception of public space? This movement also produced other questions. What was I exploring: place, place-memory, memory and the absence and presence of it in the present, the relationship between the photograph and memory, the meaning of the photograph as object, the act of photographing itself? Through my projects, I felt that I touched on all these.

In the Commonplace Book project, my second question had emerged. Lucy Lippard (after Tuan (1977)) says that the "terrain of late childhood seems to penetrate our lives and memories most intensely" (1997, p. 33). I wanted to explore this intensity and I met it again and again, as I looked back on my childhood memories (Chapter 3) and explored those of my siblings (Chapter 4). Our shared growing up space was on the very edge of the rural when we moved there when I was two; when I moved away at twenty, it was not far from that still. So in looking at research on place and childhood, I gravitated to more rural studies, and writings on the effect of "nature" on childhood.

I continued with the rephotography that had been so provocative in the construction of the Commonplace Book, now layering my siblings' memories onto my own in seeking out places to photograph. These photographs thus address not only place, but time. The open aporic space of the photograph, neither here nor there, neither now nor then, gives us a kind of "double vision," as Lively (1994, p. 29) calls it, between what we remember and what we see in the photograph; it is a rich resource for considering identity in place. As Kuhn says, "in order to show what it is evidence of, a photograph

must always point you away from itself" (1996, p. 474). That gesturing away contains the space where we can explore the dissonance between memory and the photograph, and what Lively calls "the inconstant feature" that we ourselves are. Since rephotography quite consciously forces an engagement with both time and place and a consideration of the placedness of our identities, through it, I sought to render visible, both to myself and to others, some of the storied influence of place, the imprimatur of my childhood landscapes.

I acknowledge the "staging of memory" (Kuhn, 2000, p. 184) that this artifice involves, but my purpose is not truth, whatever that means, but rather an impression of memory, the resonance of the echo. What we think we remember matters a great deal and carries its own story. We cannot retrieve childhood, but it informs our very identity. So retrieving our impression of childhood, writing memory, gives essence to our current dailiness as beings-in-the-world. Patricia Hampl says, "No one owns the past, but it is a grave error ... not to inhabit memory" (1996, p. 211). This inhabiting of memory teaches us about the ongoing construction of ourselves. Rose says, "...if the process of reflexivity changes what is being reflected upon, then there is no 'transparent' self waiting to be revealed" (1997, p. 313). Thus, she suggests, this process is more one of self-construction than self-discovery. Autobiography, then, is not (only) a chronology of a history but the active construction of the self.

As I explored the "hybrid resource" of memory and imagination (Philo, 2003, p. 12) and added photography to the mix, I thought of Deborah Tall's textured narrative and exploration of place in *From Where We Stand* (1993). In this textual mapping of her adopted place in New York State's Finger Lakes district, she considered the historical and current affect of her new home. By building layer upon layer of information and experience – "an act of deliberate adoption" (p. 86) – she created topographical intimacy for herself. She says, "having a sense of place may by now require a continual act of imagination" (p. 86). This unfinished business of learning my place – this is my act of imagination.

**The chapters**

Deciding how to structure the process and products of the above-mentioned field works into a coherent whole presented sequencing challenges. For instance, the Commonplace Book project with its rephotography and the Architectural Garden photographic mapping and exploration took place almost simultaneously. But how were they related, beyond the constant feature of my embodied experience as subject/photographer? Which came first? I could have attempted to indicate their parallel development through formatting, but I was concerned this would present representational and interpretive problems for my readers. I made a somewhat arbitrary (or traditional) decision to use life chronology as the ordering principle. Since the Commonplace Book looks at my childhood spaces (among others[8]), I discuss it first. Thus the movement in the thesis proceeds from the past of childhood landscapes to the present of current landscapes. But, as I hope I have made clear, each informs the other, in subtle and obvious ways.

Below I briefly describe the content of the chapters that follow, to situate them in relation to the field works.

### Chapter 2. More than enough: Photography.

Photography is at the heart of this inquiry. Thus, in this chapter, I spend some time elaborating on various ways of using photography in research, from Photovoice to arts-informed research to visual methodologies in sociology. I present some discussions on the use of photography and the value it brings to analysis. Am I using it as a method, a tool, or the thing itself? How does the polysemic nature of photography work with, against, or contribute to this exploration? Do photographs have meaning in and of themselves? Caroline Knowles says photographs "inflect meaning rather than reflect it" (2000, p. 23). Does this make a photograph only subjective, as some critics claim, and thus meaningless, because so full of possible meanings? Can it thus be a valid methodological tool? Or does this very openness of the photographs contain their value?

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[8] I also look at current places in my Commonplace Book, but I have not highlighted those portions in the thesis.

Through my discussion of Photovoice, I trace my decision-making itinerary regarding methodology. As I mentioned, my original idea was to work with a group of women, using their auto-photography to look at place. In the end, I used my family of origin as the "others" in my work. I delineate my long struggle with that original concept and some issues in autobiographical work.

### Chapter 3. Knowing my place.

In coming to terms with the "auto" of my inquiry, I recognize that in doing academic inquiry, one is never alone. Your companions are those who have gone before, who through their range of investigations and expositions, analysis and representation, become the voices that accompany you in your own investigation. I was interested in finding out more about the childhood that I had lived, more or less unconsciously. Carolyn Steedman (1992) has said that children cannot analyze what is happening to them or around them, "so the landscape and the pictures it presents have to remain a background, taking on meaning later, in different circumstances" (p. 22). The new social studies of childhood take a more agentic view of children. Jon Prosser (2008) states, "the current view is that children are active participants in their own social worlds and, given the means, are able to articulate and construct their own unique perspectives" (p. 408). Now I looked for the companions who have analyzed childhood, in geography in particular, to help situate meaning for my own (more or less) agentic childhood and its geographies. Too I looked to the arts-informed research community for exemplary and inspiring ways of both doing and representing.

I also found an influential literary companion, Penelope Lively. Two of her books – one a novel, *The Photograph* (2003), and the other, a childhood memoir, *Oleander, Jacaranda* (1994) – make use of photography and memory in interesting ways. In *The Photograph,* Lively writes about death and memory and how lives are altered in the present, through the revisioning occasioned by the discovery of a previously unseen photograph. A widower finds a photograph of his dead wife in which it is obvious she was intimately involved with her sister's husband. The widower (a professor of landscape history – interesting in and of itself, and not inconsequential in the story) starts to excavate the lives he thought that he and his wife had lived. The revision he is forced

to confront has implications not only for himself, but also for other lives. It is a fascinating meditation on memory and meaning in photography.

In *Oleander, Jacaranda*, a memoir of her early years, Lively writes about the child's view. That view, she suggests, contains the present in a way that adults have almost totally forgotten. As adults, she says, "it is no longer possible simply to see, without the accompanying internal din of meditation" (1994, p. 22). She uses childhood photographs to measure, in a way, the differences between the child's and the adult's view. I took up her "seeing" challenge in my rephotography because the "internal din of meditation" was precisely what I wanted to bring to bear on the photographs, looking for the storied narrative that is not "useless longing" (Mitchell and Weber, 1999, p. 5).

In this chapter, I make use of the reflections of the Commonplace Book, existing photographs and the rephotography I had engaged in for the Book. The Commonplace Book's memory writing, while not replicated in this chapter, created the framework and gave impetus to additional memory work.

### Chapter 4. A story happening many times. Research with siblings.

Autobiography is really auto/biography (Heddon, 2008). There is the self, and then there are the others without whom there is no self-story. I decided to make the implicit explicit and approach my own sister and brothers to ask them to act as narrative companions in the childhood landscapes part of this inquiry. I looked to my siblings for their memories of our shared spaces. Age, gender and birth order influence our perceptions of our family experiences, making them unique while simultaneously shared. Through this re-visiting and re-membering in the company of intimate others who shared my physical spaces, I looked for "crystallization" of insights gained through memory-work.

Laurel Richardson identifies the crystal as the "central imaginary" for "validity" for post-modernist texts, as compared with the triangle or triangulation. Crystals have many sides and refract "within themselves" (2003, p. 517). Richardson suggests that "what we see depends on our angle of repose" (p. 517); she says that "…crystallization provides us with a deepened, complex, thoroughly partial, understanding of the topic. Paradoxically, we know more and doubt what we know. Ingeniously, we know there is

always more to know" (p. 518). I trusted that looking for facets, rather than facts, would bring additional aspects of place and experience to light. My siblings would have a perspective that would bring in the elements of memory and place with complementary but (I assumed) somewhat dissimilar views. Too, the four of us have all engaged with photography, more or less, and I thought that would contribute to the ways I could use existing photographs and my rephotography.

An additional voice, another facet, was added when I started reading my father's journal just prior to writing up the sibling interviews. I discuss how his writing, past for us, but present for him, brought an interestingly vital perspective to my writing. It enlivened my mind's eye in unforeseen ways, which are perhaps not visible to the reader, but which increased the refraction substantially.

In this chapter, I make use of the interviews I had with my siblings and their responses to my photographs. Additionally, I set about taking photographs of places that had emerged as important to them through the memory work. While this rephotography did not necessarily have as much meaning for me, it expanded the "deep map"[9] that was starting to form of our childhood landscapes in Sherbrooke.

At the end of this chapter, I discuss outcomes of the first half of the inquiry. Rather than speaking of findings or results, I use the idea of outcomes, or consequences. Findings, at least in their more traditional meaning of conclusions, did not seem the appropriate name for the processes and products of this inquiry. Without playing on words excessively, when I *came out* of each stage of this inquiry, I felt that I had *outcomes*. These outcomes consisted of new visuals, the most visible product, and new insights and experiences which needed to be processed into textual form. The impetus and shaping of the next stage was another outcome.

### Chapter 5. Between then and now: The Gardens.

The element of photography as carrying both embodiment and a distancing perspective, both subject and object, makes it an ideal vehicle to look at the ways in which we inhabit space and the ways in which we see those spaces. It takes full

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[9] William Least Heat Moon (1991, cited in Pearson & Shanks, 1997, p. 51) uses this term to express the fullness of the exploration he did on one locale.

advantage of the researcher as instrument of inquiry. In this chapter, I moved away from memory (though of course bringing it with me) to current and newly experienced places to explore the possibility of creating topographical intimacy through photography.

The two photographic projects outlined in this chapter, the Architectural Garden and the Jim Everett Memorial Park, took place four years apart. In the time in-between, by presenting different written and visual versions of the Architectural Garden photographic mapping project (Allnutt, 2005), I came to understand a great deal about the photography, and further still, the autotopography I was engaged in. These understandings were fully in play when I did the second mapping project of the Jim Everett Memorial Park.

How interesting it was then to appreciate that I had the identical experience of building "topographical intimacy" in the second iteration. The dialogue with the space, the relationship of photography to that dialogue, and the role of intention in creating "topographical intimacy" were all present. One difference was that the intimacy was more swiftly established in the second project, perhaps due to the sequence of learning.

This chapter uses photography (and rephotography in the case of the Architectural Garden) as a mapping tool, as an expression of embodiment, and as a bridge between the subject and the object. Field notes are presented to act as the 'thick description' base to the representation of the photographs themselves. The field notes also represent that expression of embodiment I seek to convey.

Companions were fewer in this exploration. I interviewed one user of the Architectural Garden and walked the Jim Everett Memorial Park with one of its co-creators.

### Chapter 6. Finding Salmon River

In this chapter, I describe my last field work for this inquiry. Salmon River is a family place of memory, carrying both the known and the unknown, and now, both the past and the present. I write of my search for and the finding of Salmon River, and its photographic move from memory place to present place. Using existing photographs, my father's journal, and photography, I document that autotopographic movement from

space to place.  In addition, I point to the value of such autotopographical research, both for myself and for the readers of this work.

# Chapter 2.  More than enough:  Photography

Not to see more than is there, we learn from photographs, is to see more than enough.

Wright Morris (1989, p. 119)

**The camera in my hands**

In my family, there is a story about "Brownie in the baggage car." Brownie was our dog. When I was 7 or 8, we went to Breeches Lake for our summer holiday. It was our family custom to rent a cottage on a lake for the three weeks of my father's holiday; we would take a taxi or two (we were six, plus animals and belongings) or a train, because our family never owned a car. Noted in my father's diary, [10] in the entries for 1953 and 1954, are remarks about our summer holidays at Breeches Lake in early August: the weather, trips to Disraeli, a boat trip to Snake Island, a rowboat upheaval with my mother and the dog, visits with our neighbours, Mrs. Sharman and her sister Mrs. Clark. "Brownie in the baggage car" was a key phrase in my family to provoke a particular memory: my brother David's distress about how Brownie had to be kept in the baggage car on the train trip to the cottage.

What is not noted in my father's diary, however, is a different "Brownie" story: my strong memory of one of these neighboring women giving me a Brownie camera, a camera that had belonged to one of their sons. I believe this was the first camera our family owned. My memory is I didn't get to keep it and it became the family camera. I remember what it looked like though, and how it felt, the smell of the black plastic. How interested I was to learn that Kodak gave away 500,000 Brownie cameras to children born in 1918 (for its 50th anniversary), to sell the concept that it was so simple, a child could do it.[11]

My brother David reminds me that in his teens, he took hundreds of photographs, developing them in his school darkroom. I wasn't paying attention at the time. Nor was I paying attention in my teens to a school friend who was doing the same thing, and developing her photographs in the darkroom her father built her. How lucky I felt, though, decades later, when after a chance meeting with her, she sent me a few precious photographs of my friends and I at high school and on adventures.[12] I had, until then, only two or three photographs of those years. A great gap exists in the photographs of my family of origin. Is this explained by the fact that

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[10] My father kept a perpetual diary. In tiny, barely readable writing, he would note something about every day, almost every year. There are gaps, sometimes substantial, but it is a fascinating archive, and has been passed around among my siblings for years. None of us had ever read it all the way through until 2007 when for the purposes of this inquiry, I commenced (see Chapter 4).

[11] www.kodak.com/US/en/corp/features/brownieCAM

my brother then owned his own camera and he wasn't interested at the time in taking photographs of people, only, as he remarks, places?[13] The Brownie camera must have been long dead by then.

Photography was a casual interest of mine for decades, ebbing and flowing. I spent five months in Europe in the early 70s, and I have no photographs to show for it. Not one[14]. When my daughter was born in the early 80s and friends gave us a camera, I started the very common blossoming of photo-taking which new parents experience. Place was irrelevant; it was but the background for my daughter, her friends, her experiences. In 1993, however, I went to Vancouver alone, without a camera, and began a changed relationship with landscape. Since then, I often carry a camera, but I barely photograph people, only places. I photograph people because it is expected; I photograph place because I want to.

It is probably not by coincidence, therefore, that an interest in personal environment started to emerge during my master's work (Allnutt, 1999). My original protocol contained questions about environment, sparked by Nancy Lesko's looking at "the curriculum of the body" (1988). But in the ways of qualitative research, my original intention was not borne out in the interviews with 'my' participants. As I followed the trail of their narratives, I had to leave behind my own interest in the idea of how the physical outside structures the psychic inside. Nonetheless, I remained deeply interested in the idea that Judith Okely (from Bourdieu) suggests: "a system of beliefs or principles can be implanted by bodily training because... the body is treated as a 'memory', which is not easily obliterated by conscious thought" (1996, p. 137). This "curriculum of the unconscious" (p. 137) suggested to me not only that the body is treated as a memory, but in addition, as I mentioned, that the body has a memory and public space trains that bodily memory over and over again. This "direct grip" that our "routine, habitual activity" (Bordo, 1993, p. 16) has on our bodies, constructed in part by the public spaces we routinely inhabit, is a form of place lesson that can bypass conscious thought without the "reading" that Tall suggests we need to initiate. I wanted to explore those lessons – my own unexamined perspectives – and "to discover paths away from the road socialization now marks across our bodies" (Haug et al., 1987, p. 130).

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[12] The photograph of Susann in the tree, placed in my quilt and at the end of Chapter 1, is part of that collection.
[13] This is contradicted, to a certain extent, through my own examination of his still extant negatives.
[14] A friend and I did make a short 16 mm black and white film, set in and around the Frankfurt Opernhaus, a bombed-out building in the heart of Frankfurt.

Women have been made aware of overt and covert influences in both public and private spheres on the construction of their subjectivities, this "curriculum of the unconscious." Our schooling and the media, print and visual, have been explored; coherent and critical looks have been cast long and hard at these influences. Nuanced explorations have extrapolated some of the forces that continue to shape us. One of those forces, and the one that interests me deeply, is the public environment that we inhabit, more or less, on a daily basis, and in various forms of intensity. No matter what gender, economic status, cultural or ethnic community, age, or other factors – most of us encounter a public environment.[15] Exactly which public environment differs according to our ways of maneuvering around the city.[16] What is the meaning of public? Is it a mall, a school, a schoolyard, a park, a bus, the Metro, a downtown street, a suburban street? All these urban environments are more or less constructed, regimented and routinized, and most often, this construction has not been done by its daily users.

My intention in this research emerged from my interest in place, women and photography. We all inhabit a place; we all inhabit a body. This seeming universality is, however, "culturally, historically, and geographically specific" (Nast & Pile, 1998, p. 1). Heidi Nast and Steve Pile name the relationship between body and space, "places-bodies." They state that this relationship is more fluid and complex than the "fixed coordinates of social relationships and their constitutive spatial registers" or "the static, reified notions of bodies to bodies that make, and are made through, the practices and geography of places" (p. 5). Nast and Pile suggest that the geopolitics of "places-bodies" are neither *universal* (non-specific) nor *unique* (too specific). The relationship between ourselves in our bodies and the places we inhabit changes with all the factors mentioned above (among other differences) and whether the place is known or unknown.

Thus, there is a paradoxical unique/universal to both our body and our body in place. I wanted to map some of that *universal uniqueness* of women's physical experiences in public spaces. The gendered aspect of domestic spaces, the interior, has been well explored. But I wanted to know more about how the non-domestic, physical, exterior environments we inhabit – streets, cinemas, clubs, stores, cars, buses, metros, lakes, meadows – inform the construction of

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[15] Differences in age, mobility and economic circumstances, as well as differing abilities, can mean that everyone does not experience the same definitions of a public environment. Indeed, my own mobility and age subtly flavor all my thesis projects.

[16] I say city, because in Canada, the majority of the population lives in an urban environment, whether large or small, and increasingly, this is a global phenomenon.

our gendered subjectivities.

Women often have a limited and limiting use of, and relationship with, public space. Iris Marion Young (1990) suggests that for a variety of very good reasons, girls and women's physical mobility and motility is inhibited. She says, "women in sexist society are physically handicapped.... As lived bodies we are not open and unambiguous transcendencies that move out to master a world that belongs to us, a world constituted by our own intentions and projections" (p. 153). She considers one expression of containment to be the practice by girls and women of "*inhibited intentionality*" (p. 147), in the way they use their bodies in space and time. Our being-in-the-world is structured by the ways in which the physical environment reflects our culture.[17]

Contributing factors to what becomes an internalized bodily containment are the training of the child's body experienced at home, in school, on the streets, and in playgrounds (Okely, 1996; Lesko, 1988). This "curriculum" is made up of family protection, being the subject of the "male gaze," safety issues, physical surveillance by teachers, a constant review of bodily posture, appearance and health, and restriction on girls' use and range of physical spaces, among others. How is that training echoed in the public spaces that we inhabit and move through as adults? My interest lies in retrieving, remembering and representing a sense of what the female body (and concomitantly, subjectivity/identity) has learned and memorized as it moves through time and space. What do we see when we look at our public space environments? How do we explore the "perimeter of our enclosure" (Langford, 1997, p. 3)? How do you ask a fish to tell you about the water? Our geographies can be mapped, of course, in many ways. My original plan for this inquiry was to work with women using Photovoice[18], but for reasons I explore later in this paper, I decided to stay with the method of auto-photography. My questions however remain the same.

How do we see? How can we see? What do we see? Collier and Collier (1986) suggest that indeed we do not pay attention, particularly in an urban environment. We have become "limited observers" in the world, because we "no longer deal personally with its natural forces. This curtaining security has limited the range of phenomena that we, as individuals, have to deal

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[17] Marianne Wex (1979), in a classic photographic study of the use of space by women and men, visually documents the "*inhibited intentionality*" that women practice.

[18] Photovoice, simply put, is a method that places the camera in the hands of participants. I elaborate further below.

with in order to survive" (1986, p. 6). They describe how a Navajo man accurately locates season, hour of the day, crop, and location in a photograph he has never before seen, and call this the "sensory perception of a preliterate culture in which a man [sic] must survive by astute visual analysis of the clues of his total ecology" (p. 110). Banks (2001) suggests that seeing is not a natural act, though we might perceive it to be. "Inattentional blindness" is often at work (Mack & Rock, 1999). There is no conscious perception of the visual world without attention to it. Photography contains the possibility of fixing and isolating so that we can attend to what we did not necessarily see.

### Ways of seeing: Photography

Pierre Bourdieu (1990) suggests that photography is "a 'choice that praises', because it strives to capture, that is, to solemnize and to immortalize" (p. 6). Through this solemnization, photography moves from the

> ...randomness of the individual imagination and, via the mediation of the *ethos*, the internalization of objective and common regularities, the group places this practice under its collective rule, so that the most trivial photograph expresses, apart from the explicit intentions of the photographer, the system of schemes of perception, thought and appreciation common to a whole group. (1990, p. 6)

Thus he implies that there are limits on what is signified as a "takeable" picture, because of "implicit models" (p. 6) taken as a given by different social classes and groups. Bourdieu expands Collier and Collier's view of our narrow looking by suggesting it is hard for us to see outside the bounds of our conventional cultural narratives. He therefore sees limits in the usefulness of photography.

Although we could acknowledge that the narrative may already be inscribed, I would suggest that ways of seeing, like the ways we inhabit space, are neither *unique* nor *universal*, and they are influenced by many differences that can expand how we learn to see. Photography is potentially a way to see <u>what</u> we see, with the one step back into "object," which then can enable us to find some distance to evaluate, to discuss, to construct a narrative. The taken-for-granted of our seeing can be exposed to view, to discussion, interpretation, negotiation, identification. Video would seem to more readily express our experience of moving through the world, but simultaneously contains the potential for inattention due to that continual movement. In the stillness of the photograph, we can bring attention to what Walter Benjamin calls the "optical

unconscious" (1931/1999, p. 512) that photography can present to our view. We can construct a moment of intervention, a pause. The fixity of the photograph is one of its strengths. It is also a limit. Eudora Welty (1996) captures both elements when she says of her camera:

> It was an eye, though – not quite mine, but a quicker and an unblinking one – and it couldn't see pain where it looked, or give any, though neither could it catch effervescence, color[19], transience, kindness, or what was not there. (p. 164)

Of course, the openness of the photograph to interpretation does allow us to speculate on "what was not there." This polysemia is considered problematic by some and a rich resource by others.

In my own limited experience with photo-elicitation in my master's research, photographs proved to be that rich resource (Allnutt, 1999). Collier and Collier (1986) suggest,

> Images invite[d] people to take the lead in inquiry, making full use of their expertise.... Psychologically, the photographs on the table performed as a third party in the interview session. We were asking questions of the photographs and the informants (sic) became our assistants in discovering the answers to these questions in the realities of the photographs. We were exploring the photographs *together.* (1986, p. 105)

In the "situated meaning making" action research of Mary Brinton Lykes in Guatemala and Caroline Wang in China, photography was used by village women to map their own experiences. This gave them what Wang calls "Photovoice," a powerful tool for learning and change through shared control. (I discuss Photovoice at length below). One North-American example of Photovoice is a study by Katie Douglas (1998a, 1998b) using an "environmental autobiography" created with photographs taken by 10 first year mixed-gender African American university students. The students were attending a predominantly white 'research' university, and were asked to take photographs on campus that "will illustrate your impressions [of the university] or that will help you to describe your impressions" (1998a, p. 419). The students were then asked to interpret their photographs. Douglas notes the participants felt that the "employment of an alternative data representation promoted a deep level of reflective thinking" (1998b, p. 18). Some students said the "visual component increased their level of commitment to completing participation in the study" (p. 18). In the "environmental autobiography" photographic work of inner city Los Angeles children (Leavitt, Lingafelter & Morello, 1998), where the children were given cameras and asked to take photos of their neighbourhoods, several themes were displayed that might not have been immediately evident through other means. Like

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[19] Welty was working in black and white photography.

the photographs taken by the Appalachian children in *Portraits and Dreams* (Ewald, 1985), the photographs of the Los Angeles children shine a very direct emotional but not sentimental light on environments that seem harsh and unrewarding to the outsider/observer. Buss (1994) and Orellana (1999), both working with children, and Bach (1998), working with adolescent girls, have made use of the visual in their explorations of public and private space with their participants.

Photography can thus be useful in identifying and bringing to the surface our positionality in public space – as Grosz says, "especially those [positions] which are not acknowledged as positions" (1995, p. 124). Issues of safety, consumer culture and practices of looking, ownership of public and private space, homelessness, all of which contribute to our "envelopes of identity" (Irigaray, 1993, cited in Grosz, 1995, p. 121), can also be addressed. Grosz suggests that "unless space (as territory which is mappable, explorable) gives way to place (occupation, dwelling, being lived in)" (1995, p. 123), sexual difference will continue to be expressed in familiar and less useful ways.

### Photography as evidence

> Photographs are evidence, after all. Not that they are to be taken at face value, necessarily, nor that they mirror the real, not even that a photograph offers any self-evident relationship between itself and what it shows. Simply that a photograph can be material for interpretation – evidence, in that sense... In order to show what it is evidence of, a photograph must always point you away from itself. (Kuhn, 1996, p. 472)

Photography was invented over 150 years ago. Then it was magical. This rather cumbersome medium could capture the real, the moment, appearing to do so without interpretation; faces and places preserved for families, for history, for posterity. Still today, photography is magical. Though now, it is far less cumbersome, and is, as a result, ubiquitous. Photography has, as Richard Bolton (1989) says, thickened our visual environment.

Because of this "thickness," we both see and don't see the embeddedness of the photograph in our daily environments. Roland Barthes' (1981) idea of the photograph being invisible and contingent has taken on another meaning in today's visual world. One meaning of this "invisibility" is that the photograph is the screen upon which meaning is projected – the screen that disappears in projection, and yet is wholly material to the process. In our current North American society, our visual environments have become so imbricated with the

photograph, it no longer seems amazing or magical that we could not count on all our fingers and toes the number of photographic images we would see in one downtown city block. We no longer know a world without the image; the screen has completely disappeared.

It is against the background of this thick visual environment that longstanding debates over photography as "real," and/or as "art," have ebbed and flowed. Richard Bolton (1989) affirms that the debate over photography's acceptance as an art form is over. Photography is legitimized. Bolton suggests that all through photography's history, both its creation and its marketing have gone hand in hand. Photography's fight for acceptance is well won, although its place of in-between, in between painting and merchandizing, in between the skilled arts and the amateur arts, has always positioned it as an ambiguous "art." Bertelsen, Gade and Sandbye suggest that "the appearance of photography has itself contributed to phasing out the concept of art that excluded it from the sphere of art and to introducing a new one that could easily include photography" (1999, p. 7). This is the power and the ambiguity of photography. Its ubiquity militates against us being able to deconstruct fully its profound effect on our lives.

In Western society, most of us can (and do) take photographs. Unlike the other arts, one could argue, it requires the fewest resources and skill. A disposable camera can be had for ten dollars, and its film developed inexpensively. Higher levels of skill require better equipment, most assuredly, but it still remains accessible to many people. Digital cameras, yet another story, mean that many photos can be taken (and deleted) to yield a "good" photograph. Video requires more resources and arguably, more skill. Drawing, painting, sculpture – these require higher levels of skill, though the actual materials may be less expensive. The democracy of the camera contributes to what John Fowles (1985) calls the "common illusion" of photography:

> No one thinks to become a good writer by buying a typewriter, or a composer by acquiring a piano. Yet a camera, so the illusion runs, turns the crassest possessor into a potential Cartier-Bresson. The reason is simple: a camera records what one sees, and that is as closely personal a thing as a belief or an opinion. It is territory, in the bird sense: not to be trodden on, doubted, ignored by others. (p. xvii)

The discourse concerning photography has historically struggled with the "real." Barthes (1981) has said "whatever it grants to vision and whatever its manner, a photograph is always invisible: it is not it that we see" (p. 6). The contingency of the photograph lies in the fact that only part of its meaning derives from the scene there inscribed; the remainder emerges from its context, dissemination, use and audience. The "social biography" (Edwards, 2002, p. 68) of the

photograph includes its making, as well as the looking which follows, the place it is stored, how it is used, etc. As Elizabeth Edwards says, any object "should be understood as belonging in a continuing process of meaning, production, exchange and usage" (p. 68).

In looking at photography, "we find contradictory impulses and opposing aims. The wide range of photographic applications raises the possibility that photography has no governing characteristics at all save adaptability" (Bolton, 1989, p. xi). Bolton suggests that the complexity inherent in photography can be addressed most fruitfully through "a judicious consideration of context" (p. xi). The turns (in various disciplines) in analysis have meant that an argument exists for a completely subjective perspective. Bolton however believes that as long as dominant meanings are not relativized, we must address what he calls the *illusion* of neutrality that emerges from the 'narrative poverty' of the photograph. If photographs are still taken as "real," then they can be used ideologically. While we may understand that photographs can hold many meanings, he suggests "absolute interpretations still exist in the world" (p. xii). The "interpretive conventions" (p. xiii) embedded in them can be (and are) manipulated in ideologically self-serving ways. Bolton argues for a critical perspective on photography which would develop "an understanding of meaning as a contest, created out of opposition and negotiation" (p. xiii).

Prosser (2000) discusses the issue of the "real" of the photograph in a social research context. "Given that all photographs are constructions, it is important to know something of the context of creating an image if the implied promise of truthfulness to the subject, the audience and the research profession is to be upheld" (p. 120). Despite the "contest of meaning," in the public sphere the "truthfulness" of photography is still a taken-for-granted idea and that must be both respected and addressed. "The photographic is the way we moderns test that reality is *out there*: we rely on its veracity more than we readily admit" (Kane, 1994, cited in Prosser, p. 125). Indeed, as Bertelsen, Gade and Sandbye point out, we see photographically[20]: "we cannot form images without bringing along our 'photographic optic'" (1999, p. 10). They suggest that questioning photography means questioning our culture. "When we ask what a photograph is, we also ask who we are ourselves, how our culture uses images, and conversely, how images influence our culture" (p. 7). That thick visual environment we inhabit, with its iconic ubiquity, is now completely embedded. Visual culture, grounded in photography, continues to both reflect

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[20] Under-developed world citizens might not have the same experience.

and create our life views.

Thus, in an inquiry into looking photographically, both the context in which photographs are made and the context in which they are viewed, must acknowledge that photographic optic and attempt to move it out of the taken-for-granted. Prosser (2000) suggests that "judgements and claims of contextual validity are made essentially via *reflexive accounts* but also through their *representation*" (p. 125). Photographs provide "extra-somatic 'memory'" (p. 129) and he states, "the ability of the camera to record visual detail without fatigue... is useful" (p. 129). Prosser also contrasts the difference between the still image and the moving image and suggests that single images without descriptive text to provide context "rarely fulfil the reflexive and internal validity" provided by moving images. Internal validity is an interesting concept to consider in relation to photography. I would hold that the very contingency of photographs contains their use, usefulness, and meaning and it is in ourselves, as spectators and viewers, that meaning and validity are engendered. As Kozloff (1987, cited in Wells, 2000, p. 26) says, so poignantly, "with photographs, we have concrete proof that we have not been hallucinating all our lives."

**Photography as method**

Because of these debates around the "real," the context, and the polysemic nature of the photograph, visual methods can suffer from a strong distrust. Can they be "scientific" or rather, do or can they carry the same weight as other social science research means and ends? Howard Becker says,

> As the work progresses, the photographer will be alert for the visual embodiments of his (sic) ideas, for images that contain and communicate the understandings he is developing... His theories will help him to photograph what he might have otherwise ignored. Simultaneously he will let what he finds in his photographs direct his theory-building, the pictures and ideas becoming closer and closer approximations of one another. (1974, cited in Emmison & Smith, 2000, p. 26)

Emmison and Smith (2000) suggest one of the issues in visual research is the "methodological adequacy" of the method. Becker addresses this in terms of the use of the photograph, saying that taking issue with the exclusionary, framing aspect of the photograph is something that needs to be done, just as one must take issue with all tools used in data gathering and analysis. We must challenge the adequacy of the questionnaire, the interview, as well as the photograph. That does not mean that we exclude it, but that we examine its function, use and

limitations, and continue with the process, taking these aspects into account. Emmison and Smith are equally concerned with the potential partiality of the photograph; because the photographer has control of the framing of the photograph, a photograph "must always be considered a selective account of reality" (2000, p. 40). The photograph, they suggest, is like any piece of data.

They add that with visual research (particularly photography), there can be a tendency to "analytical conflations" (p. 18) between the data and the methodological tool. They mean "the failure of visually oriented researchers to distinguish between the information they examine – the seen – and the methodological means they have established for capturing this information – the photographic image" (p. 18). This is the power of photography, a power they are suggesting can overwhelm the researcher and the reader. In other words, form can overrule or preclude 'proper' analysis of content. Emmison and Smith argue that we need to have valid methodological reasons for using photographs (or any other visual method), and not more traditional or usual methods of text, thick description, and participant observation, to describe the seen. Scott (1991) suggests that photographs must be evaluated like all documentary source material, and be assessed for authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning. He states that photographs, like other documents, should be considered as "texts whose meaning must be disclosed like any other" (cited in Emmison and Smith, 2000, p. 39). Indeed, the visual form does have a power that cannot be underestimated.

The iconic and polysemic nature of the photograph can mean that it is more than a usual piece of "data." Burnett (1995) discusses the difference between the thing, the photograph, and our projection upon it. He cites Kracauer (1993): "in a photograph a person's history is buried as if under a layer of snow" (1995, p. 15). Burnett says, "Kracauer distinguishes between the photograph of a person and the memory-image. The latter is what is left when the photograph is viewed outside of the time when it was taken," and adds that "no photograph escapes the contradictions and potential excitement of temporal dislocation" (1995, p. 15). Burnett indicates that Polaroid[21] offers a very different kind of photography and suggests that the "temporal collapse here [through the instantaneous photograph] could be described as one of the breaking

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[21] Digital photography has overtaken the Polaroid. Polaroid has stopped making instant cameras and film. www.boston.com/business/technology/articles/2008/02/08/ polaroid_shutting_2_mass_facilities_laying_off_150/ Retrieved March 10, 2008.

points between modernity and postmodernity" (p. 35).

Nonetheless, regardless of the temporal distance – long (as in darkroom printing) or short (Polaroid or digital) – the moment of capture is always gone, is always past. Is that one of the fundamental "excitements" of photography? Every minute, passing away, slipping past us, but no, we get it, now we get it. In the "invisible" photograph, we capture time. The photograph is almost always viewed outside of the time when it was taken; although digital photography pretends to capture the instant, it does not. That is the fundamental element of the photograph; the event or person captured is always gone. In the invisible, contingent photograph, we pretend that loss has not occurred. This element cannot be ignored when we consider the power of the photograph, of the visual, to overwhelm the viewer. A photograph is not wholly a text; the emotional reaction to the visual, as compared to the reaction to a written text, must always be taken into account.

It has been suggested that visual culture is the expression or language of postmodernity, while text is the language of modernity. Photography can speak to the "pieces of" aspect of postmodernity, the hip hop, sampling, collage culture which we inhabit, rather than the "whole of" aspect of modernity[22]. Emmison and Smith (2000, p. 12) state that the visual in sociology was "banished" by Durkheim and the elimination of the body in sociology followed. The "removal" of the body meant that the eye, the physical eye, was removed (also the I?). In addition, they suggest that, historically, sociology was concerned with the underclass, and to use the "eye" through photography could be seen as a "form of surveillance, regulation and control of populations" (p. 13). Sociology "studies down" and using photography of the "underclass" might be construed as part of this regulatory regime. This interesting insight into the power relations of a specific academic discipline and its historical evolution is highlighted by reviewing the index of Marcus Banks' survey of *Visual Methods in Social Research* (2001). Photo-elicitation, which involves interaction between the researcher and the participants around photographs, is given attention, but Photovoice, which puts the camera in the hands of the participants, is not even mentioned. The work of Caroline Wang and Mary Brinton Lykes (of which more below) is not even in the picture.

One way to address both the concerns of Emmison and Smith and the understandings of Becker is to consider both the forest and the trees. Magilvy, Congdon, Nelson and Craig (1992)

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[22] Photography's role in the evolution of modernity is not explored here.

take into account Becker's caution that the "photographer's theoretical perspective influences the content and interpretation of photographs, [thus] the theoretical approach should be made explicit" (1992, p. 253). In their study of rural aging, they used photography "as both a method of mapping observations and as a lens through which the researchers were enabled to recognize ethnographic patterns" (p. 253). They first photographed the general environment to familiarize themselves with the rural context. They then focused in on closer environments, the homes of the rural aged and the health encounters that took place there. They layered their photographic process from wider to narrower, finishing with the photographing of their participants examining photographs of themselves in these health encounters. Allied with this process was interviewing and observation. These iterative processes facilitated a practice that takes Becker's idea of continuous and simultaneous data gathering and analysis into account.

Returning to Barthes (1981) who so clearly reminds us that "a photograph is always invisible: it is not it that we see" (p. 6), we can ask how a photograph differs, then from what we see? Is the overwriting that our experience/cultural story/ways of seeing give to our experience of a photograph any different from that which we bring to our everyday visual worlds? Is the cultural construction of our visuality equally present when we look at the street we walk down, the buildings we walk beside or through, the landscape beside the autoroute, the autoroute itself, the view from the bus, the view in the bus? What we see is learned. "Becoming acculturated, we should not forget, is a way of learning *not* to see, as well as a way of learning to see" (Eisner, 2006, p. 11).

Looking is also learned. Are we trained to frame the photograph? Allan Neilsen (2007) suggests that we do learn how to exclude what we see, as we become accomplished in photography.

> The longer and more attentively we work with any given camera, the closer our images
> will resemble what we thought we saw through the viewfinder... Yet when we learn what
> things our camera can see, we begin to see the same things; and when we learn what
> things our camera cannot see, we stop seeing them. (p. 21)

Nonetheless, the threshold element of the photograph can be used as an intervenor, an object external to our subject, whose usefulness does lie in its stillness. Its value as time (seemingly) stilled for our perusal enables us to stop our visual experience long enough to examine it. Indeed, it provokes that examination in a way that Rebecca Solnit (2004) describes as the difference between looking and seeing: "looking might be the business of glancing at things

long enough to take them in as information; seeing, the art of soaking them up, of letting them sink in, of feeling them" (2004, p. 40). Seeing and looking in terms of photography are indeed two separate things; one of the differences between being there and regarding the photo afterwards rests very much in the embodied experience (see discussion later in this chapter). What we see and what is noticed are also different things, so photography can show what we saw and didn't notice. In the "afterwardness" (Phelan, 2002) of the photograph, we can notice it, pay attention to it, isolate it and render it conscious. We can look, which according to Don Slater (1995) is not necessarily what we usually do with photographs. He says, "taking pictures is a taken for granted part of leisure activities, but looking at them is marginal" (p. 139). He suggests we need to know our photographs are there "(...in a persistently existential sense) but they are not part of everyday practices which involve images" (p. 139).

## Place and meaning: The "motivated gaze"[23]

I grew up in a small southern Quebec city, Sherbrooke, where two rivers meet. Daily as I went to school over a bridge crossing one of the rivers, I would seek out that glint of light on water that is a talisman for me. Years later, beside another body of water, I heard a spiritual



master speak of how geography forms us. That was a new concept for me, since the geography I had learned in secondary school never spoke of the idea that the physical topography of a place could create or form subjectivities. Still later, in a conversation in Montreal with an Inuk from Nunavut, I was struck by his statement that "everywhere I look, my eye bumps into something." Since I was then still enamored of this urban environment, where one's eye does indeed always "bump into something," I didn't fully catch the meaning. Since I had not yet experienced the North, I also didn't

understand. Later, having been to Iqaluit, Inukjuak, Kangirsualujuaq, his meaning came home. His own experience of seeing far and his desire for that landscape were never met in the city.

My favorite place in the world is beside the ocean, any ocean. The eye sees far. That littoral experience appears to contrast with the other "nature" experience I have had with great

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[23] Bezencenet, 2000, p. 57.

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regularity over the years: the view from my sister's kitchen window in the country. One doesn't see far - there is an expanse of domesticated grass (lawn), then tall grasses interspersed with fir trees my brother-in-law planted many years ago, and further through a gap, a view of more grasses and trees. There is nothing hard in that view, hard in the material meaning; there is green and softness, though one's eye bumps into it. It is littoral, however, in the sense that one is on the edge of something, not impenetrable, but unknown. It is in looking at this familiar yet faintly mysterious view over years that I have thought about the relationship between topographical intimacy and "what you see, you become." I have wondered what that view, that standpoint, means in terms of the creation of identity. I have wondered why, when I am standing beside an ocean, I feel like a different person. I have wondered how other people perceive their worlds in this material sense.

My own place-photography production over the last few years can be questioned in terms of the palimpsest Lippard suggests is created in our evolving experience of place. Why have I concentrated on landscape photography these past years? What inner landscape am I projecting? What commodified images have I been internalizing? When one is new to an environment, as an immigrant or as a rural or small town migrant to a Canadian urban centre (as I was), what internal images structure what is seen? The contention that our childhood landscapes have deeply penetrated our lives and memories led me to ask how these early images structure our perceptual lives. If they do so, how do we integrate them with our current visual existences? Can questioning the method itself, photography, help excavate meaning in environment? Combining auto-photography with public space environment exploration seems to be appropriate. As Peirce Lewis (1979) states,

> Our human landscape is our unwitting autobiography, reflecting our tastes, our values, our aspirations, and even our fears, in tangible, visible form. We rarely think of landscape that way, and so the cultural record we have "written" in the landscape is liable to be more truthful than most autobiographies because we are less self-conscious about how we describe ourselves. (p. 12)

There may be potential losses involved in the attempts at capturing our views. Stevie Bezencenet (2000) plays with the concept that landscape [photography] is linked to "actual loss and imaginative recovery" (p. 59) in the sense of the recovery of the loss of the Garden of Eden. In this, she echoes Bourdieu's prescriptive idea of photography, and she suggests that there is perhaps a double loss through the endeavour:

> When we 'make sense' of a terrain, at that moment we are already caught by a cultural perspective which generates a way of seeing. The 'seen' becomes a 'scene' and our initial vision cannot be recovered, for once we have begun to weave narratives into the capacity before us, we move beyond our first innocent response, replacing it with a motivated gaze and carrying a determining set of cultural values. (2000, p. 57)

Familiarity through layering over, and pausing in space, or experiencing loss through moving from 'seen' to 'scene' (turning embodied experience into performance?), are all possible palimpsestual experiences. My understanding of the palimpsest of place is three-dimensional, though, rather than the more two-dimensional idea of over-written layers. I see palimpsest as a construction of co-existing layers of internal and external images, connected by the thread of us, our bodies in place, our space/place/time experiences. Doreen Massey (2005) similarly does not see replacement, but rather "simultaneity of stories-so-far" (p. 9). The photograph would appear to be particularly useful in the temporal picking over of experience, permitting – even encouraging – the insertion into the three-dimensional palimpsest of "stories-so-far," the plucking from the archive.

Of course the cultural codes that sit firmly in photography, just as they do in other cultural expressions like narrative, autobiography and story (or more conventional data analysis expositions) can work against the deciphering of the 'truthfulness' of the cultural record that Lewis suggests is written in the landscape. The task of the researcher is to call forth some of these coded layers. Cultural codes too can be utilized consciously to make ideas more accessible to a wider audience (Weber & Mitchell, 2004).

## Why auto-photography?

I have been speaking above of some of the social science research on the use of visual methods in inquiry. It is important to know and understand the debates that continue to be a part of the search for relevant and useful means of gathering and analyzing research material. However, there is another field of inquiry that asks different questions about methodology and

that is arts-informed inquiry.

Qualitative research is a continuum of methods and methodologies. At one end of the continuum might sit methods that are closer to a quantitative methodology. At the other end, I believe, sits arts-informed research, moving in the personal, the poetic, the performance spheres of research. Arts-informed research, closely linked to arts-based research, a/r/tography and other alternative forms of inquiry, emerges "from the productive fusions and tensions among qualitative inquiry and the fine arts" and "infuses elements, processes and forms of the arts with the expansive possibilities of scholarly work" (Cole, Neilsen, Knowles & Luciani, 2004, p. iv).

Tom Barone and Elliot Eisner, arts-based researchers, say they prefer "not to encourage sorting of educational research texts into two separate containers labeled "artistic" and "scientific" or into corresponding containers labeled "qualitative" and "quantitative"" (1997, p. 79). On the other hand, Laurel Richardson (2000) uses the word "scientific" quite consciously and states that "some" ethnographers now desire "to write ethnography which is both scientific – in the sense of being true to a world known through the empirical senses – and literary – in the sense of expressing what one has learned through evocative writing techniques and form" (p. 253). Of course, all inquiry is grounded in sense making and meaning-making. Form, however, matters, and form itself carries meaning. Ardra Cole et al. (2004) suggest that arts-informed inquiry is more than a method, but rather "a means to redefine form and representation" (p. vii). Ardra Cole and J. Gary Knowles (2008) indeed state that "form is the main defining element of arts-informed research" (p. 62).

Academic research has created a form, or a series of forms, which have acted as templates for inquiry. Filling in the templates, of course, always requires imagination, dedication, and the making of meaning. Exploring new forms that function outside these templates brings an additional challenge, however, in that the form itself often has to be explained and justified. Compared to other forms, it seems one has to start further back.

These discussions often focus on issues of criteria, and using "scientific" to describe one's inquiry will lead inexorably to questions of criteria, and the value-laden, often discipline specific, issues of validity, replicability, and verifiability. Susan Finley (2003) suggests that when we look at arts-based inquiry work, we should forget these particular questions and ask different ones. She states that "arts-based researchers must undergo a radical break from science as a standpoint for understanding" and "make firm the claim that our work is not science" (p.

289). She cites Eisner (1997), who suggests that "virtually any careful, reflective, systematic study of phenomena undertaken to advance human understanding can count as a form of research" (p. 289). This is not to say that there are not criteria; indeed in this context, criteria become even more critical. However, Eisner warns that "grounding the persuasiveness of the text in evidence or procedures might lead to the same sort of reductive procedures for arts-based research that inspired its inception in the first place" (1997, cited in Finley, p. 286). Susan Finley offers her criteria in the form of questions that should be addressed to arts-based research. These questions investigate both process and effect; some examples are:

> How does the form of representation … create an open space for dialogue between readers/perceivers and research participants, as well as opening dialogue with researchers and artists?
> Does the research allow a heuristic "open" text, in which there are spaces of multiple meanings to be constructed?
> Does the research provoke questions, rather than draw conclusions?
> (Finley, 2000, p. 294)

Laurel Richardson too asks questions to discuss her own criteria. They speak to her grounded perspective, and cover aesthetics, reflexivity and impact. Very importantly, she asks, "Does this text embody a fleshed out, embodied sense of lived-experience? Does it seem "true" – a credible account of a cultural, social, individual or communal sense of the "real"?" (2000, p. 254).

Cole and Knowles (2008) elaborate what they call "qualities of goodness" (p. 65) in arts-informed inquiry. They suggest that if a study contains these "qualities of goodness," it will "both exemplify and contribute" to the goals of arts-informed inquiry, "of enhancing understanding of the human condition through alternative (to conventional) processes, and reaching multiple audiences by making scholarship more accessible" (p. 65). Indeed accessibility is one key quality of arts-informed inquiry; Cole and Knowles also stress the need for evidence of the presence of the researcher, aesthetic and holistic quality, communicability, intentionality and methodological commitment.

Do these criteria and "qualities of goodness" ask more of the "reader" than standard criteria? I believe they do, and that is part of their purpose. One of the reasons why I believe arts-informed research has emerged is because of the issue of voice. Our understanding of the research dilemma of who speaks for, and who speaks, has changed radically over the past twenty-five years. Qualitative research grapples with that dilemma in a way that quantitative

research rarely does, or is even asked to. How do auto-ethnographical or autobiographical methods deal with the question of evidence-based research? What is evidence? As Denzin states, "facts are only a form of representation" (2000, p. 261). Is voice sufficient? And whose voice? What could be more evidential than the personal voice? On the other hand, can it be trusted? Can I be trusted?

Finding my own values for my work from among the voices of arts-based and arts-informed researchers (for many grapple with the issue of "criteria" in different ways) is difficult. I would like to not have to explain or defend my choice. I would like to feel free to say, as Knowles and Luciani (2007) do, that they "aim to move beyond arguing for alternative genres / approaches to inquiry by assuming alternative works already exist and need not be defended" (p. xiii). However, my familiarity with my institution and my position as a graduate student, with the pressures of production that entails, has an effect. But I am interested in not 'doing it as it is done,' and there is no final word on that, nor can there be. Even though explaining does always seem to be necessary, one important issue is the rationale for the chosen form. Why am I using these alternative forms? Are these the most logical and useful means of exploring this subject? I hope to show by the doing that indeed yes, memory and place are intimately related with the visual and thus well explored through the reading, writing, taking and showing of the photograph.

My explorations take in the above questions as well as questions about value and dissemination, and a concern that arts-based and arts-informed research can be as elitist as any other, if it does not create that important "open space for dialogue" (Finley, 2000, p. 294) and contain "transformative potential" (Cole & Knowles, 2008, p. 67) for others. Accessibility and voice remain of great concern to me. And while poststructuralism has lead to a cacophony of voices, all voices do not speak. And what is voice? Surely it is differently defined in different . places. It is a complex concept, which is often used without definition, as if we all knew what it meant. There are the personal, though multiple, voices of the one; there is the politically situated voice of the One, representing many; there are the many voices of the many. I situate myself as privileged, the privilege of being engaged in thoughtful processes of inquiry, of thinking "a long thought,"[24] of being able to privilege my attempts at voice(s). This privilege requires that I work

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[24] "Think long thoughts. Each of our thoughts is too short. Until you have experience from your own observation of the difference between long and short thoughts, this idea will mean nothing to you." (P.D. Ouspensky, cited in Shulman, 1995, p. 54.)

hard at "show and tell," at earning trust, because that is the only way I deserve it. My concern with the accessibility of ideas to others, as well as to myself, requires that I explain.

Arts-informed research has the potential to expand the privilege of voice to others, though it is not always easy to find and show the balance between the personal experience (process) and the evidence (product). Lynn Butler-Kisber (2005) argues that "when the essence of the particular is expressed in an artful form, it evokes an embodied response and a different kind of interpretation and understanding" (p. 96). That expresses the ground on which I base my inquiry. I believe that the "essence of the particular" contains the seeds for broader understandings, beyond my "investigator's thumbprint ... illuminating the scene" (Eisner, 2008, p. 23). When I read research studies, I always seek the "phenomenological nod" (Buytendijk, cited in Van Manen, 1990, p. 27), the yes of deep personal understanding of the experience. It is those cricks in the neck that have been the most meaningful in my evolution as a researcher and a thinker. I too want to create work that leaves my readers with a sore neck, from all that nodding.

But I question too how to address the political inherent in my questions when I use reflexivity as my method. Barone (2008) seems to suggest that the very use of alternative methods and representations is a political stance, but is it only within the academic discourse community that this is so? It is within these emerging positions of what needs to be evidenced and how it can be disseminated that I struggle with my own embedded ideas of rigour, replicability, validity and generalizeability when I address my method and methodology. I know that I have come to this place because of issues of voice – my own voice and the voices of others. Tracing the evolution of these issues in my trajectory of inquiry brings a light to bear on methodological choices.

## Photovoice and power

When I first took up this idea of a project regarding place and photography, I had the idea that I would work with girls and women doing Photovoice in a form of participatory action research (PAR). The issues of power and whose-power are components of any research project. In my previous graduate work, I found the issue of who-speaks and who-speaks-for particularly problematic, in fact, terror provoking. As someone who has spent her life trying to figure out how to have a voice, how to express that voice, and in what context to speak and how, the idea of speaking-for was formidable. At the time of writing my master's thesis, I felt that I had arrived

at a compromise position with which I was almost comfortable. That is, I used various tools to work at making 'my' participants' stories as transparent and true as possible, to feed back my analyses to them, and to incorporate their feedback in the final product. The pragmatic aspect of finishing lent a certain glow to that product. However, in a post-master's, pre-doctoral class project, we were instructed to use alternative forms of qualitative analysis (mainly arts-informed) on already existing material. I continued to work with the interview material from one of 'my' master's participants, Emily (Butler-Kisber et al., 2003). This project brought me right up against the ethical dilemmas of voice with which I thought I had come to terms (Allnutt, 2002).

Patricia Maguire (1987, 1993), whose explorations of combining PAR with doctoral work points to the dilemmas inherent therein, acknowledges the difficulties of managing these two potentially very different agendas, especially as a beginning PAR researcher:

> By motivating women, was I trying to make the project, my dissertation, a success? Self censorship was a problem. Afraid of being pushy, overbearing, intimidating, or culturally inappropriate, I initially refrained from utilizing many trainer skills, techniques, and exercises which would have contributed to group skill development.
> I struggled with the educator role. No one in the group asked to explore structural analyses of racism, sexism, or classism.
> As a result of the triple role demands, I often felt incompetent in all roles. By trying to manage all three roles simultaneously, many details and intentions fell through the cracks. This points to the value of a team approach in participatory research and finding ways to increase members' involvement in project management. (1993, pp. 189-190)

Maguire constructed a useful framework for assessing a project using feminist participatory research as a methodology, which she in turn used to assess her own work. She asked for explicit attention to gender issues through each phase of a project, starting with gender as a central issue when addressing the "problem" to paying attention to who does what tasks on the project team. She addressed the academic environment and asked the reader to look at who benefits the most from P(A)R research work; is it valued in academia? She asks,

> To date, how has participatory research challenged patriarchy? Since men and women appear to consistently choose different problems and oppressive systems to investigate and act on, what does this mean for participatory research as a tool for radical social and personal transformation? (1987, p. 211)

These considerations have stayed with me through my subsequent analyses of Emily's interviews and informed me as I moved towards entering my doctoral program. When I first worked on my proposal for admission, I was cognizant that the questions I was asking and the "answers" I would get would depend on, or emerge from, the Who, the "subjects" of my study.

In other words, unlike Maguire who wanted to do participatory research but didn't have a subject, I had a subject, but I didn't have subjects. Who would the women be? I did not identify the Who in my proposal and there was a good reason for that. I didn't know of whom I was speaking. Over time, I have come to understand that the Who is actually myself. I do not mean white middle class women like myself, but me, the chief investigator and the one whose voice I can use without overwriting, speaking for, or silencing. I can sign my own ethics form, I can waive my own rights, I can speak for myself.

If I take Patricia Maguire's questions about PAR methodology and apply them to the embodied reflexivity I propose as my methodology, I encounter the dilemmas. What makes an investigation of this sort relevant? What weight does an N of One have? (Do we hear the voices of criteria and internal validity?) Voice itself is questioned; a single voice even more so. Why privilege my voice? But there are advantages as well as disadvantages to being both subject and object of your own investigation. Stephen Harold Riggins, who did an exquisitely detailed "autoethnographic" investigation of his parents' living room (1994), admits that there were elements that he manipulated or glossed over[25]. Nonetheless, the contribution of his own insider knowledge of the rooms, his own memorywork and the openness of the rooms' inhabitant (his mother) greatly contributed to the results of his study. As Riggins says,

> Perhaps it is best to view both the ethnographer and the informants (sic) as "authorities" even though their sources of authority differ because they come from a knowledge of different types of discourse. The authority of the informants might be summarized by the statement "I know best because I live with these objects," the ethnographer's authority by the statement "I know best because I have read so many books on sociology and interior decoration." (p. 108)

So in this research, I propose to be both ethnographer and informant, and trust there will be benefit from both "authorities." Issues of the authority of the personal and of the cultural can perhaps be usefully unpacked in arts-informed research.

Authority is very well investigated in the models of Photovoice inquiry I explore below, models which remain the impetus for my own auto-photographic work. Two pioneering exponents and practitioners of Photovoice work with women are Mary Brinton Lykes in Guatemala and Caroline Wang in China. I go into depth about these two endeavours for several reasons. First, these inquiries were done by women with women. "Shooting back" projects (for

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[25] Riggins tidied up before photographing the rooms; he "was unwilling to be disloyal" to his parents in print. "Thus, any criticism of their values is quite minor in nature" (1994, p. 141).

example, Hubbard, 1994) had been explored prior to Wang's work, but not specifically by women or for the direct purpose of eliciting women's photographic viewpoints. Second, and not coincidentally, these works by women were engaged with social change through a participatory action research (PAR) perspective. Third, the power relations explored in the fullness of these two projects make explicit the gendered and economic issues in these two quite distinct environments with interesting similarities.

Mary Brinton Lykes' work over the last 20 years has taken place within the context of people silenced by violence, existing in "limit" situations, where daily life is lived in a context of *el miedo* (pervasive fear). In particular, her work has been with the Mayan Ixil people of Guatemala. Her early work (Arditti & Lykes, 1993; Lykes, 1991, 1993; Melville & Lykes, 1992) was mainly with children. As the civil war violence eased, and both internal and external refugees started to return to tentatively take up their lives again, Lykes was asked to go to Chajul in the Quiché area in Guatemala to work with women who needed assistance in rebuilding community. The profound community disruption, in a situation of cultural, as well as physical, genocide, had placed much responsibility for renewal on the women, keepers of community, and in many places, the majority survivors of the violent years. Lykes et al. point to this "gendered nature of war's violence" (1999, p. 212) that has recently been highlighted through our understanding of rape as a weapon of war, but which extends beyond sexual violence to the many facets of community and generational disruption and dysfunction which result.

Within the context of silencing through violence, the concept of voice takes on specific meanings. Lykes speaks of "hearing into speech" (Lykes, 2001a, p. 185), assisting to voice and then bearing witness to the implications of the speech. To promote the "rethreading" of community, the creative tools of drawing, collage, movement, sound, storytelling, as well as role-playing were used with the participants. Attempts to create a written drama out of this work so it could be repeated were not very successful. Lykes states that the "'textualizing' of the ritual renders it less accessible to this population and prioritizes a form of knowledge construction better known to the academy than to rural women" (1997, p. 741). This aspect of her work was beginning to discomfit her, as more rupturing of the silenced voices was taking place. The recrafting, as she calls it, of Mayan stories for "consumption" for the outside world was privileging her voice over the voices of the Mayan women. Photovoice (Wang & Burris, 1994; Wang, Burris & Xiang, 1996) was a way of creating visual evidence produced by the

women themselves that could be shared beyond the borders of Chajul.

For Lykes, the visual image "is quite unlike any other form of communication because it is universally apprehended" (2001a, p. 191). Just as importantly, the photo represented the photographer's point of view and "became a stimulus for the group's reflections, discussions, analyses and re-presentations" (Lykes, 1997, p. 741). The photographs acted as generative codes in the Freirian sense (Lykes, 2001a; Wang & Burris, 1994), "that reflect the community back upon itself, mirroring the everyday social and political realities that influence people's lives" (p. 172). Just as Freire generated word lists for literacy, "photo novella's[26] curriculum is the photographic image of daily life as depicted by the women" (Wang et al., 1996, p. 1392). The problem-based pedagogy of analysing the mirrors the women created of their own lives formed the curriculum of their iterative learning.

Caroline Wang, who "patented" the term Photovoice, coordinated a large project in China; as with the Guatemalan project, which was inspired by Wang's work, photography was seen as a useful tool for women, community creators, with low literacy skills. This Photovoice project was part of a larger Ford Foundation-supported Women's Reproductive Health and Development Program done in two counties of China's Yunnan province among rural women. Wang et al. (1996) use Freire's work (Freire, 1970) as a conceptual basis for their hierarchy of social change. Their work aimed at three interwoven elements: individual change, community's quality of life, and policy changes aimed at achieving social equity. Wang suggests that this echoes Mao Ze Dong's approach and so was familiar to the older women in the Photovoice project. The goal of this project with Chinese village women was to identify health and education needs in the villages through photography and then communicate these needs to policy makers so that change could be effected.

Caroline Wang et al. (1996) give three examples in which the photos and the women's analysis of the needs they represented brought a broader understanding of the issues at hand, and resulted in policy changes. Photos of women working in tobacco and cornfields, babies lying very close to them, exposed to weather and dust, revealed the need for day care. Photos of unsupervised children playing in and near the river also showed the need for childcare. A photograph of a poor woman and newborn in their home three days after birth suggested the need

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[26] This term has evolved in Wang's work to Photovoice.

for more access to obstetrical care. One last example was of a young girl at home looking after a sibling, when her family could obviously afford to send her to school. These three areas, identified through photographs, pointed out to policy makers that women's needs were not always first on the agenda in the dispersion of financial resources. The male village-level leaders had not prioritized day care in the village. The woman with the newborn had not used the midwife for financial reasons, not because of "ignorance." Scholarships for girls to attend school needed to be expanded to include all girls, since family attitudes towards girls' schooling could prevent even a financially secure girl from going to school. These perspectives, which emerged from analyses and discussion of the meaning of the photographs, might not have otherwise emerged. They came from the inside out.

Diffusion of these "inside out" perspectives was also important, and was brought forward in both of these projects through local exhibitions and the publishing of texts with the photographs (Yi et al., 1995; Asociación de la Mujer Maya Ixil (ADMI) y M. Brinton Lykes, 2000). Wang defines diffusion as the "process by which an innovation is communicated through many channels over time throughout society" (1996, p. 1394). The processes during the projects developed 'looking' skills, as the women were taught concepts such as clustering ideas, identifying similarities and differences, constructing holistic analyses of the photos, as well as expanding beyond the borders of the photo, "storying the photograph" (Lykes, 2001a, p. 192). The women learned how to conceptualize beyond the immediate event captured in the photo, hypothesizing structural reasons for it. Then, these analyses were brought to a larger group and reexamined and further elaborated through other means such as drawing, dramatization and storytelling.

Lykes also says that the distancing aspect of the photographing was an important element in being able to critically compare perspectives:

> It's like a mirror in some odd way - many women in Chajul don't really look at themselves in a mirror often - most of them are living day to day, struggling to put food on the table for their husbands and family and/or supporting their kids as a widow, and/or supporting themselves as orphans, with little formal education and few resources. Yet through this project they began to see themselves and each other relative to each other - and relative to many women who lived in the neighboring villages to which they traveled to take pictures and gather stories - and they began to see the relative "well-being" of women in the town of Chajul relative to the village women, many of whom still had to grind corn 4 times a day, rather than take it to the mill for milling, as one small example. So the photograph enabled comparative thinking. (Personal communication, March 31, 2002).

Wang et al. (1996) discuss the value of Photovoice as a process method. Women without formal education were trained and enabled to record their own lives and to conceptualize about them, using the mirror of photographs. The visual evidence they provided gave value first to their lived particular, and then to discussions held with (often male) policy makers. Women's hardships, accepted as being "normal" commonsense reality, were challenged by being seen in a larger perspective. So power *to* and power *with* were addressed (see below). Power *over*, on the other hand, would mean that women gained the ability through this project to direct the changes to their lives. This did not happen. They were able to present their perspective, but as Wang et al. point out,

> A potential ethical implication of photo novella concerns the unfair distribution of the burden of social change. ...cautions against placing the burden of organizing for change on less powerful groups rather than on the privileged who have a responsibility to redress inequality based on some notion of compensatory justice. (1996, p. 1398)

Nonetheless, the sustainability of some of the projects implemented as a result of Photovoice's gaze was seen as long term. Caroline Wang suggests that through being visual, natural anthropologists, recording what others would not see and contributing to the communities "of which they will forever be a part," the village women are promoting "empathy" – not paternalism, condescension, pity or idealism.

I have not pointed out here many other elements which are discussed by both Wang and Lykes: cost issues for this technology in limit economies, conflicts around changes in gender roles that can emerge from empowering women in traditional situations, the ethics of exposing people in photographs in still precarious peace situations (this applied more to Guatemala than China), and so on. I point out what I consider some generally universal values of Photovoice: ease of use (despite cost) and training, particularly in low literacy situations, the relationship that can be nurtured between seeing and photographing and the subsequent relationship between the photograph itself and what was seen but not noticed, and the distancing element of having the material object of the photograph to consider – the "still" photograph.

Lykes (2001a) raises issues of both the polysemia and the labelling of the photograph by pointing to the inevitable misreadings that are possible when any visual evidence is sent out to the wider environment, which does not have direct contact with the context. At the same time as each individual woman has had her own perspectives broadened by her project experiences, the

actual product, the photo exhibit and the book, "locks in" the story. The fluidity represented by the process the women engaged in becomes removed from its framework. As Lykes suggests, "the strength of the photograph is also a weakness" (2001a, p. 194).

In addition to the consideration of the photograph in these projects, the discussion of power in these PAR contexts was most revealing to me. In considering the Chinese Photovoice project, Wang and Burris (1994) highlight three kinds of power: power *to*, power *with*, and power *over*. Power *to*, they state, is "affirmative power, the ability to accomplish things. Power *with* is the ability to work with others towards a common purpose. Power *over* is the ability to influence or to direct other people, or the physical or material environment" (p. 174). Perhaps a good definition of empowerment would be the combination of these three.

The processes which were in place for the Guatemalan Photovoice project certainly were addressing all these forms of power, though as with the Chinese project, power *over* is less definitive. The Guatemalan women discovered their own ability to learn a new skill, photography, as well as learning all the skills that surround such a project, such as working with other women in an organization, fundraising and accounting. Further they produced photographs that served as artefacts to enhance analysis for themselves and for others, and further still, a travelling exhibition and a text. Beyond these more overt skills, the *practice* of the project, they learned the nuanced *reflection* that makes praxis.

In addition to the power which inheres to such a project and might adhere, in the short and long term to the women directly involved, the power of the researcher in these two inquiries was a subject of particular interest to me, as I mentioned earlier. In this in-depth discussion of these two Photovoice projects, it is obvious that voice is at issue. The ideal PAR process suggests, in a nutshell, that the researcher be at the service of the participants, either because she has been invited to participate, or because she has identified through being an insider an issue that could be co-investigated.

There is a pragmatic in the PAR process that can work against this idea of service. Lykes states that in the "processual" (Haney & Lykes, 2000, p. 288) nature of PAR, identities shift as the project advances. Careful attention on the part of the PAR co-researchers to these micro changes is required to continually acknowledge and make transparent the nuances of the process. Without this attention and diffusion of its understanding, PAR can sometimes appear imbalanced. Whose responsibility it is to pay attention to these nuances is a good question.

Differences in material resources, both financial and educational, can impact on the shifting power axes in a PAR project. Kum Kum Bhavnani (1988) suggests that it is the transparency of such "messiness" that is very important. It is these "apparently awkward questions from the researched [sic] which are desirable" (p. 43) and which reflect and elucidate the complexities existing inside the power relations which are the very essence of all research.

Again, though, I suggest that the power to make transparent the messiness seems to rest with the person(s) who diffuse(s) the knowledge, i.e., the researcher(s). How do the "researched" write up the messy process? Are these the questions that privilege allows us to have the time and energy to ask? Janice Ristock and Joan Pennell (1996) note the requirement "that we be honest in the research process without recognizing the privilege inherent in this demand" (p. 72). Inside the Guatemala project, for instance, given the differences in material resources, are the Mayan Ixil women less interested in the transparency of process than in their own goals? What danger might come to them in being totally honest, in complete and transparent identification? As Lykes went deeper in her work in Guatemala, she became aware of fine lines between confidences and ethnographic research, and the context led her to maintain "uncharacteristic silence about what I was discovering" (Haney & Lykes, 2000, p. 286).

Photovoice is a method that "is based on the understanding that people are experts in their own lives" (Wang et al, 2004). Nonetheless, it is most often other-directed and embedded in power relations, no matter how vigorously these are addressed (Wang & Redwood-Jones, 2001). A strong value of Photovoice rests in its community-based element, however, and in the built-in strategies of PAR work to bring the results of the inquiry to a larger audience to affect policy.

There are also a number of ethical issues to be considered in Photovoice, not the least of them being safety. Indeed all research involving photography and subjects involves considerable ethical dilemmas, a problem dealt with in different ways by researchers (see for example Haney & Lykes, 2001; Karlsson, 2007; Wang & Redwood Jones, 2001). My exploration of this Photovoice PAR work, in the context of attempting to find the appropriate methodology for my doctoral inquiry, made me cognizant of its possibilities and limitations, as well as my own as a researcher. I had to recognize my own personality (for lack of a better word – voice is insufficient here), my own abilities and mobilities, and their influence and place in my inquiry.

I am not, again, speaking for any other, when I trace this personal path. I am not

suggesting that the challenge of researching the other cannot be met in myriad ways, through reflective thoughtful positioning. A critical perspective on one's own research practices is always essential, fundamental in fact, whether researching one's self, one other, or many others. I can also ask why I continue to do research or address this practice as research. It is because I think my questions, which I explore in this way, can resonate with others. My method of attempting to unravel them, to tease out the strands embedded in them, may expose some structural issues that can contribute to others' understanding of, if not my way of unravelling, then at least of the threads themselves. Then too my method might invite others to explore their own arts-informed approaches.

**Finding my way**

The interesting thing is, as I explored the dilemma of the Who of my study, I was simultaneously solving the problem as I continued my auto-photographic explorations of place in two projects. This is the fundamental charm of research; it finds its own level even as it expands it. As I did what I considered to be "pilot projects," I was creating my course of autotopographic inquiry.

Riggins' (1994) autoethnographic mapping of his parents' living room inspired my own photographic mapping and analysis of two spaces. My first project looked at an interior space, the lobby of a university building (not coincidentally the one in which I study and worked at the time). The second looked at the outside, a public art/park space attached to a Montreal cultural institution (this project is explored in Chapter 5). Through photographic mapping, observation and visual attention, and brief interviews with other users of the spaces, I drafted what I called "perceptual" documents on feeling, form and function, trying to see if still photography would be an appropriate and useful means for textually mapping our physical spaces. My questions were, and remain (see Chapter 1): Does space talk to us through auto-photography? Do we learn useful things about our relationship to our public space environments? Do we become 'empowered' by the micro attention we bring through auto-photography? Do we establish a new level of comfort in these "envelopes of identity" (Irigeray's phrase)?

I was experimenting with my own seeing, and with the use of photography in both recording and "being there." As well, at the time, my intention was to use more than my own (photo)voice. I thus wanted to see what it felt like to be "commissioned" as it were, as I intended

to commission my future (imagined) participants to take photographs of everyday public space. What would be the restrictions, limitations, and emotions that went along with that process? What would happen immediately, in the process of photographing, and then later, in the looking at the photographs? It turns out the actual process of documenting public space is at least as rich as examining the product of that recording.

This experience was not unlike any other qualitative process when described on paper: look at some theory, develop a protocol, go into the field (wherever and whatever it is), use your method, bring back the data, examine and analyze it, look at more theory, discuss and conclude. But having done more "traditional" work in my master's inquiry, involving interviewing and textual analysis, I suggest that the above quick summary of traditional qualitative research methods cannot do justice to the process of arts-informed research. Laurel Richardson discusses the "breaking [of] our sense of the externality of topics, developing our sense of how topic and self are twin constructed" (2003, p. 519). That is at play in my idea of simultaneity, but there is also something more.

In trying to describe further how arts-informed research differs from more traditional qualitative inquiry, I come up with words like hot and cold. The struggle of expression, of adequate representation, in arts-informed work, is, for me, the most difficult. The process is personal and intense and the products, in this case, text and visuals – the show and tell – do not always manage to convey the intensity of the inquiry and learning experience. It is the challenge of all research, of course, no matter what the method, to convey "results" in a clear, informative and transparent manner, making evident both process and product. But arts-informed research can be less transparent as to process because the method itself has heat, the only word I can use to describe it (Finley uses "passionate, visceral" (2003, p. 288)). It is hot, as compared to the "colder," more traditional methods of qualitative research. (This too is arguable, and I do not wish to deny the passion with which all researchers approach and experience their inquiry. I am trying to suggest the qualitative difference, however, between forms.) That "hot" element, the doing, is perhaps what Finley (2003) is describing when she speaks of how a performative text "is one in which doing research creates a specialized (open and dialogic) space that is simultaneously asserted for inquiry and expression" (p. 287). While she is talking about more obvious performance texts than photography (or collage), this idea of the space in which inquiry and representation (fieldwork and "writing up") are simultaneous begins to capture the "hot"

element I am trying to explain.

I prowl with my camera looking for expressions of my thoughts and theories, marking or tagging my landscape as I see it. I return with mundane photographs of sidewalks, streets and trees (because my city thoughts are like that). What will my readers see of the intensity of that experience? (As Lykes expresses it, "the fluidity [is] removed from the framework" in the product.) I can't just say, "you had to be there"; that is taking privilege too far. I have to explain the sometimes unexplainable, the perhaps unrepresentable. Trustworthiness, as Weber and Mitchell point out, must be a part of all arts-based work, no matter what the genre. They suggest that "it is the ability of the final presentation to evoke and convey the essential processes and findings… that are paramount, along with the ability to project an outward gaze or gesture or path back to the reader/viewer's experience" (2004, p. 1028).

Part of the explaining has to take into consideration the embodied experience of taking the photographs themselves. That experience, like all field experiences, can be the most difficult to articulate. The nuanced difference I am trying to pinpoint in terms of arts-informed research is the embeddedness of process in product, and the concomitant simultaneity that results. This experience confronts directly Emmison and Smith's (2000) concerns about the conflation of data and methodology. In arts-informed research, there is a "natural" and purposeful conflation of method, methodology and material, a simultaneity that more traditional research methods seek to move away from, rather than towards.

The struggle in finding, expressing and using form as the 'vehicle' of inquiry speaks to its importance in arts-informed inquiry. Cole and Knowles (2008) suggest that this identification and elaboration of form is vital to knowledge production in arts-informed research; it points to "how representation and inquiry are unified" (p. 62). They also state that form can evolve over the process of the inquiry because "the researcher is, after all, the instrument of form" (p. 63).

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The simultaneity I express contains the pleasure and desire of the embodied photographic experience, the sheer pleasure of taking photographs, that threshold element of holding the viewfinder up to your eye and framing the world for whatever purpose. It contains the being-there: not art, not science, but the body-being-there, making meaning through the framing, and expressing the often diverted voices with which we all contend – our tacit companions in any inquiry.

What I am trying to say here is that the photograph is only one of the products of auto-photography. Our experience of photographs is situated in space and time, and mediated by the presentational format and the context of looking. When one is the photographer, that experience starts even further back. As I decide what to photograph, the analysis has already begun. Thus the photograph, in and of itself, carries meaning, prior to even looking at the content of the image. The photograph is only the end of a process, and could be said to have an equal value with the act of photographing. In addition, there is the (non-digital) experience of waiting for the results of the photographing (particularly if one does not develop one's own photos, as I do not).

As even an experienced ceramicist waits with bated breath for the final result of the multi-faceted creation of a bowl, knowing that at any one point in the process, the bowl can be ruined, so too, a photographer waits for the photograph, the end product of many steps. This process of waiting for the material object of the photograph to be in one's hand informs the film photographer's experience, just as the many steps of the bowl-making process inform the ceramicist's experience. The body "remembers" the making and the waiting, and both become a part of the embodied relationship with the object. Historically, this has given great meaning to photographs (a meaning which is in flux with digital cameras) for both the photographer and the viewer/subject. Where is the meaning? It is in the simultaneity of the doing and the done, the process and the product. Burnett (1995) suggests that the photograph always represents a relationship, and that relationship will "always be contingent, a space in between, without the properties normally attributed to subject or object" (p. 37). For me, this aporic space is very rich with possibilities; in my explorations of place, I wanted to explore this simultaneity.

## Place and Photovoice

> Landscape imagery has traditionally offered the spectator the pleasures of an imaginary journey into representational space, creating the sense that in both the image and the material world we have the capacity of contemplation and action, of affirming our sense of self and of creating our own narratives. (Bezencenet, 2000, p. 58)

In Lykes' and Wang's work, discussed above, place comes into the analysis almost by accident. That is, the environment is not being analyzed directly, but rather the activities that take place in that environment. Thus, in the photographs taken by the women in the China project (Yi et al., 1995), fields, village streets and the river are seen, but the focus is, for example, on a woman working in a field while her baby lies on a blanket close by. The purpose of this photograph was to highlight the fact that women have to work without anyone to look after their children while they do so. Boys are photographed by the river foregrounding the fact that they are unsupervised, and drownings have occurred as a result. Beyond the skilling inherent in the process part of the project, the focus was on the photograph as a functional witness, as exhibit, to make evident, to provoke social change. It was not on the 'scene' of the environment in and of itself.

Alice McIntyre's (2000) inquiry is an example of Photovoice work with women which is specifically directed at place in the everyday. She asked women living in a politically contested and violent area of Belfast, where safety is never a given, to photograph their places. Working in a PAR mode (inspired by her work with Lykes), she started with Wang's Photovoice frame[27]. The women found that framework constraining, so the parameters shifted to suit their view of what was meaningful. Their photographs were a mixed combination of place and peopled place, "places that are 'center(s) of meaning'" (McIntyre, 2003, p. 54). Most often the people in the photographs were the women themselves or their children. Ethical considerations regarding photograph use and issues of permission are at play here, and as mentioned previously, are of great importance in any use of visual representation. Knowles (2000), for instance, in her work on homeless people in Montreal, took photos of rooms in shelters when they were empty for just such ethical reasons. Such photos cannot hope to convey the reality of a peopled shelter. I would add, however, that these photos allow us the opportunity to look at the space that someone staying there comes to. The moment of arriving and looking at your bed or room for the night is

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[27] "SHOWED: What do you See here? What is really Happening? How does this relate to Our lives? Why does this situation, concern, or strength Exist? What can we Do about it?" (McIntyre, 2003, p. 53).

stopped and made available for critical reflection. For us, who will not stay there, it is a "stranger" experience of place and it richly informs us as to the influence of the space.

But can one photograph and write place without its constitutive element of people? I am personally more interested in the place than the people, not the constitutive element of peopled place, but the sheer materiality of place itself. Is it possible or even desirable to divorce or dress down the peopled aspect of place? What is place without people? Marc Treib (2008) notes that most "card-carrying landscape photographers ... eliminate people from their images" (p. 197), and adds that as a result, scale is flattened. (However, ethical issues are eased.)

In my own photographic practice, I have focused on places that could or would normally have people in them, but I have deliberately framed my photos to be peopleless. In my critical reflection on my own photographs, I began to understand that I was photographing iconically. I was not trying to bring in critique, but rather my own engagement and enjoyment, and the consoling perception of my own interpretations of aesthetics and beauty. This understanding positioned me to look critically at landscape photography and readdress it in terms of photographic "conventions."



One of those conventions is that of the "natural" aspect of landscape photography. I have found myself embedded in that convention for some years now, trying to work out my own approach to daily life through the conflicting, as I see it, environments I live in and am desirous of living in. Examining my own practice of photography, amateur, personal, and contingent, has shown me how desire and longing are ideologically manipulated, and how images work on us in ways that sometimes seem malicious. The real... I ask myself. How real is it? Can we know? Do we have a contrasting image of the world, a control image so to speak, with which to do a comparative study?

During the time of this critical reflection, I was engaged in my photographic mapping projects of spaces that I mentioned above – spaces chosen not for beauty or iconic reasons, but for analytic reasons, mapping the "perimeter of our enclosure" (Langford, 1997). I came to realize that when I was attempting to take a photograph for other purposes than aesthetic

enjoyment and memory, I did not know how to take the photograph. What I consider mundane or ordinary, I do not know how to make extraordinary (or what I consider extraordinary). The realization that I could perhaps use this contrast between the mundane (or "laconic"[28]) and the iconic contained in my own photographic practice, to explore ideas around visuality and seeing and meaning in place was another level in my emerging inquiry practice. "The relationship between what we see and what we know is never settled" (Berger, 1972, p. 7).

The photographic mapping work that I did for my Architectural Garden project anchored my interest in the possibility of critically addressing our mundane daily public environments through photography. Lippard's idea of topographical intimacy really took hold. For girls and women, is public space ever intimate? When we consider Lippard's idea, how does the street (using the street as a symbol for public space) become intimate to us? For the most part, women do not create the public spaces they move through and which have such an impact on their lives. The urban landscape is the place where I live and have developed, and where my personal autobiography has been created and lived out. It is increasingly the place where most inhabitants of North America live out their lives.

We live in a political landscape when we live in the urban environment. J.B. Jackson, a geographer, is addressing this question when he speaks of the difference between a political landscape and a vernacular landscape (1984). A political landscape is one in which authority (which in current terms could be government, business, and law (local or global)) has dictated and created an organization of space according to certain needs and precepts considered to be outside of the individual, but addressing individual needs. A vernacular landscape is one that is more responsive to the individual, a more organic response to individual needs. But what do we know of it, think of it, do we question what lies behind/underneath it? Does the city have an agenda?

Jackson states, "I suspect no landscape, vernacular or otherwise, can be comprehended unless we perceive it as an organization of space; unless we ask ourselves who owns or uses the

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[28] Deborah Bright uses this word to mean photographs that "explain nothing," in the sense of the Szarkowski idea that "photographs describe everything but explain nothing" (cited in Bright, 1989, p. 133). She is arguing with what she decries as Szarkowski's formalist and ahistorical definitions of photography.

spaces, how they were created and how they change" (1984, p. 150). He goes on to say, "We create them [landscapes] and need them because every landscape is the place where we establish our own human organization of space and time. It is where the slow, natural processes of growth and maturity and decay are deliberately set aside and history is substituted" (p. 156). The "unwitting autobiography" idea of Peirce Lewis and its "truthfulness" (1979, p. 12) can be addressed through photographic attention. Stopping the city in its tracks to examine it, as we race through it in our car and bus cocoons, bent on our tasks, is difficult. Do we ask ourselves on a daily basis what effect it is having on us, what structural influence it has on our embodied experiences?

Our experience of the public spaces that we move through on a daily basis is not normally stopped. In that sense, video is more like our experience, fleeting, like something caught out of the corner of our eye. Photographs, on the other hand, if we really address them, are front and center. But even more, the act of photographing addresses our view of our world. It is that conjunction of the act, the photograph itself and the later reflection on both that creates the inquiry. Bright (1989) suggests that although individual photographs may only describe, the contexts of their production, distribution and consumption are integral and vital to our interpretations. I would add that their integrity needs ascription, as well as description. These elements affect our every interaction with meaning in a photograph and they must be addressed.

Through process (photographing) and product (the photograph), this simultaneous inquiry can address our perceptions of space, our being-in-space, firstly through the doing and then through the reflecting on both the doing and the visible result, the photographic 'evidence'. Inherent value lies in the stilled moment, the photograph, to which we return again and again, to remind ourselves, to verify our perceptions, to expand and express our perceptions beyond the border of the photograph to the embodied experience of photographing. The photographing (the embodied moment), our memory of the photographing and the photograph itself (the stilled moment) are such a rich archive for critical reflection.

**The role of the other in autobiography**

Through my own auto-photographic practice, I began to feel that I could legitimately and meaningfully investigate and explore issues of space and subjectivity, contextualizing them through the literatures on photography and place, those academic companions that I mention in

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Chapter 1. I understand that autobiography is a continuum. We all engage with autobiographical work when we do inquiry, whether we acknowledge it or not, whether we are aware of it or not. Indeed, the topics that we choose for our research emerge from concerns that we as embodied and placed subjects experience. We decide a particular issue is important and worthy of focus based on our own experience. Research sometimes looks as if it isn't about us; sometimes it is obviously intensely about us. I like Jacques Derrida's (1988) play on the word autobiography. He spells it "oto-biography," implicating "the ear of the other." I use his term to think about the purpose of autobiography. We tell our stories not only for ourselves, but also for the ear of the other. We conceptualize our self culturally, not just personally. And we construct our life narratives for the ear of the other. When we hear our stories spoken, we understand them better. They prove useful. When others hear them spoken, understanding grows. They prove resonant.

However, although I feel that autobiography always engages with the ear of the other, the value of the actual voice of the other remains, because there is a liveliness that emerges from multiple perspectives. In pondering ways to bring that in, the obvious presented itself: my siblings. We all inhabited the same place in theory, though as I was to learn more fully, in practice, our experiences of the "same" place were different. They all agreed to participate, unsure of how this would unravel (Chapter 4). From my perspective, they would bring light to bear on more facets of the crystal that Richardson describes, more "angles of repose," without presenting the dilemma of "speaking for."

In the writing process, however, I realized that the "speaking-for" aspect always sits in autobiographical work. Laurel Richardson suggests that auto-ethnographers are "somewhat relieved of the problem of speaking for the "Other," because they are the "Other" in their texts" (2003, p. 513). I understand this to mean that as a researcher of your own lived experience, in this autobiographical act, you carry a doubled identity, what Annette Kuhn calls "the writing I" and "the written I" (2000, p. 180). Nonetheless, others are present. Although it appears you are only speaking for yourself, in reality, since we do not live our lives in isolation, the important others of our lives are always there in our stories. "Because our own lives never stand free of the lives of others, we are faced with our responsibility to those others whenever we write about ourselves. There is no escaping this responsibility" (Eakin, 1999, p. 159). By actively seeking out my siblings' voices, I thought to engage with that responsibility directly, and to obviate that

particular ethical aspect of autobiography. I believe I did to a certain extent. In addition, I took as my model Stephen Harold Riggins' respect (one could call it) in his study of his parents' living room (1994). I addressed the use of my parents' journals in a similar way.

After all, what was my purpose here? I saw the childhood landscapes work as an exploration of place experiences and memories through photographs and talk, a partial opening of our archive. I know that opening the archive has a ripple effect; I learned that in my master's inquiry.[29] The narrative effort, episodic or not, focused on body or place, starts a nuanced remembrance process that continues long after the interviews. I am not responsible for those ripples, though; I am responsible for how I explore and represent my siblings' narrative expressions. The distance that is created that allows for "research" to take place means that I as researcher inhabit a different subject position than that of my 'everyday' life[30] and as such, I carry these responsibilities. The purpose is not to expose, but to refract and reflect. Through this process, new material was generated for the archive, an inheritance of sorts for my siblings, and a suggestion to readers/viewers of ways and means for doing the same (but differently, of course).

However, one must acknowledge that my goals and my siblings' goals were not the same, and that I am the one writing this text, appearing as its sole author, and benefitting from its completion and dissemination. These are the same issues that Patricia Maguire (1993) raises about using participatory research in a doctoral project. I am aware of only one doctoral thesis that has multiple authors. A thesis is considered to be an autonomous, singular production. The acknowledgements page that appears at the front of every thesis belies that, but nonetheless, we continue to participate in that contradictory fiction.

The balance between the self and the other is part of the dilemma, or rather the challenge, of arts-informed research. Because of the very nature of arts-informed work, the self's construction of whatever form is being used is usually personal, or at the very least, more subjective than is normally considered in qualitative research inquiry. This "evolution" also reflects changes in the field itself. In her discussion of ethnography, Amanda Coffey states, "it is the textual visibility of the self that has undergone transformation" (2002, p. 318).

The arts-informed end of the qualitative continuum can sometimes be overwhelmed by

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[29] I was aware that exploring the body with women can raise problematic issues, and I prepared for that by ensuring I had access to therapeutic resources, if needed, for 'my' participants.

[30] This continues to be the privilege of inquiry.

the effort to bridge the gaps between process, product and representation. In this struggle, of course, I am not alone and many researchers could probably delineate the same struggles. Successful examples, however, do abound (see Knowles & Cole, 2008). In speaking of arts-based inquiry, Eisner (2008) suggests the most important support is not "tight rationales articulated by academics... but exemplary arts-based work which is difficult to dislike" (p. 19). The effort to communicate the tacit and transformative positions which can emerge from arts-informed inquiry is worth the effort. In the doctoral process, the effort is also to express theoretical understandings to contextualize what you have learned for knowledge "transmission" to a particular (imagined) audience. That performance has its impact on the final product as well. I believe anyone familiar with arts-informed research will be able to clearly see my struggle in this text. The element of "you had to be there" is sometimes not confronted. The personally transformative aspect of "being there" and doing it was difficult to communicate. But I hope my efforts at knowledge 'transmission' and meaning making will be "difficult to dislike," and thus will lead to some phenomenological nodding. For me, that resonance is the most important measure of this work.

Part of the post-modern situation is the emphasizing of multiple voices, multiple positions of power and authority. We know this emphasis must take into account ongoing · differences in power relations based on many factors – gender, race, ethnicity, age, mobility and others. Nonetheless, more voices now speak, and are heard, than in any time past. And there are, in addition, more ways to speak and be heard. There is however a potential concomitant dilution of the possibilities of power that can leave hegemony complacently alone. I remain poised between the personal and the political. I acknowledge, as we all must, that when I speak of myself, I am not speaking only of the unique "I" personal self, but of the universal constructed cultural self, the "we" in "me" or the "me" in "we" (Mitchell & Weber, 1999). Still, the power of "me" remains ambiguous.

Power and voice are linked in ways that I continue to explore, both personally and professionally. There is inherent power in the position of the social science researcher that cannot be overleaped, no matter how reflexive the practitioner, or how communitarian the goals of the inquiry. My own solution – embodied reflexivity through photography, as I have framed it for this inquiry – must do for now. My challenge is, as in all research, to make my inquiry accessible, relevant and meaningful to the other. I would add that since this inquiry is my

attempt to fill in my genealogy of place, to "sign" my presence, it is also squarely aimed at my own transformation.

In the next chapter, I look to my Commonplace Book and its place and use in this inquiry. I put into practice a form of self-photo-elicitation, examining found photographs of childhood spaces. In addition, I practice and examine rephotography, using my own "made" photographs. I write memory across time and about place, attending to the element of time in the photograph. I connect and relate my childhood memories of place to current literature on children's geographies. I examine the relationship between embodied memory and the photograph.

# Chapter 3.  Knowing my place
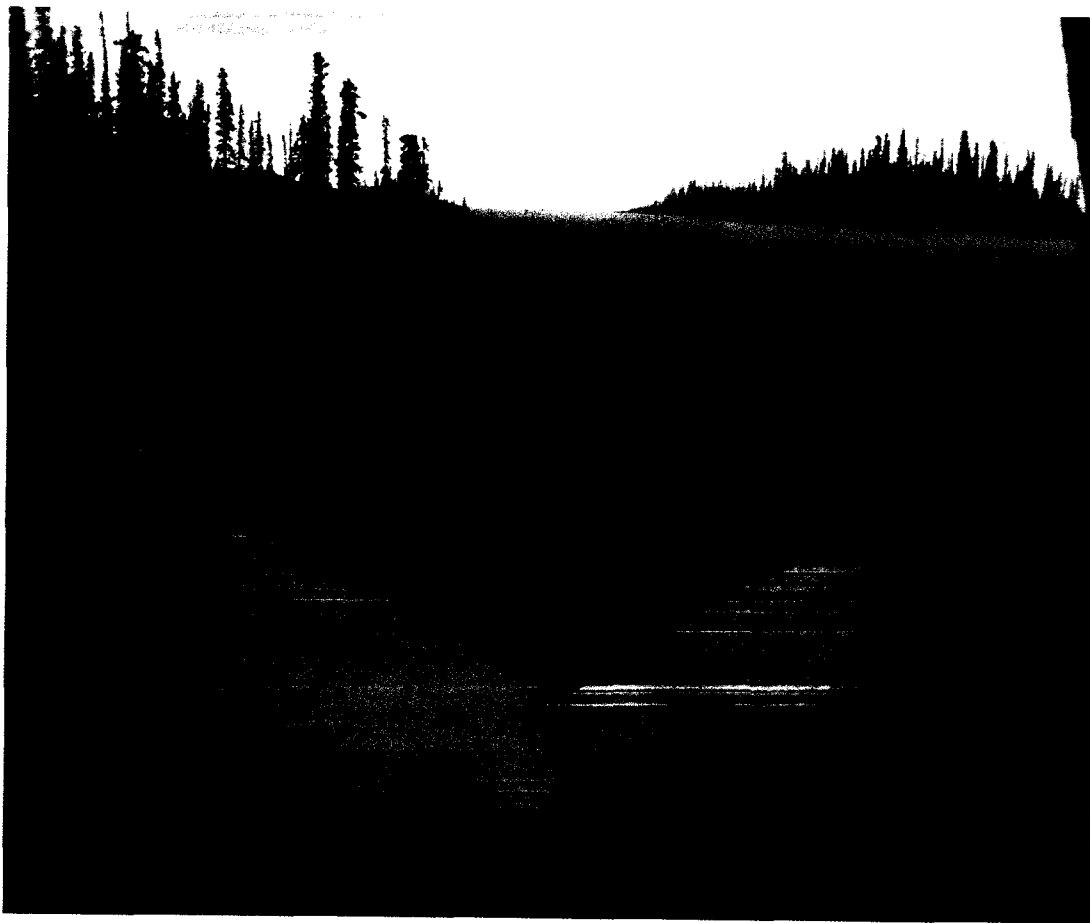
Memory is a kind
of accomplishment
a sort of renewal
even
an initiation, since the spaces it opens are new
places

William Carlos Williams
*Paterson (1963)*

"Our whole childhood remains to be reimagined."[31]

This chapter explores my childhood landscapes through photography, rephotography and writing – "acts of memory" (Kuhn, 1995). The genesis of this chapter emerged in memory texts created inside a larger project, my Commonplace Book (of which more below). When I started this project – as a photographic exploration of place – I was unsure of its direction. I realized quite early on that I felt a need to return to "bury" some things, in order to look more keenly at the present. I was completely unprepared for the therapeutic element of excavating (instead of "burying") my childhood landscapes. Foucault (1985, cited in Alvermann, 2000, p. 123) says, "there are times in life when the question of knowing if one can think differently than one thinks, and perceive differently than one sees, is absolutely necessary if one is to go on looking and reflecting at all."

This project ended up being just such a moment. Its impact emerged from the very integrated experience of writing and photographing. I wrote, I photographed, I wrote. I looked. And then I photographed again. I repeat these elements because the

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[31] Arnoux, cited in Bachelard, 1969b, p. 19.

sequence is important. This segue went back and forth, back and forth, between the multiple selves – cultural, intellectual, and yes, childlike – that we carry with us. I was acting as curator of my life, picking things up, arranging, placing, and explaining. Of course, we all do this, consciously or unconsciously, through the overview of memory, scratching down the vernis of the lived canvas, peering under and through the layers of the palimpsest. But in this particular self-conscious process, I wanted to explore the imprimatur of childhood landscapes on adult perceptions and in this way, as I saw it, on identity. This was situated, placed, episodic memorying. It aimed to explore, through photographs and writing, influences on my/our seeing.
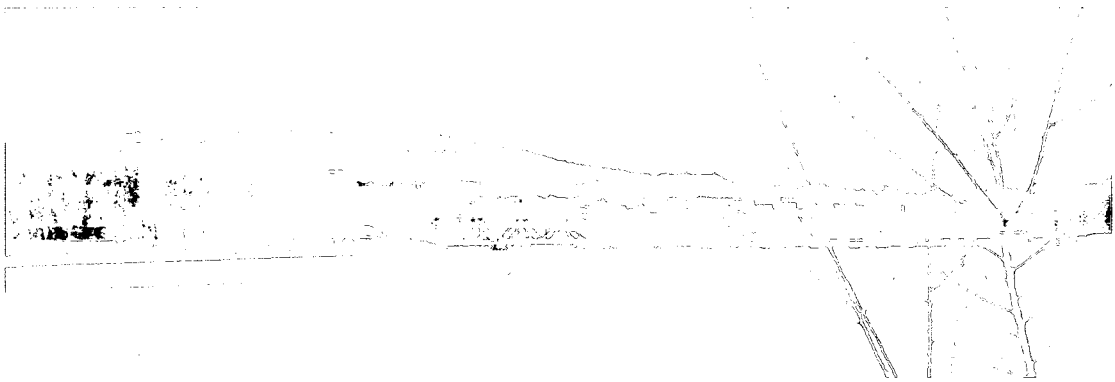


I lie in bed at night, in the bedroom I share with my sister, and I listen for the CPR train as it crosses the railroad bridge over the Magog River. It sounds its horn and the sound resonates across the water, across the park, up the street and into our bedroom. It is a most haunting sound: it calls, it speaks of the world I don't know, far and desirable places. It speaks also of that bridge on which I have never walked, a mysterious railroad bridge, off limits. [32] It is 1956.

Trains were a big part of my childhood, as we never owned a car. I took a train, by myself, to Montreal when I was 12, to meet up with my great-aunts and my cousins, to get on another train to New York for a weeklong visit. Although that was a day train, due to an error in time judgement[33] on the part of my great-aunts, we all got to take a night train back to Montreal. I had my own private compartment. I lay on my dropdown bed all night, too intoxicated by the experience to sleep, watching the landscapes of New York, Vermont and Quebec

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[32] This bridge is no longer off-limits, but is now part of the redevelopment of the river's edge. I have not (yet) walked over it.
[33] Trains used to always run on standard time; this required calculation to get arrival and departure times right!

flow by. We took trains to the cottages we rented for my father's summer holidays, if there was one that went there (otherwise, we took taxis). My entire family, parents and four children, took the train to Montreal for an exciting Easter holiday in the big city. Prime Minister John Diefenbaker came to Sherbrooke campaigning from the back of a train; we used to have a photo of my youngest brother with my father, shaking Diefenbaker's hand, which appeared in the local newspaper. I went to my summer job in New Brunswick on the train, leaving from the CPR station, up all night (this time sitting up), wired with excitement. After university, I went from Montreal to Vancouver by train, again sitting up for a long three days, feeling as if I were in a cocoon, no news, no radio, no telephone, seeing the land, living the transition. Now when I fly to Vancouver, I feel as if I have missed something vital, not living the miles, the distance, the spaces in between. We have stopped considering how mobility has changed our relationship with the spaces we live in – we take for granted that we can avoid the spaces in between.
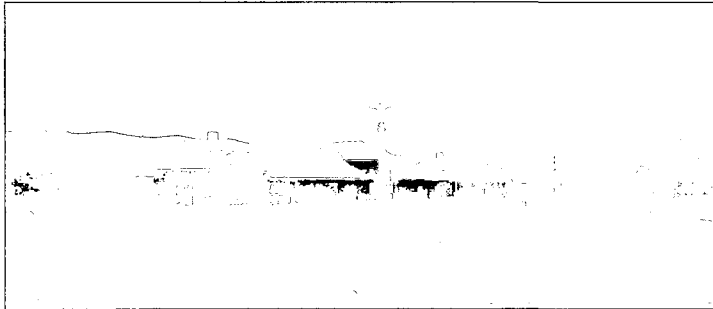


Importantly, also, one of my closest childhood friends lived in the CPR (Canadian Pacific Railway) train station. Her father was a cook/chef, and he ran the small station restaurant. They lived in a tiny apartment on top of the restaurant. Helen always had the most wonderful sandwiches, lobster or roast beef, for school lunch, wrapped in a heavy wax paper that you couldn't buy in the store. Her back yard was the train yard and her companions were the train yard workers. We knew the tracks, the freight cars, as well as any back garden or field, and we roamed them freely. (SA) [34]

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[34] These short memories emerged both from my Commonplace Book writing and in the writing of this chapter. They feel a part of the text, but apart simultaneously. So I label them simply (SA) and demarcate them from the main text through formatting.

I have been thinking about this roaming free as I read some of the literature on children's geographies. Children have not been a "traditional focus of concern" in geography, which Holloway and Valentine call an "adultist discipline" (2000, p. 7). Particularly, research on younger children tended to be centered in educational, environmental, and developmental psychology. As well, as Mitchell and Reid-Walsh (2002) point out, the contemporary discourses of marginality and resistance do not necessarily resonate with studying nine-year-olds. However, starting in the 70s and 80s, work by researchers such as William Bunge and Roger Hart brought children's environments, and children's "spatial cognition and mapping abilities" (p. 7) into the picture. During the 90s, children's geographies from a child's perspective were again in the forefront. The 1989 U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child places "children's access to space and place [as] … a legitimate political right" (Matthews & Limb, 1999, p. 63). A more general interest in spatiality across disciplines has also arisen, possibly emerging from "the 'new' cultural geography [which] draws attention to the importance of difference and diversity and the various ways in which social groups cohere and collude around shared subjectivities" (Matthews & Limb, 1999, p. 62).

Children are recognized now as a social group[35], in what is called 'the new social studies of childhood', with the "recovery of children from essentialist discourses through an examination of the social construction of childhood" (Holloway, 2004, p. 7). The concomitant focus on the agency of children themselves, as social actors, has resulted in the "development of child-centered methodologies" (Holloway & Valentine, 2000, p. 8). This literature, of necessity, explores views and perceptions of the nature of childhood itself, and the contest of meaning in the spaces that children inhabit. It is concerned with "spatial imagery in the ideologies of childhood" (Holloway & Valentine, 2000, p. 1). When we think about children and space and catch the images that immediately spring to mind, we understand that "conceptions of childhood are spatially as well as temporally specific" (Holloway & Valentine, 2000, p. 10).

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[35] Matthews and Limb (1999) emphasize, however, that unlike other "marginalized" social groups, children "will never gain entry to the academy." They use academy as shorthand to mean the "sets of hegemonic values which form part of the apparatus of ruling" (p. 83). Thus children remain unique, and as they suggest, in need of "allies" (p. 83).

What were the conceptions of childhood when I was growing up? My impression, through memory work, is of an incredible physical freedom, freedom to roam, alone or with friends, as long as I was home for supper, or before dark. My roaming territory was quite large, though very specific. This physical freedom contrasts sharply, however, with the psychological (or moral) strictures with which we lived. Our moral lives were lived in black and white, religion held sway (this was small city Quebec in the 50s), linguistic differences were profound. Our class boundaries were quite rigid. This appears to contrast strongly with current childhood experiences, at least in the urban environment, where physical freedom is constrained and controlled, but psychological freedom is broader. Does the complexity of richer moral lives lead to restrictions for children? What is that relationship? Is it lived out spatially?

> I contrast my childhood with my daughter's. Admittedly I grew up in a small city and my daughter grew up in a large urban setting, living in the downtown core, though we had a small backyard (three floors down) in which she played with friends. Her school was within walking distance, three short blocks, but she never walked there by herself until she was 10. I, on the other hand, took a city bus (Number 42) to and from my school (over a mile and a half away) often by myself by the age of seven. I would have to add to that that I knew my usual bus driver on the way home by name – Mr. Guay. The bus turned up my street, and had a stop at the top and bottom of the block. Even so, Mr. Guay would stop in the middle of the block, across from my house, and let me off. This was small town living. (SA)

Examining this interrelationship between physical and moral spaces brings up the connotative place language used by Owain Jones (2000). Jones, who has centered his studies on childhood and the (English) countryside, looks at how children's and adults' geographies meet and mesh in an English "idyllic" village, by considering "pure" space and "otherable" space. He asks "to what extent the dominant, striated fabrics of adults' geographies are, or can be, rendered flexible or porous enough for children to form their own geographies within them" (2000, p. 30). This is continuing the discussion, which ranges all through the literature on children's geographies, of a number of current issues about childhood, most particularly in overly developed societies: that childhood is disappearing, that children are being erased from public spaces, that public spaces are not

being constructed with both adults and children in mind.[36] Matthews and Limb (1999) call this "sociospatial marginalization" (p. 65). Jones (2003) suggests not only physical spaces are becoming more restricted.

> There is some concern for the loss of 'reverie' spaces for children as they become increasingly bound up with information and technologies and the inevitably adult prescribed worlds of games, videos, and televisions, and as they face the pressures of audited education and commodified lifestyles. (Jones, 2003, p. 33)

Jones also looks at the construction of the idea of country life as ideal for children as "pure" space (p. 33). He cites Eisenberg (1998) in that "most forms of idyll are ways 'of denying or declawing change'" (p. 33). Declawing is a very vivid metaphor for one of the ways through which we cope with change, taking the sting out of it through an idealization of a past situation or place. One of the ideas embedded in idyll is that of sameness, not difference, the idea of a "common language" (to use Adrienne Rich's phrase), or as David Sibley (1999) states, "there is a common desire to live in a place which is stable and orderly, where social interaction entails what George Herbert Mead called 'a conversation of gestures', gestures which are mutually understood" (cited in Jones, 2000, p. 33/34).

When space is constructed as "pure," a concomitant freedom can be granted to the children who inhabit that space. "Pure" in this sense often means that to the responsible adults, the space is seen as safe, predictable, non-threatening and bounded. Jones says, "perhaps inevitably the countryside has come to be seen as a childhood idyll because it is where the innocence of childhood can connect with innocent spaces of nature" (2000, p. 34). These two innocent spaces, childhood and nature, are contestable, of course, but they are also very powerful constructions of naturalness.

Gill Valentine (1997a) has noted, however, that parents in a rural (English) village both struggle with and invest in these constructions. These parents, whether indigenous or "incomers" to the village, are aware that these are no longer "pure" spaces. They know that due to increased mobility and indeed, due to that very ideal of 'idyll,' the

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[36] Most of these discussions are about overly developed countries; declining birthrate is surely one of the considerations, though I have not yet met that particular element in my readings. Baby boomers are adults now, overly occupying space, and designing it.

countryside is easily invaded by danger, most often seen in the form of "stranger-danger," but also by transport accidents and so on.

A theme Valentine notes is that of "prolonged innocence" (1997a, p. 140). Parents felt that the rural environment kept their children from growing up too fast, and they spoke of differences between city or town children, and their own. While urban children are seen as having decreased habitat, contracting into the home, children in rural environments are seen as able to entertain themselves, through access to natural and less bounded spaces. My parents, too, were seemingly of that view. I remember looking through a drawer for a report card when I was about ten, and finding a letter addressed to my father from an American hospital, offering him a position. Troubled at this glimpse into an unknown adult world, I brought it to my mother. She said that they had decided that Sherbrooke was a better place to bring up a family, and my father wasn't taking the position. I asked no more.

Parents in more rural settings regard their children as less affected by the impact of global forces on local environments (Valentine, 1997a). Urban children are viewed as inhabiting a more sophisticated school environment, and as materially more connected to the wider world through cyberspace and other electronic media (though this is of course a class issue). Parents and children have distinctly separate views on children's capacity in public space (Valentine 1997b). Valentine suggests that children's spatial competence is frequently underestimated by their parents and that modern parents view the world as less secure than the one they inhabited.

> I think of my childhood and of my knowledge of global forces – overheard, vaguely understood. What were my dangers? I was never warned about strangers. But I do remember foreboding, so much linked to the Cold War, and of course the aftermath of the Second World War, and Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Post-traumatic stress disorder was not a concept then, but societally we lived it. The Korean War call up, the drawn (not photographed) images in my geography book of the "horror" of communist countries, the (nuclear) air-raid sirens on top of the hospital, how they sat in us and created inchoate fear. One day, when I was about nine, I walked into our small library and displayed there on the tables were open books with photographs of Holocaust victims, of the concentration camps, images which no one ever explained to me, which were never discussed

in school, or at home. I never asked anyone about them; I just took them into my soul. Children were innocent; nothing was explained. All these forces must have contributed to the sinking feeling I always had of catastrophe about to happen. That feeling of foreboding is not explained by the mostly benign images that came into my house through Life Magazine, National Geographic, and British Country Life. That was how I was supposed to know the world.[37] What did my parents know of the world? Was I aware of how they perceived the world, or wanted me to perceive it? Did I care? My view is that our views never met and were never discussed. (SA)

Owain Jones (2000) is also interested in the ways that children "operate their own spatialisations rather than remain utterly confined within the patterns of adults' geographies" (p. 37). He suggests they do this by using space in a different way than intended, by using "spaces of disorder" which have been left freer, or abandoned, by adults; he calls these spaces "polymorphic," spaces which can be used in different ways. (p. 37). He says children are "opportunists in the exploitation of space, which leads to the important perspective of 'freeing up' space for childhood, rather than trying to (over) determine it" (p. 37). We can perhaps remember our experience of carving out our own spaces – appliance boxes which become instant huts, overhanging trees which become caves, a puddle which is like an ocean. Jones says that children have an "often small-scale, fine-grained relationship to [material] space." (p. 37).

I think of my spring adventures just off the sidewalk, on the street in front of our house, where the melting water would make rivulets in the packed ice. It would resemble, to me, a miniature landscape (much as I now see that landscape in certain sunset cloud formations). I had wooden clothes pegs, taken apart, with little faces drawn on them, and these 'people' would do things in this ice land, with rivers and banks and snow houses. This is a very embodied memory; I am crouched down, not cold, the April sun, the closeness to the ice water, this world at my fingertips, my own creation. Or in the hospital woods, sitting on the forest floor having a picnic of pretend 'chicken' (the rotted wood of a fallen log, wood that felt and looked like the flesh that you would pull off a chicken breast). (SA)

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[37] We didn't have a television until I was 12, though some friends did. At their homes, I would watch the *Mickey Mouse Club* after school and part of a soap-opera which came on just before the *Mickey Mouse Show, As The World Turns*.

Jones suggests that "crucial to these activities [of remodelled space] is the presence of loose material in the environment which is both safe(ish), and not restricted from use due to adult needs or curfews" (2000, p. 40).

Increasingly, spaces are "monomorphic" or single use, even in a rural environment, Jones says, and these are spaces that exclude children for the most part – intensive agricultural fields (though after harvesting, these can become polymorphic), roads (formerly used for play but now carrying too much traffic), and gardens too "precious" for children to run in.

Jones is arguing for more polymorphic spaces to enhance the opportunistic and non-scripted use of space by children. Children do not have control over the structuring of their environments for the most part and

> ...the more rigid this structuring is, the more it will constrain children's worlds within it, and the degree or rigidity of such structures is determined in part by the extent to which the boundaries within it are permeable or impermeable. If these boundaries are to some extent permeable to children they have a chance to build their own geographies, to reorder the space to their own desires and in effect create a dimension parallel to that of the adult space, which continues to function. (2000, p. 41).

**The imprinting of landscape**



When I was born, my parents lived in Lasalle, at 9835 Lasalle Blvd., in a house that has since been torn down[38]. Not until recently did I understand that the first two

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[38] Lasalle is a suburb of Montreal, which lies along the St. Lawrence River. I remember being told that our house was the coach-house on a larger property owned by friends of my father; this was the country in those days, compared to the downtown greystone building my parents lived in prior to moving here.

years of my life were spent across the road from Lac St. Louis. In my parent's only photograph album (inherited in 2000 when my mother died) is a photo of our Lasalle house, with an address. One spring day I visited this (then empty) space and finally understand the pre-verbal origins of my thirst for the littoral – light glinting on water. (I have since revisited this space to again take pictures of the view and the empty space behind is now inhabited by condominiums.)

When I was two, we moved to Sherbrooke; when I speak of my childhood landscape, I mean that city. It was small as cities go when we moved there. When I left it permanently almost twenty years later, it was still relatively small. I did not have a rural upbringing, but I had the edge of one. Our home, at 75 Heneker Street, sat on the boundary of Sherbrooke when we first moved there. Our street was not paved; our house was one of two on our street. The Sherbrooke Hospital, where my father was to be the Executive Director, had not yet been built at the top of our street; it was still located in the East end of the city, another world. The hospital woods, as we called them, were a completely undeveloped part of the large property the hospital was built on. We roamed it at will, on foot, and on our bikes, making our own paths. These spaces are now full of houses, though they still appear wooded. We lived on the rural edge of the North Ward, the middle and upper class part of town; though class did not enter my consciousness in any apparent way, it was implicit in all activities. More apparent to me were religious and linguistic divides: Protestant/Catholic, French/English. These dictated space use far more than class.

The Sherbrooke I inhabited in the 50s was an English Sherbrooke. I knew hospital and business people as parents of my friends and as friends of my parents. Because my father was Protestant and my mother was Catholic, the friends of my parents tended to be of a mixed religious background. At the time, I did not identify that mix. That religious identification was more obvious in the parents of my friends who were all Catholic. Prior to attending school, I played with neighbours who were French (and Catholic), though we did not speak each other's languages. Once school started, however, such play ended. Only after 1960, and "la revolution tranquille," as it was called, did I again cross the language divide. All my friends did not take that crossing. Fortunately, I was helped by my friendship with a bilingual person, whose father was

English and mother French.[39]   The religious divide was never really breached for me in Sherbrooke, though I attended the first Grade 12 in the Eastern Townships which was non-denominational and of mixed gender.[40] It was only when I moved to Montreal that religion fell away as a defining characteristic of friendship. The religious/linguistic landscapes – these less physical landscapes – impacted on the physical spaces I visited or roamed, though I was totally unconscious of these demarcations on my environmental map. They were taken-for-granted, common-sense, but embodied markings.

Penelope Lively (1994), in her brief but piercing memoir of her childhood to age 12 in Egypt, *Oleander, Jacaranda*, discusses the mixed elements of the imprimatur of her childhood landscape. She contrasts this remembered landscape to the one she met when she emigrated from Egypt to England, where she experienced a form of landscape culture shock. Is our childhood landscape imprinted on us in a way that we carry it always, as Tuan (1977) suggests? Lively says that although she was purportedly not an immigrant to England – her parents were British, and she spoke the language – she felt very much displaced, not only because she didn't know the customs, but because of the place itself. "And all the while I carried around inside me an elsewhere, a place of which I could not speak because no one would know what I was talking about" (1994, p. 129).

She revisited Egypt as an adult, and in her memoir, she recalls the experience, examining through photographs her childhood perceptions, comparing the embodied memory of childhood with the adult visit, looking back, or, to use Edith Cobb's (1977) phrase, "fingering over of the environment in sensory terms"[41] (p. 45). Lively believes that the experience of childhood is "irretrievable. All that remains, for any of us, is a headful of brilliant frozen moments, already dangerously distorted by the wisdoms of maturity" (p. vi). But she suggests that the "fingering over" of memory can be useful; in taking those "moments of seeing," and writing about them, something can be learned about children's perception, and thus childhood itself. She states that "children are aliens in a landscape that is entirely unpredictable; they are required to conform to the dictation of a mysterious code while finding their way around a world which is both

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[39]  Although this is now very common in Quebec, it was rare at the time.
[40]  The English Catholic schools in Sherbrooke at the time were single gender schools.
[41]  Edith Cobb is discussing children and play but the image of fingering over of memory and even more, the physical object of the photograph, is too appropriate to resist appropriating!

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dazzling and perverse" (p. viii). The idea that children live parallel, rather than companion, lives to our adult ones is both important and daunting. As Jones (2001) says, "they are not less than adults, they are different to adults. They have fully blown imaginative social lives" (p. 175). Lively plays with this in her memoir, contrasting childhood embodied memory with her adult self looking at the same space, and also looking at photographs of the same space – remembering largeness where now she sees smallness, distance where now there is closeness, beauty or shambles where the child saw only interesting things, without judgement. She speaks of a remembered space, where she played with her bicycle:

> I see it with double vision – the reality of the photograph in front of me, and that inward eye which insists upon a sweeping expanse, a great curve around which I hurtle. Both, though, are accurate. It is I who am the inconstant feature. (1994, p. 29)

Lively speaks also of the remembered thrill of constructing a huge house out of a packing case, and then looking at the photograph which shows again the smallness, the ordinariness of the experience. She says, "at any rate, I know that the camera lies. It is not thus at all" (p. 30). I think of my experience of spring run off on the street, and the world I inhabited, crouching there. What would a photograph have shown? Only a small child hunched over some melting ice, holding clothes pegs.

In revisiting Cairo, Lively speaks of her childhood experience of the city as self-serving, in a sense, "what was there here for me? It is a view that is egotistic and also acquisitive, one that is in search of relevance" (p. 54). As a result, "what remains of it all, now, are those points of personal reference: my private map of the place" (p. 54).

## "Of childhoods, I have so many"[42]: My private map

In search of my own private map, I went back to my hometown of Sherbrooke to rephotograph, and in some cases, to photograph for the first time, my childhood spaces. This visit was a part of a larger project, my Commonplace Book. The idea of a Commonplace Book was first inspired by a presentation by Rishma Dunlop and two graduate students (Dunlop, Sandhu & Young, 2001). Dunlop had developed a

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[42] "Of childhoods I have so many/that I would get lost counting them." (Alexandre Arnoux, cited in Bachelard, 1969b, p. 112.)

pedagogical process in a graduate course at York University whereby she and her students wrote to each other through the students' commonplace books; they used drawings, reader response, and poetry, as well as other textual means to dialogue with each other through this very material object.

The popularity of Commonplace books was strongest in the late Renaissance (Darnton, 2000), but its history stretches back farther than that. People created their own books to store knowledge for themselves, copying favorite sayings, quotes from books, and moral precepts. From these sayings, they would then write their own thoughts. It was both an archive and a learning tool. "If the commonplace book is an example of the cumulative, it is informed by the analytic," according to Philip Dyck (1997). Max Thomas (1994, cited in Dyck, 1997) says that "commonplace books are about memory, which takes both material and immaterial form; the commonplace book is like a record of what that memory might look like."

My own Commonplace Book, which I named "Portals, or Learning to See," was a photographic and personal narrative/memory work exploration of place. It was originally part of a reading course on photography[43]. The Book was a collaboration between the course supervisor (a photographer/educator) and myself. It was passed back and forth between us and its current artefactual state contains both our writings, mine typed and hers handwritten. Using existing photographs and made photographs taken specifically for this project, I wrote to them, of them, and most particularly, around them. This evolved into a most fruitful, wide-ranging, autobiographical endeavour that led me, in essence, to begin exploring my life-place stories. I identified four main place themes in the Commonplace Book: portals (or spaces of longing), childhood landscapes, current places, and spaces of solace. Two pages are reproduced in this chapter on page 95. They form a part of the childhood landscapes exploration in my Commonplace Book, the heart of this chapter.

In this work on childhood landscapes, the "inconstant feature" of me (as Penelope Lively describes the adult/child viewer) worked with various photographs. These were found photographs of my childhood home from my parents' photo album (which only

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[43] This project, which looked to practice rather than theory, was inspired by Cathy Mullen, and confirmed my move into the rewarding space of visual practice.

came into my hands in 2000), photographs of my home taken in 1987, and the subsequent purposeful photographs of my Book project, taken in 2002. In addition to these latter photographs of my home, I also sought out and photographed, for the first time, childhood play/adventure spaces of particular meaning. I have subsequently returned several times to Sherbrooke to continue the rephotography project, to deepen my own memory work, and to give photographic 'evidence' to my siblings' memories (see Chapter 4). This photographic memory work and rephotography constitutes my framework here. Penelope Lively, in discussing the child's view, states:

> No thought here at all, just observation – the young child's ability to focus entirely on the moment, to direct attention on the here and now, without the intrusion of reflection or of anticipation.... A way of seeing that is almost lost in adult life. You can stare, you can observe – but within the head there is now the unstoppable obscuring onward rush of things. It is no longer possible simply to see, without the accompanying internal din of meditation.
>
> And is that perhaps why we remember with such clarity? Could it be that it is the lost capacity for unadulterated vision that furnishes those suspended moments, because we saw then with an immediacy that we have since lost? (Lively, 1994, p. 22)

The statement, "it is no longer possible simply to see," is both a challenge and a reality. Whether seeing in daily life, or looking at a photograph, we bring to our visuality cultural and personal scripts. I wanted to use the "internal din of meditation" to reflect on the photographs, working "beyond nostalgia"[44] as Mitchell and Weber (1999) suggest.

I was looking for my child's placed story, one that would not be "useless longing" (1999, p. 5), but would be a part of a "pedagogy of reinvention," a term Mitchell and Weber use to describe the process of making both the immediate and the distant past usable. Memory work argues for the usefulness of "going back over something in different ways and with new perspectives, of studying one's own experience with the insight and awareness of the present for the purposes of acting on the future" (Mitchell & Weber, 1999, p. 8). Chawla quotes Goethe: "There is no past that one is allowed to long for. There is only the eternally new, growing from the enlarged elements of the past; and genuine longing always must be productive, must create something new and better" (1994, p. 8).

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[44] I discuss nostalgia further in Chapter 6.

Jones (2001) states quite categorically that "once childhood is superseded by adult stocks of knowledge, those adult filters can never be removed to get back to earlier states" (p. 177). This is an important statement when one is researching childhood landscapes and memories. Chris Philo (2003) suggests, however, that our advantage as researchers in this area is that we have all been children. Unlike other areas of research, where we could never hope to fully stand in the shoes of the 'other,' in this case, we have a foothold. That foothold is memory (though Matthews & Limb (1999) call it "both an opportunity and a danger" (p. 68)), "creating the potential for some small measure of empathy – some sense of recognition, sharing and mutual understanding, even if slight..." (Philo, 2003, p. 9). In addition, Philo, pointing to Bachelard (1969b), suggests that there is an "admixture of adult imagination and memory in the recovery of childhood reverie"[45] (p. 7) that could allow researchers to engage more deeply in children's geographies, whether our own or others, "as experienced and imagined *from within*" (p. 7).

In a seemingly self-evident statement, but one with deep implications for memory work, Linda Rugg states that "the present is the only place from which to experience the past" (1997, p. 220). She is responding to Christa Wolf's statement that "the past is not past." The past is never past, to put it even more categorically. Getting back to "earlier states" is therefore not the point, nor is it possible. But the use of reverie (memory and imagination) as the "hybrid resource of phenomenological reflection" (Philo, 2003, p. 12) is possible in (re)membering our embodied childhood terrain. Jones (2003) does allow that perhaps the questioning of the value of adult memory of childhood is "too based in the realm of the rational, conscious, reflexive adult self" (p. 29). I contend that this (re)visiting of memory carries value in and of itself, and can be seen as a necessary step to elicit the embeddedness of our own standpoints. Memory and imagination are not seen as diametrically opposed but rather, as Philo points out, "entail[ing] in effect a hermeneutic exchange" between present "reveries" and past "recollections" (2003, p. 16), between the remembered and the imagined. Mitchell and Reid-Welch (2002) suggest that memory-work gives "access to components of the "afterlife" of childhood

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[45] Philo is using Bachelard's concept of "reverie" to explore ways of accessing adult memories of childhood geographies.

that are not otherwise available, either ethically or conceptually" (p. 56). Photographs carry much meaning in this endeavour; by carry, I mean, they are "loaded" and rich and full of contradiction. They contribute intensely to this dialogue between the past and the present. As Peggy Phelan (2002) says, "belated interpretation is the hallmark of afterwardness" (p. 981). She is discussing afterwardness that can emerge from/in a photograph, and suggests it is neither memory nor "flashback," but something weighted and in-between those two, which "allows us access to the copresence of the past and the present in the same moment" (p. 981).

One photographic tool that engages with the idea of afterwardness in another manner is rephotography. This practice has been used in different ways, for different purposes. The work of Mark Klett et al. is probably best known (Klett et al., 1984; www.thirdview.org); it has substantial environmental significance, though that is not its only purpose. Klett et al's engagement with time and views of the imagination are also explored in this work. In the late 1970s, Klett took a "second view" look at wilderness in a unique way. Deeply interested in the work of 19th century wilderness photographers such as Timothy O'Sullivan, John Hillers, and Carleton E. Watkins, he set about rephotographing their original sites. Almost mathematically, he and the teams with whom he worked found the original vantage point, and rephotographed, in as identical a manner as possible (including time of day and year), the original sites as represented in the 19th century photographs. These were photographs of the American West, of a wilderness that even today[46] is much unchanged. The 19th century views are monumental, showing a vast impressive landscape of mountains, canyons, and rivers. Many of these original photographs were taken for government purposes, for surveying and mapping. They are iconic and in a "style" that has been codified in landscape photography – a monumental, distanced approach to nature. In their painstaking work, Klett and his colleagues have been able to track most tellingly the exponential impact of development and evolving nature on wild places in the United States.

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[46] There was a Third View project in 1998 which shows more change in twenty years than in the hundred years that preceded. However, there is still much the same, amazingly.

Malcolm Collier (2001) has worked this way as well, photographing the view from his New Mexico home regularly since 1964. His panoramic photographs show "significant changes over time and distinctions in how changes are manifested in different parts of the valley" (p. 40). This photographic revisiting of the same landscape over time offers up much information on both natural and cultural changes – it also offers us a frame of the photographer him/herself.
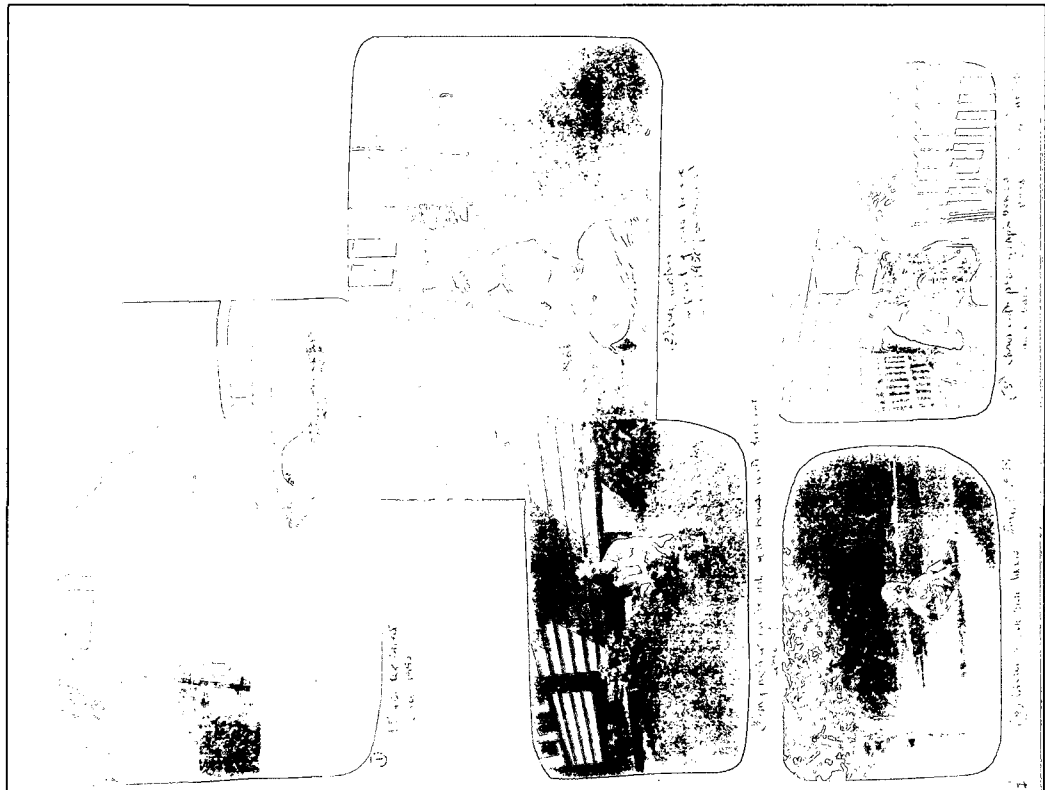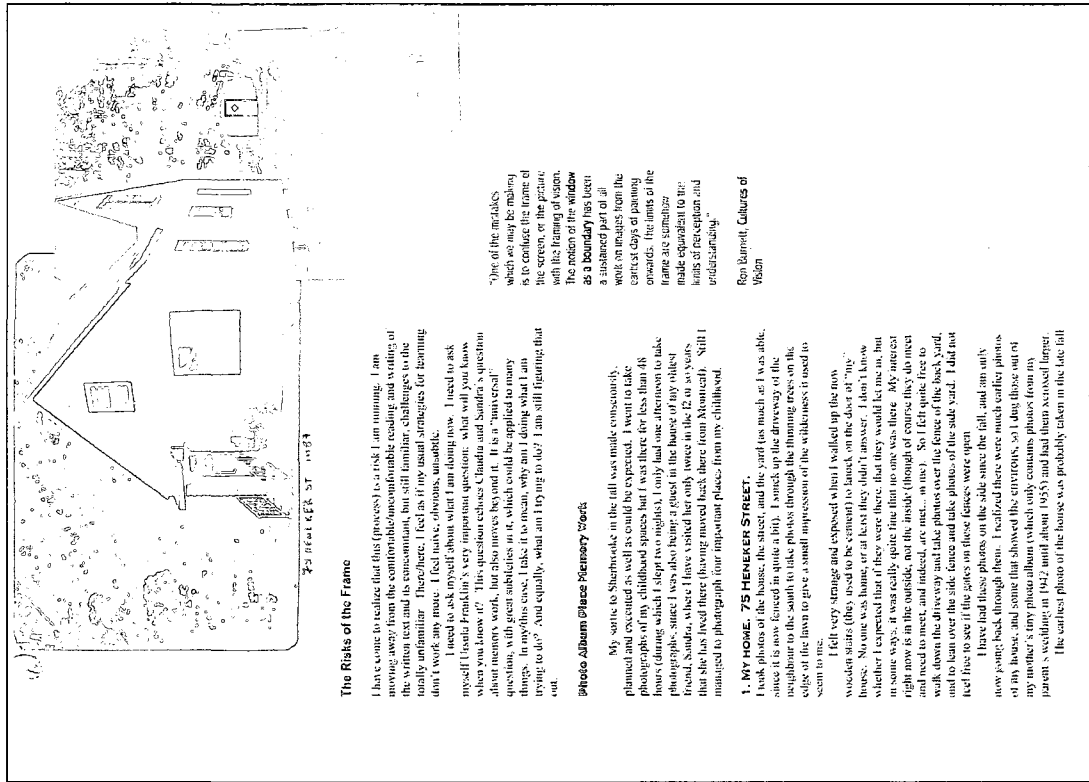
The rephotographic project by Andrzej Maciejewski (2003) identifies urban change in specific Montreal locales over 100 years, contrasting the sites photographed by William Notman with those of today. (Klett too has done a huge and rare rephotography panorama of San Francisco of 1990, "comparing" it to Eadweard Muybridge's panorama of 1878 (Muybridge & Klett, 1990)). Stan Douglas (2002) has photographed a very specific urban locale, the 100 block of West Hastings St, a central block of the renowned 'downtown Eastside' of Vancouver. This photographic project was a form of rephotography; it positioned his massive panoramic exhibited photograph in contrast to recent and historical photographs of the area, making a powerful statement on urban development and decay. Wright Morris, memoirist and fiction writer, has used rephotography in other ways to examine both fictive and non-fictive autobiographical elements in his work through re-staging (Adams, 2000; Morris, 1989). The goals and practices of work labelled as "rephotographic" are multiple, sometimes political, sometimes personal, often both. (I note the seemingly stereotypical gender differences in the "restagings" of Jo Spence (1988, 1995) and rephotographic work; the women's work is about body, and the men's is about monumental place, though Spence has placed her body in public space, and Morris' rephotography is mainly of the vernacular.)

"Then and now" photography, as it is also called, lends itself particularly well to place and there are many other examples easily accessed and viewed on the WorldWideWeb. Three in particular stand out. One is an "amateur" rephotographic project by the daughter of a U.S. soldier in the Vietnam war. She has rephotographed the photos (of place) from his photo album of that time (the late 60s). (www.flickr.com/photos/courtneyutt/sets/72157600336640477/show/). Two other projects are more professional; both rephotograph cities, Paris and New York. Both replicate photos of place taken by well-known photographers of those cities, Eugene Atget and Berenice

Abbott. (See www.lensculture.com/ rauschenberg.html and www.newyorkchanging.com /index.html).

My personal rephotography had more limited goals. At first, I just wanted a record (a re-record in some cases) of my lived-in places. I have come to understand, however, that my exploration is not only of a specific place or places, but also a thrust into time itself, and of how time plays out memory in the flattened plane of the photograph, and of how entrancing and mysterious that is. I now make sense of rephotography and its relationship with time and memory in a way that was not evident to me previously. In my Commonplace Book, I pondered over and over this element of capture, the "taking" of the photograph, the capturing of time, of the moment past, just past, just past again. This is the hold the photograph has on us, and which writers on photography examine again and again. Wright Morris, in speaking of the way he "intermix[es] and reuse[s] fiction, nonfiction and photography" (Adams, 2000, p. 178) states, "...the function of the present was to confirm the nature of the past, and by a commodius vicus of recirculation the reality of the present" (Morris, 1985, cited in Adams, 2000, p. 178). Morris rephotographed an image from the past (of his ancestors standing in front of a house) and he asks: "Was it in this wise I hoped to postpone what was vanishing? A simpler ritual of survival would be hard to imagine. By stopping time, I hoped to suspend mortality" (Morris, 1985, cited in Adams, p. 203).

Is it survival or something else that I am considering when I write about the palpable difference between the photograph of my mother seated on the lawn in front of 75 Heneker Street in 1950 (est.), and the photograph I took of the house in 1987. (See two facing pages from the Commonplace Book, reproduced on the next page).

75 HENEKER ST 1953

## The Risks of the Frame

I have come to realize that this [process] is a risk I am running. I am moving away from the comfortable/uncomfortable reading and writing of the written text and its concomitant, but still familiar, challenges to the totally unfamiliar. Therefore, I feel as if my usual strategies for learning don't work any more. I feel naive, obvious, unsubtle.

I need to ask myself about what I am doing now. I need to ask myself [Ursula Franklin's] very important question: what will you know when you know it? This question echoes Claudia and Sandra's question about memory work, but also moves beyond it. It is a "universal" question, with great subtleties in it, which could be applied to many things. In my/this case, I take it to mean, why am I doing what I am trying to do? And equally, what am I trying to do? I am still figuring that out.

## Photo Album Place Memory Works

My son to Sherbrooke in the fall was made consciously, planned and executed as well as could be expected. I went to take photographs of my childhood spaces but I was there for less than 48 hours (during which I slept two nights). I only had one afternoon to take photographs, since I was also being a guest in the house of my oldest friend, Sandra, where I have visited her only twice in the 12 or so years that she has lived there (having moved back there from Montreal). Still I managed to photograph four important places from my childhood.

### 1. MY HOME, 75 HENEKER STREET.

I took photos of the house, the street, and the yard (as much as I was able, since it is now fenced in quite a bit). I snuck up the driveway of the neighbour to the south to take photos through the thinning trees on the edge of the lawn to give a small impression of the wilderness it used to seem to me.

I felt very strange and exposed when I walked up the now wooden stairs (they used to be cement) to knock on the door of "my" house. No one was home, or at least they didn't answer. I don't know whether I expected that if they were there, that they would let me in, but in some ways, it was really quite fine that no one was there. My interest right now is in the outside, not the inside (though of course they do meet and need to meet, and indeed, are met... in me.) So I felt quite free to walk down the driveway and take photos over the fence of the back yard, and to lean over the side fence and take photos of the side yard. I did find itself free to see if the gates on these fences were open.

I have had these photos on the side since the fall, and can only now going back through them. I realized there were much earlier photos of my house, and some that showed the environs, so I dug those out of my mother's tiny photo album (which only contains photos from my parent's wedding in 1942 until about 1955) and had them scanned larger. The earliest photo of the house was probably taken in the late fall

"One of the mistakes which we may be making is to confuse the frame of the screen, or the picture with the framing of vision. The notion of the window as a boundary has been a sustained part of all work on images from the earliest days of painting onwards. The limits of the frame are somehow made equivalent to the limits of perception and understanding."

Ron Barnett, Cultures of Vision

What these photos say to me or to another viewer would of course be different. In both photographs, for me, there is an immediate projection away from what is seen and a move to what is felt. I write around these photos; I do not write of them. In this, I am responding to Caroline Knowles's statement that photographs "inflect meaning rather than reflect it" (2000, p. 23).
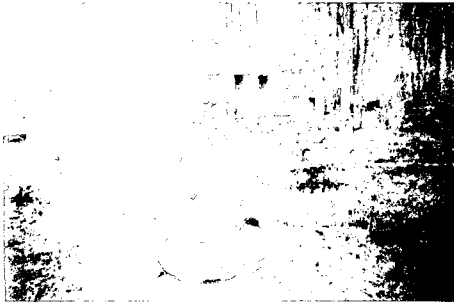


For instance, of the photograph of my mother I could write as follows:

A woman sits on the grass in front of a wooden house with concrete steps. She wears a light coloured blouse with short sleeves, and a slightly darker skirt. She sits with her legs tucked under her, to the side, posing patiently; we see part of a shoe peeking out from under the skirt. Behind her we see part of the front of a house, steps, a door, a window, with an empty window box. Behind her on the grass is a small fir tree, and further still, the beginning of some woods. From the style of the clothing and hairdo, we can decide that this is the late 40s or early 50s. It is spring or fall, as there are no leaves on the trees.

Or I could write the inflection of the photograph:

My mother is sitting on the lawn in front of our house. This must have been very soon after we moved there. David was not yet on the horizon, seemingly, or he has just been born. It is interesting to see that behind my mother, where I remember only our neighbour's house with its bank of lawn (there was never a fence), there are woods. My parents told us that when we moved to this house, it was one of only two on the street, there were no sidewalks, and the street wasn't paved. That was 1948. We lived on the edge of Sherbrooke, right on the edge. Even from when my memory starts, when the streets were paved and there was a sidewalk on at least one side of the street (amazingly in 2007, there is still only one sidewalk), we had only to go three blocks west, past Jacques Cartier Blvd., and immediately, there were woods, fields, only a few houses. Now the city continues for miles west past this street. I understand when I look at this photograph that my early play experiences took place in a form of wildness,

which I remember. I make no differentiation in my memory between the streets and the woods – both were equally available, accessible and allowed.

Morris says, "we sense that it lies within the province of photography to make both a personal and an impersonal statement" (1989, p. 6). In the above descriptions, I respond in both ways. But the projection away to the personal feels more meaningful. Where is my mother, where am I, where is my father (surely the person who took this photograph) in this movement away? It is a photograph of loss, of what has passed and will never be again; a photograph is always already the presence of absence. Malcolm Collier (2001) writes that "Anglos" (as compared to the Navajo and Pueblo peoples in his study) have a tendency to immediately go to what he calls "projective responses" (p. 52) – responses that move away from a photograph – and not to examine the photograph itself. In my Commonplace Book memory writing, and here, I notice that tendency in myself, and yet, as I write this memory moving away from the photograph, both the memory and the photograph become anchored in me.

In considering the 1950 photograph taken of my mother and the 1987 photograph I took of our old home, what differs most intensely and seemingly obviously, is that I was there in 1987. This was my first re-encounter with 75 Heneker St. in 20 years. It was



not intended at the time as rephotography. Indeed my emotions felt stifled at the time. But our own photographs, as opposed to those taken by others, even of the same place, represent our lived experience as compared to a not-lived experience. Radstone (2000) speaks of how we live in a technological time "which can, to all extents and purposes, evoke experience of un-lived through events" (p. 8). These nonetheless enter our memories, sometimes with considerable force (9/11 springs to mind, or my experience with the Holocaust photographs). These considerations of memories of memories, or memories of the representation of other peoples' experiences, raise many spectres, which I do not explore here, though they cannot be ignored. And yet, doesn't the photograph

always turn the subject into an object, and remove us from the thrall of subjectness so that the scene or person photographed is always already not what we experienced, both in time and in "being-thereness"?

Addressing a photograph, in and of itself, seems simple but it is not. Barthes says of the photograph,

> The Photograph then becomes a bizarre *medium*, a new form of hallucination: false on the level of perception, true on the level of time: a temporal hallucination, so to speak, a modest *shared* hallucination (on the one hand 'it is not there,' on the other 'but it has indeed been'): a mad image, chafed by reality. (1981, p. 115)

Barthes is addressing the very heart of the photograph: that "a photograph is always invisible: it is not it that we see" (1981, p. 6). For me, this temporality of the photograph, both in viewing and in taking, is its most entangled element.

I have another project, which I have done for the last 27 years, as long as my daughter has been alive. In the summer, we go to my sister's place in the country and there, on the hot, slow summer days, we visit a small private lake. Every summer, there
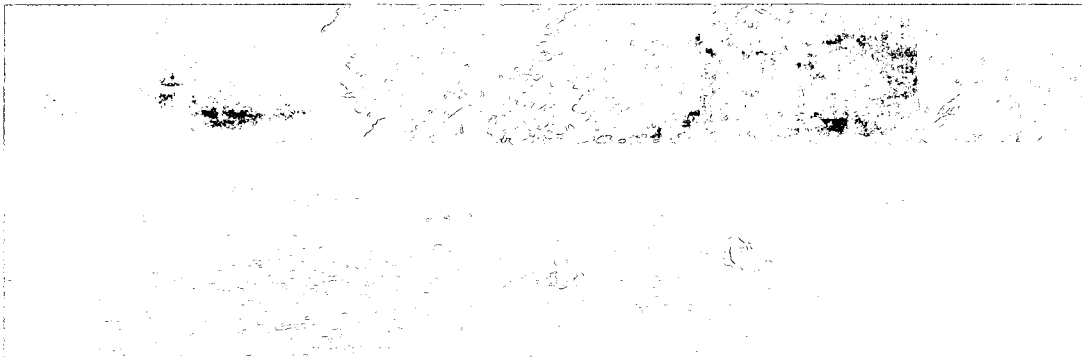


must be a photograph of my daughter and myself in the water, always taken from the dock; I insist on this. My daughter questions this; to her, it is always the same. I say no, there are the photographs when the boathouse was there (and now it is gone); there are photographs when the dock was different, when the light was different. It is not only that we change and grow, the place itself, though always seeming the same, the same water, the same trees, the same sky, is not the same. Is that recordable? Is it only in the loss or addition of the manufactured landscape on this place (the dock, the boathouse) that change can be recorded in this seeming timeless place? I insist on these photographs because I want to capture the ineffable: time.

Rephotography is perhaps not only the name for what Mark Klett is engaged in; it could be called the very project of photography that we all engage in, the very essence of it. Time and its layers are perhaps more visibly present in the family album through the markers of age, as children grow up and parents and others age. But place, too, "ages" and changes, and place is not only background (as Klett's work forefronts). Through rephotography, I have learned that the relationship I have with place (even a place long uninhabited) is not fixed in time, nor is it only "nostalgic." The relationship can change, it can be acknowledged as attached to a certain self, which is always evolving. Thus so does place/memory. Rephotography is not only the embodied act of taking the photograph; it situates me in the same place as my childhood. So when I am there, taking photographs of 75 Heneker St., for instance, I experience some form of that self again, but in parallel with my adult self. Probyn says, "images of childhood, from childhood, pull us back to a space that cannot be revisited; they throw us into a present becoming, profoundly disturbing any chronological ordering of life and being" (1996, cited in Jones, 2005, p. 103). It is that awareness of "present becoming" that is disturbing, of course, the understanding that we are never 'done.' Jones suggests that for Probyn "memory, and writing about memory, is a *spatial rearrangement* by which 'the past is bent into strange shapes so that what should be furthest away is in fact the closest'" (2005, p. 209) (my emphasis). This parallel experience of past/present can be disorienting, as I have experienced in writing this chapter, but it is also instructive. Photographs can play a role in bringing memory closer still, while simultaneously underlining the dissonance of past/present.

During my Commonplace Book project, my exploration of the photographs of my childhood, of which there are not many, brought strongly to the surface a feeling of dislocation, or translocation.[47] That intense feeling seems to come from the fact that in 1967, while I was working in New Brunswick for the summer, my family moved from Sherbrooke to Montreal. In May, I left my home of 19 years at 75 Heneker St. to go to New Brunswick (from the Sherbrooke CPR train station), and in early September, I (re)turned to a duplex on King Edward Avenue in Montreal. I did not participate in the leaving of this encumbered space, my home. It took me a long time to understand the

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[47] Meaning: "a change of location." To translocate means "to displace."

impact of this. Indeed, when I read Penelope Lively's statement, "And all the while I carried around inside me an elsewhere, a place of which I could not speak because no one would know what I was talking about" (1994, p. 129), I felt a deep sense of relief. This seemed to capture some of the aporia and dissonance that was, and is, my placed experience. Wright Morris, who experienced his own losses, says, "I was compelled to return to those [places] where I was still captive. This was at the heart of my agitation" (1985, cited in Adams, 2000, p. 192).

The idea of "domicide," a word I had not yet met when I was writing my Commonplace Book, also carries some of the feeling of loss that I encountered in this looking/writing. Kit Grauer (2005) and Sharon Sbrocchi (2005) have explored the destruction of home(place), the actual loss of the physical family habitat. They document the destruction of their homes to make way for development, in Grauer's case the expansion of the Vancouver airport in Richmond. I did not have the same direct experience of the loss of the physical building/location that Grauer and Sbrocchi had. But by not experiencing the transition from the known to the unknown in terms of habitat, it was as if what I knew had been vaporized. And yet it was not, it has not; I have evidence of that through my rephotography work. What I knew was gone for me, but it was still there physically, though it took me a long time – decades – to go back to see it.

I came to understand that my original concept for my thesis of doing Photovoice "placework" with immigrants, displaced from their familiar, by choice or by circumstance, arose from my own experience of loss of habitat. The word "translocation" was one that rang in my head. My own experience, minor and common, had impacted me so strongly that I thought to advance a political purpose, by working with women whose translocation was much larger. In subsequently choosing not to do so, I have given this rephotographic project not an overtly political but a seemingly personal purpose. However, I believe that by serving as the subject of this project, I locate, in this surface story of rupture, a healing mechanism. In the making of my Commonplace Book, in the rephotography and writing with which I have engaged, I have created a renewed but altered relationship with 75 Heneker Street. This complex representation of healing has been a mapping of emotion as well as place, of feeling about place and space,

domestic and public. It situates me, in this present, in what has passed, in the past. It informs my understanding of my place in the places of the world.

## Palimpsest, memory and photography

> Memory work has a great deal in common with forms of inquiry which – like detective work and archaeology, say – involve working backwards – searching for clues, deciphering signs and traces, making deductions, patching together reconstructions out of fragments of evidence. (Kuhn, 1995, p. 4)

Moore uses the word "rememberance," a rich and perhaps more evocative word than memory, in reference to place. He says,

> As the full potential of discovered places is explored in depth, a sense of attachment and meaning arises...In territories where experientially-layered places are thick on the ground, range development is correspondingly substantial and can create a feeling of affiliation. (1986, p.19)

He is concerned that children have access to the richness of experience which leads to that feeling of affiliation, and he wonders at the effect of shrinking physical ranges and concomitant development opportunities on the adults of tomorrow. Yi Fu Tuan (1977) too stresses the vital importance of place. "Objects and places are centers of value. They attract or repel in finely shaded degrees. To attend to them even momentarily is to acknowledge their reality and value" (p. 18). I contend it is not only acknowledgement; it is ownership. He also says that living somewhere for a long time does not mean that we "know" it, even though we do know it. "Its image may lack sharpness unless we can also see it from the outside and reflect upon our experience" (p. 18). And places we visit only and do not live in "may lack the weight of reality because we know it only from the outside – through the eyes as tourists, and from reading about it in a guidebook" (p. 18). Immunity to landscape can thus come from that feeling of affiliation, "topographical intimacy" (Lippard, 1997, p. 33), as Tuan suggests, and it contrasts with the tourist's eye. But photography, again, can make us tourists in a familiar landscape, helping peel away the layers of the palimpsest and the possible closing down of our perception of the known topography.

Owain Jones (1997) explores this complex "looking" in the context of childhood and the countryside. He states that "to see how we see things and the consequences of

that seeing is a task beset by difficulties. We can never get 'outside' or 'above' for some form of total view'; rather, we are trying to 'map' deep and complex landscapes from a few locations within them" (p. 158). He suggests that the rural is set against the urban, in terms of values and childhood, and that the countryside is seen as the last idyllic place for childhood. Wildness and freedom, celebrated in the country childhood, is seen as feral and fearsome in urban children. "Images of inner-city crisis often contain children, and images of childhood crisis are nearly always set in urban contexts" (p.165), contrasting with the rational urban environment. When I reflect upon my childhood, and its rural edges, I relate very strongly to his questioning of how my (and other) adult memories construct rural childhood. The rural has changed substantially over even the last twenty years. Jones suggests that the "idyll" is a frozen one, locked in through memoir and children's literature, and that adult memory and the representations still in currency[48] work together to mask current rural children's experiences. How generational is this issue? Do most of us have a less urban landscape of childhood (those of us of a certain age), and thus we are caught in this space of longing/(be)longing[49]? The move from rural to urban has taken place in our generation(s).

The outdoors does appear to be connected intimately to childhood. One often cited work on children and nature is that of Edith Cobb (1977), who looked at 313 autobiographies of creative individuals, as well as studying children in place. Louise Chawla (1986) says, "Cobb's work remains a rare attempt to explicate an elusively intangible but perhaps profoundly formative aspect of childhood: our early sense of the surrounding physical world" (p. 34). Chawla, an environmental psychologist, replicated Cobb's autobiographical analysis approach, though with fewer autobiographies, because she felt Cobb's methodology was not very transparent, and the writings she had examined were "Wordsworthian" (Chawla, 1994, p. 2). Cobb had suggested that creative individuals use their childhood experiences of "nature" as a wellspring of creativity. These individuals return to childhood in memory and "experience both a momentary

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[48] Ransome's *Swallows and Amazons*, Beatrix Potter books, Burnett's *The Secret Garden* still sell in substantial numbers, and media representations of the childhood idyll based on children's literature still have a grip on our imaginations.

[49] (Be)longing, as Bronwyn Davies (2000) uses it, suggests that "in the process of constructing ourselves *appropriately* in landscape, we long for a *secure relationship*, for an *affinity*, for a sense of being in our *proper* or *usual* place" (p. 37).

sense of discontinuity – an awareness of his (sic) unique separateness and identity – and a revelatory sense of continuity" (Cobb, 1977, p. 88), a renewal of relationship with nature in time and space.

Louise Chawla (1986) lays out her own methodology quite clearly; she examined 38 modern autobiographical works, charting seven memory "themes." Her results do not correlate completely with Cobb's generalized conclusions. For instance, not all of the childhood memories she examined held the important element of "transcendence" (1986, p. 37) which Cobb identified. However, Chawla did find that "outdoor places were remembered out of all proportion to the relative number of hours spent there…outdoor settings exceeded interiors by a ratio of about 4:1" (p. 37). She also notes that "natural objects receive disproportionate attention in early memories" (1994, p. 146), even for city-raised children. In the Los Angeles Photovoice project with disadvantaged girls[50], of the four photographic themes identified by the authors of the study (Leavitt, Lingafelter & Morello, 1998), one was nature – in an urban area where "nature" was hard to find. The girls sought out and photographed small areas of grass, lone trees, and greenery sprouting from a balcony. Marjorie Orellana (1999) also notes that greenery was very noticeable in the children's photographs in her study with urban children in Los Angeles. She was taking photographs of the same spaces as the children and was interested in the contrast between their location of greenery and her lack thereof. "I came to see there was more greenery in the area than I had noticed, undoubtedly because my focus was on other things" (p. 83). She came to understand "the kids' complex aesthetics of space and play" (p. 84).

## Representations of place: Ways of seeing

How do children represent place, when given the chance? Photovoice is often used as a means for the voiceless (the disadvantaged, the powerless – often children, the homeless, illiterate women, etc.) to give voice to their perceptions of their environments and their worlds. This tool, in the hands of children, often elicits the "small-scale, fine-grained relationship to [material] space" (2000, p. 37) that Jones speaks of. Are children

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[50] Boys who were in the group dropped out, turning the group into an all girls' one.

ever conscious ethnographers? And yet their photographic work can be hauntingly representational and full of clues to their parallel world.

When we look at the photography of the children who have worked with Wendy Ewald (2000), for instance, their photography shows a relationship to place that must often be scratched at, since the seeming focus of their photography is frequently a person, or an object of endearment[51]. But looking around – to the side, behind – the centered person/object, one sees the places that they inhabit. These places are concrete, grounded, but often full of dreams and imagination, showing children living placed lives that Iona and Peter Opie (1969) have described as the "child-to-child complex... [of] people going about their own business within their own society...fully capable of occupying themselves under the jurisdiction of their own code" (cited in Moore, 1986, p. xiv). Those lives, of course, take place within contexts that we as adults think we know, but examining Ewald's children's photographs, we wonder if indeed we do know them. This is not a romanticized idea; Ewald's children's work is proof of that.

Wendy Ewald's work is not traditional Photovoice work. She does support and develop complex and nuanced relationships in her projects. Her work and those of her children collaborators is conceptual, rather than "reality" based. It is intended to be used, as in more traditional Photovoice projects, as a tool of empowerment and pedagogy – beyond the individual. Interestingly, two of her more recent projects are large public installation works in North America and England, portraits in place, positioning the individual in his/her place, out of the museum and the book, into the street, and a politicized and situated location (Hyde, 2005).

More directed place photography by children is seen in Shirley Buss' work (1994) in a penultimate urban setting, Los Angeles. She states at the outset that her methodology was mixed (photography, journals, and interviews) because "children's reactions to the spatial dimensions of the environment are often more visual, emotional, or unconscious than adults" (p. 168). Her research purpose thus puts boundaries around

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[51] An exception in *Secret Games* (2000), a retrospective of Ewald's work, is some of the Dutch children's photographs. As she notes, their photographs "were profoundly rooted in a landscape that is a culture in itself" (p. 216).

what she wants to see as products, unlike Ewald's work.[52] This difference is important.[53] She was also asking very place-oriented questions of her participants, directing them to take photographs of places in their lives, "of places they like, places they don't like or places they find interesting. The photos may or may not include people, but should focus on places" (Buss, 1994, p. 216). The children in her study catalogued some obvious places, and others that are perhaps less obvious, again, to adults. Buss states that for the children in her study, "even though…the social and physical ecologies of the city are tightly entwined, they tend to describe and analyze their lifespaces in social terms." The children "articulate their … feelings about social relations which are symbolically embedded in the spatial environment" (1994, p. 575). The photos were placed in photo journals; there the children wrote about their photographs and elaborated on their meanings, following on dyad and interview discussions. The photographs "sometimes reinforce[s] and sometimes contradict[s] what the children say in the dyads" (p. 261). The contradictions, or messiness, between the visual and the verbal are always of deep interest. Robin Moore (1986) notes with interest that, with the children in his study, drawing place maps elicited far more places than those mentioned only in interviews (about four times more). Just so, Buss (1994) found that although children spoke of fear limiting their access to their neighbourhood, some of the photos showed them ranging quite far afield.

The work of Claudia Mitchell and colleagues (2005) in South Africa, while focusing on HIV/AIDS as a framework, elicits photographs of placedness, rich with metaphorical and actual meaning. Asked to photograph "feeling safe," or "feeling not safe," some children photographed a school toilet, the door unhinged – a place of fear, no safety. Adults were unaware of this issue in the school; they were focused on a larger story. Children's daily trajectories are much closer to the ground; the texture of their days is not metaphysical, but physical. Imagination can take root there, but so can fear.

So when I revisit my childhood places, whether through memorywork narrative, or third person story, or through photography and rephotography, I know the particular

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[52] One must also note that most of Ewald's work has been in under-developed, mostly rural settings, in North and South America, Africa and India, often with children totally unaccustomed to the photographic.
[53] Philo (2003) suggests that working with children's non-adult-directed products might bring more accuracy to researching children's geographies.

texture of childhood is slippery and hard, perhaps impossible, to replicate, sound out or feel 'again.' But, for me, the value of this endeavour rests in the palimpsestually rich ground of the self, the layers of history, experience and meaning that have been granted at every turning, and which are placed at every moment. Robin Moore (1986) speaks of the "cultural quilting of play and environment through *time*" which he says is a *"crucial hard-to-convey dimension"* (p. 9). Any activity in which children engage has to be contextualized across space and time. Time is not just this moment or this month or this year, but exists across childhood over time, and this place over time.

My own memory story of creating a "picnic" of 'pretend' chicken shows that any play activity is built of many things. There are the material elements like the rotted wood. In addition, there are the less material elements of play: how we children interacted to decide that rotted wood was picnic food, the space we carved out in the wood to have that picnic, and how we made the time to sit on the warm, smelly earth to "eat" it. There is the tradition inside which we do that – the tradition of picnics, and even chicken – and then how this activity contributes to the cultural context of our growing up. Play is placed and across time. Context, then, informs our experience in ways that, as children, we do not imagine. The question of inscription, thus, sits in this inquiry quite deeply. The construction of the child/country idyll, for example, as Jones suggests, may arise mostly from "adult notions of country childhood idylls." Trying to unravel this means "trying to unpick to what extent the countryside is some sort of idyll for children which is merely *represented* by adults or whether it is an idealisation *constructed* by adults" (1997, p. 175).

Do I carry around an idealized idyllic childhood, based not on experience, but constructed over time through the representation of others? How do I tease this out? How do I extract memory from this photograph of myself, age two or so, sitting in a field (my father and sister close by, as I know from other photos)? I engage
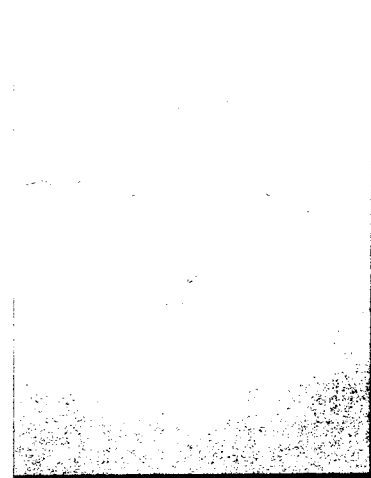
regularly with this photograph, through collage[54] and looking, seeking an embodied understanding which I can't reach. I *know* this photograph carries experience, feelings written on my body like fossils in stone. Does it speak to what Erikson (1977) calls a "child's 'first geography'," our own bodies (cited in Matthews & Limb, 1999, p. 75)?

My relationship with this photograph is situated in what John Berger and Jean Mohr (1982) say about the photograph: "the ambiguity of the photograph does not reside within the instant of the event photographed… the ambiguity arises out of that discontinuity… the abyss between the moment recorded and the moment of looking" (p. 88-89). They suggest that "certainty can be instantaneous; doubt requires duration; meaning is born of the two" (p. 89). The gap between then and now is part of the meaning of this photograph for me. But beyond that, there is something in this child's image (this me) that contains Barthes' idea of the *"punctum,"* how a photograph or a portion of a photograph contains "that accident which pricks me (but also bruises me, is poignant to me)" (1981, p. 27). Barthes also says, "to give examples of *punctum* is, in a certain fashion, to *give myself up*" (p. 43). In other words, there is a sort of vulnerability involved in identifying the images that pierce you. This photograph, and my identification with it, has always carried an important vulnerability. It may also carry the hope of finding, as Benjamin suggests, "the inconspicuous spot where in the immediacy of that long forgotten moment the future nests so eloquently that we, looking back, may rediscover" (1931/1999, p. 510).

Are my felt memories of 'nature' walks at a later age, with my father and sister, roaming through the hospital woods, binoculars and bird and tree reference books in hand, somebody else's idea of my childhood? My father, whose childhood was spent in an English village, carried his own idea of what our childhoods should be like. All parents do. What is that based on? How do they construct it for their own children? How was I influenced by that, and what means did I have to figure that out, then? What longings are not fulfilled, and then become the longings of their children (myself) when they become parents (as I became a mother)? How deeply place(d) are these concepts? And when I look now, what am I seeing? Memory is so active.

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[54] See collage, Chapter 1 cover page.

Bronwyn Davies (1997, 2000) works with women on what she calls collective biography. She does not mean, necessarily, that one story is written collectively. Her method is to have women writing together, at the same time, in the same place, on their own memory stories, and to have each woman's story spark/feed/prod the others. She suggests that this way of working can or may elicit an embodied experience which is not necessarily "pre-discursive, but that it is lived in the body in ways that practiced forms of telling often make inaccessible" (p. 50). She is interested in the relationship between language, embodiment, memory and landscape, and asks her participants to call upon place to anchor their language and memory in their stories. In our collage group (AARRC), we discuss the differences between doing collage as a group, or individually and bringing it to the group. The non-discursive element – the sequence of first visual, then verbal – appears to elicit quite different, more embodied, understandings than those which emerge from text alone (Butler-Kisber, 2007).

Embodiment has a distinct place in memory. Although it has always been thought that children don't have very early memories, there is some evidence to suggest that pre-verbal memories do exist. Many of the stories we think we remember of our childhood can come from our parents' stories, repeated over and over, until they become our seemingly embodied memory, and we tell them as if we remember fully the experience. In reality, these stories often carry the adult's perception of our experience; they are like stories we could read in a book. But early memories can exist, strongly rooted in the senses. I know, for instance, that my story of playing in the winter run off with my clothes peg figures is not a story anyone ever told me, or told of me. It sits in my body.

Bachelard says of childhood home memories that "the word habit is too worn a word to express this passionate liaison of our bodies, which do not forget…" (1969a, p. 14). Looking at photographs of our childhood can be like listening to the stories told of our childhoods. But if we enter into the exploration and write around and into the photograph, we can taste the edges of remembered embodied experience through that intertextuality of looking and writing – the "fingering over" of memory, haptic, aural, and sensual. The simultaneous literal and metaphorical elements of the photograph, its contingency, its referral away from itself, its there/not thereness, make it such a useful tool for (re)inscribing (to use Bronwyn Davies' term) our relationship with memory.

**Back to the questions**

My question, which started this perambulation, asks how childhood landscapes inform my (adult) perception of public space. Is this measurable, I now ask myself. What are the questions you would ask someone to understand how landscape influenced the way they address their life places? Their space choices are so entwined with their daily-being-in-the-world. We can explore this only through memory and the personal narrative of the adult – auto/biography, in other words. My siblings presumably lived much the same life as I, though we understand that no two people have the same experiences even in the same environment. When I asked my siblings to talk about their childhood landscapes, I asked if they saw a relationship between those past places and their current places. I am no longer sure that is the question. Louise Chawla (1986, 1994) and Edith Cobb's (1977) work did not address landscape choice, but rather creativity and its relationship to childhood nature landscapes. (Do our current landscape choices influence and/or reflect our adult creativity?)

Interestingly, Penelope Lively's memoir (1994) finishes at the age of 12. This was the end of her life in Egypt, as her parents separated and she returned to England to live with relatives. But the childhood memories I have explored here would likewise seem logically to end at 12 or so; for girls in particular, life changes in puberty often propel a different trajectory, which no longer seems so grounded in the fine-grained materiality of the physical environment (Allnutt, 1999). Moore (1986) says that "relationships with the physical world grow and develop until the apex of childhood, around eight-to-twelve years old" (p. 11). Cobb (1977) describes this as the middle age of childhood:

> ... a special period, the little-understood, prepubertal, halycon, middle age of childhood, approximately from five or six to eleven or twelve – between the strivings of animal infancy and the storms of adolescence – when the natural world is experienced in some highly evocative way, producing in the child a sense of some profound continuity with natural processes and presenting overt evidence of a biological basis of intuition. (pp. 123-124)

Jones (1997) says that in his study preteen country girls are often seen as tomboys: "tentatively, it would seem that boyhood in the countryside is seen as the natural state of childhood, and country girls are quasi-boys until the sophistication of femininity

somehow overwhelms this 'natural' state" (p. 177). Is this sophistication, or does it relate more to Young's idea of "an inhibited intentionality and a discontinuous unity with its surroundings" (1990, p. 147) as a description of girls' learned relationships with their physical environment?

My own "idyllic" childhood holds an incident that ended some forms of innocence, some forms of "ordinary purposive orientation of the body as a whole toward things and its environment" (Young, 1990, p. 147). I have written about this elsewhere (Allnutt, 1999).

It's hot. There is that stillness of a summer day, sounds of birds, flies buzzing, the leaves are still. We're walking along the dirt path that is carved through the hospital woods, by many other feet besides our own, but our own too. There are mostly deciduous trees, not so tight together, but still you can't see very far into the woods on either side of the path; not too far in, there is a giant rock formation, to a small child, like the side of a cliff. I don't remember having climbed up it, but it was a strong, recognizable marker through the woods. There is more than this one path, of course, there are tributaries, but this is the wide one, and the one most taken. We bike through here, later, when we are older, though the path is rough, and often muddy and puddled, especially in the spring. We are with our father, who as always has his binoculars, and his books, one on birds, one on trees, at least these two. Sometimes more, not nature books, but diarists. Always, there were books. We would be as quiet as we could be sometimes, because that is how you hear the birds, he told us. In my father's journal, he reports us telling him when we heard various birds' songs. Now my virtual ignorance of birds seems astonishing; I know only crows, robins, grackles, seagulls, pigeons – city birds. My sister, though, knows birds, since in the country, so many varieties arrive at her bird feeders, populate the sky, eat the gravel on her road. My Vancouver brother recognizes many varieties too. My Montreal brother complains of the loud songs of birds that wake him up.

These woods are the site of my first understanding that the world is not only made of family, friends, and kindnesses. This is where two older boys tied me to a tree, my "boy friend" tied to the other side of the tree where I could not see him. They had leather belts with axes and knives attached. This is where my

clothing was pushed aside, and I was fondled, though dismissed as "being too small." This is where fear started. (SA)

So when I think of the hospital woods, my memories – of family walks, of adventure bike rides, of pretend eating 'chicken' on picnics with my friends and/or my siblings – contain also this memory of where fear began. This textured complex palimpsest of placed memories contains an ambiguity that sits on the surface of my meaning-making about childhood landscapes and current landscapes. Is this what Arnoux means when he says, "Of childhoods, I have so many!"

However, I only addressed this aspect of my childhood in the 1990s, understanding then how very profoundly that incident of sexual violation had changed my relationship with my childhood landscapes. This is not a footnote, but a demarcation, a critical incident that marks before and after in terms of my engagement with the places around me. Thereafter, a care crept into my choice of spaces. "Nature" took on different meanings. I do not deal with this story here; I remain in childhood spaces. I would just add that there is no photograph of this incident, or this care. I think again of a photograph of a "not safe" place taken by girls in Mitchell et al's (2005) study in South Africa, a dramatization of rape, girl on girl, in the bushes on the school grounds. The girls are smiling, embarrassed but determined. This is the story of their unsafe spaces, and they are going to tell it. What will their adult perceptions be of their public spaces? What will their public spaces be?

When I addressed my adult public spaces in my Commonplace Book project, I found myself trying to let the photographs speak for themselves. I could not explain why one set of photographs (my 'photographs of longing') carried no relation to my 'current living places' set. I felt that my aporic (neither here nor there) feeling of translocation, of not being in the right place for my body, could be conveyed by thrusting photographs into the face of my reader. "Here, here," I thought, "isn't it obvious? Do you understand now?" However, I did come to see how some of my childhood landscapes (Sherbrooke streets) relate to my current neighbourhood. There is a familiar resonance between the streets I live on and near, and the streets on which I was raised. That is an awareness that wasn't evident to me before and surfaced only through continued relooking (and

photographing). What also became clear was the relationship between my childhood critical incident and my attraction to the littoral in terms of openness, not only of psychic space, but also as safe space, seeing far with 'no enemies in sight.'[55]

That attempt to have photographs speak for themselves, however, does not address the need for exposition that this thesis project demands. As Phil Mizen (2005) says, so succinctly and rigourously, "if photographs are to possess anything more than rudimentary or speculative meaning, and if viewers are not to be set adrift in a medium whose intrinsic narrative powers are notoriously weak, then sufficient background and contextual detail must be provided to render them intelligible" (p. 125). I acknowledge the need to annotate in these circumstances, though I would disagree with his description of photography as a medium with a "notoriously weak" ability to speak for itself. Keenan (1998) argues that the photograph is not "poor," in the sense of only representing "the appearance of events, but not their significance" (p. 62); instead it becomes "auratic" by being "a site of memory because it is a present object that determines how the past is remembered" (p. 63).

In this chapter, I have written further into the photographs, though as if from a distance. The idea of field work as a "separate space" is interrupted by autobiographical research, but a "politics of translation" (Cook, 2001, p. 103) is still involved. These photographs are not just data; in some ways, they are not even data. They are, however, visible evidence on which to hang my exploratory process, and they present the reader with some taxonomies of memory.

The photograph, for me, is a threshold, in the same way as voice is a threshold between the body and the world. In the taking of the photograph, the camera itself is positioned between the taker/viewer and the object/viewed. In the viewing of the photograph, the threshold or interface is the photograph itself with its ambiguous position between memory and "reality," between object and subject. Its use too positions it as a threshold, between the writer/photographer and the viewer. It is physical, while simultaneously being as contingent as memory.

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[55] This was the phrase used by one of my master's thesis participants, as she described a favourite memory of sunbathing in the nude while camping beside a lake.

In the next chapter, I explore childhood place memories with my siblings. Photographs, found and made, act both as an invitation to step through the threshold of memory and as an interface and material anchor for our conversations. Too, my father's journal serves as a haunting "auratic" copresence in the memory journey.
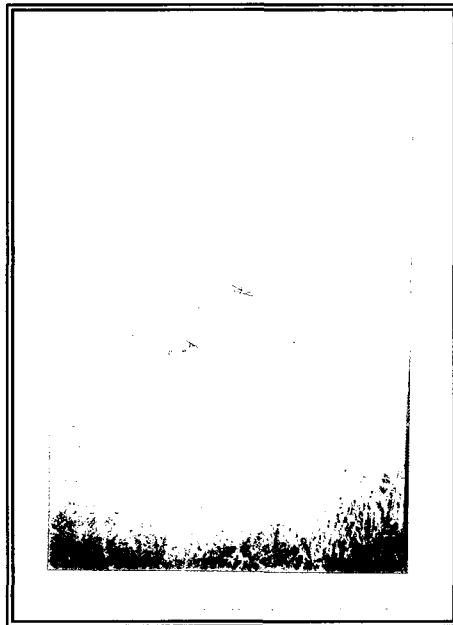
# Chapter 4. A story happening many times: Research with siblings
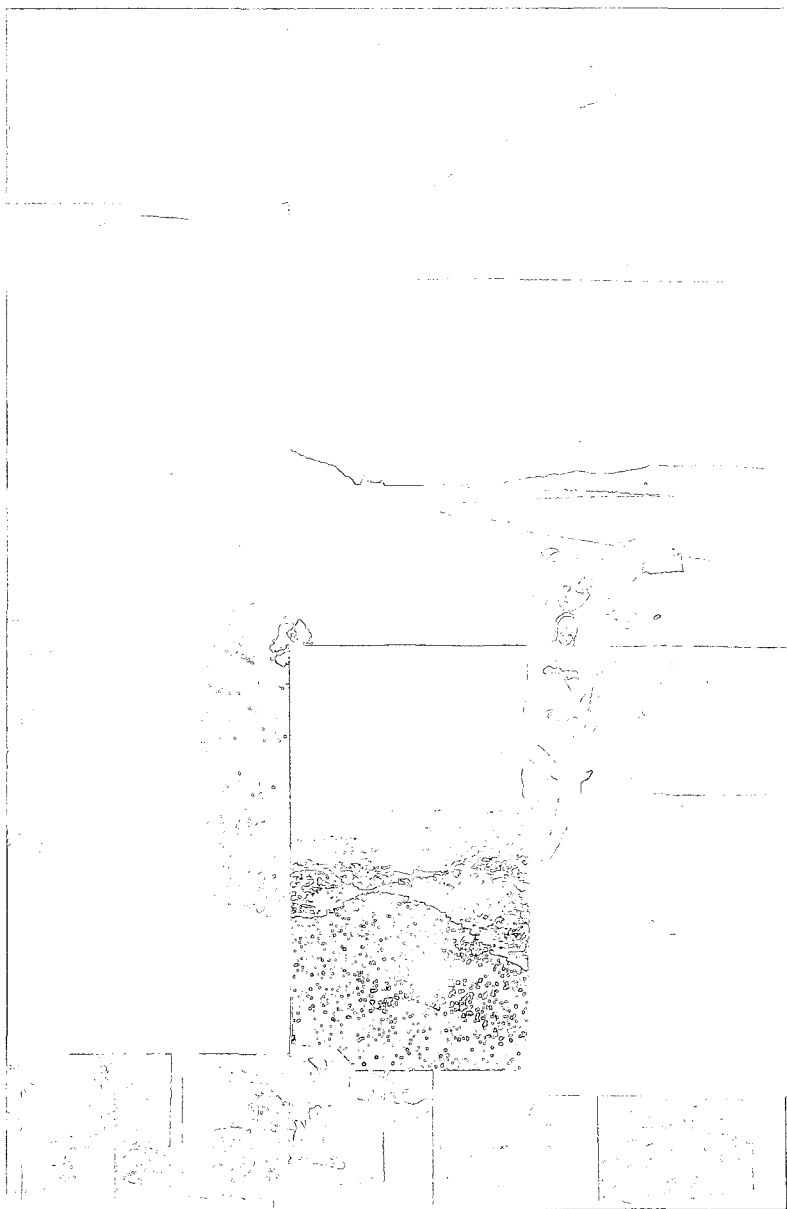
A place is a story happening many times.
Kwaikiutl saying (Lippard, 1997, p. 50)

My father kept a journal, a perpetual diary – the Canadian Date Book. The earliest entry is 1938, the latest 1969, the year of his death. On any one-date page, such as April 1, there is a (usually short) entry for each year. There is not an entry for every year; indeed there is a great gap between 1956 and 1964. After 1964, the entries are very sporadic. The diary is a single artefact, bulging with inserts: notes from my mother or from one of us children, pressed flowers (most frequently pansies), tree leaves, feathers, newspaper clippings, and additional diary pages inserted so that he could add text. There are photographs taped into the front and back covers, and a few inserted loose among the pages. There used to be more, but the diary has been raided over the years by those who looked at it (but never read it). I too have plucked photographs from it (always of myself; I am sure that was what all of us did.).
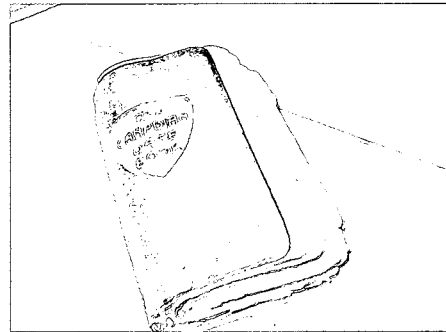
I started reading it in 2007, almost 40 years after my father's death. It had seemed so daunting previously. His writing, never very legible, is made less legible by the occasional use of pencil as the writing implement, which has smudged over the years. The writing is very small, sometimes obscured by scotch tape used to hold a petal or leaf, yellow with age. But as I started writing this chapter, I suddenly decided that perhaps if I read only one date a day, it could be conquered. It still took 10 or 15 minutes each day to decipher the entry. But slowly a mass of built up information made the reading easier, as I came to understand his style, not his handwriting, but his style of writing. It's in a kind of shorthand that I began to understand. This priceless archive was not first intended to be a voice in my thesis writing, but it has become so. As I read and write my way into
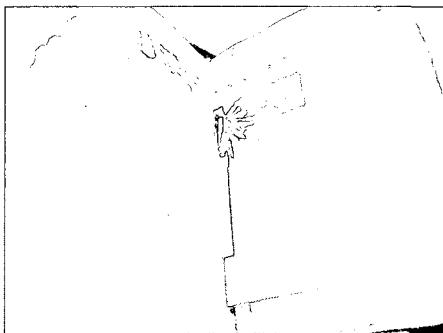
memory, stitching together my remembered places with those of my siblings, I have added the layer of my father's written voice, a fifth voice to add to his children's voices. Those voices, of Sara, my older sister, and of David and Chris, my two younger brothers, find resonance also in the pages of the journal, as my father wrote extensively of his children. It is not the voice of memory (of things past) I am reading, though I read it through the veil of memory. His diary entries represent the present, captured (like a photograph) at the moment of the doing. He cannot challenge my reading of his diary voice, he cannot talk back, but I trust that he understands its value in this endeavour.

As I read the diary, I am imagining location. The early years, before I was born and for the first two years of my life, the time I don't remember, when we lived in Lasalle, have become thickened by his moderate descriptions of walks, gardens, birds, skies and weather. This journal is almost indexical in places; an example is his listing of what was planted on one day in the spring. *"R* [my mother Ruth] *did a prodigious amount of work in the garden, planting innumerable annuals and vegetables (poppies, sweet william, phlox, verbena, lissum, carnations, godetia – spinach, lettuce, radish, cauliflower, brussel sprouts, peas, beans, beets and shallots). N.B. our one daffodil is out!"* My father adds *"(Oh, I root pruned the lilac at the end of the garden.) Heard frogs for first time tonight."* On the same day, he notes: *"No less than eight white throats at the grass seed! And we also saw one white crowned sparrow. A pair of yellow warblers in dogwood and a [unreadable] warbler after spiders on the porch roof."* *(Henry Cameron Allnutt journal (hereafter HCA), (Sat.) May 17, 1947).*[56]



I read the years after 1948 (when we had moved to Sherbrooke) and its descriptions of 75 Heneker Street with place in mind. I know now that our cedar hedge was planted in 1951, and it was a moment of great excitement and preparation. There is mention of the grass slope below the

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[56] I have put my father's journal writing in an italic font, to suggest handwriting, and to differentiate it from the interview quotes of my siblings.

hedge, always a source of irritation because grass would not grow in the same way there as on the lawn. It was difficult to mow, and presumably the drainage or even the soil itself worked against that smooth desirable flat green grass, so loved by house inhabitants of the fifties (and on). Both my brothers, in our interviews, spoke of this part of our property. My brother David, shown photographs of 75 Heneker St. from April 2007, immediately remarked, "I remember always... well being pissed off, disappointed, that this grass never took, and it still hasn't taken." (Interview, June 2, 2007, hereafter DA). Chris said, "And our various efforts with trying to do something with the hill down to the sidewalk, trying to plant grass, and then I just think it became very rough." (Interview, December 3, 2006, hereafter CA).

The richness of my father's diary contributes to the layered aspects of my memory work and reading of the photograph. So, too, do the memories, both my own and those of my siblings, which emerged during my interviews with them. Our conversations served to enliven our memories; they played off each other to bring further memories out. One example of that concerns Key Brook, a swimming hole outside of Sherbrooke that my sister and I biked to occasionally on hot summer days in our teens. (My brothers don't remember going there.) I had reminded her of these sorties, but I couldn't remember the name of the brook, and during our interview, my sister couldn't either. Following our interview, I went to sit under the apple tree and read, while she rested. About an hour later, she yelled from the upstairs window: "Key Brook." Memory had continued working, and there it was, plucked from the archive. (A couple of weeks later, I came across a Key Brook reference in my father's journal and I have now located it on a map.)

**Interviewing siblings: Troubles and pleasures**

For this part of my inquiry, I originally had specific questions in mind: What influence do our childhood landscapes have on our current perception and choice of landscape? How do we excavate memory, as adults? My question, "if I had chosen another landscape, would I be a different person?" was also at play here. In doing my rephotographic work, writing memory and then coming to my siblings' memories, I wasn't sure these three questions fully expressed what I was finding or even looking for.

I had wanted to understand more about the origin of current landscape choice. However, as I sank deeper into place-memory through the now five voices I was hearing – my own, the voice of my father's journal and my three siblings – I realized I was learning things about my siblings, their current thoughts and their childhood thoughts, that were charmingly sufficient. My father's voice, which only I was hearing, was intently complementary and yet solitary. As researcher, as sibling, and as daughter, I felt both a part of and separate from these stories. This memory foray was both more and less than I had anticipated.

As Philo (2003) and Jones (2003) have discussed, researching childhood from an adult perspective can be problematic. How do we put aside who we are now, filled with "the unstoppable obscuring onward rush of things" (Lively, 1994, p. 22), to remember who we were then? In many senses, we cannot. But Philo suggests that there "are occasions when we are recalled to the peculiar psycho-social circumstances of childhood...and also to the sights, sounds, smells and other sensations and 'childish knowledges' made available through this thoroughly embodied but temporary difference" (2003, p. 10). This "fragment of connection" (Philo, p. 10) or what Lively calls "those suspended moments" (1994, p. 22) are reflections of what is never past and are a part of the disturbing "present becoming" that Probyn discusses. A reader of this chapter asks discerningly: "Is there an awaited state? Can we find ourselves in time? The idea of the "as if" – is there someplace we are aiming for that we know when we arrive?" (V. LeBlanc, personal communication, July 24, 2007).

Are photography, rephotography (Klett et al., 1984; Collier, 2001), and the reflexive writing of the photograph useful tools in this attempt to find ourselves in time, this remembering? Owain Jones, in a memoir of his childhood landscape in Wales, speaks of how he "was overwhelmed by each photograph" of the childhood spaces he examined. "Why am I so moved? Why am I so concerned?" he asks (2005, p. 217). Contingent (Barthes, 1981) and polysemic (Bolton, 1989) as the photograph may be, we

nonetheless rely on its presence to verify our perceptions (Prosser, 2000). But more, we can use the photograph to question those perceptions, to engage with memory and location. I can try to see what the differences are among siblings brought up in the same physical environment and wonder about the importance of our childhood place stories in understanding the construction of our identities as adults. This reflexive process, of course, bends back on and inflects those very identities. Once again we meet our "present becoming."

This is the face of memory. Our layered and complex identities depend upon memories – even as I write this word, it moves into memory. Memory is not static; it reaches back into the archive, and pulls out something that was (as if) parked. As this particular memory comes into the present, it starts to change. And thus we are changed. Place is inherent in memory. And so is imagination. Jones points to "the strange geographies which occupy us all, which hover between the then and now, between our geographical imaginations and our geographical memories, to these hybrid ecologies of the self and to the other element, their emotional register" (2005, p. 210).

When I decided to expand my own geographical imaginations and memories by asking my siblings to pull out their archive of 75 Heneker St. and of shared spaces in Sherbrooke, I did not know how that process would go. I looked for research on inquiry among/with siblings and found little. Two studies I did find, Sofaer and Sofaer Derevenski (2002) and Bordo, Klein and Silverman (1998), reveal very different takes/approaches on the process of inquiry with siblings.

Sisters Susan Bordo, Binnie Klein and Marilyn Silverman came together to write about their shared bodies/place memories, an invited contribution to a text on place (Nast & Pile, 1998). They describe the experience as "like neighboring monarchs mapping disputed territory, we prepared to do a gentle battle with the truth that is each of our 'truths'" (p. 72.) They were writing of their home places, places that were not so much places, but stories – of immigrant lives in America, of lost possessions and family. Marilyn ("Mickey") writes that in answer to the question, where are you from?, she would reply that "I was never, in fact, from anywhere that I actually lived. I lived inside my family and even then in a private place far from its borders" (p. 85). These sisters

leaned on each other for continuity, and indeed, in the writing of this essay, they mark that existence.

However, writing of the inside of the family and indeed of the inside of 75 Heneker St. is not what I wanted to do. In fact it is interesting how I did not want to write of home, the inner domestic space, but rather of the spaces and places around that.

> We used to go through the back yard over to church and Jacques Cartier ... (DA)
>
> And I think even the hedge at the far end ... was always damaged or something. I remember we used to go down through the hedge, down through here [pointing to photo], down kind of a hill. (DA)
>
> And then of course the back way through the property, was that the Delaney's right there? (CA)

After I made my hand-drawn map of 75 Heneker St., I realized the ways I used to leave the property. I didn't do so by the front walkway, the official path, but almost always as if escaping, slipping through the back gate into the Delaney's yard, or on the south side in the back, through the woods, snaking along the edges of back yards. From the front, I would go down the slippery path between the cedar hedge and the low cement wall of the next door neighbour. Roger Hart (1977, cited in Moore & Young, 1978), in his groundbreaking study of children and place in a Vermont town, noted the importance of "pathways" to children. They "gave access to a stimulating private landscape, where the normal space-time relations of the functional adult world were suspended" (Moore & Young, p. 121). As I remember, we would use our neighbour, Dr. Delaney's property, as a shortcut on our way to church on Sundays with our mother. Apart from that, these exits from our property, particularly one that led to a small hilly wild property, were indeed child-useful spaces. Moore and Young suggest that the "multipurposeness" of these intersection spaces is particularly attractive to children, "drawing them beyond their habitual domain, into a perceptually more boundless "as if" world where mind, body, and landscape can be in more fluid contact" (1978, p. 122).
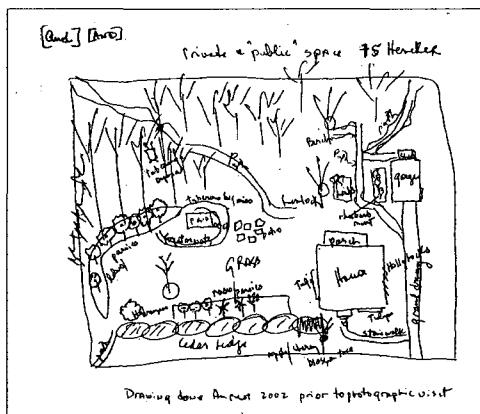


Drawing done August 2002 prior to photographic visit

These "as if" spaces hold the potential of volitional space, spaces not controlled by adults.

      After I drew that map, and realized how important these exits seemed to me, I wrote of the idea of portals, which led me to look again at some of my photographs taken over the years. These photographs were often of paths, framed by green trees or bushes or gates – littoral in the sense that they suggested a beyond, an "as if", though you could not see it. I remember the first portal photograph I took with conscious awareness of why I was taking it. It was at my sister's in the fall. I had wandered down her road in my nightie, with my camera, charmed by the early morning sun and autumnal warmth, watching the light falling through the thinned out leaves of the trees onto the rough road beyond the sugar shack road. I suddenly thought of it as an escape place... that if you just kept on going down the road, through the portal, something special would be there.

      I am reminded as I write this of the time at Garthby when my father, Sara and I had rowed across the bay to the small rocky beach on the other side.



How old am I? I don't remember. What was the weather like? I don't remember. But it must have been a calm day because we rowed across Ward Bay, something we wouldn't have done if it had been windy and rough. It probably took at least an hour; my father did the rowing. Sara and I got to sit and enjoy, because we were not considered strong enough I guess to row. Though sometimes we did, two of us, one to each oar, when we were rowing close to shore. But in this case – across open water – I am sure my father did the rowing. On the other side, mysterious, because it was the other side, the promontory we had gazed at from our side, the beach was rocky, not as sandy as ours. Woods grew right down to the edge of the rocks and sand and there were no cottages or houses. There was a road though; presumably people drove their boats down to the beach on this road, to launch them, or just to come and picnic and swim. Perhaps it was the Garthby town beach, though there were no picnic benches or lifeguard towers; it was the 50s after all in rural Quebec. My father, as always carrying books and his binoculars, settled in to read on the beach, and Sara and I ventured down the road. It was quiet, very quiet; only the faint sound of the wind in the trees – I like to think they were beeches with their distinctive rustling sound – and birds, muted by the woods. We were hesitant but excited – walking into the unknown.

The road was gravel, with small clumps of grass growing in the middle, used but not overused, like the roads up from the cottages on the other side. It curved, and looking back, we could no longer see the beach. We kept on; it got warmer away from the lake breeze, most probably there were flies – I don't remember.

What I remember is the sense of adventure and the road curving away from us with no known end, inviting us to keep going. And then a shout (could we have gone as far as I remember? Or was it a whistle?[57]) from the beach, my father calling for us to come back, it was time to go back. We didn't want to, we kept on walking; the reluctance was evident in both of us. Finally we stopped and looked at each other. I looked longingly at the road, we still saw no end, we didn't know where it went, we would never find out. It felt urgent. But we turned back, we turned back, to the familiar that was calling us. That road with its tufts of grass and its lining of trees, the silence of the woods, haunts me still. I always felt such an affinity for that Robert Frost poem when I read it later in life ... a deep understanding of the road not taken, and a great regret that I had only been able to glimpse the portal. And yet at the time, what did I feel? This is not an adult regret. I know that I felt this at the time, but could I have described it then as I just have? I don't think so. Sobel cites Robinson who says, "there is often a dimension to our early experiences that we can only become fully conscious of (if at all) in later life, when we compare them with other forms of experience that lack that dimension; in childhood we may be wiser than we know" (1983, cited in Sobel, 1990, p. 8) (SA).

Bordo, Klein and Silverman do not describe why they decided to do their memory work as they did: each sibling wrote their own memory story. But they did do preliminary memory work together and they presumably[58] co-wrote the opening pages, and the closing paragraph. What was their process then, and what was the process that led to their deciding to write their memories separately? Was it because of the territory idea mentioned above – an understanding of the depth of the differences of their 'truths,' as they "scrutiniz[ed] each other's memories" (1998, p. 72)? There is an invisibility in the

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[57] Young and Moore (1978) note that in a rural study, children were allowed to play within "whistling distance" (p. 102). The whistle meant come home. I do remember my father's whistle, melodious but piercing; it was his signal.

[58] I say presumably because "we" is used. The voice, however, does not seem a "we."

process of memory work. It can only be documented so far and no further. They found, to their surprise, that in and through the personal stories, they "began to see how reflective our family's history was of a certain cultural trajectory..." (1998, p. 75).

Indeed, in the writing of their separate home stories, Bordo, Klein and Silverman noticed that something was missing – the kitchen. As feminists, they quickly understood that it was not only the kitchen that was missing, but also their mother's role. From there, they brought the cultural story back to their own development, as girls and women, in that time and those places, and the influence of the "missing kitchens," the title of their essay. This auto-ethnography ends by affirming the value of their memory work. "In tracking the missing kitchens together, we have also retrieved something vital that was passed down to us by our parents... Working together, we actualized these values once again as a family and so reconstructed another part of the missing kitchens" (1998, p. 91). They brought memory out of the archive and re-shaped it. Bachelard says, "at times we think we know ourselves in time, when all we know is a sequence of fixations in the spaces of the being's stability – a being who does not want to melt away" (1969a, p. 8). The self is a palimpsest. Place and time are layered in the self and we draw those experiences forward through memory, locating the "fixations" at times when they need to be known or are called forward.

Unlike these sisters, whose family moved several times during their growing up years (Brooklyn, Newark, and New Jersey suburbs), my family stayed in one place in Sherbrooke at 75 Heneker St., from 1948 to 1967. I am the second child. My sister Sara is almost three years older than I am. My brother David is two years younger, and my youngest brother Chris, a further two years. My sister and I went to the same girls' school for all of her elementary and secondary school years, though I changed to a new school that had been constructed for English Catholic girls for

Grades 11 and 12, when Sara had already left for university. My two brothers also went to the same boys' school for most of their school years – my youngest brother, Chris, did his last year of high school in Montreal because by then we had moved. Thus, when we four speak of our childhood landscapes, we are speaking of a presumed sameness, though with different ranges and boundaries, according to our age, our gender, our friends, our school places, and our solitary forays.

In this working with the familiar and shared (though not the same) time/landscapes/experiences, the silence of sameness can be an issue. Many assumptions are embedded in both what I ask and say and in what they say. There are questions not asked, shoulders shrugged to indicate the "you know." A place is mentioned, acknowledged, and thus not explored with words. Our mental images, presumed but not acknowledged, are different. But that is both the pleasure and the danger of a sibling interviewing her siblings. Even as I question, there are both pleased assumptions of a shared culture and dangers of overlooking differences, what Tracey Hurd and Alice McIntyre (1996) call "the stillness of sameness" (p. 78) in their discussion of women interviewing women in feminist research. This can result in an "under-exploration of the experiences of sameness" and present "the danger of aligning myself with the participants' lived, but critically unexamined, life experiences" (p. 79). On the other hand, I do not claim objectivity, replicability, or reliability in this study. I claim my partial voice; I ask my siblings to claim their partial voices inside the artificial construct of my inquiry. I try and place our voices in a context that uses form instead of findings, as a means of broadening possible applicability and as a way of creating trustworthiness.

Joshua Sofaer and Joanna Sofaer Derevenski, siblings – Joshua an artist, and Joanna an archaeologist – use form in a unique way to excavate their very early childhood. They were both born in Cambridge, two years apart, but moved away to Edinburgh, when Joshua was one-year-old and Joanna three. These early years they consider "the forgotten past," and they look to art and archaeology as means of disinterring "the places they were before they can remember" (2002, p. 45). Archaeology uses material remains to reconstruct history; in this case, however, the "human remains are currently sitting at a computer terminal typing away, and are completely transformed" (p. 46) from the children whose lives they are attempting to explore. Originally a

performance and installation piece, in this iteration of their inquiry, their written essay uses text, graphics and photographs. The siblings use various research tools to search for "the autographic of childhood," and in this way, they work with the "concerns of visual culture and performance, rather than [only those] of archaeology" (p. 47). One of their tools is "object biography," whereby they trace the history of a pillowcase, through oral history and photographic evidence. Through this tool, they expand the more linear, archaeological conception of an object biography, to consider "how objects construct the lives of people; in particular, the role of objects in mediating life changes" (p. 49). In other words, "we have one object in contact with many biographies, rather than an object with any singular, easily describable history" (p. 49).

Remembering the Brownie camera given to me at Breeches Lake, and forgotten as an object, in our interview I ask David why he started taking photographs.

> S. Why did you first start taking pictures, when you were in your teens? What interested you?
> D. When I first started taking pictures? Well, didn't you take pictures before me? I don't think it started with me, I think it started with you. (S. really?) No?
> S. I don't know. I remember getting a Brownie camera from neighbours at Breeches Lake, these two women who lived next door. One of them... it was an old Brownie, the really old black Brownie cameras, it had been her son's, and she gave it to me. But then I don't remember taking pictures with it, and I have no pictures. I mean, I don't know...
> D. I remember the bulbs that would go pssshh and you'd have to throw them out.



> S. But I haven't any photos. There's a picture that Janet sent me of two of my classmates, with cameras...hung around their necks. Another high school friend said she had a darkroom with her dad and she was taking pictures all the time, I don't even remember that. Because I literally, until she gave me those pictures from high school, I had no pictures from ... I'd say from 12 (10), except that we had that group photo that we made for the parents... until about 20. Literally, I had one. And now there's this picture of these two girls with cameras hung around their necks. And I don't even remember that, I don't remember anybody taking pictures of anything. I don't even remember you taking pictures.
> D. I am pretty sure I learned from you.
> S. Really? (DA, p. 19-20)

This piece of information cuts to the bone. What happened to this object, this Brownie camera? Where are the photos it took? Who used it? Have I forgotten taking

pictures with it? What meaning did it have in my life? In David's life? Why am I here now, doing this inquiry using photographs? Its story seems lost, but perhaps it is right here, in these echoes.

In what is for me the most interesting discussion on a research tool, Sofaer and Sofaer Derevenski (2002) use a photograph of their mother bathing both of them to construct an installation (photographed) putting their father, the presumed photographer, back in the picture. They also create a "re-experience" of the viewpoints of the whole family in this bathing context: baby, toddler, mother and father. By doing this, they push the boundary of the photograph outwards, to the periphery. As Nemet-Najat says,

> The most powerful space of the photograph resides in its peripheral space and the blank space, the glow, extending around, beyond the frame. This is the space of accidents, "failures", social movement, contemplation. It is in the peripheral space that image turns into language, the dialogue between the subject and the observer of the picture occurs and the "frame" of the photograph is demolished. (2003, p. 37)

This is a form of creative rephotography which "rejects the common reading of experience as purely sensate, or on the other hand as entirely in language – that is understood – and places experience at the limit of understanding, as both 'undergoing and interpreting simultaneously'" (Sofaer & Sofaer Derevenski, 2002, p. 52). Sofaer and Sofaer Derevenski suggest that through their performance piece (and the writing that now is presented to us) – "this time-map of past action to present" – they bring the past forward. Not only does the past come forward, as the teller/performer, "one *becomes* present" (p. 56). Memory is the link to the self; it is the glue of our selves. Sofaer and Sofaer Derevenski reiterate Probyn's idea of "present becoming" and of the potential usefulness of the spatial re-presenting of our selves.

These two sibling inquiries, using different means and seeking different memories and outcomes, point in their qualitatively different ways to uses of the archive. We tend to regard the archive as stable storage, but when memories are taken out, they become unstable, revisable, malleable, and useful. And they do not return to the archive, if indeed they do return at all, in the same state.

Two arts-based environmental autobiographies, preoccupied with childhood spaces, and which interestingly do not use sibling stories, are those of Sharon Sbrocchi

(2005) and Teresa Luciani (2006). Sharon Sbrocchi returned to her childhood neighbourhood, her street, Zorra Street in Toronto, to explore the place-related story of her childhood and the effects of development on neighbourhoods. She turned to some childhood friends who grew up on her street, to explore textual, poetic and photographic[59] memories of a certain time and place. There is reference to her siblings, a brother and sister, as having "free range of the neighbourhood" (p. 29). She then says (like Teresa Luciani below) that because they were older, eventually there was not sibling play. "They traveled to places too far to take their kid sister along. I was left to find my way alone" (p. 31). Jones (1997) speaks of how children's geographies are 'structured "from without" and experienced "from within"' (p. 158). Age is a prime factor in the control that children have over their environments, though it is not the only one.

There is one current reference to her sister, Marlene, which emerges on a brief visit to their home on Zorra Street, just prior to its planned demolition in 2004. Together, she and Marlene go into the house, which they have not visited together for 15 years. Sharon says, "We collect artifacts of remembrance for my sister. Her photo album has just become three-dimensional. I watch as she scans the house for 'things' that speak to her. She gathers the kitchen light fixture, brass mail slot, door to the ironing board cupboard and the last remaining rose bush from my father's garden. I see the lines of her story – I know what she is doing" (2005, p. 153). Sbrocchi's memories of childhood explorations, thus, are with friends who were her age. Perhaps that is why she looked to them, rather than her siblings, for this exploration of her childhood spaces.

Teresa Luciani, though she makes reference to her sister as being a fellow traveler "who flew beside me" (2006, p. xiii), focuses her memory story on herself and her mother. She explores the kitchen as a metaphor for the gendered curriculum of her growing up years, and uses an alter ego (third person writing) to story her girl's geography. Her sister and brother are almost always described as being away from the house (and the kitchen), while she, as the youngest, was kept close to home. "When my brother was old enough he did what he wanted to do. My older sister could leave the neighbourhood but not venture out too far as long as she returned home before dusk"

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[59] Sbrocchi uses both her own photographs, and formal ground and aerial photographs of her neighbourhood, taken by municipal photographers.

(p. 58).   Being the youngest of three children, having both male and female siblings, and being a girl and Italian, are common factors in Sbrocchi and Luciani's stories.

I note that Sara and David briefly mention a friend but other than that, friends are not discussed.  Family companionship is mentioned, though there seems to be a sort of solitary bent to our memory stories.  A friend of mine drove across the country alone, because, she said, if she were with someone, she wouldn't be looking.  Does this mean that if asked to describe space, one tends to describe places where one was alone, because one has a memory of it from paying attention?  Or does it have something to do with the quality of reverie, as Bachelard notes.  One does not have reverie with another, or rarely, at any rate.  Bachelard says, "childhood reveries are the reveries of the child himself or herself, normally occurring in solitude… and entailing moments when, away from the 'unhappiness' often brought to them by adults, childhood 'can relax its aches' and find the 'peace' for idle daydreaming" (1969b, p. 99).  Philo (2003, p. 12) suggests "the geography of this daydreaming is important," not home, not school.  Bachelard adds that "when we are children, people *show* us so many things that we lose the profound sense of *seeing*" (1969b, p. 127).  Perhaps then, as children or adults, when we want to see, we choose to be alone.

### Research with siblings: Interviews as performance

> In the theater of the past that is constituted by memory, the stage setting maintains the characters in their dominant roles. (Bachelard, 1969a, p. 8)

What did I expect of these interviews?  I wanted my siblings to bring strangeness, in the sense of being outside myself, and simultaneously, insideness and solidarity, in the sense of shared spaces.  And yet I was concerned with not making them strange, not treating them as a subject/object and thus challenging our sibling intimacy.  I did not intend to bracket myself, as the researcher, and yet inevitably, a sort of objectivity might appear.  This was not a familiar space; did our relationships allow for this double vision?  What is personal experience for one is background information for another.  "One person's memory is another person's archive" (Cándida Smith, 2002, p. 3).  Can conversation in collaboration ever change that?  Like Harold Riggins (1994), who chose his mother's living room as a space to explore because it would not involve making

social commentary on the "other," I meet the complications and subtleties of ethnographically exploring family.

I approached the interviews with a sort of temerity. Despite their unquestioned support of my academic quest, there was some reluctance on the part of David and Sara – they were unsure what was expected of them. Was this a psychological performance that they would have to do? I reassured them that no, I was interested in place, their memories of childhood spaces, their thoughts on their current spaces, and I was curious about their current photographic practices. David asked for the questions beforehand. Interestingly, Chris approached the interview in much the same way as geography is sometimes taught to elementary school students – through the expanding circles of territory. He started in his (shared) bedroom, moved into the rest of the house, then to the yard, to the streets around, and to his furthermost boundaries of exploration. Robin Moore (1986, p. 17) speaks of "territorial range, (the "collective spatial realm of experiential breadth and diversity" (Moore & Young, 1978, p. 91)), as "habitual," "frequented" and "occasional" (of which more later). David used external prompts, like the photographs of 75 Heneker St. (taken April 2007) that I had brought to the interview, and the computer, as he Googled a map of Sherbrooke to remind him of the names of streets.

The locations of our interviews varied. In all cases, I interviewed my siblings in their own spaces. With Sara, I sat outside, under the apple tree in her large country lawn/garden, in mid-afternoon on a somnolent, hot August day (August 21, 2006). After that interview, we put on our bathing suits and went to the lake. I interviewed her again in July 2007, this time at her dining room table. That afternoon, too, we went to the lake.
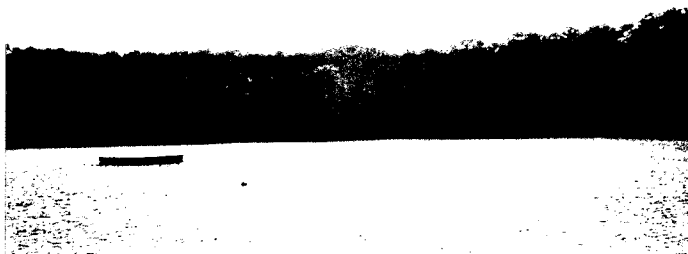


Chris and I sat at his dining room table, after lunch, undisturbed except for a brief foray into the kitchen by his son (December 3, 2006). Although David and I had met in



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November 2006 to talk about memory, look at his collection of photograph negatives from his teenage photography, and research locations on the web (Breeches Lake and Salmon River, of which more later), we didn't have a "formal" (taped) interview until June 2007. On this occasion, as in November, we sat at his kitchen table with his large computer screen sitting in front of him. However, we later moved to the dining room table when his wife started the blender in the kitchen to make gazpacho. This interview was punctuated with other people, family members, in person and on the phone (June 2, 2007).
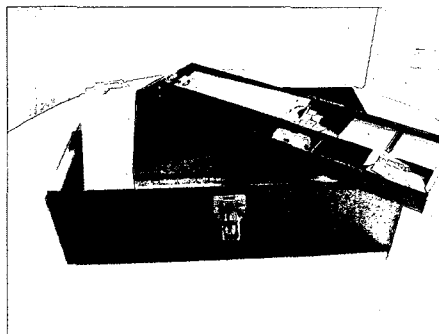


In these five interviews, our personalities and proclivities are evident. The power of birth order is also in evidence, in terms of both the interactions and the memories elicited. From past experience in memory work (my own and with others), I know that opening the archive starts an internal stream of recollection which continues after the interview(s) or conversations. Can the door then be closed? Sara said to me several times after our second interview (with photographs) that this "talking was bringing back more memories." I was very aware that my own memory, because of the site visits, rephotography and writing I had been doing, had started dancing quite some time ago. I was surprised at the way that my siblings' memories enlivened it still more, however. I was also surprised at what they had forgotten and what they had remembered. The past is never past and is always worth a visit.

There were large time gaps in between these interviews. This was a result of distances and life events. It also meant that the reflective and reflexive work on my part had grown and expanded in between these encounters. In reading Richard Cándida Smith (2002), I also have thought about these interviews in terms of their performance. Siblings talking together, in a formal way, about shared past landscapes means that our storied, placed lives are being performed for each other. This is not a usual sibling interaction. Memories, yes, are often thrown into a conversation as present activities bring forward a residual spark. And siblings who are not often together can use memory as the base for enacting their shared bond. But this formal encounter, with questions being asked in a

ritualized way as a starting point for conversation, carries a different flavour. In these interviews, gestures of meaning were engendered. Cándida Smith says, "gestures, which would have no meaning if they did not invite respondents into a shared space, affirm an intersubjective experience which will also likely contain a verbal counterpart" (p.4). He adds, "the magic of the artist is an ability to reproduce a sense of shared space outside of immediate face-to-face encounters" (2002, p. 4).

I sought to use photography as the "magic" shared space – readable gestures to make connection. Cándida Smith suggests that the gestures have to spark rules that come up through the gesture. "Creative power to stimulate reactions brings to the surface patterns of habituated responses articulating rules needed for the given communication to occur successfully. Our bodies must be inseparable from the rules governing communicative exchange, or artists would lack the power to make *something absent feel as if it were present*" (p. 4) [my emphasis]. Photographs are mutually readable, though not understood or interpreted in the same way.

I would identify these encounters with my siblings as conversations, rather than a usual research interview. Although I had my starting questions and I made sure to ask all of them one way or another, they were only a prompt for what evolved into a more spontaneous though necessarily artificial conversation between a researching sister and her siblings. These discussions about our collective and individual memories took place, as Middleton and Edwards suggest all conversations do, "on the basis of a continuously updated but contentious understanding of what has been said so far, what is understood, what is yet to be resolved" (1990, p. 26). The context for our conversations is embedded in a long history of growing up together as individuals cohabiting without choice in the family group, our chosen encounters as adults, and our adult lives separate from one another. This ongoing identity creation as sister or brother along with our other identities situates the context for the quality of these conversations as "part of a continuously reworked collective memory" (Middleton & Edwards, 1990, p. 26). I am aware, as I artificially construct and set the stage for this shared remembering for the purposes of this inquiry, that these memories are not only limited snapshots of place, but limited also in terms of memory and identity. Too, as I suggested earlier, this memory making provokes further images and remembering that will not necessarily be communicated. These

biographies of place-memory could continue ad infinitum; memories carry an almost infinite possibility. I present here a temporary stillness and finiteness, "tidied up" (Middleton & Edwards, 1990, p. 28), in the same way a photograph creates a view which, again temporarily, ignores the messiness outside the frame.

## Memory spaces: Near and far

I situate us briefly in time and space. Our family moved to Sherbrooke in 1948. Only Sara and I were living then; both David and Chris were born in Sherbrooke. I was under two and Sara was five, at the time of our move. When we moved back to Montreal in 1967, I was already attending a Montreal university, having spent 1966-67 sharing an apartment with Sara, while she taught school. David was about to start his studies at the same university. Chris, on the other hand, was still in high school, finishing Grade 10. He was 15. He completed his last year of high school in Montreal.

## Memories: Nearby

Christopher has lived in his current home, his second in Vancouver, for 20 years.


Following Sunday morning waffles and coffee, we sat at his dining room table to explore, without photographs or maps, his memories of Sherbrooke. He has returned to Sherbrooke twice, both times accompanied by his now wife, then girlfriend. On one of those visits, my mother also went with them. He wanted to show his wife where he had grown up, and he is still interested in showing his son his childhood spaces.

As mentioned previously, Chris carefully blocked out his spatial memories for me. He slowly moved outward through memory space, from his (shared) bedroom in our house upstairs, to downstairs, to the porch, the yard, the neighbouring streets, the path to school and back – making very evident the boundaries of his childhood spaces. In discussion with him, I realized how constrained was our "area" in a sense, given that Sherbrooke at that time was a very small city, bordering on a town. The mental mapping process he was going through was almost visible and his systematic blocking or

bracketing of territory enlivened my own mental map. He was describing what Pearson and Shanks (1997) call "*y filltir sqwar* – the 'square mile' of childhood, that patch, that intimate landscape which we know in detail we will never subsequently know anywhere else" (p. 46).

We lived in what was called the "North Ward," bounded by King and Prospect, Jacques-Cartier and Belvedere (or perhaps Queen St. – a matter of opinion). Inside this world was my father's place of work, our home, the homes of almost all of our friends, and the boys' school, St. Pat's. Just outside this boundary sat our girls' school, Mont Notre Dame, the library, and downtown. Later, for me, the boundary expanded and changed, because of a school move. A separate English Catholic school for girls was built, past Prospect, and I spent my Grades 11 and 12 there. Chris, perhaps because of his age, remembers Portland as being a boundary, rather than Prospect:

> And then in terms of spaces, although Daddy's workplace was just up the street, there was a clear barrier going across Portland, going on the other side, like that was a different expedition, it was not part of the norm, it would be unusual to go across that. (CA, p. 6)

Perhaps this 'concern' with delineated boundaries is an adult one, a concern with rules of space. However, I use the boundaries in order to have a framework on which to place these potentially unruly memories. Robin Moore (1986) suggests that "some streets and other anonymous everyday spaces actually function perfectly well as ecological niches for children" (p. xiii). And indeed, inside this bounded space, were many different "niches." Moore discusses the "territorial range" of children as "encompassing a child's play and leisure places and the pathways connecting them"; he suggests this range is a "fluctuating phenomenon" (p. 17) and breaks it down into three categories, impacted by different factors. Firstly, there is "habitual range," the "square mile" of Pearson and Shanks (1997). Closer to home and restricted temporally, as Moore suggests, this range is not impacted by "distance and age constraints." "Frequented range" is bounded by physical and parental constraints. This range does change with age, mobility (buses and bicycles) and older siblings or friends to travel with. Lastly, "occasional range" territories, as the name suggests, are various and depend on a number of factors, such as the "child's personality," parental guidance and restriction, friends or siblings to explore with, and "arresting destinations" (p. 17). Hay (1998), in a

developmental study of attachment to place in New Zealand, also discusses the difference "between younger and older children for spatial range and degree of local attachment" (p. 17) in terms of preference. Younger children prefer close to home, and older children sometimes have similar likes to adults.

Chris, interestingly, mentioned no friends as he laid out his territorial map. His furthest destination, the Sherbrooke "mountain" (CA, p. 11), as he calls it, which bounds the eastern side of Sherbrooke, was a place he visited by himself:

> ...this I guess would be a winter – was it winter? And have the experience of being in the trees there with a very strong wind. It was really beautiful, the noise of the trees walking by myself...and I also drove up [by bicycle] the lookout...and I walked about... And there was a huge ... a huge religious school, a monastery, a large grounds that you could see... [from our house] and I walked around there, in the trees to the left of that. (CA, p.11)

Moore's "parental prohibition" interests me. Did our daily boundaries reflect explicit admonitions that I cannot remember? Being home for meals was a rigid rule, and lateness for these was highly frowned upon. Were there tacit rules which also escape my conscious memory, but which were embedded in our mental maps? Would this explain why we never went on the south end of Wellington St., our downtown street, but only hung out on the north side? (Even now, the south side carries some foreboding, some element of the forbidden – this on a street whose full length is barely a kilometer. There is currently a "gentrification" push for this section of Wellington.)

Closer to home, Chris' memory starts in his room, in the side closets/attic of the bedroom he shared with David. Because of the A-frame roof of our house, these closets, one on either side of the boys' room, had a large and small component to them, tall at the top of the A, and small at the tight angle of roof to floor. One could barely stand in the middle. Chris remembers, "...there are lots of visions going through my mind, there is the angle of the house there, the back part, where you could climb into, sort of a storage area, at one point it was really dusty. At another point it was kind of cleaned up. Anyway, I just remember that." (CA, p. 1).

I too remember the mysterious and secret aspects to these spaces. In my (shared) bedroom, smaller than the boys, there was an equally ambiguous "closet," but it was so truncated, there was barely room for clothes. We could not go into it, much less hide in it. Already, therefore, for the boys, there was a "habitual" space that contained the potential for what Bachelard calls *necessary reverie*. So too, the cellar, which Chris does not mention at all, but which David refers to, had spaces that were mysterious and a little frightening.



But outside, on our property, at our feet, so to speak, lay ample "ecological niches." These allowed us to have that experience in play of "fingering over of the environment in sensory terms, a questioning of the power of materials as a preliminary to the creation of a higher organization of meaning" (Cobb, 1977, p. 45). We always had that opportunity to live out that cliché: 'Where did you go? Out. What did you do? Nothing.' Chris remembers the steps down from the enclosed outside porch to the gravelled part of our yard, "where we used to play and set up Dinky toys and road systems and tunnels and stuff. That was very nice." (CA, p. 3). Our 100 foot lot, as David measures it, now seems rather small and not that mysterious – "Well…our land looked huge then, with a big forest, and everything else, now it looks teensy-weensy." (DA, p. 1). Chris does remember it as large:

> The little path that went up there, and then the path down by the shack and the back shed, and then there was a loop that went around in the bush behind…
> There was a tuberous begonia, I was always enamoured with the word "tuberous begonia," that lived in that pot back there. And then the other little path in the bush, in the shrubbery that we had on the other side of the property. Which was neat and you would come out onto the grass, and you couldn't, or wouldn't or weren't supposed to, walk through the shrubbery and some … a garden patch. (CA, p. 3) [The tuberous begonia, planted in the wooded part of our property in a tiny clearing, never bloomed properly. My father looked after it tenderly, but to no avail. Year after year, a tuberous begonia (for there must have been many) failed to flourish in its special footed cement urn, placed particularly in the wood

just for this purpose. Whenever I say tuberous begonia, I too am instantly transported back to a certain image/space. SA.]

David's interview took place at his kitchen table and his dining room table (as kitchen noises pushed us into the dining room), in his home north of Montreal, where he has lived for 28 years. Accompanying us at both tables was a computer, on which David would find a map or a piece of information to accompany his conversation. His discomfort with the interview appeared to stem from a feeling that whatever he had to say wouldn't be that useful. Our conversation together was somewhat interrupted so the sequencing of memories was a bit staccato. Nonetheless, his memories covered much of the same range as those of Chris. To this interview, I had brought the most recent photographs I had taken of 75 Heneker St., along with some other Sherbrooke photos from my visit (David's school, Howardene). David has been the sibling who has visited Sherbrooke the most since we moved away. He says he has been down to Sherbrooke and Lake Massawippi (Ayer's Cliff), "I don't know, ten times since we left." (DA, p. 1). His sister-in-law lives in Waterloo, so he feels it is not that much further to Sherbrooke, to do a quick drive-through to see old haunts.

David's house memories contain the basement, which he always felt was somewhat frightening, "because it was dark and sombre, the pump room... sometimes there was water on the floor...it used to bug me." (DA, p. 4). The basement was also where our television, come late to our lives when I was 12, was installed. This was not what one would call a finished basement: cement walls, a painted softwood floor, and lawn furniture for TV viewing. On the other side of one wall was our noisy (and to me, frightening) furnace, in an open space with cement floors. What David calls the pump room was a closed room where our hot water tank was stored, with an attached cold cellar for preserves and vegetables.

Our property, which David does remember as "huge," also contained a shed and a shack. The shack was tacked on to the back of the shed, but it had no entry directly into the shed. We didn't have a car, and the shed was full of various items, chief among them our bicycles, our lawn mower, and some old chairs. David remembers the shack as a place of adventure, as does Chris.

> Chris and I kind of fixed it up and we raised the roof and built like a window. And we cut a hole in the wall between the shed and the shack, a small hole. (DA, p. 2)

> ... Different variations as we added things, we sawed through things, we cut a window one year in the back. We used to run around the whole shed in the back... (CA, p. 3)

David also remembers, "we put in drapes and stuff, and we put in a cot, and one day the drapes caught fire. I think we were playing with matches... and the neighbour got really pissed off... I guess we could have burned the shack and the shed down." (DA, p. 2). This shack, and its renovations, are clearly part of what Sobel (1990) and Kjorholt (2003) consider the "place-making impulse" (Sobel, 1990, p. 9) of children. The desire of children for private space leads them to discover and colonize "interstitial spaces – the spaces between areas with designated functions" (Sobel, 1990, p. 9), even in urban environments. Jones (2000) calls these "remodelled spaces" (p. 40) and emphasizes that important to these activities is the availability of "loose" materials and the freedom of both time and space for children to use them.

This shed also figures in my memories, though construction is not a part of that. What I remember is being there with Sara and my "boyfriend" (I was 10) and Sara timing our kissing, to see how long we could hold a kiss, before having to come up for breath. These differing memories, of construction, and kissing, are rather gendered. Indeed, I wonder who put up the drapes.

We had a compost heap beside the shed, which David mentions. Chris remembers the planting of more cedar hedging to make a visual barrier into the back yard beside the shed. David recalls the ironwood tree, a curious small tree which was planted just outside our dining room window, and which was always named, just so, in any conversation about it. "There was a tree in the backyard near the pool, beside the dining room window. I think we used to call it the armwood tree. I don't know why. Kind of had a branch like this..." (DA, p. 3). Chris had also talked about the tree, without being able to name it – "what was that tree, that gnarly tree?" (CA, p. 3). David remembered it as an "armwood" tree, but my own latent memory (enlivened by David's phrasing) and then my father's journal made it clear it was an "ironwood" tree. *"Yellow warbler in the*

*ironwood tree this early pm."* (HCA, (Mon) July 2, 1951). Like "tuberous begonia," the "ironwood tree" must often have been a topic of conversation for it to have embedded itself so strongly in our memories. (There is no photograph of this tree.)

These contiguous spaces on our own property were always available and much availed of by all four siblings, as well as my parents. We had several gardening spots, to which my parents, in particular my mother, devoted a great deal of time, as my father's journal makes amply evident. In our vegetable garden, on the side of the shed, Chris remembers "forget-me-nots, and I think asparagus, one year." (CA, p. 3). I remember rhubarb, and mint. But there were other vegetables. (*"R. planted a row of yellow and one of green beans." (HCA, (Sat.) June 13, 1953).*) There was a large ground cover and flower garden, which curved around a small "pool," along the side of the woods.

Sara refers to the pool "that Daddy made, not a pond, it was a tub of something or other, cut off...with water in." (Interview, August 21, 2006, (hereafter SAA1), p. 1). I too remember its laborious installation. It was a rectangular galvanized metal tub, with a drainage hole. Drainage was an issue, so that rain did not cause it to overflow too much and flood the plants surrounding it. The placement of the flat rocks in it had to be just so, so that birds could perch on them easily at just the right depth, to get a proper bath. Our age span differences show here as Chris recalls "the pool, which I always remember as being there, I don't even remember it being put in, I always thought it was there." (CA, p. 3).

In my father's journal, I found mention of this pool a few days after writing the above paragraph. My mother had evidently been given a double sink, which my father made into the "pool"; he always put it between quotation marks in his diary. *"Separated the two sinks and one is installed with the odd rock around it." (HCA, (Tues.) July 18, 1950).* "Painted the sink and the little birdbath: both don't look too badly." (HCA, (Wed.), July 19, 1950). "Reset the "pool" – it doesn't look too badly – this evening a robin actually drank from it and tried to take a bath, but of course it was too deep." (HCA, (Thurs.) July 20, 1950). "Fixed up a birdbath end to the "pool" which was patronized by a white throat and a robin." (HCA, (Sat.), July 22, 1950).* So Chris is right; for him, the pool was always there, as it was installed before he was born.

Coincidentally, he has recently installed a small pool, with running water, in his own backyard.

There were more plantings, flowerbeds, on the lawn side of the cedar hedge, as well as lining the front of the house. My father's journal also makes clear the variety of plantings – delphiniums, hollyhocks, clematis, roses[60], pansies, lavender, forget-me-nots, the cherry tree (in the front) – most of which my mother seemed to have planted and cared for. My father mowed the lawn, and weeded. He says of weeding, "*I find w. a pleasant and irresponsible occupation.*" *(HCA, (Sun.) July 21, 1946).* David and Chris both speak of their lawn work:

> I don't remember mowing, though I must have. We had one of those manual ones... and then we did get an electric one. Yeah I guess we would mow and we would rake. (CA, p. 4)

> I remember having to rake the leaves every fall and sometimes having fun, but finding it a pain in the ass too, because we used to jump in them too. I mowed the lawn sometimes, with our little manual mower. (DA, p. 3)

Sara's memories are far more fleeting. She says of a photograph of our street and house, "it might as well be somebody else's." (Interview July 26, 2007, hereafter SAA2, p. 2). She has been through Sherbrooke since she moved away, on her way to Lennoxville where her son studied and then taught, though even that was about eighteen years ago. On these visits, she never went past 75 Heneker Street, though it was easy to access en route. She told me she would rather keep it in her mind's eye. In the course of our interview, she did recall some street names. Of the photograph of our house, she said, "Is that the house? It looks so tiny." (SAA2, p. 3). She had more questions than answers during this interview, though I felt her mind's eye was working very hard. Of the photograph looking down our street toward the Sherbrooke mountain (see p. 142), she comments, "I don't even remember being able to see the mountain." (SAA2, p. 5).

### Further afield

Still in what Moore (1978, 1986) calls the "habitual" range, but further afield than our own property, are the neighbourhood streets and the trajectory to and from school.

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[60] My mother's aunt Mamie was a gardener too, and her rows and rows of rose gardens, cascading down a hill in the family summer compound at Lac Maskinongé, are image-stained in my memory, as well as my sister's.

As Moore and Young (1978) point out, age can expand our range but only up to a point. Time – the availability of time – has an exceptional influence on the availability to children of the outdoors – what they call the "locus of volitional learning" (p. 88). Family (home) and institutionalized learning (school) occupy and control most of the hours of a child's day, and the majority of the weeks of any year. Thus, children's ability to range far (even with bikes) is restricted by time as much as age. Weather too dictates possibility (most studies seem to be done in spring/summer); Sherbrooke in winter is a far different proposition than Sherbrooke in summer. Interestingly, only Chris speaks of winter.

> So most of those memories really are fall, summer, spring memories. Not too many winter memories. Not around the house winter memories, I can remember the street and snow banks and walking when I was delivering the paper around the neighbourhood. You know, knocking the melting ice, it used to form little caves and we used to knock the ice off. (CA, p. 4)

Chris is reminded by this memory of the paper route he had for several years which "very much connected me to the neighbourhood" (CA, p. 5). He mentions this as a temporal constriction on his activity. "One of the results of having a paper route was… this isn't a question of space, but not being able to participate in after-school activities, I had to get home to do the paper route." (CA, p. 5). In David's memories too, the paper route claimed a lot of his time. "I used to joke that I must be the oldest carrier boy in Sherbrooke" (DA, p. 4), as he remembers doing a paper route from Grade 5 to Grade 11, prevented from quitting by our mother.[61] Like Chris, he adds this meant he "knew the topography of the neighbourhood" (DA, p. 4). Indeed, he can recite the streets he covered in great detail, as can Chris (though in less detail). They each had 36 to 40 customers. David relates his memory of the Kennedy assassination by associating it with his paper route:

> I can still remember the day Kennedy was assassinated, because that Friday, I think he was assassinated at 1:00 or 3:00… 1:00 I think. Because usually we used to get home after school and the papers were there and we delivered them and we got home at 4:00 or 4:30. But they were delayed that… on November 22nd, 1963, until 5:00 or 6:00 o'clock. So we didn't get home until like 8:00 o'clock. I remember that very distinctly. (DA, p. 5)

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[61] David's first summer job, and indeed his first permanent job, was as a newspaper reporter.

Unlike Chris, however, he does not identify his paper route as having prevented him from doing sports activities after school. He says, "I wasn't interested… We were more intellectual. Teacher's pet and all that." (DA, p. 5). He does say, though, that if he regretted anything from school, it would be the lack of sports activities. Instead he helped manage the school bookstore and did photography.

Both David and Chris mention the Kingsway Vanlines Company that had a large property on the corner of King St. and Jacques-Cartier Blvd., three blocks away from us. It covered half a city block. Trucks were parked there regularly. Again alluding to children's pathways, Chris says,

> There was a route from the back of our property, where you would go through other peoples' back property, down to a vacant lot, and it was sort of trees there, we used to play around there, that would go down to a place, and just opposite that was a trucking place. Kingsway trucking…And so that was a play zone. (CA, p. 7)

David has a stronger memory of Kingsway Vanlines as a mischievous play space:

> …we used to go through the back yard over to … the Kingsway Transport place. I remember even actually going…I think going with Chris, once or more than once, we used to go into the tractor trailers which were parked there, and do a little vandalism. Like there was one just filled with 8½ by 11 white paper and we just ripped everything, threw the paper all over the place. (DA, p. 2)

Our house sat between King St., a major thoroughfare, and Portland, a less travelled but still large street, above which was my father's workplace, the Sherbrooke Hospital. The actual hospital property was very large, the width of four blocks, deep with woods on one side. The hospital and the nurses' residence were the only buildings on it. The remainder was what we called the Hospital Woods. Both Chris and David mention this wild space. My father often took us, alone, or with one or all siblings, for walks, with binoculars and bird and tree reference books tucked under his arm.

> *A lovely day, hot but quite fresh. Took Sara and the 'boys' for a walk this afternoon – no less than 5 times, Chris said "Thank you Daddy, for the lovely long walk." Heavens, he's cute! David and Sara behaved extraordinarily well, too, the loves. We went up the unfinished part of Bryant, thro' "the" wood to Jacques Cartier Blvd., & so down thro' the fields to Portland again. (HCA (Sat.) July 30, 1955).*

Sara says, "...I feel he was more attracted to being alone, and being comfortable in nature." (SAA1, p. 5). The Hospital Woods would often be our destination. Chris says

> And then up that way, there was a walk a bit further where the ... behind the hospital, beside the hospital, where we would go for walks, between Portland and Prospect, was it Prospect, and there was a big huge rock up there, that was very...it was very mysterious. (CA, p. 6)

This memory prompted a discussion between Chris and me about this rock. I assumed he was speaking of Picnic Hill, which my father so named. *"We all went to the field above Girl Guides' Rock for a picnic supper."* (HCA (Wed.) Aug. 24, 1955). *"Took Susan, David and Chris to Picnic Hill as I've decided to call it."* (HCA, (Thurs.) Aug. 25, 1955). This was a rock formation that sat in a field on the other side of Jacques Cartier Blvd. from the Hospital Woods. But no, Chris was remembering a "huge boulder in this wood" (CA, p. 6). Suddenly, I remembered this boulder – it was very large, at least ten feet tall and long. Clambering over it was scary because the rock was smooth and slippery. It had clefts in it as well, in which it was easy to catch your foot. Until this conversation, that boulder had left my memory. Now it is firmly and corporeally embedded. During a subsequent visit to Sherbrooke, I tried to find this rock. I could not. It was evidently destroyed in the creation of the housing development that now occupies most of the Hospital Woods.

This part of our conversation highlighted for me what Miller (2006) says about the vagueness of "categorizations of space: understood and yet imprecise" (p. 459). He suggests that

> Their existence is a purely relational one present in the here and now. One knows where, for example "our picnic" spot is not by crossing a perceptual border but by the alignment one remembers (and reexperiences) of the trees, buildings, open spaces, and perhaps most important, the agreement of others. (p. 459)

In my conversations with my siblings, I met these ideas of "alignment" again and again. The memories are not the same, even of the same space and time, but there is a kind of alignment in memory, that moves inside the relational "here and now" Miller speaks of. This contributed to the corroboration, or "agreement of others," aspect of our conversations.

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The aspect of reexperiencing in memory that occurs can, of course, be strong or weak. Louise Chawla (1990) in looking at environmental memories of what she calls "ecstatic places" suggests that there are elements that must be in place for an adult to have such memories. She says, "ecstatic memory was reported under conditions so constant that they appeared inflexible" (p. 20). All the conditions deal with freedom: environmental freedom (usually "open space that the child could move through untiringly"), psychological freedom ("of undisturbed encounter" – solitary experiences), a sense of appropriation ("places the child could claim"), and finally, basic emotional security ("freeing the child from self-preoccupation so that he or she could give full attention to the place itself") (p. 21).

Too, this discussion once again highlighted age differences. The Picnic Hill property, with my remembered rock, was bought and developed. The rock itself was incorporated into an in-ground swimming pool, which I swam in once when a friend of the girl who lived there invited me to accompany her on a visit to the house. Prior to that, though, I remember Picnic Hill as a destination for a relaxed picnic in the middle of the field, with a warm smooth rock at our backs, and silence all around. David does not mention this space; and Chris did not remember it at the time: "I don't really remember walking over there" (CA, p. 6). However, as my father's journal illustrates, he did visit this place and it was in our trajectory on more than one occasion: *"Took Susan, David and Chris for a walk – skipped Picnic Hill this time and went past the golf course. Fascinating. This time took bottle for frogs, but no frogs" (HCA, (Sat.), Aug. 27, 1955).*

After reading this chapter, however, a faint memory of this rock, and a much clearer memory of the shale rock and woods behind it came back to Chris. I had forgotten this shale, but the moment he spoke of it, it was there in my mind's eye.

**Further still**

Within temporal (and other) restrictions, children find the spaces for exploration and expansion. Moore (1986) delineates some factors that can impact on this expansion, beyond the



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spaces themselves: the child's personality, siblings and peers available for play and roaming, and parents' interest and prohibitions. Our further but still habitual range brought us to school. We lived about a mile in a relatively straight line to both the boys' school (St. Patrick's School, hereafter St. Pat's) and the girls' school (Mont Notre Dame, hereafter MND). The highway from Montreal to Sherbrooke turned into King Street as it entered Sherbrooke, and it was a major thoroughfare through the city. Our city bus to school could take King Street (half a block down from our house) straight to Belvedere St. (St. Pat's) and a few blocks further to Cathedral St. (MND). We could also walk that way; it was the straightest line.

However, children don't always like straight lines, and certainly the amount of traffic on King Street was not very attractive.

> Because quite often instead of taking the bus, I would walk home from school and that was quite a walk. And I would pass by [Howardene] and go through the park instead of just carrying on, on the sidewalk. (SAA1, p. 3)

> Walking? ... well basically two. One way would be King St., and the other way would have been up ... what's that... Portland, then through Howardene, kind of down through the woods, and then up and then through backyards and across the street to 75. (DA, p. 7)

> Across the bridge, King St. Bridge, to Queen, Queen came down like that, and sometimes I would go down along the river, and go along that way, and sometimes I would keep going up King climbing the hill, and then go right and go through ... Howardene. Because there was a street that ended that you could connect up with and go, and then there was another street that deadended and went down over a ravine and came back up just at...what was that street, parallel to Heneker, White... you know where you would climb down... that was the quickest route to get home. (CA, p. 7)

Howardene figures large in these memories of the path from school to home. We rarely walked to school – time being a factor at the beginning of the day – but walking home could be a meandering path. Most of my friends would have lived on that path, so as I walked home, often with some of them, they would slowly drop away as I continued on. In later years, a close friend lived in an apartment building that backed on Howardene; it was basically her back yard. Now, Howardene is a public park; then it was a private property, huge and open as it was. The law of public use allowed us access, but it always felt a little edgy if we got close to the residences on the property. This of course was part of its charm. Water too is ever attractive to children, and it had (and has) a huge pond. It had small and large trees, lawns, flowerbeds, green slopes, paths, roadways, and a pond; all these elements are the loose fabric of a child's outdoor play.

Too, there was the river. Sherbrooke sits at the junction of the Magog and the St. François (St. Francis) Rivers. The St. François runs directly to the south of downtown, out of what was our usual range. The Magog River, however, as alluded to in Chapter 3, was part of our usual boundary. It separated the North Ward from the other side of the



river until the Jacques Cartier Bridge was built in the 1950s, and it turns into a dammed, jostling gorge just behind St. Pat's, before settling down to flow into the St. François. Sara says, "that falls by the [mills] on my walks home from school …was of course fascinating, and always drew me to the rail, although I was terrified of being sucked over the rail and under all the time." (SAA1, p. 7).

We all remember the manufacturing mills (the Paton mills) which sat right above the dammed portion, and the clickety-clack of their machinery was a constant in my brothers' school, when the weather was warm enough to have the windows open.
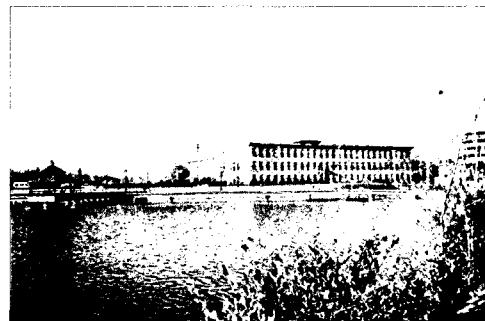
And then I remember the clack, clack, clack from Paton Manufacturing or whatever it was called, in the summertime... when we were in the back. When we were in the front, it was less, it wasn't as bad. (DA, p. 5)

You used to be able to walk and actually hear the looms. (CA, p. 28)

Sherbrooke is emphatically a water place, a junction of two rivers, which figure largely in its history. The Magog River cuts Sherbrooke in two, and it was not until the building of the Jacques Cartier Bridge in the mid-fifties, that access was improved. Long walks over the Jacques Cartier Bridge became a part of our trajectory. Indeed, Chris' expeditions to the Sherbrooke mountain would likely not have taken place without this bridge access.



Walking home along the river or going to Jacques Cartier Park, where a lake-like basin in the river created a broader vista, was a part of all our lives. Every day, by bus, we crossed over the Belvedere St. bridge (seen in the Paton Mills picture on the previous page) on our way to our schools. Walking home from school, we would have had to cross over one of two bridges, depending on our trajectory.

In younger days, accompanied by our father, we went to Dominion Day (now Canada Day) July 1$^{st}$ fireworks in Jacques Cartier Park in the evening. I distinctly remember one particular firework that astonishingly exploded to portray the face of Queen Elizabeth II. Strangely, none of us remember swimming at the beach in this park. Chris wonders if our father, as Executive



Director of the hospital, was privy to information about the condition of the water that wasn't well publicized. In the early 50s, polio epidemics were rampant and public places

like swimming pools and beaches were to be feared. (My father's summer journal entries in those years are full of references to polio cases.)

But Sara, Chris and I all remember walking along the river, often, on the walk home from school, or as a place of reverie. Sara in particular says,

> With Carol [a friend who lived near the river], I used to hang out by the river. Later on, I used to go there by myself and write poetry. Nowadays, one couldn't do that. There would be people lurking. And parents, well, my parents perhaps didn't know I was there at the time. (SAA1, p. 3)

I remember walking in my teens on an open grassed space above the rushing water near the dam, dreamily reading a poem by Wallace Stevens that I kept in my wallet, "The idea of order at Key West."



Too, there is the railway bridge which I speak of in Chapter 3. Sara says, "I used to watch the train go by, and thought to myself, I need to get out of here ... on that train. Many times. But that was later, as a teenager." (SAA1, p. 3). Chris too remembers the bridge. "Of course, there was that intriguing sort of... it wasn't a trestle bridge, but that covered bridge, train bridge, I have memories of those. I don't know whether I really walked, I don't think I ever walked along there..." (CA, p. 11). For him, it is a place of adventure, not of longing, as it was for Sara and me. Is this again an element of age?

For us all, though, trains figured in our lives. They were our chief mode of transport, as we didn't have a car, and there was limited bus service. David remembers the CPR station, though not as vividly as I do. Our annual trips to Montreal at Easter to visit my mother's family and stay at the Laurentian Hotel would have started at that station. In those days, in my memory, Canadian Pacific mainly carried passengers, and Canadian National carried freight. For me, however, without any concrete memory for saying so, the CP/CN differentiation had class connotations. We never took the CN train in my youth. When I took (unusually) the train to Sherbrooke in my 40s, with my young

daughter, we arrived at the CN station. I was astonished and disoriented. The river I saw from my window was the St. François, not the Magog.[62]

Whether we consider these forays as "habitual" or "frequented" would depend on whether we were with friends or siblings, or alone, and how often we went there. Moore and Young (1978) and Moore's (1986) range boundaries differ somewhat from Hart's (1977) of "free range," "range with permission" and "range with permission with other children" (cited in Matthews, 1992, p. 19). These too have temporal and personality characteristics, and involve assessments by parents as to the capacity of the child at any given age, set alongside parental fears. My father's journal cites an expedition by Sara and me in 1953, when we would have been 9 and 6 respectively: *"Sara down to library with Susan. They walked home "the way the 'bus went" and arrived very hot but also v. pleased with themselves."* *(HCA, (Tues.) July 14, 1953).* The library was a few blocks away from our school, downtown in other words and a good mile away. There is no mention of how we got there – presumably by city bus.

### Expeditions: Occasional range

The stories of our further places, places we went to for the day, and for longer periods during my father's summer holidays, bring up the issue of mobility. Our family never had a car; the reasons for this were presumably financial, though I never remember any discussion about our carlessness. All of my friends' fathers had cars. When we lived in Lasalle, on the edge of Lachine, and my father worked at Atwater and St. Catherine, he apparently took the train to work with the occasional taxi back when he had worked late. A couple of emergencies are mentioned in his journal in these early days, and a taxi was taken to the hospital. Luckily in Sherbrooke, we lived down the street from the hospital, though because of my father's position, and indeed the era, doctors came to our house, rather than our going to them. (There are many mentions of doctors' visits.) In Sherbrooke, we came to know certain taxi drivers by name, as my father would always request the same driver. They would drive my father to the train station if he were

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[62] A transportation plan is being developed for the re-establishment of a train route to Sherbrooke that would approximate this route.

travelling to Montreal, New York or Chicago to a conference, or on business. They would drive us to Salmon River, a day trip, and once at least, they drove us to Garthby.

### Salmon River

*V. hot indeed (rumoured 93°). Spent a lovely day on the Salmon River (same spot as on Sat.) with R., Susan, David & Chris. (Sara elected to stay with Judy B.) Both Chris and David had a wonderful time in the water—the former was too cute for words! Jones [taxi driver] drove us over & called for us at 5:30 just before a brief storm broke. (Jones stuck in sand, man with jeep, etc.). As the children said in their prayers tonight 'Thank God for a wonderful day.' (HCA, (Mon.) July 14, 1952)*



Salmon River is a location remembered mainly through the photographic by my brothers. Sara and I have some memories of it. But photographs too provoke my memory. For instance, I garnered a corporeal memory from the archive by looking at this photograph of my father and the four of us playing on a raft. Suddenly, a haptic memory came to me, and I recalled its shape – two logs held together by a few weathered boards hammered to them with the nails and the splinters in the wood presenting probabilities of injury – its feel and colour. When we returned to Salmon River, we looked for the raft and were so happy it was still there (used by others, as well as us, one assumes). Matthews (1992) cites research with adults' childhood memories that suggest "it was the tactile rather than the visual quality of the place that was recalled" (p. 1). As Jones (2000) says, children have that "often small-scale, fine-grained relationship to [material] space" (p. 37).

But my brothers do not mention Salmon River as a memory place in our interviews, since they were quite young at the time of those visits. David and I did spend some time during our November 'interview' visit trying to find its location on the Internet, prompted by my statement that I had not been able to find it. We eventually found a Bassin de la Rivière aux Saumons, to the northeast, which did not seem to correspond with my memory of the location being close enough for a day trip, somewhere near Lennoxville. Indeed, its actual location emerged from my father's

journal. David and I had trouble finding it because its real name is the Ascot River, though it is known locally as Salmon River.

> *A fine day, but certainly hot enough. Went on picnic with the Armitages (including Chris & his playpen) and a very nice time was had by all. David somewhat reluctant to go in water for some reason or other, but certainly Sara and Susan loved it. A beautiful spot on the Salmon River beyond a place called Huntingville. We left shortly after 2 and didn't get back until 8 or so. (HCA, (Sat.) July 12, 1952)*

Sara does mention Salmon River: "…and the rivers, we used to go in a taxi with our family and that river I remember…those photographs…I don't know where they are now." (SAA1, p. 7). The photographs she is referring to are at David's house, as I was reminded when I visited him for our interview. There are actually two sets of this type of memory frame: one focuses on the boys and are all taken at Salmon River, and the other



focuses on the girls, Sara and I in Lasalle and Montreal, prior to our move to Sherbrooke (see next page). These two gendered, album-like montages were, I am sure, put together by my father, who also created the only family photo album still (or ever) extant. His

writing is under many of the photographs in that album. The hand-made pencil lines, which outline each photograph in the two memory frames, seem very like my father. Some of the photos of Sara and I were perhaps taken in 1947. *"Took some photos of the children & the house." (HCA (Fri.) July 25, 1947).* Salmon River can perhaps be dated as 1952 by the appearance of the playpen in the photographs.

These two montages hung on our wall in Sherbrooke, moved to Montreal with my parents in 1967, and to my mother's solo apartment after my father died, where they hung together until she died. Sara ended up with the girl montage and David with the boys, though I have copied and mounted the girl montage for my own wall. These photographs, and one family portrait, are the only ones I remember being staged in our home – they are more a post-memory artefact than a memory one. Their biographies as objects cannot be fully known, only conjectured (see Chapter 6 for more discussion). But they have a lasting presence as a symbol of experiences that we know we had, but can't remember – a family story.
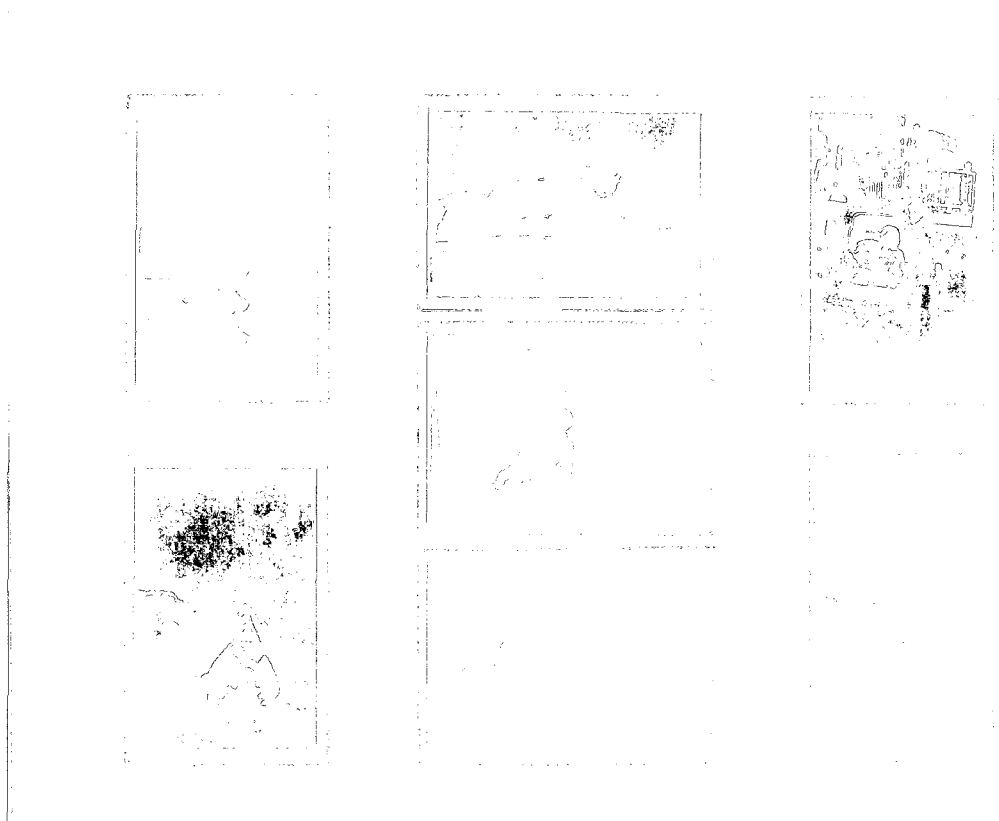


*A lovely morning, cool & sunny. Despite the appearance of clouds decided to go to Salmon River. Left around 1:00 pm. We had fun – particularly the girls, but it*

*was quite cool and we had a couple of showers & little rain. Chris doesn't like the " 'ain" because he associates it with thunder we suppose. After awhile, however, he trotted about during a brief shower with my knotted hankerchief on his head, looking too funny and cute for words. All v. but pleasantly tired after our outing. Saw hummingbird at bergamot this evening. R. planted the black-eyed Susans we dug up at Salmon River & 3 tiny little evergreens. (HCA (Thurs.) July 9, 1953)*

My last photographic act for this inquiry was a foray to find Salmon River. I recount that in Chapter 6.

### Breeches Lake

Around the same time, we went to Breeches Lake. Thanks to David's Internet research, we located its unique shape (the reason for its name) up near larger Lake Aylmer, where we later had a cottage near Garthby. Although I remember the "Brownie in the baggage car" train trip to Disraeli (Chapter 3), the first mention of Breeches Lake in my father's journal does not say exactly how we got there. *"We left sometime between 9 & 10, the 6 of us and Brownie and, of course, Mary H., who thoughtfully dropped in to see if everything was under control. Got to Breeches Lake around 11:30. Mary, David, the luggage & I went by boat (2) and R.S.S., & C. walked. Most pleasant place. Mary stayed long enough to have a light lunch with us." (HCA (Wed.) July 29, 1953)*. The next day, we went to a very small island about a half-mile off shore from our cottage. *"Sunny with cloudy intervals. Rowed Sara, Susan, David & Brownie to Snake Island." (HCA (Thurs.) July 30, 1953)*. There was a drawing, now apparently lost, that my father did of this, or another similar occasion, when we were in the process of rowing off to Snake Island, with my mother on the shore relaxing with Brownie. Suddenly Brownie, a small longhaired mix of what we always thought was dachshund/collie, decided she wanted to come with us. She plunged into the water and madly swam out to us, despite my mother's frantic calls. We pulled her into the boat and she shook herself and wet us all liberally.

We have no photographs of Breeches Lake. Nor do Chris and David remember being there – Chris was just two and David four. Sara, age 10, remembers "running along a path, barefoot, and I stepped on a snake which was sunning itself. And that is where I got my everlasting phobia of snakes." (SAA1, p. 4). "And then Daddy made

those sketches of Brownie and the boat...where are they?" (SAA1, p. 5). I, on the other hand, recall getting the Brownie camera from our neighbours (referred to in Chapter 3). I remember too rambles on Snake Island; we picked berries there. I was quite sick on one of our visits there and went off by myself. I see the stony beach in front of our cottage; I remember being in the boat when Brownie shook her wet fur, I see my mother on the shore. I even have a faint memory of the cottage itself, and how it looked from the outside. I remember the feel and look of the narrow stamped-down mud path where Sara stepped on the snake. I was not yet seven.

### St. Gabriel de Brandon

My mother's family had what can only be called a compound (with several houses on it) near St. Gabriel de Brandon on Lac Maskinongé (a name I never knew until I was an adult). The boys don't appear to have ever gone there. Certainly Sara and I did, and it appears from my father's journal that we went by ourselves. *"Sara & Susan left today for St. G. de. B. Haidee[63] came out with John & his brother, Thursday to get them. They are driving straight there via Sorel." (HCA, (Fri.), July 20, 1951).* We returned



from this trip Monday, July 30th. We went in 1950 and 1953 as well, duly noted in my father's journal. Certainly at a later date, I remember attending a wedding there of my mother's cousin Betty. But the earlier holidays were spent with our Montreal cousins, their parents, and of course our Auntie Mamie, who as mentioned earlier, was the excellent rose gardener. I

remember most distinctly the excitement of the drive, how at a certain point we would come over a hill and see the lake far below us. My heart would leap. Too I remember the path to the lake – crossing the road, we would take a long sand staircase, rimmed with splintery wood, down to the lakefront. Is that because we would have to watch our feet carefully in order not to stub our toes, or get splinters, that I cannot remember what was around me, but only the sight of those steps?

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[63] My mother was raised by her three aunts, sisters Haidee, Maddie and Rosemary.

We frequented other summer places, a cottage near Garthby on Lake Aylmer, two separate cottages near Ayer's Cliff on Lake Massawippi, and summer camps (separately to boys' and girls' camps) on various occasions. These spaces are of less interest to me, though I remember them quite clearly, as do my brothers, because they take me beyond the memory terrain of my middle years. Too, my father's journal, the fifth and important voice, is relatively silent during these years. Entries are sporadic; whole years have no entries at all. Is the journal like the photo album, very active when the children are young and not as active as they get older? Though I think there were other, more individual factors, about which I do not speculate.

## Memory work

"Childhood amnesia" is the idea that "adults can no longer cognitively process early childhood experiences" (Aitken, 1994, cited in Philo, 2003, p. 8), an idea which I discussed in Chapter 3. Philo, though, is suggesting that research into childhood can "allocate[s] a role to the *in*active daydreaming of the adult researcher" (p. 8). My research with my siblings has looked to both "concrete" memory and to daydreaming, in that the enactment of the memories has provoked more memories on my part, and suggested different ways of seeing the remembered environment.

For instance, the realization that Salmon River is a photographic memory for my brothers, and that indeed the girls' montage from Lasalle represents a photographic memory for us as well, has made me think about the meaning of these two montages for my parents, and for us – the "afterwardness" of photographs. In exploring these two artefacts, I understand Sofaer and Sofaer Derevenski's interest in excavating the time before they were cognizant, but which is documented for them, in particular and culturally specific ways. And why was my family so photographically poor? Apart from the formal studio family portraits, done three times over the years, according to the evidence, and always, in my memory, created as a present for my father, there was

little family evidence on display. There were no family photos on my father's side, displayed or otherwise.

Can we consider Marguerite Duras' (1990, cited in Hirsch, 1997, p. 199) suggestion that "photographs promote forgetting"? What she suggests is that the photograph is a "confirmation of death"; it is only one of the "million other images that exist in the mind", and "the sequence made up by the million images I will never alter" (p. 199-200). She is discussing this in talking about a pivotal moment in her life, not recorded photographically, the photo not taken.

Do photographs make our memories lazy? We don't have to attend, because there is a photograph. But when we do not have photographs that confirm our memories, or when we have photographs about things in which we participated of which we have no memory, what does this mean about identity, experience and memory? Is this like post-memory, Marianne Hirsch's word for what the children of survivors of the Holocaust have as an experience of the Holocaust? It is not their memory; nonetheless, these memories have impacted very strongly on their own lives. They carry these memories, even when not known or elaborated. Linda Haverty Rugg (1997) in discussing Christa Wolf's autobiographical writing says "the missing photographs Wolf describes act as a marker for absence, just as photographs always do, but because the photographs are lost, they indicate a 'hyperabsence,' an absence squared" (p. 194).

Sofaer and Sofaer Derevenski's use of existing photographs as an attempt to excavate unknown memories through artefacts and photographs could be considered an exploration of post-memory. But we all live with post-memory, even when it is commonplace. The ways in which my father's journal has intersected with my siblings' memories and my own is evidence of that. He too is exercising selective memory in his journal writing; while it seems indexical, it is not. However, it represents events while they were happening. But our memories are episodic – more so than the journal in its dailiness. I have chosen to weave in only those elements in my father's journal that mesh and meet our memories. There is another story there (probably many) – one I am not writing. But this invaluable artefact, the story on the side, the story of these adult perceptions of his children, his days, and his environment has created a parallel frame for our memories.

What becomes obvious is that my mother is missing here. My father's journal, our sibling memories – where can we locate my mother's voice? Twice in my father's journal, I met her actual hand-writing: *"Because today was such an anxious one, tonight I am so grateful to God, I am recording in my husband's diary – surely I can have that privilege today." (RA, June 23, 194? – unreadable)*. There had been some worry about my father's health, mentioned only briefly by him with no details. Later in 1947, from September 1 to 13, my father was away, and my mother wrote an entry, in his place, every day.

She did, briefly, keep her own journals. One, prior to meeting my father, was a travel journal, a small blue and gold journal called "My Trip." She sailed from Quebec August 19th, 1939, on the Empress of Australia. She was on her way to Germany to meet her German fiancé, Bernd. I only learned about Bernd in a letter from my mother, when I was staying in Germany in 1972.[64] For obvious reasons (the declaration of war), she never got to Germany and spent her time visiting London and Edinburgh, eventually sailing back from Liverpool on September 15 on the Duchess of Atholl. Her days were filled with visits to London sights and restaurants with friends, and worries – waiting to hear about war, waiting to hear from Bernd, watching the sandbagging and anti-aircraft balloons going up. *"Sept. 5. Each day to Cook's for change of sailing – not very interested. Planning highland trip or to Oxford if nothing definite settled." (RA, Sept.5, 1939)*. She waited from Sept. 7 to 14th in Liverpool at the Adelphi Hotel for her sailing. Tucked in the back of this journal are three negatives of my father.

Later, with three children in hand, and pregnant with Chris, my mother starts another journal, a five year diary, a gift from my father inscribed by him: *"To you, my love, with the fervent hope that it will record five years of happiness and afterwards, another and another, ad infinitum."* The entries start January 1, 1951, ending February 19, with two final entries March 12 and 13th. Otherwise, it is blank. On March 13, my mother writes, *"Have been most remiss in writing this up for past 4 weeks – must try to catch up." (RA, March 13, 1951)*. Seven months pregnant, with three children, one does understand the blanks. The entries recount briefly the weather, our winter colds and

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[64] Sara has a letter from Bernd, sent to my mother after the war, part of a collection of letters (mostly from my father) which my mother gave her.

coughing, as well as shopping, and tea visits. It appears that if we were outside playing, it was by ourselves, not accompanied by our mother. But then, it was winter; summer entries would presumably have been different; and again, she was pregnant. Our father took us for walks, a not uncommon phenomenon. Sara alludes to that in her comment above regarding my father's love of nature, and she continues, "I think we all got a bit of that from Daddy, rather than from Mummy." (SAA1, p. 5/6). A common theme is fatigue, often expressed by my father too in his journal. My mother's short journal entries contain little other commentary, beyond dailiness. But indeed, many of my father's entries are similar; it is the weight of them, the sheer number of them over the years, which add up to a portrait. There is a portrait of my mother in my father's journal, from his perspective, but it is not her voice.

The absence of my mother's placed voice cannot be recuperated. Photographs are insufficient (and there are few enough of those). Her love of water places remains in my memory. She was a strong swimmer in her youth, and took great pleasure in that activity. St. Gabriel de Brandon was her summer place when she was young. She was the gardener, though my father always helped and was interested in attempts at gardening (witness the tuberous begonia). But it is evident from my own memory and from my sibling's stories, that my father is more deeply implicated in exploration of space and place than my mother. My father's journal does document my mother taking us to the dentist, the hairdresser, shopping for shoes and new outfits for school. This reflects the gendered elements of exploration and function in use of space; certainly place adventures with your mother tend to be less frequent than with your father, both then and often now. The father is the one for rambles in the woods, the mother for shopping – aesthetics and function divided evenly; at least they were so in my family.

**Outcomes**

The suggestion by Tuan (1977) that started this exploration regarding the imprimatur of our childhood landscapes has been both confirmed and questioned in these two chapters on childhood landscapes. Certainly the memories are there, waiting to be enlivened. One of my questions in our conversations was, "Do you see any relationship between your current spaces and your childhood spaces?" My siblings did not

necessarily perceive a direct relationship between the spaces we inhabited when we were growing up and the spaces they have sought in their adult lives. But some elements seem to stand out as having been important and carried forward into living choices.

In talking about Salmon River, for instance, which Chris for obvious reasons has no memory of, he says, "It is interesting because there is nothing I like better, I think that is true of everybody... Going swimming in a river, sitting beside a river, that is really really lovely... unusual, you can't do it very much, there are very few places in the world..." (CA, p. 17). In our discussions about Sherbrooke, Chris mentioned that when



he was growing up, he never thought about Sherbrooke as being a "water place," but realizes now how the two rivers made it so. One of his favourite places in Sherbrooke for solitary forays was walking beside the river. Too, all our summer holidays involved staying beside water. Chris, who lives in Vancouver, though not right beside the ocean, feels living beside water is symbolic of being able to travel and of being connected; the water that laps on this shore also laps on the farther shore. "The thing about water is the connectivity is much more there than with land." (CA, p. 27).

David, on the other hand, said he thought there was no correlation with Sherbrooke being a water place and the fact that he has lived on an island, in the middle of a river, for most of his adult life. "You're probing too far," he said. (DA, p. 15). In recently seeking a new temporary living place in an American city where he works during the week, he wanted to be downtown, in the centre of things, though he has no desire for that kind of space in Montreal.

Sara does see a relationship between the emphasis in our childhood on interacting with the wild outdoors and her current life situation. She says,

> I have come to feel about my surroundings as I perhaps did when I was much younger, and it was a sense that ... I guess it came more from Daddy than from Mummy. I feel that he was more attracted to you know, being alone, and being comfortable in nature, and I think we all got a bit of that from Daddy, rather than from Mummy. (SAA1, p. 5)
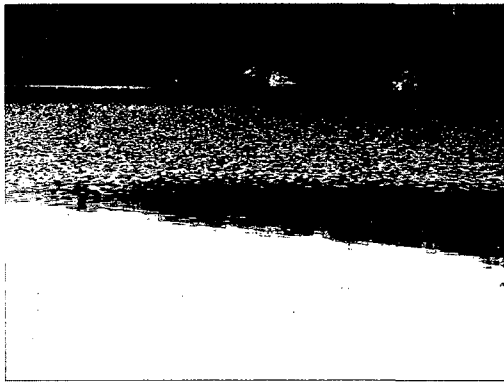
She also mentions missing water spaces in her daily environment, though there are tiny streams on their property. "Well, I like the lake…when there's nobody there. I have taken a lot of photographs there. I like areas with water. This is one of the… I wouldn't say minuses… about being in this present place, but I would love to have some of, some body of water, running… we have streams that run in the spring, but then they dry up." (SAA1, p. 6).

My own affinity for water places is reflected in my photographic practice. I seek water like a homing pigeon. I would say that more than 75% of my photographs are of water and its luminescence and sense of the littoral. I relate this to my middle childhood daily experiences in Sherbrooke and our summer experiences. I also feel that the first two years of my life, where we were so often beside water with my father in Lasalle, contain haptic memories written on my body, as they are on Sara's.

This question of the influence of childhood landscapes on current choices appears to carry an enormous unconscious aspect to it. Since I was not aiming for the psychoanalytic here, or the story of personality, I asked my questions lightly of my siblings. I do not "analyze" this memory material, but present it, aligned with photographic evidence of the places where memory took place. My original purpose became subsumed to this alignment through rephotography, which took on meaning, in and of itself. Thus additional questions emerged (see Chapter 1) about the actual target of my explorations. The mixture of memory, place and photography is very complex and rich. This angle that I had taken, of childhood landscapes and sibling memory, is only one possible exploration.

Too, the addition of the fifth voice, my father's journal, altered (for the better, I believe) the direction of this chapter. The textual aspect of my father's recounting of place in his (and our) "present" in his journal was a strong counterpoint to our recollections. My siblings did not have access to that. But as I worked on this chapter in particular, their taped present voices and his textual past voice and the photographs

themselves, past and present, created a rich environment for telling our stories. The bringing forward of the past into the present was made more coherent by the journal; it became an important framework for my writing.

In reading Kathleen Vaughan's (2007) discussion of her exploration of silence in relation to her father, along with Deborah Tall's poetic journey into her own father's silence (2006), I consider the legacy of this journal artefact. I don't know what my father intended for his journal, but I believe he thought someone other than himself would read it one day. I say this because he hides himself somewhat; he uses some coded writing. However, as I mentioned before, a portrait emerges that is priceless in terms of memory. His voice and presence sit in this artefact. There are huge gaps, but what is there has contributed some ground to our place memories.

Frances Yates recounts how the Greek and Roman rhetoricians used space as a way to memorize long texts. "…Memory training might best start by imagining himself [sic] inside a building. Visualizing movement through this space provided a sequence to recollection" (1966/1992, cited in Cándida Smith, 2002, p. 2). Imagining this kind of memory work, I ask if the photograph is enough to propel the body into that remembering sequence, so that memory cues come up. The fact that I have physically gone to remembered spaces to take photographs for this inquiry means that I have put myself inside the physical space in a way that my siblings have not. What are the implications in that for memory? Certainly, my memories sometimes felt livelier to me than those I heard from my siblings. But how can I be sure that is so? Isn't that how memory works? How can we compare memory of place, our "mind's eye," as an embodied experience, using words? Cándida Smith, discussing the Greek memory strategies, says,

> In and of itself, language was too slippery to hold onto with confidence. Vision provided, within this scheme, the most precise sensations, so words needed to be covered with forms that the eye could master. Images, however, did not appear unless the body first put itself in motion through space. (2002, p. 2)

With space itself used as the memory prompt, it was only when one put oneself in that (virtual) memory site, that the words would come, propelled by a total sensory memory experience, all aspects of the body engaged.

The product of rephotography is not only a photograph, it is the embodied experience of taking that photograph in place, and the subsequent storing in the "eyes" of

the mind and the body of the experience of that place. As Cándida Smith says, "site provides a structure for the placement of memory cues" (2002, p. 7). This being-in-place, the active autotopographical richness of making, was my experience in this inquiry, an aspect my siblings did not have. Are there rules of space, rules of narrative, rules of photography, that mandate how we read them, how we form and tell stories to ourselves and to others? When we talk our stories out, how placed are they? How placed do we make them? Even when asked to speak of space, my siblings did not always find it easy. Place is such an embodied experience that it is not easily elaborated in words. Our cultural story is not often told as placed, and yet place is embedded in, and marks, all activity. We might speak of moving from here to there, where our school was, our house, but what that place specifically evokes doesn't easily come to the surface. Our stories are not thick with space description, unless we are novelists or experienced memoir writers. Place is one of the "rules," but its regulated and regulating language is rarely spoken in the everyday.

I cannot access textually the richness of memory, of exploring the mind's eye archive that my siblings experienced. They can only say that this was interesting, this enlivened memory. The skimming of their surfaces is what I present; the deeper ripples and echoes in the ongoing construction of their identities are not visible yet. Bachelard says of memory and imagination, that "with intimacy it recovers its entity, in the mellowness and imprecision of the inner life" (1969a, p. 57). Certainly, when I gave each of my siblings a copy of this chapter to read, they all commented on how this reading had provoked more memories, beyond the interviews themselves. Sara added that she hadn't really wanted to look at the photographs of 75 Heneker St., so much did she prefer her mind's eye memories. Both David and Chris remarked on my very light presence in this chapter, reminding me of my researcher role in this endeavour.

What is often pointed out as the purpose of the telling of the personal story is the exposure of the absences, or the holes, in the story. In this inquiry, however, I found myself entranced with the presences, with what we actually do remember, with the places themselves, as icons, symbols, and the ground beneath our feet. I became interested how opening it up enlivened the ongoing aspect of the archive. Through my additions to the archive, I was enhancing the legacy of memory and artefact. I believe I actively engaged

with childhood in these ways. Too there is the idea of play that links, through photography and the visual, all these spaces: the play of the eyes across the landscape, the play our bodies engaged with in these places, the play of the visiting, the looking, the looking again, the looking back, the photographs themselves.

The locating of memory that this inquiry engages with has stayed outside, in the exterior places, the "locus of volitional learning" (Moore and Young, 1978, p. 88). Outside place is an interesting path into identity, one that is perhaps not so fraught with the unchosen emotion of the family that the inside of the house represents. Reading Kathleen Vaughan's (2007) work on her father-memory, I came to a sudden insight that my master's work had been on the body, the interiority of self, and it was related to my relationship with my mother. This present inquiry, focused on the outside, the exterior, has explored, both tacitly and explicitly, my relationship with my father. This gendered understanding flared up and disturbed my attempt to not engage with "personality." But I stop there, again, with this demarcation. I point to it as an example of the learning which can emerge from the engagement with the past and our "present becoming."

These two chapters, driven by my own and my siblings' memories and emotional and haptic place-stories, have been attempts to create "deep maps" of known spaces, to uncover some of the layers of the topographical intimacy of our childhood landscapes.

In the next chapter, I look to unknown spaces and acknowledge my current landscapes. By photographic mapping of two public spaces, the Architectural Garden and the Jim Everett Memorial Park, I challenge the idea that only time can create the place layering that brings familiarity, affiliation and topographical intimacy. Rather than memory, I use the camera as the main tool to eliminate distance between myself and these spaces.

# Chapter 5.   Between then and now: The Gardens
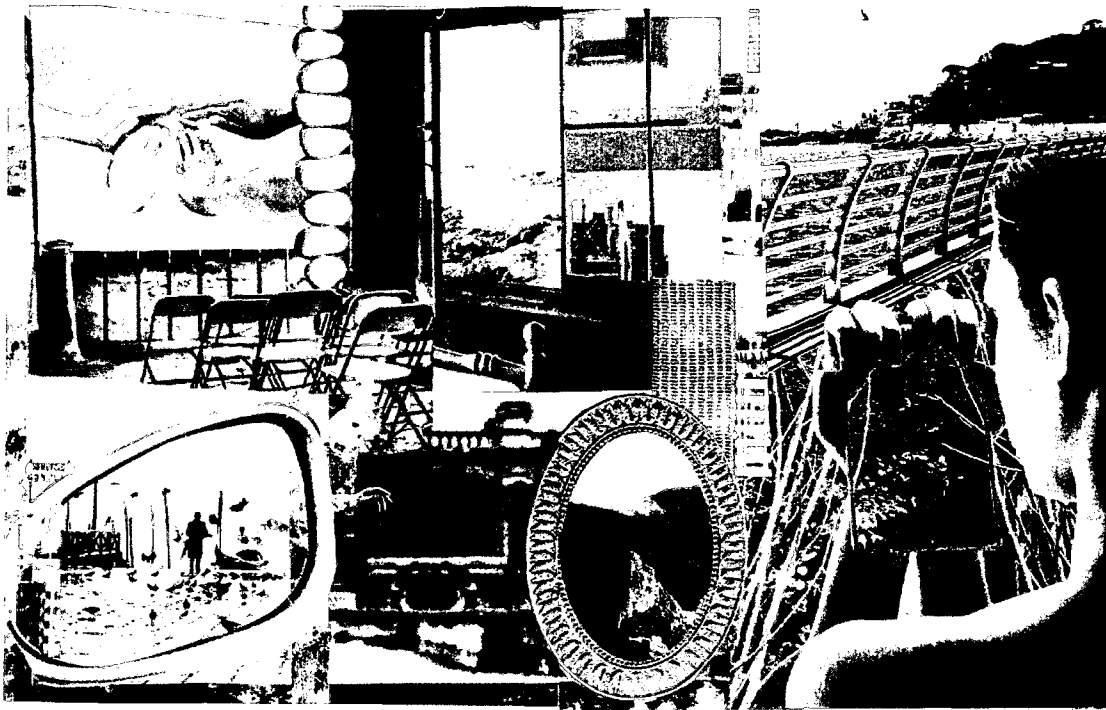
It is the intimate, never the general, that is teacherly...Time must grow thick and merry with incident, before thought can begin. Mary Oliver (1998, p. 25).
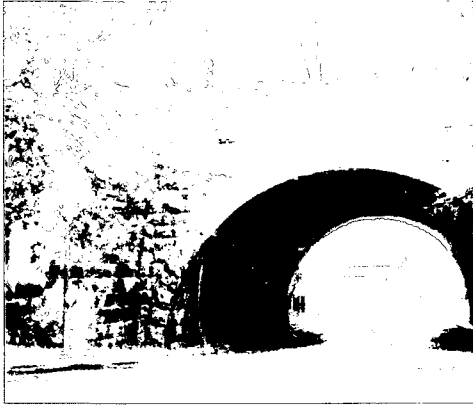


Bridges, like trains and portals, are materially aporic, acting as pathways from here to there, but being neither here nor there. Their littorality, their being on the edge of things, makes them mysterious and solid at the same time. As objects, they are poetic, mimetic, and metaphorical of journeys, thresholds and identities.

Passing through such portals can tell us a lot about ourselves, our standpoints – what we value, what structures our every day. It pulls us up to contemplate where we are. When we are in familiar spaces, we pay much less attention to our environment, to the constitutive aspect of place. Moving through to less familiar space places our environment in sharp relief and brings attention to bear on our surroundings.

A camera is a portal, too, an idea-object used between self and environment, materially positioned between the embodied photographer and the space she finds herself in, between here and there. The photograph, the product of the act of photographing, is materially a step away from embodied space and offers itself as one important way to make the familiar strange. When we take photographs of our familiar environments, or alternately, when we make the strange familiar through photography, we enliven the in-



between possibility of the photograph. Thus the layered relationships between memory (the now and then) and space (the here and there), the photograph, and the narratives of

the reflexive self are intertwined. The photograph can be used as a presence to explore the story of presences. The act of photographing establishes my presence.

What is the bridge between my exploration of childhood landscapes and the two contemporary landscapes I have chosen to explore photographically? Jane Urquhart speaks of "all the details that made up what she thought of as her known and knowable place" (2005, p. 117). We think of the past as the known, although memory itself remains tentative at best. Samuel Weber (1991, cited in Hall, 2004, ¶ 7) says of the past, that it is "a 'time' that can never be fully remembered since it will never have fully taken place." But still we act as if the past is wholly or partially known. The present, always instantly past of course, can be framed as knowable (able to be known) as a space of "volitional learning" (Moore & Young, 1978, p. 88).

In that light, I have looked to two contemporary places that could be mapped and known, in great detail. Unlike memory – fleeting, partial and archived – if I look consciously to present spaces, I can attempt to capture them wholly. I can see if they can "fully" take place. 75 Heneker St., now rephotographed, looked at again and again, mapped, reinterpreted through my father's journal and through memory, both my own and my siblings, can never be fully recuperated or reclaimed, though this project has brought it very close to being re-paired. Now, changed, it can perhaps be archived. Looking now at contemporary spaces which I consciously choose to enter, to record through photographs, to write and research, to make mine, is a way to break through feelings of dislocation carried for decades – to make sense of my biography by creating my own lived place photo album.

Rebecca Solnit says, "memories themselves seem to smudge from too much fond examination, becoming the memory of a memory" (2001, p. 188). In exploring current spaces and looking for relationships between past and present/known and knowable places, I am looking for a meshing of memories, not a smudging, by attending to the details that emerge from close mappings. The two contemporary spaces I chose to investigate are highly bounded, unlike the ranges I delineated as childhood landscapes. They sit in urban settings, with lines drawn around them, easily marked. Their loose fabric is highly controlled. Nonetheless, entering them and mapping them

photographically teaches me about space, the photograph, the act of photographing, and the imbrication of identity with place.

When I was showing Chris the photos I had been taking of the Jim Everett Memorial Park, he said, "so much attention on such a small space." Isn't that a perfect definition of research? That bracketing of something, that setting boundaries around it for study, that focusing in, is interestingly like taking a photograph – going deep, but small: framed. And then widening out, to position that small and now well-known thing. (Re)framed (framed again). In my mapping of these spaces, and in my rephotography projects, am I trying to get rid of the "space-off," the "space not visible in the frame but inferable from what the frame makes visible" (deLauretis, 1987, cited in Hirsch, 1997, p. 198). In the last few years, I have become enamoured of the panoramic; every landscape I photograph now is recorded horizontally for at least 120, if not 180, degrees. I have made a 360 degree panoramic of St. John's, Newfoundland, from Signal Hill. Am I trying to make everything visible by not having anything outside the frame? But there is always something outside the frame, not the least of which is I, the photographer. Time, for instance, that space in this time, cannot be easily gathered in; it sits outside the frame, always. Much is written about how photography, in particular that of people and events, is an attempt to freeze a moment, to stop time. When one is photographing locations, creating a place photo album, trying to gather up space in time, what is one doing?

Vincent Miller (2006) suggests that some things are "unmappable," that the cataloguing, the conceptualization, cannot always be verbalized or categorized. These two places I have chosen to gather up photographically appear to have strong boundaries, both physically, in that they occupy distinctly bounded spaces, but also conceptually, in that their intentionality creates a demarcation. However, when we experience them, when we are in them, these boundaries become less evident, less marked. Miller says,

> People do not, for the most part, experience *borders*; they experience *transitions*. In the same way that the "border" of Mount Everest is contingent on one's relationship to it (once you start climbing it, it begins), to say where social spaces or ethnic spaces (especially within urban contexts) begin and end is problematic, although one may be conscious of when one is "in" or "out" of them. (2006, p. 461)

Thus, despite my treating the Gardens as bounded spaces, their positioning in their differing urban environments, their conception and articulation, are part of a "social geography that does not rely on borders and exactness but on inexactness and layers of experience" (Miller, 2006, p. 461). <u>This</u> cannot be photographed, but can it be elaborated in/through photography? What can we make visible?

Miller suggests that spatial representations "work against...lived understandings," because they act as abstractions. He sees this as "a struggle between pragmatic, intersubjective (and ultimately vague) understandings and reified, static (and ultimately precise) concepts achieved through abstraction" (2006, p. 464). I have struggled with the idea of representation in these photographic projects. What am I doing in this semi-rigourous mapping of the spaces that I have visited? Are my attempts at representation, both through the photographs and the writing about the spaces, an attempt to reify, to fix, these spaces? Am I attempting to colonize these spaces? I feel that it is not at the level of abstraction that I make these attempts. It is more a process of extraction, a bracketing of place, plucking it out of the urban archive, the everyday colonizing hegemony of what surrounds us.

The photographs may seem literal, but they are more of a metaphor for my engagement with the places themselves. The Gardens are not mundane. They are not even (necessarily) part of the everyday. They require intention (one more than the other) to inhabit them with attention. So, once I start inhabiting these Gardens, to use Miller's idea, they begin. And in this beginning, am I stepping away from, outside of, alienation and abstraction, and stepping into an engagement with place that is both literal and symbolic? Can all of our forays be thus described?

And yet, these spaces have a place outside of me, outside of all of us who pass by, pass through, or stay (for awhile) in them. Their concrete, grassed and gravelled realities are not only physical, but they are adamantly physical. Like all places, they also carry wider, more conceptual, meanings: the cultural and political component of the engagement – community, the urban, ideas of beauty, landscape, art, the public, public spaces – issues of identity, "the taken for granted frame in which all of the problems which I must overcome are placed" (Schutz & Luckman, 1973, cited in Miller, 2006, p. 458). I take these considerations into the sites I have chosen to explore.

**The Sites**



     The first public space I explored was the Architectural Garden of the Canadian Centre for Architecture (CCA) in Montreal. This public/art space, which I had never visited prior to this project, sits in my daily trajectory in the city. It is a space of enclosed intentionality. This made it appear easier to map than a street, though its siting and its layered meanings are complex enough. I brought my own intention to this highly planned space, exploring the differences between being-in-place, looking and photographing. What emerged was a sense of "topographical intimacy" in/with this space.

     When I started this exploration, I didn't know what would emerge. My original intention in photographing it was to have material with which to work in the Rigginsian sense (see below) – data to use for verification of observation and memory. Surprisingly, complex feelings of attachment, detachment, and spatial curiousity were predominant. I also realized that the "woman" aspect of my project had remained tacit, and I had not dealt in any substantial way with gender in my exploration. I had intended to map a second space, not yet chosen, and was thus intrigued by a suggestion[65] that I explore a public space created/constructed by a woman and contrast that with the Architectural Garden, designed by Melvin Charney. I ended up choosing a space designed by Cornelia Oberlander, a landscape architect who has spent decades creating inside and outside public landscapes, such as the Contemplative Courtyard (1984-88) in the National

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[65] This suggestion was made by Annmarie Adams, a member of my committee.

Gallery of Canada in Ottawa and the Vancouver Robson Square Law Courts gardens (1976-1983). My intention was to document this space, the Jim Everett Memorial Park (2000-2001) in Vancouver, in the same way I had documented the Architectural Garden. The fact that I had never seen this Vancouver Park before I visited it for purposes of the project was intriguing. I wanted to see to what extent my photographic exploration of it would make it familiar, intimate, when I was so unfamiliar with it. As well, this Vancouver Park would bring me back to my Commonplace Book and my explorations of spaces of longing[66].

These two sites are both the same and different. They are public spaces, both parks or alternately both gardens, though one is called a Park and one is called a Garden.



Cornelia Oberlander has said, "in historic terms, a park is a garden" (CCA Archives, 75-032-26T). They are located in large Canadian cities, Montreal and Vancouver. The Architectural Garden is very close to the centre of Montreal, though it is peripheral in ways that will be elaborated. The Jim Everett Memorial Park, while centrally positioned in its neighbourhood, is not situated in the centre of Vancouver. Their purposes and their functionality emerge from allied but different disciplines: public art, architecture, landscape architecture, urban planning and children's play spaces. Thus their expressiveness differs. But they are similar in that they are not overtly consumptive spaces, and increasingly in large urban centres, public space is consumptive in a commercial sense. However, they are aligned with cultural consumption and assumptions in subtle ways.

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[66] Vancouver is my preferred city.

## The Architectural Garden

The Architectural Garden has haunted me since I first saw it, years ago now, but I had never visited it prior to this project. Nor had I ever visited the Canadian Centre of Architecture (CCA) with which it is associated. I had meant to, I had picked up the schedule of events at the CCA three years in a row, and marked off interesting conferences or exhibits or lectures... yet somehow, I had never gone.

Its location in my city trajectory partially explains my view-only experience of the Garden. I view it because the 420 Express bus that I often take home runs along René-Lévesque Boulevard from Metcalfe to Fort and then takes the Fort on-ramp to the Ville Marie Expressway. I am always on my way somewhere when I pass by it. Actually visiting it requires intention.

The (west) chair in the air sculpture (Column 10) was the first enchantment: as you drive onto the highway ramp, the city rises to your vision and simultaneously you see the chair, like a kitchen chair in bronze, positioned for the best view.[67] Its whimsy is delightful. In fact, in all seasons from this mobile distance, the Architectural Garden was mysterious to me. Perhaps that is why I never wanted to go there. Like my aversion to deconstructing the meaning of a poem, I wanted only to feast on my own [mis?]conceptions about what the Garden meant.

I decided not only to visit, but also to attempt to deconstruct it, and watch to see if the mystery faded. I felt that in some ways it was a microcosm of my

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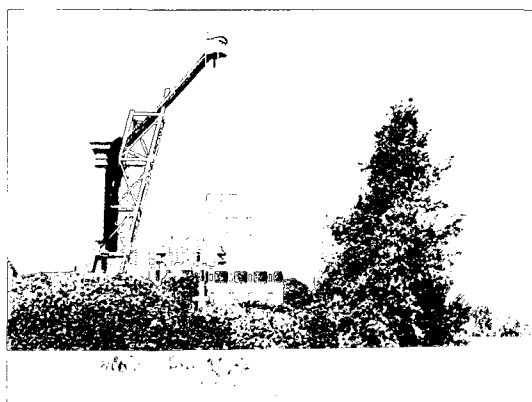
[67] Trevor Boddy (1991) calls this view "a postmodern epiphany" (p. 35).

urban dilemma – city, country, nature, the built environment – it seemed a contradiction, conceived and constructed by an artist/architect. I felt that it would speak of my attempt to resolve dichotomies. Because more than just deconstructing a mystery, I wanted to explore photography and topography together, to learn more about the value of photography as a useful means of textually mapping our physical spaces.

The genesis of the project was three-fold. One was my everyday, and the place the Architectural Garden had marked in it. The second was my research interest in public space and how it influences girls' and women's identities, not least my own. The third impetus, and most specific at the time, was an article by Stephen Harold Riggins (1994). Riggins describes in minute detail how he "read" his parents' living room as a text, using photography to document the visible evidence about which he was writing. Riggins' painstaking "reading" of that very small and particular piece of his material world made me decide to use an adapted Rigginsian approach to explore the Architectural Garden. At this time also, my thesis project was still conceptualized as having "subjects," women who would do their own urban photo-voice, recording their own public space journeys. I was thus using this Architectural Garden exploration as a pilot project, with myself as the subject. What meaning would emerge from examining this physical space as a text, as Riggins had done with his parents' living room? And how would photography be useful? What would it do to/for me as the photographer? I had not yet gone beyond Riggins' limited use of photographs, at this beginning point. I thought of the photographs I planned to take as counterpoint only to the more important written text, to help in documenting and reminding – as an aide-memoire, as they say.

## Approaching the Garden

My first approaches to the Garden were in 2002. Although I have visited and photographed the Garden since then, in 2002 I visited it three times (twice with a camera and once without), in three different months, September, October, November. Over that time, I took about 115 colour photos, both digital and print. When I took these photographs (on two occasions), I was taking them as memory tools, as I mentioned, with no other purpose then in mind.

Riggins' study (1994) was very influential in my entire approach to the Garden. This was for several reasons, not least that he confessed difficulty, ethically, in dealing with the points-of-view of others and his "right" or ability to critique/analyze/comment on them. This issue, as I have pointed out previously, is one with which I grapple. Too, the boring, but rigorous, systematic manner in which he "read" his parents' living room, and the syntax for reading space "textually" which he developed, were both interesting and useful, in and of themselves, and as a jumping off point. He suggested that photographs are extremely useful in assisting in "reading" for fieldwork. Not only do they facilitate the textist's[68] memory in articulating the 'thick' description which solidifies the reading, they also assist in the transparency of the project by creating "visible evidence" for the reader, who may not have the opportunity to directly experience the "text" in question.



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[68] A word I played with for this project, meaning one who 'reads/re(creates)' a "text."

Following on Riggins' inside exploration, I had done a small investigation of an inside space, a lobby in an institutional building. There, I scanned the space photographically, 180 degrees, left to right; I used text to describe all the items in the space in the same way. When I approached the Garden, I similarly attempted to map it photographically. This was more difficult. I know I missed some corners in this first, apparently thorough mapping. Public space, exterior in particular, is very full and active, even in such a designed space as the Garden. I also found myself reacting to it expressively, rather than analytically, framing views rather than solely documenting. But then, that is part of the Architectural Garden's allure and purpose, as I discuss later.

I used the photographs in three ways in this first iteration of the project:

1) As a memory resource for my own thinking and looking, in a Rigginsian sense;

2) As reader response tools. I circulated some photographs to a graduate class in Education, asking the members of the class, in dyads, to spend about ten minutes answering four questions regarding the photo they had been given[69];

3) As sequences in a four-minute "film" (using Imovie@) with a musical soundtrack, titling of sequences, and some minimal titling narrative. This was again for Rigginsian purposes for myself, as well as to see what else might emerge as a result of the manipulation and further thinking that was required to try and construct a whole that would be comprehensible to viewers.

This crystallization was my attempt to grapple with the intricacy of doing "cultural" readings. I can be quite overtaken by photography, as a form. It can seem sufficient in and of itself. The modernist notions of art are rather strongly embedded in me, and I tend to react emotionally and intuitively to the form itself, to reify it, and not question its connotative, cultural meaning. Since I now seemed to be creating forms to reflect on forms, learning how to address both critically was the challenge.

A fourth tool, an interview, also contributed to this project. I interviewed a fellow graduate student, Barbara[70], who had lived near the Garden for a couple of years and had been a regular visitor to it. Her user insights were discerning, and expanded my view of

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[69] I do not use this material in my inquiry.
[70] A pseudonym. Interview: November 19, 2002.

the Garden. I realized that I was writing a biography of the Garden, and yet, I understood, particularly after talking to Barbara, that this Garden had many identities. I decided to separate these into Melvin Charney's Garden, Barbara's Garden, and Susann's Garden, thus pointing to differences in intention, attention, and perception.



## Melvin Charney's Garden

### History

A brief history of the Architectural Garden is in order. Phyllis Lambert, an architect/philanthropist, Montreal citizen, and heritage activist, started the Canadian Centre for Architecture in 1979, but its accommodation was difficult from the start. It had quickly outgrown its various homes. Lambert decided to situate it in Shaughnessy House, a location she had purchased in 1974, after it was designated an historic site in 1973.[71] Even this building needed expansion to contain the present and future holdings of the CCA. The design of the renovations for Shaughnessy House started in 1983[72], with construction beginning in 1985. The idea of a Garden was conceptualized simultaneously. The land on which the Garden is constructed was at that time a "no-man's land" between René-Lévesque Blvd. (formerly Dorchester Blvd.) and the expressway, a left-over space following the destruction of many of the older buildings which had lined René-Lévesque (then Dorchester) Blvd. prior to being demolished for the Ville Marie Expressway. This piece of land belonged to the City of Montreal. After much negotiation (see Boyce (2001) for a detailed history), the CCA leased it from the city on an emphyteutic[73] lease of 75 years. A limited competition was held by the

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[71] These various negotiations helped save Shaughnessy House, a double house with a single front constructed in 1874-75, from destruction during the construction of the Atwater and Guy access ramps for the Ville Marie Expressway (Richards, 1989/1992).
[72] Peter Rose, Architect and Phyllis Lambert, Consulting Architect.
[73] Under these terms, the lease is permitted if there is substantial improvement to the site. The Garden is that "substantial improvement."

Ministère des Affaires culturelles du Québec in 1987 for the design of a work of sculpture for the Garden. Melvin Charney won this competition with his plan for the entire Garden. A Toronto landscape architectural firm, Gerrard & Mackars, participated in the Garden work (Boyce, 2001). The official opening of both the Canadian Centre for Architecture and the Architectural Garden was on May 7, 1989.



Shortly after this opening, Christopher Hume (1990) reviewed the Garden and called it "an oasis of urbanity" (p. 30). Trevor Boddy (1991) said it was interesting and heartening to see a permanent installation by Melvin Charney, the iconclastic creator of the ephemeral 1976 Corridart installation, "Les maisons de la rue Sherbrooke."[74]

The CCA has a large collection of Charney writings and drawings in its archival collection, and has mounted an (inside) exhibition of his work, as well. There are two texts published by the CCA that treat Charney's work in the Garden and his full oeuvre in more depth: *Canadian Centre for Architecture:*
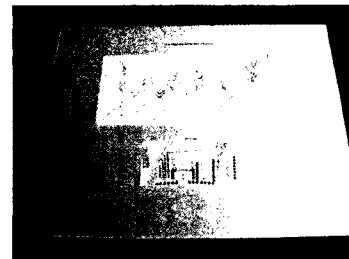


*Building and Gardens* (Richards, 1989/1992) and *Parables and Other Allegories* (Charney, 1991). A less public version is one by Margaret Boyce (2001) who, as part of her thesis work in urban planning, did a case study on the genesis of the Architectural Garden.

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[74] Corridart was an innovative street installation project commissioned by the City of Montreal for the 1976 Olympics, which was destroyed in the night by city workers the week following its construction. It remains, according to Boddy (1991), the most extreme act of censorship of visual arts in Canadian history.

## The Garden

I was unable to find a vantage point that would allow a photograph to encompass the entire Architectural Garden's plan, though I was able to do so for the Jim Everett Memorial Park (see ). I thus photographed the Garden plan on the site marker, and include it here. The marker includes both the whole Garden plan and a plan of the columns.
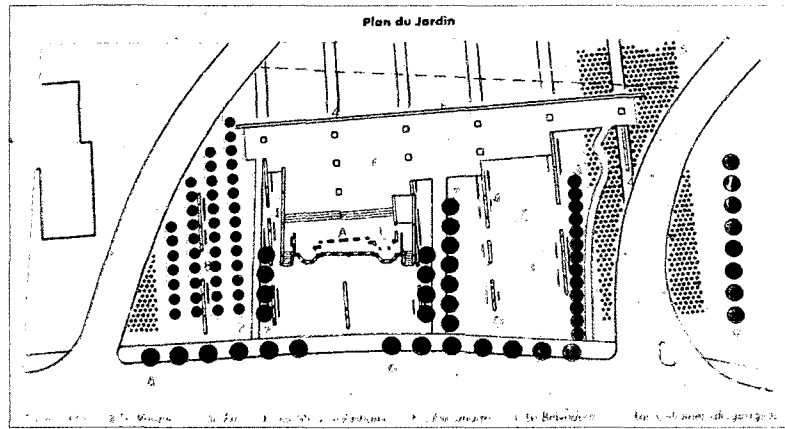
The Architectural Garden is a curved parallelogram, artificially formed by the armature of the autoroute. It sits on an escarpment, bounded on the north side by a Boulevard, on the south by the slope of the escarpment and the Ville Marie autoroute, and on the east and west sides by the on- and off-ramps that lead to and from the autoroute. There is also a small piece of land on the west side of the on-ramp, with a line of trees and grasses, which seems orphaned from the rest of the Garden.

The elements of the Garden are: the Orchard, the Arcades, the Allegorical Columns, the Terrace, the Promenade and the Meadow. Each of these elements presents different vistas, views and sensory experiences. In the Orchard, over 40 apple trees of different types form a grid, like an orchard. One row (of the six such rows in the Garden) of small 'mitoyen' walls provides shaded seating along one path; the paths themselves are carefully mowed between the rows of trees, leaving unmown grasses to surround each tree row for about a metre on each side.

The Arcades center the Garden. They present their concrete face to the street, with two 'mitoyen' walls running down each side; a third wall emerges from the middle of the grassed slope in front, leading down to the sidewalk. On either side of the Arcades are stairs leading up to the Promenade, mirroring the stairs of the Shaughnessy Mansion

across the boulevard, just as the façade of the Arcades mirrors the window placements and structure of the Mansion.  Up in the Arcades, there is a second set of broken wall, an echo of the front walls.  Large glass-covered pot-lights embedded in the ground point up to these walls, for night lighting.  The south-facing sides of these walls are ivy-covered in the growing season, softening the stark grey concrete.  Three long rows of stairs lead one down to the Promenade from the back of the Arcades.
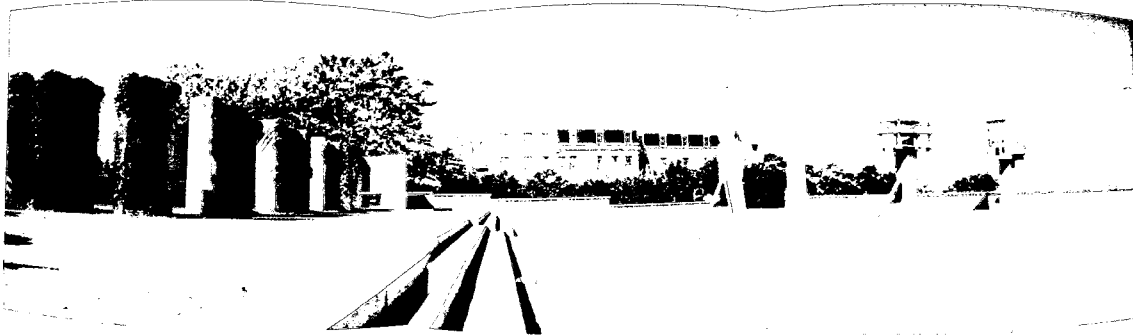


The west side of the Garden contains the Meadow, and alleys of deciduous trees line the broad path which leads up to the Promenade.  Here too 'mitoyen' walls run down the sides of the Meadow, with low rose bush plantings.  To the far west is another path leading up to the final column.  It is lined with pruned vibernum bushes.

The Promenade strikes one as the purpose of this Garden, since all paths lead north-south to it.  There is no east-west access to the Garden, although one can enter the Garden at any point on the street (north) side.  One is thus inevitably drawn up to the Promenade and the view of the city.   On the Promenade sit the Allegorical Columns (east to west, left to right, in the diagram below).
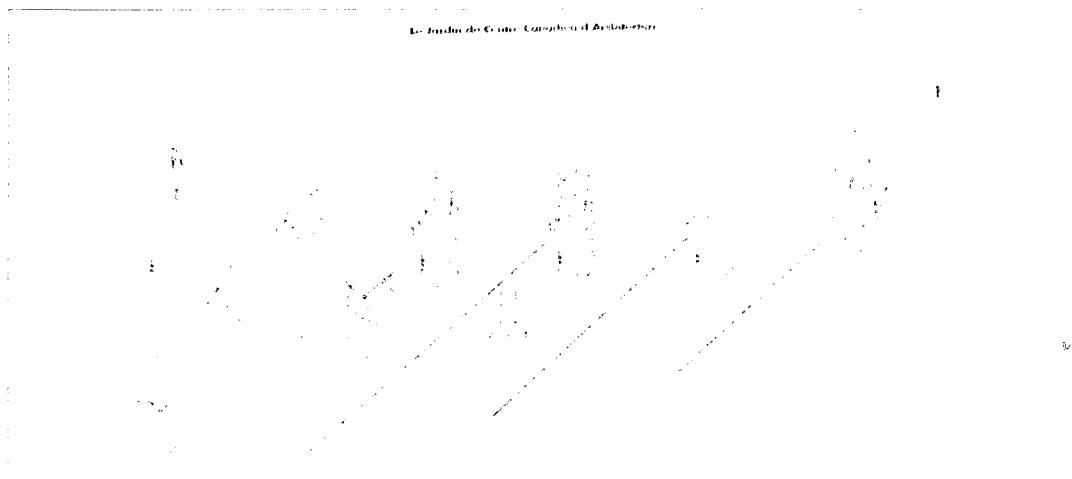
There are ten columns, spread over six rows (see drawing). The chair in the air is Column ten, although Charney's (1989/1992) description of the chair in the air column calls it Column eleven. I address some of the columns in the section below. Boyce (2001) describes how some of the elements Charney had wanted for the Garden did not come to fruition. Indeed, Column seven, an unadorned short cement column, is not named on the site marker. Boyce (2001) also mentions that Charney had wanted two chairs, but only got one, although Column one does have a chair on it now, as does Column ten. (Indeed the drawing on the site marker does not indicate a chair on Column one.) Lighting also appears to have been an issue (Boyce, 2001). The columns are lit by one or two spot lights embedded in the ground, in this case covered with metal grates; the light shines up their length. At night, the Garden is thus very subtly lit; as you pass by, you get a partial glimpse of each column and light glows from inside the Arcades.

Other accessories in the Garden are minimal; again, this seems to have been an issue as the City of Montreal asked for the usual Park accoutrements, such as benches and garbage cans. These do not appear in this Garden; the sole accommodations to visitors are a stylized water fountain placed discreetly on the inside of the east Arcade wall, and a low bicycle rack against the bushes off the west pathway.
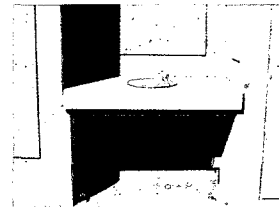


The lower city lies spread out in front of the viewer when they reach the balustrade; the autoroute, one of the reasons for this Garden, is first in view. Looking up one sees far, to the river; looking down, one sees the railroad track. Part of the slope down to the track belongs to the Garden and is planted with grass and rose bushes. The lines of the rose bushes continue the lines of the cadastral walls in the upper Garden.

## Meaning in Charney's Garden

To look at meaning in the Garden means at least partially to address Charney's intention. This Garden had to respond to three "intentions" or, as Charney calls it, "three programmatic categories" (1991, p. 184):

1. A garden that is a public and urban event related to major elements of the city;

2. a garden related to the CCA as a study centre, archive, and museum of architecture;

3. a neighbourhood garden.

## A neighbourhood Garden

The emphyteutic lease means that the City of Montreal still technically owns the Garden, and it falls under municipal park regulations, though the CCA asked for and retains responsibility for the maintenance of it. This perhaps explains its pristine quality. Barbara commented on this in her interview, saying that unlike Jeanne Mance Park, near where she now lives, you never have to check the grass to see if there is a needle or some other similar accoutrement of urban living. That aspect, she suggests, comes from the large expanse of cement and gravel where it is easy to see if anything untoward is lying around, but even the grass looks, and indeed is, very clean and well-shorn.[75]  She adds however that it never struck her as the kind of park where one would go to have a picnic and hang out, though some of her friends have thrown Frisbees there. For her, it was a "good landmark in that area, for a walk, if you were just going for a walk, a place to go to and turn around and go back." Barbara enjoyed "that place apart feeling" and the fact that when you look out,

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[75]  The information panel on the street says "no dogs," but it is the only indication of that rule. When I was there on my first visit, a man and his dog went through, and on my winter visit, there were certainly dog prints in the snow. In subsequent visits, I have seen no dogs.

you can see far. Indeed, this littoral aspect of the park is very striking, and it is not immediately evident unless you enter the Garden and go up to the Esplanade.

From the street, what one sees are trees, paths, and the "Arcades," the mirror image of the CCA Shaughnessy House across the street, positioned on a slope. This rise was created for the Garden, as originally the land was flat. The angle allows a partial view of the Columns behind the Arcades. Evidently it was also created to "hide," at least at first glance, the view of the city which lies below the Garden (Boyce, 2001). The "Arcades" suggest a destroyed fort, staggered walls without a roof, open to the sky. They could also be a sardonic commentary on the manner in which Shaughnessy House has been preserved, or an elegy to the greystone buildings that inhabited this site previously. Trevor Boddy suggests that, indeed, "ses jardins et ses icônes sculpturels sont malicieux[76], mais c'est une malice très canadienne, subtle et peu accentuée" (1991, pp. 32-33). He adds that all Charney's work is "un délicat équilibre entre dialogue, monologue, et auto-parodie, le tout teinté d'un humour pince-sans-rire" (p. 33). It would indeed be surprising if Melvin Charney's work here did not include some ironic statement, given that his installation for Corridart was a mirror image façade of a razed building at the corner of St. Urbain and Sherbrooke. That building had been torn down to make way for a development which was not constructed at the time; indeed, only recently has that corner been built on, decades later. Much of Charney's work over the years has used ar(t)chitecture as social commentary. Boddy suggests that the irony present in the Garden "tempers the surfeit of seriousness emanating" (p. 35) from the CCA.

Nonetheless, Barbara, as a Garden visitor, enjoyed the allegorical columns in and of themselves, and stressed that they contrast with the usual allegories that one encounters in parks:

> Sometimes whether you are actually sitting and focussing on some artwork is not really the point, you know, you are sitting amidst it, you are sitting in a space that is expressive, that is different, that is free, that is not selling something to you, that is not ... just that in itself is relaxing, you don't even have the stressful war monuments, the horse and the gun, that's... is reflective of, that reminds you, of battle, so you can just sit there, it is a very not political space. You know what I mean, those sculptures, even though I don't really sit there and think about them, and ponder like how did they get that chair up there, it is there, and I am like, hey chair.

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[76] Translated as "mischievous" in the shorter English version in this article.

She adds:

> I never thought about the park when I went there; I knew I liked it and that was enough. Sometimes when you go to an exhibit, you know, you put a thinking cap on.. that park, it was just a park... And I love that it doesn't have a man on a horse, with a gun, for a city. When you want to sit on a bench downtown, it is so historical and political, this is not like that at all.

In this Barbara echoes the sentiment of Arlene Raven that "public art isn't a hero on a horse anymore" (1993, cited in Miles, 1997, p. 167). Nonetheless it is this former history of monuments, those "exhausted, inoperative models from the past" (Phillips, 1995, p. 66), which persuades us as casual viewers to think we recognize what is intended by Charney's allegorical columns. We feel we understand their positioning in the Garden because we have experienced monuments in parks. Charney's post-modern purposes, both of ironic commentary and of hommage to classic formal gardens, are not necessarily apparent or obvious to the casual visitor.

This element of "the monument" that Barbara is referring to made me think about how this Garden acts as art, rather than history. This is despite the fact that the whole construction of the Garden is steeped in history; it is in a sense an 'archaeology' of both the rural and urban use of the land on which it sits. But does the Garden carry fully the "appropriated meanings of place" that Malcolm Miles (1997, p. 177) suggests are what public art needs to reveal and exhibit? The art and artfulness of its construction are such that this history sits lightly on those who visit. It is "historical and political," but in that subtle way that Boddy refers to as being Charney's calling card.

W.J.T. Mitchell asks if "violence is central to the concept of the monument, ...many memorials, monuments, triumphal arches, obelisks, columns, and statues refer to a past of conquest" (1992, cited in Miles, 1997, p. 61). In this Garden, there is a story of conquest, but not of the sweeping military kind that gets date-noted in history books. Rather, Charney is charting how the land use in the neighbourhood of the CCA and the Garden has changed over centuries. Of course, this land use is political, just as its current use as a "cultural" space is political. Charney does not go as far back as Indigenous settlement in his archaeology of architecture and land use. Indeed, the Garden is a layered look at the history of European architecture, from classic to modern,

and conquest. Its objects, sculptures and the very form and layout of the Garden itself, with its cadastral edges, reflect the European settlers of this space. It is not only a Garden of remembering, of tribute, but also of forgetting and erasure. Dell Upton (1997) suggests that "by picking apart the seen and unseen..." we can see "how much the scene demands that we not see" (p. 176).

The Indigenous peoples who inhabited Montreal were pushed aside; the high land was taken for seigneuries and the church. Above René-Lévesque Blvd., the land was part of the original Sulpician Domain, which "holds, with the Seminaire de Saint-Sulpice in old Montreal, the oldest built evidence of settlement on the island of Montreal" (Richards, 1989/1992, p.139). The land below the escarpment on which the Garden sits became the "other side of the tracks" when the Canadian Pacific Railway opened in 1889, cutting across the city below the escarpment. Housing was built there for the mill, factory and railway workers, below the tracks, that traditionally classed line.

### A Garden that is a public and urban event:

Melvin Charney tells the stories of this classed housing (among others) in his allegorical columns. He says,

> An allegory is a narrative, a commentary of one text read through another, an extended metaphor. The narrative presented by the columns is intended to capture and objectify an architectural discourse derived from distinctive buildings, as befits a museum of architecture. As elsewhere in the garden, the columns were made to establish self-reflexive dualities. A first line of columns was set up as the direct counterpoint to and reflection of actual parts of the city, while a second line was set up as a counterpoint to and reflecting of the first series of columns, echoing the first as the first echoes the architecture of the city. (1989/1992, p. 95-96)

Charney states that his work "has to do with the narration of narration." He feels that his work "circles about and attempts to close in on the multiple registers that situate the locus of signification of a given place or object" (1996, ¶ 3).



The upstairs/downstairs element is signalled at the base of many of the columns, as I interpret them, with the tenement housing in cement on the north side

and pitched roof housing on the south side. Round
cement columns relate to the factories and containers
seen to the south.
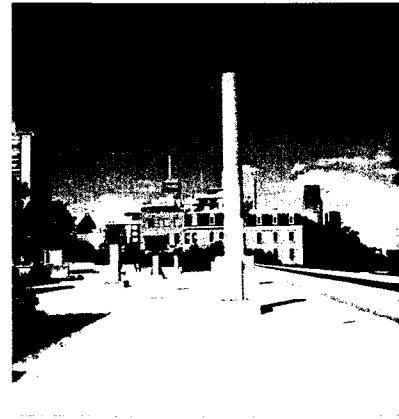


Column two (*De Stijl dansant*) and three (*Domino dansant*) speak to the "legacy of
modernism" (Charney, 1991, p. 186) and are informed by De Stijl.[77] The "maison
québécoise" is interpreted in Column four (*Les Maisons*) and alludes to the interest of Le
Corbusier in such housing (Charney, 1989/1992).
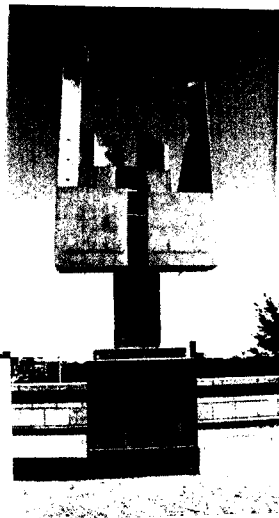
The "*Colonne sacrée*" (Column eight) echoes the twin-
spired churches (like St. Cunégonde) which sit below the
escarpment and are visible as one looks out over the littoral
edge of the balustrade.





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[77] De Stijl (The Style) was an early 20th century Dutch movement that "strove for a universal form that
would correspond to their spiritual vision. Neo-plasticism (meaning "a new plastic art") was the term
adopted by Mondrian to describe the qualities that De Stijl artists endeavored to achieve in their work."
Retrieved August 17, 2008 from www.guggenheimcollection.org/site/movement_works_De_Stijl_0.html

Column five, the Parthenon model, is "'*The Silo-Temple*' of rational architecture." My personal favorite, the west "high chair" (*La Tribune*), unites the expressway and the seminary[78] in Charney's allegorical juxtaposition.



> A tubular steel structure that usually supports the directional signs for the expressway now supports a façade, another "sign," similar to the pediment of the seminary. One façade is posited as the representation of the other, as elsewhere in the garden. (1989/1992, p. 98)
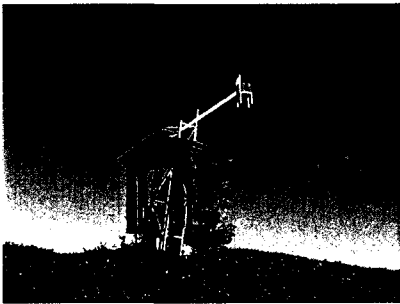


On the chair sits a house, not easily visible. Charney calls this the "final house of the sequence of "dwellings" which began at the base of Column one. This "house" is a sign of the city as a collective abode and of the essential content of a centre for architecture" (1989/1992, p. 98).

**A Garden related to the CCA as a study centre, archive, and museum of architecture**

The "house" brings us to the final programmatic requirement of the Garden – that it be in relationship to the CCA. Charney accomplishes this very formally with the mirror image of the Arcades. Shaughnessy House looks back at itself, with stone windows and stairs leading to the Esplanade, the open air and the expressway, the railway



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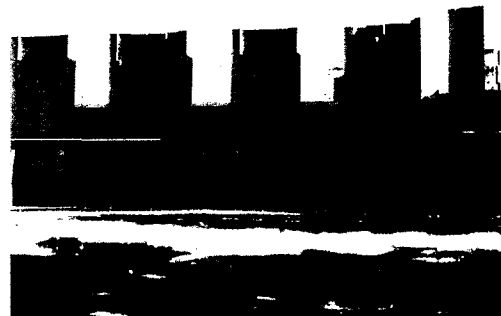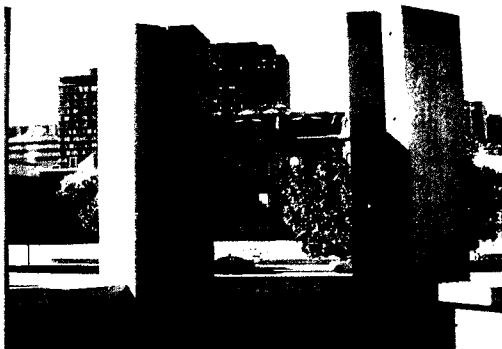
[78] North on Fort, at Sherbrooke St. three blocks away, is the seminary of the Collége de Montréal. Its portico façade faces directly, seemingly even at the same height, the portico on the high chair.

tracks and the working class city below. The mirror image is one that reappears in Charney's work again and again, from his ill-fated "Les maisons de la rue Sherbrooke" for Corridart in 1976 to the Arcades and the high chair portico of 1989. In between and still, he has used or tried to use[79] ar(t)chitecture to call forth memory of what existed before. His work is a sometimes fierce social commentary on urban progress. He doesn't want us to forget. He honours the CCA as an archive through all the built elements in his Garden – both the allegorical columns and the Arcades bend towards the CCA, as well as towards the city.

This element also reminds us that this Garden would not have existed were it not for a wealthy patron. This puts the Garden squarely in a tradition of monumental gardens, created by kings and wealthy landowners, a tradition that is not only Western. Buildings and gardens are linked. One could delve deep into the meaning of nature and culture by examining their relationship, but that is not my intention here, though it is certainly one of the reasons why I chose this space rather than others. Suffice to say that the built environment's relationship with the "natural" past of the land on which it sits speaks intensely of our cultural footprints, and thus becomes a part of dualistic notions of nature/culture. Charney nods to this as well in his Garden, which contains remnants of the orchards which once sat here and produced fruit for colonizing Europeans, layered on top of the forested land it once was, the territory of Indigenous hunters.

### Barbara's Garden: "Hey chair"

Barbara is a Garden user. As such, her viewpoint can speak to the Garden's success at several levels. Visitors who come to the Garden as a result of having visited the CCA will most likely have a perspective different from that of the neighborhood user. They would also tend to be less frequent visitors to the Garden, one could assume, and they would also be more likely to see it as public art than as a park.

Lucy Lippard (1997) suggests that public art should be "place-specific." She gives a definition of such public art as "...an art that reveals new depths of a place to

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[79] His proposed work for Documente 7, "Better if they think they are going to a farm..." which was going to situate a concentration camp entrance in the streets of Kassel, was banned and exists only in blueprints and photomontages (Charney, 1991).

engage the viewer or inhabitant, rather than abstracting that place into generalizations that apply just as well to any other place" (p. 263).

The Architectural Garden in many ways combines the local and the global in a unique way. By making reference to classical forms, it speaks to the history of Western architecture, while simultaneously using new materials and sculptural forms to point both to the history of the site itself, and to modern architecture. This combination of local and global (Western) creates a conversation in the Garden, which Barbara did respond to. CCA visitors, on the other hand, might be paying more attention to that aspect than Barbara wanted to.

Barbara does perceive the Garden as a park in the neighbourhood, not merely as a public art space. My appreciation of the Garden as a neighbourhood park is limited, since I have not visited or observed it sufficiently to make comment on its neighbourhood function. That was not my intention. Compared to Barbara, I am a tourist in the Garden, and that *was* my intention, to investigate how a visitor/viewer, not a tenant, gains topographical intimacy. However, Barbara does suggest that it is not a real "hangout" park. It doesn't have comfortable seating, though there are places to sit. The stairs leading to the Arcades are one such seating, as well as some of the bases of the columns, and the cadastral stone walls. This is cement seating with no back, and doesn't suggest that a long-term visit is invited. In passing, I most frequently see people sitting on the grass.

Barbara considers the Garden a "pit stop, a transition park, you just kind of go there and relax for a few minutes and keep going." She suggests that part of the reason for that feeling is that it really isn't on the way to anywhere or from anywhere if you are on foot. It is not near any shops; the bus service is limited. "It is not on a direct route, you don't have people loitering there, it is not near anything, it is not right outside a Metro stop...." Most people will first see it from their cars, and that may be the only way they ever do see it, at 35 km. an hour, going on or off the expressway. The view from the car, in our mobile society, is of course important.

Barbara, however, has spent time there; her being has been in place. She considered the Garden her "local place." Even though she calls it a transition park, she adds that it has qualities she is very fond of. Beyond its cleanliness, she says,

it is so open, it is so varied, no sense of confinement or walls... even the fact that they put the walls the way that they did, they are not boxed in.... you can see out of the city, so you don't see the skyline... Your eye can just go until it can't see any more.

The littorality of the space appeals to her particularly because she grew up on Nun's Island, just south of Montreal, where there was green space and the St. Lawrence River.
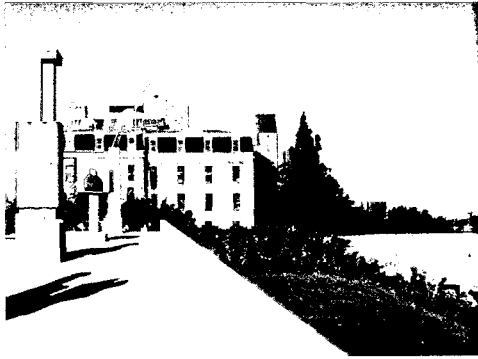


She adds that one of the strong elements of the Garden is sound. "That park, it heightens more senses than you realize." She would lie on the balustrade in the sun, and listen to the sound of the cars on the expressway, creating an impression of the sound of the ocean, of waves. Indeed, that is so. Part of this auditory impression comes from the regularity of cars passing, first one, then another, like waves landing, but there are also structural elements to this. The expressway has columns that temporarily obstruct the sounds of the cars, so sound swishes in and out. Barbara enjoyed how the overriding sound of the swishing cars on the expressway would block out the closer car sounds from René-Lévesque Blvd., heightening that sensation of a place apart.

Barbara affirms her Garden affection by saying that she is not that interested in what Charney might have had in mind. "I don't know if I want to know. I'm sure I am fine with knowing... but I don't know if I care." For her, the experience of the Garden was sufficient. She does say,

> ... if I think about what his intent was, it is along those public art intentions of taking art outside of the museum, bend the four walls and one side, you have it [the CCA] and on the other side, you have it different, more organic, maybe that is what he meant, accessible to any one...

Her attitude is interestingly intertwined with that of Lucy Lippard (1997). Lippard suggests that place-specific art "must take root outside of conventional venues and would not be accessible only to those in the know... it should become at least temporarily part of, or a criticism of, the built and/or daily environment, making places mean more to those who live or spend time there" (p. 263). In this, Charney's Garden by Barbara does not wholly succeed. The Garden's "criticism" is very subtle and multi-layered; its refusal

to fix meaning reflects Charney's post-modern perspective. The Garden suggests unresolved dissonances; does it ask the non-expert visitor too many questions? Trevor Boddy (1991) lauds it as not being "overt and self-conscious" (p. 35); nonetheless, when meaning is not obvious, or rather, available, is art really out of the museum?

Lippard says that while the artist is always conceived of as free, "the challenge of public art lies in dealing with other people's freedom as well" (1997, p. 264). That freedom would presumably not only involve consciousness-raising, but pleasure. She suggests that "public art exists in the hearts, minds, ideologies and educations of its audience, as well as in their physical, sensuous experience" (p. 264). Barbara's rich sensuous experience of the Garden may arise from her rejection of its meaning, or it may be enhanced by her acknowledgement of its "expressive" space. There are multiple meanings here, and as with all art, meaning is in the eyes of the experiencer/viewer, as well as in the eyes of the creator – subject/object/subject, and all the spaces that can exist in-between.

### Susann's Garden

Come late to this
      as with most things
      I attend to the littoral
      of this space.
Seeing far, as in why
      I take the 420 express bus
      because on certain evenings
      the sweep of the horizon
      is achingly large
      and the clouds create the illusion
      of another country.
Seeing far, Charney attended to the city
      being an architect n'all
      it seems logical.
But the littorality (a word?),
      the edginess of it,
      suggesting water,
      suggesting waves,
      going in, coming out,
      the tide of the city.
He tries to anchor it but it escapes,
            over the edge.
              Susann, October 2002[80]

### The first visit. September 24, 2002

Carrying my film camera that still has a few shots left, I make my first foray to the Garden – it is a weekday morning, and it's mesmerizingly hot. When I arrive, I think, I am finally here. I walk along the front sidewalk on the south side of René-Lévesque to look it over. I read the only information piece –



a 24 X 36 inch drawing of the garden, which names and lists its "parts" in French – the orchard, the meadow, the esplanade, the allegorical columns, the cadastral rows. The sign sits on a pedestal, very unassumingly; it is in a funny bluish white material, which I suddenly realize is meant to mimic blueprint (a now obsolete form of reproduction). This format has since been changed.

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[80] There are two of my 'poems' in the thesis (the second starts Chapter 6). I am sometimes inspired to write a 'poem'; like collage, or third person writing, an insight arises in the writing that would not have been necessarily accessible even through expressive writing. I make no claim that this is Poetry.

In the heat, the east Orchard looks particularly inviting, the shade of the apple trees enticing me up these very neat paths. The grass is cut so that there is a square of long grass under each tree that meets the next, so that there is a border of about two feet all along the row. Thus, the cut grass in between the rows of trees creates an invitation. I walk along the sidewalk, photographing the orchard, trying to line up the bottom of each shot with the cement border, trying to photograph the space in a methodical way. I find that I can't quite; there is something about the space, about the bigness of all this open space that makes it hard to be so precise.
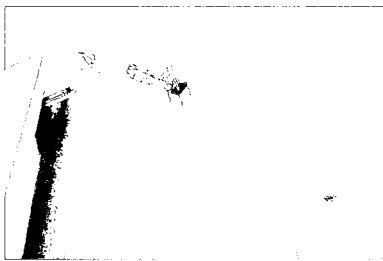


I walk up through the cut grass to the top (south) of the east Orchard and look along the Esplanade. Finally, I am close to these amazing sculptures that I have only viewed from the 420 bus all these years. They seem overwhelming – so big and towering, almost mythical – how many are there? I can't quite take it in. I make a panorama from where I am standing, trying to cover at least 180 degrees, to capture the sense of it.

These Arcades are interesting; I sit on the edge of one of the sculptures in the shade, because the sun is blazing hot. Right in front of me is a flat cement wall, at the top of the stairs that run the whole length of the arcade. Most fascinating, in the midst of all this cement, are vines, which are growing out of the corners of some of the walls, running up the side. How I love that; I have always enjoyed the vines that cover buildings, the weeds that appear in the middle of a seemingly cemented sidewalk, that tree that grew around the iron fence up at the reservoir. So tough, so one-pointed, nature's imperative: grow! Time to go. Film's finished.

### Aporia[81] in the Architectural Garden, Thanksgiving 2002, October 6

A sunny day but cool. It is mid-afternoon. The light is beautiful. Already there are shadows on the grass. Carrying a borrowed digital camera, I walk along in front of Shaughnessy Mansion on the north side of René-Lévesque Boulevard, taking photos of the Garden from across the street. Having learned from the sign in front of the garden that the west side of the autoroute entrance is also part of the Garden, I go to take pictures there, both from the other side of the street, and from inside the Garden. As I walk down one of the grass paths, a dog barks at me. So I take a picture of it. There is a house there, separated from the Garden by a wire fence.

Having read that the façade of the Arcades echoes the Shaughnessy Mansion across the street, I realize that it is not only the stone windows that mimic the other side, the stair entrances do so also. On the Mansion side, the stairs lead to huge doors. In the Garden, the stairs go up into space and wide open air. I walk up the stairs, that seeming to be what I am invited to do by the space. Then I walk among the Arcades, taking some photos, noticing again that it is a perfect hide-and-seek space – or perhaps an insecure space. I also notice again how the vines growing between the cracks at the bottom of some of the stone walls and small and large vines are creeping up here and there, some higher, some lower. (By now, I know that these are purposeful plantings of the site.)

A man, age 30 or so, sits on one of the columns reading, with a plastic lunch bag beside him. As I watch, he stops reading, takes out a cigarette and gazes at the city vista which lies beyond the stone railing, a visual and real border which serves as a sort of enclosure. Another man, older, in a white windbreaker, is walking along the enclosure, glancing at me, as I take all these photos. Later I realize that on the other side of the stone wall is more of the Garden, grassed and planted, where he also walked. I continue taking photos of the sculptures, the paths, the meadow, until the batteries start to go on the digital camera. As I walk back across the Promenade, and into the east Orchard, I see another man who I realize is a security guard doing a very quick tour of the space. As he leaves, life

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[81] Doubt, especially deriving from incompatible views on the same subject; A figure in which the speaker professes to be at a loss what course to pursue, where to begin to end, what to say, etc.; An insoluble contradiction or paradox in a text's meanings. 1. of places, *difficulty of passing.* Or, as I consider it, "the space between here and there."

comes over the stone wall in the form of five 12-year-old boys. They must have come up from the "other side of the tracks." (I photograph the tracks.) They are sounding off caps. I think, shall I go back and take a picture of them, or shall I take another picture of the Orchard. I decide on the Orchard. I do, very consciously, however, make my last photo one of the cars coming in on the expressway exit-ramp, noticing my hesitation and reluctance at taking this strongly "urban" photo.

Walking down along the sidewalk, heading west again, I see a (seemingly) homeless man wheeling his overburdened grocery cart up the path through the bushes on the west side. I curse the fact that I have run out of (digital) memory, and pinch myself to remember to write this. By the time I reach the path up into the bushes, he has disappeared.
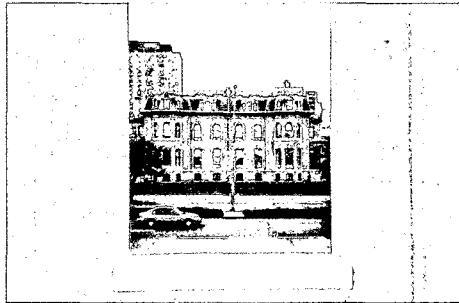


I enter the CCA – free, because there are no current exhibitions. I go into the Shaughnessy Mansion part of the Museum, and gaze across the street at the Garden. The windows are very clean. Finally, I leave, and push my way through the smooth modern doors, into the sunshine and the golden light in the trees, I think – ah, aporia on Thanksgiving.

**Winter visit December 1, 2002**

I had meant to go back sooner. I thought of taking photos of the trees with their leaves changed, or even blown off, in mid November. I again borrowed the digital camera, but in the end the weather was really awful, and I didn't go. Today, cold and crisp and almost blue seems like a good day to go. But I am purposefully going without a camera.

I had thought during the first two visits that going into a space to take photos of it, when you don't know it, is quite different from going to a space you enjoy and then deciding to take pictures of it. I found that I wasn't quite sure I had seen the Garden, that I had actually been there. The first time, perhaps yes. The second time, no. I was more "in" the Garden when I made the IMovie and spent all those hours looking at the photos as I manipulated and sequenced them.

I felt a great affection for the Garden then, more so than when I had actually been in it, intensely indexing it through photographs.

The Garden looks smaller in the snow, without the greenery. The bushes on the west side are still there, with their berries on, and make some mass, but the trees are bare. The apple orchard is surrounded by a large snow fence about six feet high, more elegant that the orange netted ones one sees, but netted nonetheless. Wooden poles have been driven into the earth at intervals to support a framework of dark green netting. I don't think apple trees would do well in this windy and exposed place if they weren't protected. Still it's kind of shocking to see it blocked off like that. (I wonder what this looked like in the ice storm; there must be a photo somewhere. Barbara said she and some friends had come to the Garden at that time and described it as quite surreal.)

I walk up the path on the east side of the Arcades to the Esplanade. The path is cleared only by wind and footprints – all men's boots I assume, in large sizes, with a couple of dog prints. The expressway seems really close; the curves of the on and off ramps are more visible, looking cleaner and more designed than when they are half hidden by foliage. More urban too.

I go around to the south side of Column 1. When I read the description of it in the CCA book, describing an obelisk I hadn't seen or photographed, I thought where is this obelisk? But a couple of weeks ago, sailing by below on the 420 bus on the expressway, I looked up and saw that the obelisk, in white cement, is hidden inside the column, and one can only see it from the south.

I take out my notebook and lay it on the balustrade to write; it is very cold and blowing hard. My hands get cold quickly. There is a man in the Arcades, leaning against the most easterly wall, smoking, out of the wind. While I am spending my cold half hour in the Garden, two other men walk up the east path, walk briefly along the Esplanade, look out over the city, and walk back down to the street on the west path.

The space seems more literal, less littoral, without the softening of greenery. I see how the chimney stack sculpture mimics clearly the chimney stack to the south. The view to the south is clear; you can see Mont Bruno. I admire again the round cupolas of the St. Cunégonde[82] church, and walk along

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[82] Saint Cunégonde: Germanic imperatrice (v. 978 - abbey of Kaufungen, Hesse, 1033 or 1040). Spouse of Henri II the Saint, canonized in 1200. (home.earthlink.net/~ritter/firesign/lesicon/C.html)

the Esplanade, stopping to make notes from time to time, my cheeks getting colder and colder. The grey bark of the trees that run down the path beside the Meadow echoes the grey of Shaughnessy Mansion behind them. They blend in more, and look less important. Winter in the woods I always find charming, because then you can see the lay of the land more, you can get right in there visually, the undergrowth hidden. But here... does one want to see? The urbanity of this place becomes more apparent.

I notice this time that the carved housing in the base of some of the columns has square and rectangular shapes (windows) on the north side of the column, and pointed shapes (on the top) on the south side of the column. I decide this must be because if you were looking south, you would be looking at working class housing, and if you were looking north, you would be looking at middle or upper class housing. I think, how clever.

Also this time I discover that on the balustrade, there are some unobtrusive indentations in the cement, slightly narrower on the inside, widening slightly as they reach the edge, appearing to be pointers to structures to the south that are evoked in the sculptures. However, there are no signs to indicate that.[83] It is only because I know that this particular sculpture mirrors the chimney stack, and that one is informed by St. Cunégonde, that I even know that these runnels are not some accident of the construction workers. There are about 6 that I notice; there might be more further east, but I don't walk back to look. It's too cold.

I also remark for the first time that there are stairs on either side of the Garden, going down beside the expressway ramps, down to the tracks presumably because I can't see their ends; nor can I really see their beginnings. I don't know how one gets to them. That is an exploration which will have to wait for spring.[84] (All this noticing – do I see better without the camera?)

I walk to the far west side, to the "high chair." I look up Fort Street, and make a quick frozen drawing of the classical portico that the portico on the "high

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[83] How fascinating and disappointing to discover that originally there were brass arrows with text inserted in the indentations, common at tourist sites. Interesting too to conjecture as to how they disappeared. Did some boys from the other side of the tracks pry them up and cart them off, souvenirs of their foray into "upstairs"?

[84] Again my view from the 420 bus informs me. These stairs go down to an entrance into the underneath of the ramps, presumably for workers. They are not access from "downstairs" to "upstairs."

chair" mimics, up there on the Seminaire. It is now more visible with the leaves gone. I think, is this too precious? Or is he telling us that whether we know it or not, all that surrounds us influences us? Our mental environment. I walk down the winding path through the bushes, and think – but this, he thought of this too. They go together.
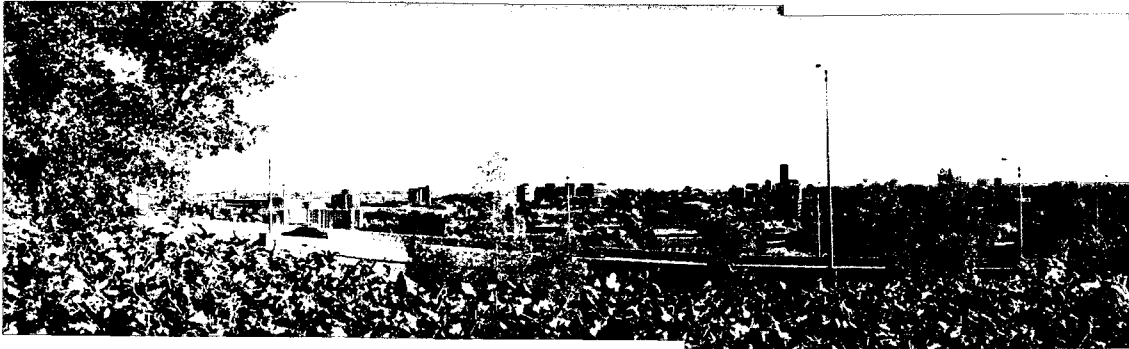


Our Gardens, Melvin Charney's, Barbara's and mine, have taught me yet again how close examination of almost anything leads to learning, if not insight. Just as my earlier study of a familiar inside space (the lobby of an institutional building) made the familiar unfamiliar, this study of an unfamiliar space has brought both familiarity and distance. Abstracting the concrete has been difficult, however, as I alluded earlier. My privileging of form can sometimes elide meaning.

The "narration on narration" aspect of Charney's Garden made it difficult for me to approach it as a knower. Charney had already created a totally real and totally allegorical space; he had already over-commented on his comments, and besides, I could walk among them. He says that his intention is "to affront narration directly by acting it out, by telling all..." (1996, ¶ 3). But while Boddy (1991) calls the allegorical columns "didactic" (p. 34), I didn't find them so.[85] I found meaning difficult to ascertain.

This study, however, accomplished several things. It highlighted the challenges of critiquing public space from a "user" perspective. It informed me about the limitations and the value of photographing place. It brought home to me all the more how the spaces we live, work, walk, drive in, are not made by us. Their effect on us is normalized to the

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[85] Boddy might be using Didactic in the sense of one approach to landscape architecture as Marc Treib (2002) outlines it. "A design didactically conceived, like the photo caption, is both informative – possibly normative – and certainly directive. The "factual" base is intended to validate the designer's work" (p. 95).

extent that it requires microscopic, considered and long examination to start to extract the text that is embedded there.

Ann Whiston Spirn (2002) suggests that we are "co-authors" in the making of and experiencing of all landscapes. She says, "all living things share the same space, all make landscape, and all landscapes, wild or domestic, have co-authors, all are phenomena of nature and culture" (p. 127). This complex idea seems to ask us to be responsible not only for the creation of space, but also for the way we occupy and view all spaces. If we see ourselves as co-authors, then we are never outside the picture, never outside the place. In Melvin Charney's authoring of the Architectural Garden, in Barbara's response to the Garden, in my photographing the Garden, I see our co-authorship. I insist on our co-authorship. But it is not necessarily spontaneously or intuitively knowable. Excavation is necessary, indeed urgent.

There is very little public Western space that is not dominated by notions of consumption. These economic landscapes are "understood" – their use, purposes and impact on our identities extensively examined. If we choose to consider these examinations, we can elide some of the effects. But other spaces like this Garden are taken-for-granted, and often assumed to be a good thing, green space/art space/public space. But Patricia Phillips asks, "Where does the audience for public art come from if public life is so dangerously depleted?" (1995, p. 65). Lucy Lippard (1997) too is concerned about what public can mean – the public domain, a space/place that is accessible to people. But then malls appear open and accessible, though highly regulated (Manzo, 2005). The Architectural Garden is not overtly about consumption. Nothing is being advertised here. Nothing can be bought here.[86] Is it public, however, because people can go into it? What if they can't or don't understand its intended meaning? What is there is no engagement for the public in the space? Is it still public? These questions are implicated in discussions about art, the meaning of art, high art, museum culture, public space, and public art. (I discuss this further at the end of this chapter.)

Patricia Phillips contests the idea that art is public because of its location and says public is an "animate" idea:

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[86] One could argue that Western culture is being sold here, even though Charney's intention may have been to critique it.

> One basic assumption that has underwritten many of the contemporary
> manifestations of public art is the notion that this art derives its 'publicness' from
> where it is located... The idea of the public is a difficult, mutable, and perhaps
> atrophied one, but the fact remains that the public dimension is a psychological ...
> construct. (Phillips, 1988, cited in Miles, 1997, p. 99)

The Architectural Garden is a very complex space – demanding of its "public" while simultaneously able to pleasure, as Barbara's testimony shows. Yet those demands make it in many ways an elitist space. Her pleasure may also come from its status; it does not contain many "stigma objects" (Riggins, 1994, p. 112) beyond fallen leaves, or occasional briefly unscooped dog excrement. In addition, could we look at the Garden as "de-activated," in the following sense: "elements of contesting pasts are de-activated in a continuous, seamless space, offering only a passive reception ... because it cannot admit change" (Miles, 1997, p. 76). The Garden's pristine quality, hard-edged sculptural forms mounted on cement, concrete walls lined up, its trimmed bushes, and manicured lawns, make it a "continuous seamless space." This is not a park that conveys the notion of "active" though its constant change with the seasons is related to its rather contained "nature" element. It is a harder, more obvious space, as I mentioned earlier, in the wintertime; denuded of leaves and foliage, and the concomitant softening of its edges, it is more stark and unwelcoming. Its feeling changes form, and yet the forms are unchanged.

Signs can be stripped of meaning by their context. While Charney intended commentary on the suffering, rational city, he has perhaps created not what he intended, but rather the reverse. He says,

> I share the fear of someone in analysis of not having the right words to express his or her fears. All too often one has to displace the very idea of the visible to situate oneself in the spate of images that is drowning us nowadays. We find ourselves immersed in a bath of images that are at once limpid and meaningful, yet opaque and empty. The images are both there and not there, substantial and insubstantial. These images seem to impinge on our comprehension while canceling each other out: the "self" seems to be suspended in a self-created void.... (1996, ¶ 2)

The minimalism that is expressed in the Garden works both for and against its experience – the subtlety of its expression of images that are "both there and not there" could be part of what makes it a "transition" park. One doesn't want to stay. Despite the littorality, despite the view, there is something here that spits you out. Perhaps it is the lack of messiness, the lack of a lived feeling that discourages lingering; it echoes the coldness, yet charm, of its mirror, the CCA. Peter Jacobs describes the Garden as a "dispassionate place" (1990, p. 32).

When I was photographing it, I started to realize that the Garden was created for views. Of course, landscape architecture in urban gardens is always engaged in that positioning, framing the long and short view. In larger spaces, that could be less evident; in smaller spaces, more evident. But usually, that formulation (manipulation) is more hidden. Was it because I was photographing, rather than just strolling, or looking? I felt bound to take certain photographs, frame certain elements; I felt that I was being directed to consume this space in certain ways, not commercially, but culturally and visually. This direction began to feel very intellectual, less corporeal. Charney does say, "the Garden was conceived to be a place to look at, as well as a place to look out from" (1989/1992, p. 91). But I wondered: where am I? I started to feel angry with the Garden. My co-authorship was being contained.

Charney's intention was to counterpose the Garden to the expressway. The expressway runs "indifferently" through the city; in his view, the Garden is "intertwined with the city, the mountain, and the river, north and south" (1989/1992, p. 99). He also felt that the natural part of the Garden, with its seasonal and yearly changes[87], made of the site a "temporal medium," an active place, a place "not to celebrate the past, but to expose the place in the present, as a singular fragment of the city" (p. 99). He speaks of despair and hope as sitting in the Garden.

> A garden by its very nature tends to evoke old, stereotypical images of a lost Arcadia. This garden is situated on an expressway that is no more than a place of lost urbanity, a lost city. And if Paradise is a garden at one end of time and city at the other, somewhere outside the world, as the underpinnings of tradition would have it, then either all is lost or we are now outside history in a world in which new relationships can be forged only out of an amalgam of elusive metaphors, be they a garden or a city. (1989/1992, p. 99)

This rather forlorn testament perhaps underlies the coldness that can emanate from the Garden. Nonetheless, my photographic foraging, my research into what lies beneath the presented surface of the Garden, has embedded it firmly in my city topography, where previously it sat on the edge. It is thus now a part of me, and the dissonance it expresses partially echoes my own. As I imagined, that fascinating relationship between environment and self has been expanded through this experience. The creating of the Garden's biographies through photographic engagement has implanted it in my environmental autobiography.

Charney says of the creation of the Garden that "there is an obvious narrative component in my work... It has to do with the narration of narration. That is to say, with the externalization of the rhetorical component of any willed gesture in art" (1996, ¶ 3). I had to ask myself, are my photos yet another inevitable narration?

**Outcomes I**

There were both immediate and long-term outcomes of this project. In the immediate, I learned the difference between approaching a space "innocently" or with intention, approaching it with a camera in hand or without a camera, and also the

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[87] These yearly changes are made evident by the contrast between early photos of the Garden and its current more fully-grown state.

difference between reading and writing about a space, and actually living and viewing that space – having that embodied experience. I entered into a dialogue with the Garden. There is a qualitative difference between passing through and staying to photograph with the intention of "owning," or to use Spirn's (2002) phrase, "co-authoring." The artificiality of the endeavour is part of its power. The intention brings attention.

The mystery of the Garden that I sought to pierce is opened yet enhanced. I continue to reflect on the reasons for that. Why does knowing more expand the desire to know more? I do know is that my attachment to this space is now profound. When I pass it, and look at the various sculptures, the plantings in their seasonal foliages, its littoral view, I feel deeply content. I am continuing that dialogue that I started with this space. I have made a small corner of this huge city mine. Artificially, I have created that palimpsest, that layering of experience of place: topographical intimacy. This forced, intensive examination of place accelerated that intimacy.

I do acknowledge that I chose a safe place to examine. By this I do not mean secure, because in lots of ways, this space is not secure. What I mean is the enclosed intentionality of this "willed gesture" (as Charney calls it) with its own narrative, made it easier to examine, gave it parameters and boundaries already, like a mall, or an inside museum exhibit. Its intentionality seems to create not only physical boundaries, but also behavioural ones. Its position outside does make it less predictable than an inside space, but it is interesting to consider how much. Predictability is not usually the case in public spaces.

The staking out and marking of territory that I initiated with my auto-photographic passage through this Garden is a form of "tagging," of marking landscape; that tagging says both "I am here" and "I was here." As girls and women, we have not historically been the makers of our public environments. This has deeply influenced our relationship with public space, beyond issues of safety. How can we more fully inhabit that space, beyond the consumptive act (Green, 1996; Reeves, 1996, Weisman, 1992)?
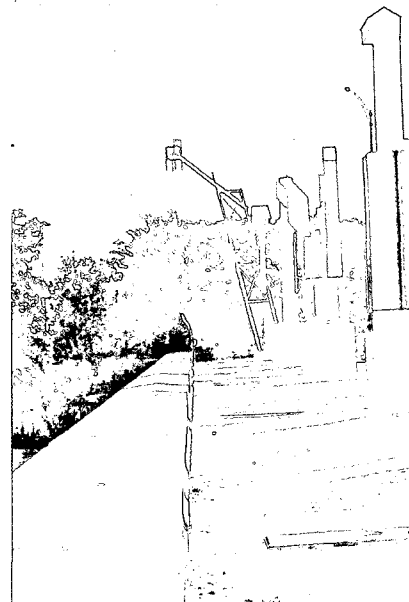
Tuan's suggestion, that when we live someplace for a long time our "image may lack sharpness" (1977, p. 18), means that effort is required to see and thus inhabit our daily environments more fully. This experience of photographing the Garden led me to believe that developing topographical intimacy with public space through photographic enquiry was perhaps a means to both see and assert identity in place/space.

If this is true, then is the specificity of the space itself important? In working with the photographs of the Garden, I came to feel that perhaps it was not. I had moved from Riggins' use of photographs as aide-memoire to an exploration of the use of images as thick description, in and of themselves. I was creating a place photo-album that my text and/or captions might enrich, but unlike a family photo album, could stand on its own for a viewer. Simultaneously, working with the images this way was having the same familiarizing effect that the making of a family photo album evokes in its creator. It became a multi-layered corporeal experience for me; even now it evokes being-in-place when viewed.

**Approaching the second space: Jim Everett Memorial Park**

If my contention was correct – that topographical intimacy can be artificially created and does not have to evolve over time – I considered that any other space would suffice for a second photographic mapping. I chose a second space – this time an apparently more traditional (or modernist) one – the Jim Everett Memorial Park in Vancouver.

The suggestion by a member of my thesis committee that I look to a space created by a woman brought me to the Canadian Centre for Architecture to look at an exhibit of photographs, drawings and models of and about the work of renowned Canadian landscape architect, Cornelia Oberlander (*Ecological Landscapes,* May 11 – July 30, 2006). She has made a donation to the CCA of models, drawings, and correspondence regarding her work. The photograph portion of the exhibit was by Etta Gerdes, showing some of Oberlander's best known, mainly public, projects. (This has also been published as *Picturing Landscape Architecture* (Manus & Rochon, 2006).) Fascinating to me were the drawings, and one model in particular, of the Jim Everett Memorial Park (hereafter JEM Park) in Vancouver. A short video was playing; it showed Oberlander

discussing with the curators of the exhibit her concept of a park where children would not have structures created for them, but where there would be unstructured space, and freedom to enjoy what Jones (2000) calls the "small-scale, fine-grained" relationship that children have with the environment. In the video, Oberlander tells the story of seeing two small children playing with twigs and rocks in the JEM Park and of her pleasure in hearing one say to the other, after being called to lunch by her mother, "don't you move my sticks and stones!"

Cornelia Oberlander has been exploring play spaces for children since her work at Expo 67 in Montreal, where she created the Canadian Pavilion's "Children's Creative Centre Play Area." She understands children's need to manipulate their environment and not have things like play equipment handed to them. She says, "The essential ingredients for playgrounds are space and a good variety of items that can be manipulated in an infinite number of ways so as to elicit new responses from the child as he [sic] plays" (Oberlander, 1972/1974, p. 2). The question that brought me to this exhibit had been: "wouldn't it be interesting to compare a space designed by a woman with a space designed by a man?" There was something about this brief virtual glimpse of the JEM Park that attracted me as a space in which I might address this question. In addition, it was the only public space designed by Oberlander, easily accessible to me, that was not attached to a building. Too, I posited a possible relationship between the Park and my exploration of childhood landscapes.

My approach to this Park differed substantially from my approach to the Architectural Garden. That project started with the photographic mapping; learning more about the Garden through text research, and revisiting it, came afterwards. Learning about what I was seeing followed upon seeing and photographing it. The JEM Park project was not so organic. It started in theory, or rather in the background research in the CCA archives. As users of public spaces, we are not usually privy to the planning and thinking that goes into those spaces. Even the choice of the JEM Park as a site to document photographically was a theoretical – a research – choice. How could I know whether this site would hold meaning for me? And yet, as I mentioned, I felt that the Architectural Garden, as a space to be photographically mapped, was interchangeable – that the process and products of that photographic exploration could be done

meaningfully with any site. So the possible artificiality of the choice of the JEM Park perhaps didn't matter. (Research choices can indeed be "artificial.") Its association with Vancouver did matter to me, as that city has a particular hold on my geographical imagination. Continuing along the path of theoretical exploration, I visited the CCA Archives to review the site plans and design development drawings, correspondence files, and the photos of the original Park and the construction renovation. Thus, I knew a lot about the Park before I ever saw it. Yet, I would posit that I knew very little, until I visited it. I made two visits in December 2006; on the first visit, I was alone, and on the second, I was accompanied for part of the time by Elizabeth Whitelaw, an associate of Cornelia Oberlander.

The knowledge that I would not be visiting it again any time soon after these two visits also structured my relationship, both in-place and photographically, with this space. My photography of the Park, substantially constrained by weather, does not satisfy me in the same way as does my photography of the Architectural Garden. As well, my considered choice and prior exploration of the Park's elements meant that I approached it systematically, rather than expressively. (As I mentioned earlier, however, public exterior space is difficult to map systematically.) There was a strong internal editor operating in terms of photographing the Park based on the elements I had isolated in my archival research at the CCA. Too, it would seem to be a less expressive space inherently, since its programmatic element appears uni-dimensional – a community park – as compared with the Architectural Garden's diverse purposes. But interestingly, as the viewer/reader will hopefully see, it generated a more emotional response. Still now, I miss it, and summon it to my mind's eye regularly. I look forward to the next time I visit it (and photograph it).

### The history of the Park

The Jim Everett Memorial Park in its current incarnation was rededicated on July 16, 2002. The person to whom it is dedicated, James Everett, died at the age of 34 in 1985. The park was originally dedicated to him in 1986, and a memorial stone put
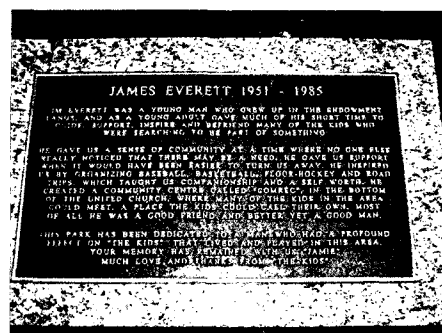
in place (the current plaque was added later). Jim Everett was instrumental in starting a community recreation program in this University Endowment Lands' (UEL)[88] Acadia Park neighbourhood. The existing park, a flat grass area of about 7000 sq. metres, was a focal point for the program's activities. "The program was operated out of the United Church (now University Chapel) on University Blvd. and later moved to the old RCMP building across from the Park on Allison Road" (CCA Archives, 75-032-19T).

The renovation to the Park came about because a Vancouver municipal by-law requires all developers to give a financial portion for green space in conjunction with development. The building of a low-rise mixed use (residential/commercial) building at the west end of the Park on Allison Road thus contributed to the renovation of the green space in front of it. The University Endowment Lands (UEL), an entity which manages the neighbourhoods of the UEL, called for tenders and Cornelia Oberlander, who is a UEL resident who lives not far from the Park, won the bid. The proposal states the purpose: "to develop a neighbourhood park serving the needs of the community for passive and active enjoyment with special attention given to the requirements of the annual 'Happening in the Park' event" (CCA Archives, 75-032-27T). The development of the Park has taken place within a comprehensive "concept plan" for Block 97, called "the Village," a mixed residential/commercial area of the Endowment Lands (CCA Archives, 75-032-27T. Comprehensive District (CD-1), UEL Block 97 "The Village" Concept & Design Guidelines, 10 November 1997).

Community consultation took place. An Open House was held to invite feedback on possible designs. A questionnaire was distributed, asking what residents envisaged for the Park. The involvement of both the Acadia Park Tenant Association and of the UEL was instrumental. Elizabeth Whitelaw says it was a small committee, and thus was manageable to work with. Citizen participation included three people from apartments, two tenants, the Everett Recreation Program coordinator, Jim Everett's brother Bill, and a single parent.

The public questionnaire asked the following:

1.  What activities do you envision for the Park?

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[88] The vast University Endowment Lands of Vancouver have a long and complicated history. The University of British Columbia, the Pacific Spirit Regional Park, and residential areas (University Hill) are located there. See http://www.qp.gov.bc.ca/statreg/stat/U/96469_01.htm

2. What use would you make of the Park personally?
3. What amenities should be available in the Park?
4. What age groups will use the Park primarily?
5. Briefly state your personal or family aspirations for the Park.

(CCA Archives, 75-032-26T)

Another questionnaire asked about desired vegetation and environmental responsibility.

The responses to this questionnaire show the dilemmas involved in community consultation; they include requests for swings, a skateboard park, a basketball court, a volleyball court, a model boat pond, a jungle gym, and ice skating, along with first aid, refreshments, washrooms, and "a little fence." What emerged from meetings was also the desire for low maintenance plantings and "no games of frat football" (CCA Archives, 75-032-20T), as university students had sometimes taken over the Park for (drunken) play. The area is home to families and permanent residents, as well as students, and there are the occasional 'town/gown' conflicts. Cornelia Oberlander made reference to this at the rededication ceremony by saying, "the park you see today forms a bond between 'town and gown' for all ages and in all seasons" (CCA Archives, 75-032-26T).

The Park in its beginning drawings looked like a keyhole, with a circle (for the
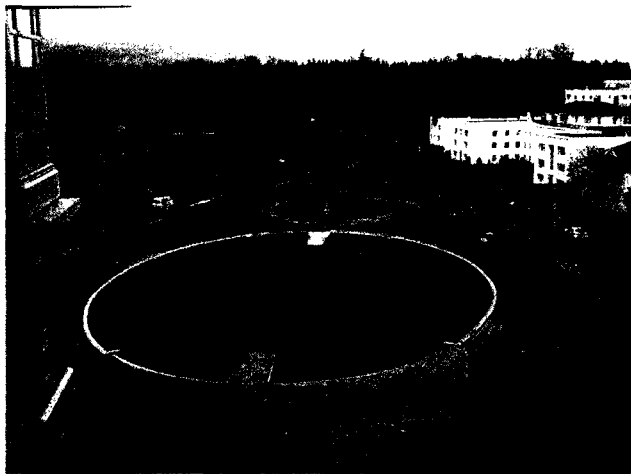


key) in the middle of the triangular space. That one circle evolved into three "circles" (one more oval, and much larger, than the other two) that exist now. "Dirt play" was the original idea for the center circle, which then evolved to become the Mound and the wetlands, the two smaller circles. Throughout, environmental sustainability was factored in. At the rededication of the Park, Oberlander described the design principles:

> Above all, it addresses the principles of sustainable design and construction as an integral part of the design solution. These principles will include:
> a) conserving water,
> b) conserving energy,
> c) developing a healthy eco-system in the park,
> d) using materials efficiently:

i) on-site water retention,
ii) organic fertilizer, no pesticides,
iii) re-cycled pavers allowing water to percolate into groundwater.
(CCA Archives, 75-032-26T)

The Park is planted with sheep fescue, a slow-growing grass, which only needs to be mowed once a year in September, allowing flowers to be planted on the Berm among the grass and the birch trees – crocuses, narcissi, and native Indian hyacinth. The Berm itself is constructed of excavated material from the digging out of the Oval. The Plaza "is paved with re-cycled concrete brick laid on sand to allow water to percolate." The plantings along the path near the Mound are filled with flowering plants – coneflower, black-eyed Susan, salvia, and sweet woodruff – that will, over time, attract butterflies. In addition, this Park has only an overflow connection to the sewer system. The wetlands "act as a retention area"; this is an important environmental design feature, in Vancouver's climate in particular. The rainwater "gradually returns to the groundwater." Plant indigeneity is one of the hallmarks of an Oberlander landscape design, and here too native pines, ferns and huckleberries are planted at the eastern entrance area to create a miniature woodland (all above quotes from CCA Archives, 75-032-26T).

The issue of accessibility is also addressed. The Park is easily entered from almost anywhere (except the Berm). The paths are covered with a size of pebble that allows wheels to easily manoeuvre, wheelchair or pram, as is evidenced by feedback from Bruce Stening, Manager of the UEL. He says the "road mulch is great for all sorts of wheeled vehicles" (CCA Archives, 75-032-19T). The two ramps that go into the Oval would allow the same wheels entry, though the grass might make going straight across the Oval a bit difficult.

### Susann's Park

I did not write the same kind of field notes about the visits to the Jim Everett Memorial Park as I had for the Architectural Garden. In some ways, I felt that the photographs could speak for themselves more extensively, because the Park also speaks more explicitly for itself. Too, as mentioned previously, having researched the Park prior to visiting it, the visits had a different purpose. I could perhaps compare the difference in the two experiences as the difference between reading the book before you see the movie, and vice versa.

**The first visit: December 1, 2006**

In the aftermath of a huge snowstorm, I made my first visit to the Park on a Friday afternoon, four days after the storm. It was overcast, but not raining. The Park was buried in at least a foot of snow, and most if not all of its features were hidden. I couldn't locate the memorial stone, which I knew was there somewhere. Even the approach to the Park was not as it would have been in better weather. It lies on University Boulevard, and a bus runs along the Boulevard with a stop right across from the Park. But the storm had brought down trees and power lines, and buses weren't running on the Boulevard. I had to walk a few blocks to reach the Park from the bus's rerouting on Wesmore Mall.

Indeed, buried in snow is not the normal state of anything in Vancouver, but this weather did enable me to see what is probably an unusual event on the Play Mound, which sits like a talisman among the circles of the Park. A mother and young child (age 3 or 4) climbed up and slid down the Mound on a blue plastic sled. The snow was smooth and fast for sliding. Then the father (presumably) came, with a still younger child; he and the older child slid down once, and then they packed up and left. I wandered around and photographed what I could, having in my mind the site drawings from the CCA. It was difficult to be systematic in the snow. It was very quiet, since there were few cars on the Boulevard, and snow muted sound.

For awhile, I sat on a metal park bench at the east entrance, a bench that was well designed for snow to fall through. I was able to brush snow off and through the metal openings, as I sat to write notes. I also took some photos from that seated vantage. I felt quite disoriented on this first visit, as little that I saw corresponded to the elements of the site drawings, except for the obvious: the hump of the Mound, the rounded edges of the Berm, and the half-circles of the Oval. In the quiet, crows, ubiquitous in Vancouver in the winter, cawed from the trees and from atop the white apartment building that sits south of the Park. I climbed the Mound and experienced a curious feeling of delight. Then school was out and

it became noisier. Several boys and two girls left their bikes in the bike rack, and the boys and one girl climbed up on the west end of the berm to have a snowball fight. Surrounded by the group's backpacks, the second girl sat on the
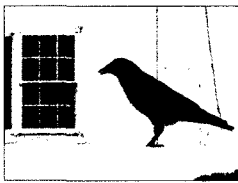


bench and read. Apart from these activities, the space felt curiously empty. I put this down to the weather; I was not seeing it at an ordinary time. That day I thought of the Park as a simple place, one that doesn't overlay your own experience – made mildly interesting for adults with the Mound and the Berm, but far more interesting for children. I took photographs of the visitors because I thought I should. Similarly, I was disinterested in taking photos of the few Architectural Garden inhabitants when I was there (though I did photograph some visitors in the Garden on an October 2006 visit).

**The second visit: December 11, 2006**

Prior to going to Vancouver, I had written to Cornelia Oberlander to ask if I could meet with her, and perhaps see the Park with her. She kindly responded that she would be away but that her associate Elizabeth Whitelaw could meet with me. In telephone conversations with Ms. Whitelaw after my arrival, we decided to postpone visiting the Park together until the snow had gone. On a windy (and later rainy) Monday afternoon, December 11th, I thus met with the co-designer of the Jim Everett Memorial Park. All the snow had melted by then. We walked the Park together in very windy weather, as she pointed out different elements of the design, some problems they had encountered, and the successes they perceived. She took me up to the top floor of the mixed commercial/apartment building to the west of the Park, saying she had often taken photographs from this vantage point to see the evolution of the work as it was ongoing. She has also taken photos from there of people doing things in the park: a group of Asian women of a certain age, doing t'ai chi in the Oval every Monday morning, children playing soccer in the Oval, mothers with carriages meeting up, students sitting along the edge of the Oval studying. Indeed, that overview allows one to see the Park as a whole, though it is not a perspective to which many would have access.[89]   I greatly appreciated the

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[89] Only Ms. Whitelaw's persistence with a member of the janitorial staff of the building got us access. It is a locked residential building.

opportunity to photograph from this bird's eye view. When our conversation had ended, I did a second photographic mapping of the Park, until increased wind and the beginning of rain, with the concomitant darkening of the sky and lessening of light stopped me.

## The Park Elements

### The entrances

The Park has an almost triangular or fan-like shape, formed as it is by the curve of University Blvd. meeting Dalhousie St.   It has two "formal" entrances, though like many parks, one can enter anywhere.  At the narrower east end of the park, there is what Whitelaw calls an "intimate"[90] entrance, where one or two people can enter at a time, on a pebbled pathway.  You meet one of the Park markers, the original one, as you enter.
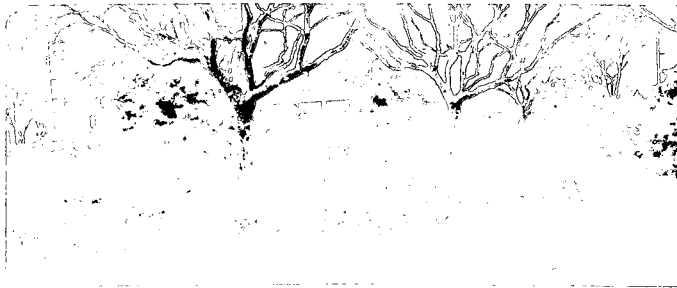
The path, short as it is, meanders, so that the view into the Park is not open to the visitor immediately.  A bench, the one I sat on, sits about three-quarters of the way in on the path.  Seated on it, you can look back to the entrance, at the plantings close by, or further, into the Park. The Mound hides a full view, giving you the sense that there is more to explore; everything is not immediately evident.  It feels private here, interestingly, because this is quite a small Park, a 'nothing' space in one sense, formerly just a grassed wedge with trees, something to run through. Now it has form; the eye moves up and down and around.

At the wider end, at the bottom of the triangle to the west, is a plaza, a more public and open way of entering, which can accommodate many people at

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[90] Quotes attributed to Elizabeth Whitelaw are from fieldnotes written after our meeting.  It was too windy to tape our conversation as we walked around the Park.

the same time. This is presumably important because of the "Happening on the Hill" that takes place every autumn equinox. It is a popular and well-frequented neighbourhood event, and the Park design had to take its needs into consideration (such as electrical access). The Plaza allows for a congregation (as does the Oval). It is an event that seems to subvert the intention of the Park design, according to photographs available on the Web (http://www.planning.ubc.ca/ living/photos_happonhill_03.html). The Happening brings in (temporarily) the ready-made play things that Oberlander prefers not to include in a design for children's play. "This is not a playground with equipment, but a park to engage in spontaneous exploration with its surroundings and spaces of unique experience" (Oberlander, CCA Archives, 75-032-26T).

The plantings on the Plaza are more formal than at the 'intimate' end of the Park. The five slightly raised beds, placed on the Plaza, contain 108 rose bushes (36 each of Spanish Sun, Apricot Nectar and Ainsley Dixon) (CCA Archives, Planting Plan Sheet, L105, 75-066-03 M). Their shape and containment allows for close inspection and also contributes to the feeling of formality that is more predominant at this end of the Park. Their placement, angled so that you must pass through their space to enter the Oval, acts as an invitation to step into it. On our walkabout, Elizabeth Whitelaw identified a yellow chrysanthemum plant sitting in one of the beds as a "volunteer," (a plant that just "shows up"). "We didn't plant that," she said wryly.

### The Oval

From the Plaza one can move easily into the Oval. A cement ramp leads into it from both east and west, though you can step more or less easily into it from anywhere.
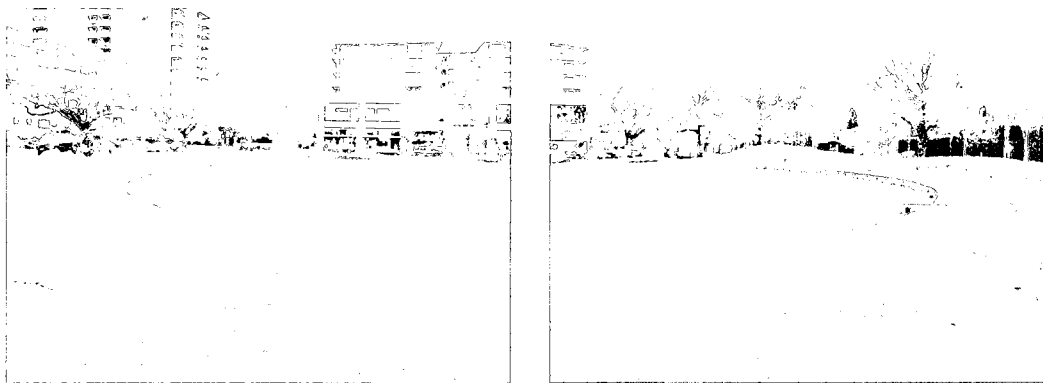
From the Oval's west vantage point, the Mound is again predominant, blocking the view of the "intimate" east entrance. The Oval is wonderfully symmetrical, while simultaneously being asymmetrical because of the two ramps that break its curved line. It is slightly sunken, and a portion of the north and south sides of the ring around it have been raised slightly, useful as seating. The low-voltage lighting hidden under the seating is controlled by a light sensor and only comes on at night. Originally, Whitelaw says, they had wanted to have LED lighting completely ringing the Oval, so that it would have looked as if it were "going to lift off," but there was no money for that. The ring around the Oval contains it, both symbolically and actually, making it feel safe for young children to play in, while also possibly limiting rambunctious adult play to this part of the Park (that town/gown dilemma). It has a gathering-in effect. This delimitation, like the slightly raised rose beds on the Plaza, thus has multiple uses.

### The Mound

The Mound, a ten-foot hill with giant stone steps leading up it on the west side, has a mysterious simplicity to it. It is not quite symmetrical, being steeper on the south side, with a softer, longer rise on the north side. To walk around it is to see it as a hillock, a climbing challenge for a small child, and an easy few steps for a fit adult. To stand on top of it is to feel something different. Lisa Rochon says, "...surrounded by a community of low to mid-rise apartment buildings, the mound provides discovery in the landscape, a place to conquer, to look out with a different perspective on the world" (2006, p. 22). Jim Everett's sister, in a thank-you note to Cornelia Oberlander after the Park opened, said " ...the overall "feel" – so elusive, but when it's there, it's right there" (CCA Archives, 73-032-19T).
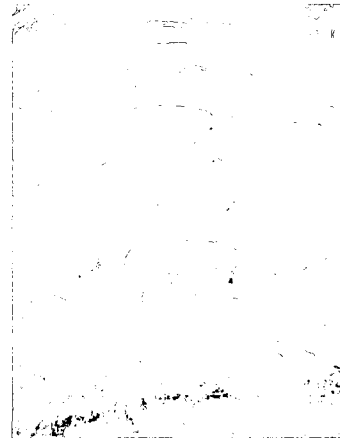
The first time I stood on it, in the snow, I felt delight, a "right there" feeling. I didn't quite know why. [91] The second time, the minute I reached the top of the stone

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[91] The author of an article on Cornelia Oberlander in *Vancouver Magazine* had a similar reaction to the mound in Robson Square. He says, "having attained its summit, seen its oddly private views... I suddenly

stairs and turned to face the Oval, I heard a voice inside of me saying "I'm the king of the castle, and you're the dirty rascal" with the child's sing-song cadence of superiority.[92]

Instantly, I had been transported to a childhood space, a joyful space. With Proust, I could say, "I had ceased now to feel mediocre, contingent, mortal. Whence could it have come to me, this all powerful joy?" (1996, cited in Kwint, 1999, p. 3).



I was the mistress of this domain. This was a transformative moment, linking my exploration of childhood landscapes with this current landscape. It was a portal opening, where my adult body, not my intellect, swayed between the past and the present. Without exaggeration, this was a moment I had been seeking. My eye informed my body, and my body suddenly understood why I want to map spaces photographically, why I record, over and over, the same spaces. Writing this now, I am again standing on that Mound, enjoying this important moment of understanding. I am in my place.



### The Berm

While in theory, the Berm should also contribute to this "place to conquer" feeling, it does not do so in the same way as the Mound. Perhaps the reason for this is that while it is raised, its length makes it indefensible (as the Mound could be "defended"), though one of the snowball group used it to good advantage, by standing on top of it to rain his snowballs down on the others. It is more of a knoll, and it creates a distinct demarcation line as it runs along the north side of the Oval. Its purpose is to

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see The Mound as representative of her. A subtle feature of the design...A bit of technical mastery, all but hidden in the quiet aesthetic effect that it achieves" (Taylor, 2007, p. 36).

[92] This gendered phrase came directly from childhood. Only my adult could say, "I'm the queen of the castle."

create a barrier, a buffer zone, between University Blvd. and the Park, visually, actually, and as a sound barrier. Whitelaw says that Cornelia Oberlander tends to use the berm often in her work and has used the construct to good effect in front of her own house. It carries the idea of sculpture, of sculpting and contouring the landscape "to make it more agreeable."
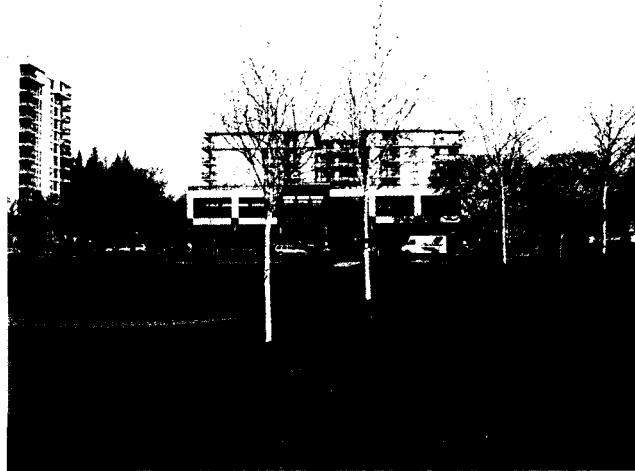


Here, it creates an amphitheatre effect on the Park side. The land dips and rolls. On the street side, it creates an invitation to run up it to see what's on the other side. The grass on that side meets the sidewalk in an uneven line. "The public sidewalk will meander slightly along the edge of the berm bringing pedestrians into the realm of the park" (Oberlander, CCA Archives 75-032-17T). This delicately conceptualized detail strikes one even from the Google Earth satellite photo. One can also see, from the satellite photo, the line that cuts through the triangle of the Park and its circles; this line starts with the east entrance path, follows the stones of the wetlands and the mound steps and is completed by the ramps of the oval.

I saw the Berm in two states: one covered with snow, with all detail obliterated, and the other in its more common winter state, with short grass. The white-barked Himalayan birches planted along it look quite lonely and stark at this time, but one can imagine how spring would bring life to this section of the Park with the hundreds of flowers planted along it.

### The wetlands

The two circles in the Park are, in a sense, the negative and positives of each other, one concave, the other convex. While the Mound rises ten feet high, the wetlands

are only a dip in the landscape, pebbled and originally planned for planting with soft rush, skunk cabbage, water sedge, and yellow swamp iris (CCA Archives, Planting Plan Sheet, L105, 75-066-03 M). The wetlands are a type of water cache, part of the drainage system of the Park.

A curved line of stones inhabit the centre of the dip. The plantings appeared very minimal to me, and Elizabeth Whitelaw explained that these had not been as successful as they should have been, possibly because the gravel hadn't been washed properly and there was something on it that killed some of the plantings. The resulting space is interestingly spare, at least at this time of year. Looking east from the Berm, one's eye is charmed by roundnesses, the convex curves of the Berm and the Mound, and the concave dip and circular boundary of the wetlands. The darker grey of the pebbles in the interior part of the wetlands contrasts with the lighter, less pebbled pathway around it. Seen from the Mound, the stones in the centre are the invitation to the intimate path leading out of the Park at this end.
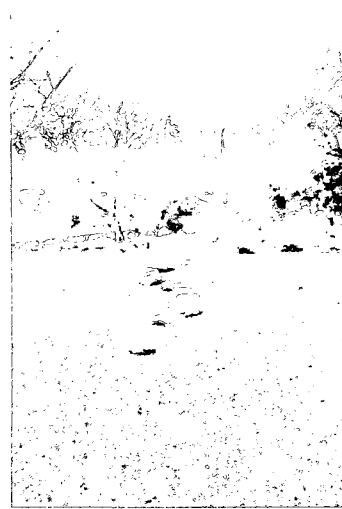
## Trees and other plantings

He that plants a tree loves others beside himself.
(Thomas Fuller, 1732, cited in Nadel & Oberlander, 1977, p. 25)



Trees are central to this Park. They define its south and west boundaries, and create the intimacy of the eastern entrance. From the Park's original incarnation, the towering Catalpa trees at the west end of the Park and the Japanese flowering plum that line the south side remain. According to Whitelaw, some Catalpas were lost in a windstorm, as they are brittle, and two Empress trees were put in, to maintain the line at the west end of the Park. These new trees still look very young and almost spindly, compared to the Catalpas near them. Besides these two, and the birch trees, Pyramid



lumber pine, Japanese pine and vine maples were planted in the miniature woodland, the east end of the Park. Salmonberry, huckleberry and wild currant shrubs were also planted. (CCA Archives, Planting Plan Sheet, L105, 75-066-03M).

### Accessories

The park's accessories (what Edward T. White calls "the scenery" (1999, p. 31)), the material objects in the space which are not plantings, are sparse: garbage cans, benches, picnic tables (of the same porous metal as the benches – Whitelaw says wood is not viable in this damp environment), one bike rack, and



three signs. Built things do not overrun this space, but are positioned carefully to maximize the experience. The picnic tables lie under trees for shade and benches look

into the Park at strategic points – the bench I sat on at the east end being a case in point. The two companion benches along the Mound path will allow, eventually, viewing of butterflies, as they are near the butterfly attracting plantings set into the path. The number and placement of garbage cans implicitly asks the co-operation of the users in keeping the Park clean. They also suggest that this Park will not host transients, but rather people who will stay awhile. As I mentioned, the Architectural Garden has no garbage cans.





## Outcomes II – Difficult comparisons

Ambience is read not only with the mind but with the entire body. (White, 1999, p. 36)

Missing from my encounters with the JEM Park was the silent visit, the one without the external witness, the camera, when just my eyes and body encountered the space, and saw the things I missed when I was trying to frame the place photographically. But that will come in the future, hopefully in the spring season when I can sit on the benches under the flowering plums and inhale their beauty. Though it will not be a part of this endeavour, it will be a part of that relationship which has now been created between this garden and myself.

I certainly understood, while walking the Park with Elizabeth Whitelaw, how different our experiences were of this space. I felt our bodies were walking in different places. I think of her almost motherly look at the rose beds and the chrysanthemum

"volunteers," which they had not planted.[93]   I had co-authored this Park, at least temporarily, but she had actually co-created it.  What did my photographic ownership mean?  What I understand as a result of this entire process is that each of our endeavours is meaningful, each is part of the constitutive nature of place, of the details, the minutiae, without which there is no Park, no experience, no practice, only theory, disembodied theory.

Walking the earth is one way to become grounded in the details of a place; another is the photographic mapping that I utilize as a means of soaking in and yet distancing myself from the space itself.  That distancing aspect is what permits me to take a further step back and write about these photographic experiences.  The embodied aspect is respected, indeed delighted in.  The physical encounter with the place itself is only one of the embodied experiences.  Later I work with the photographs, digital or print, after covering the ground.  I finger over the landscape in this form; this too is an embodied experience, this handling of the object of the photograph.  I then come to the place where I can ask: what lies beneath in each of these Gardens?

Gardens "reorganize our thinking" according to John Dixon Hunt (2002, p. 133).  Hunt says, "reading gardens…does not consist wholly in taking notice of their inscriptions.  Many do not have any verbal devices, and they present themselves substantially if not totally through formal, visual means" (p. 136).  Gardens could be considered to be "set up" for views, for gazes.  However, J.B. Jackson (2002, p. 12) says, "the significance of space in landscape terms, the allotment of land for private or public use, is that it makes the social order visible" and contributes to the "unwitting autobiography" aspect of the landscape (Peirce, 1979).

In this project, I am trying to marry the landscape as "unwitting autobiography" and my mindful autotopography, to see how body meets the space and space meets the body.  The photograph becomes the vehicle of separation, the difficult separation of body/space and simultaneously the tool of co-authorship.  Whether I have been successful, I am not sure.  But trying to elaborate the biographies of the Gardens through both my body-in-place and my photographs has brought their layered affects to the

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[93] Taylor (2007) describes Oberlander's reaction to some "low purple flowers" in the Robson Square Law Courts.  "'Impatiens', she says, shaking her head and moving off across the tilting flagstones.  'I certainly didn't plant those' " (p. 38).

surface for attention. Intention meets attention. In dealing with public space, intention matters a great deal. Gardens seem, by their very nature, to demand a micro-attention, because they are constructed of many fine details which present a whole, and which can usually be seen (unlike a building whose many elements are not always visible). Each time I revisit the Architectural Garden, for instance, I seem to notice something different, some detail I overlooked previously. While I have not had the chance to revisit the Jim Everett Memorial Park, I assume I would have that same experience there.

However, my intention in this project was not to analyze these two spaces from the perspective of a landscape architect or urban planner, but to experience each space corporeally and photographically – to consider the usefulness of photography in gaining topographical intimacy with public space. That I have addressed above. I do however feel that consideration of a couple of elements in these two spaces can assist the thoughtfulness that is needed to respond to public spaces. One is the scale of intention, as I call it. If I think about Melvin Charney's Garden, I think about aesthetics, self-consciousness, history from the dawn of "civilization," art, littorality, reflexivity, self-reflexivity, reflexivity upon reflexivity. If I think about Cornelia Oberlander's Garden, I think about play, space, small, and local. So what do these sometimes verbal, sometimes non-verbal "inscriptions" mean?

Simon Swaffield addresses the historical and emerging themes that sit in the "theoretical terrain of landscape architecture" (2002, p. 3). Historically, he suggests, form has been forefronted in informing landscape design. Newly emerging themes are the "relationship among society, language and the representation of landscape architectural knowledge," "ecological design and the aesthetics of sustainability," and the "integration of diverse values through site, place, and region" (2002, p. 3). The Architectural Garden, in its very essence, is a garden of cultural, post-modern

forms, requiring very high maintenance. The Jim Everett Memorial Park, on the other hand, is steeped in the ethics and aesthetics of sustainability, and uses more traditional (or modernist) forms.

Over most of her career, Cornelia Oberlander has worked on ecological design, in the sense that her site analysis takes on indigeneity to a very strong degree. Her plantings appear to emerge from that analysis; she looks at what would have been there in the past, what representation of that should be, and then makes sure it will work in the site currently. This is a kind of historicity that many landscape architects pay attention to. Charney, for instance, uses four types of apple trees grown in orchards in this area, as well as planting the columbine and wild rose bushes that would have grown beside cadastral walls. But indigeneity and sustainability have been a particular focus for Oberlander, and she has used less spectacular plantings in certain projects to maintain that stance (for instance, the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia). Recently she is forefronting sustainability particularly in terms of water, looking to ways to use the cycle of "nature," rain, oxygen release and ozone retention, through roof gardens, trying to keep the water cycle inside the system. Oberlander's work at the C.K. Choi Institute of Asian Research at the University of British Columbia, an award-winning design, is off the grid in the sense that its sewage is recycled and its water runoff is used to support the landscape rather than going into storm sewers. Roof gardens, a particular focus of her recent work, reduce storm runoff. (The Vancouver Law Courts were addressed in this way, and her Vancouver Public Library roof garden reduces runoff by 48% according to Johnston, McCreary and Nelms (2004). Oberlander has also designed a roof garden for the new Canadian Embassy in Berlin.) Within this sustainable approach, form must also find its place in terms of aesthetics, use and usability. While the JEM Park is the first Vancouver park to not connect to the storm sewage system, Oberlander also speaks of "parks without equipment where children can find their own way, and adults too. The park of the future" (21 March 2006. CCA Videorecording of working session). In the JEM Park, these ideas are contained to a human scale, where we can find our own way.

The Architectural Garden on the other hand was not built with sustainability or ecology in mind, though the plantings had to be chosen for survival in this rather exposed

space. Charney has created a very stylized space, apparently without thought to environmental concerns. This site is steeped in history, the historical land use of Montreal, and the history of Western architecture. His layers are more obvious in one sense than Oberlander's and less in another. (Vancouver, of course, has less history or is seen to do so, than Montreal. It tends to take its heritage less seriously; it remains a littoral city, and retains that edge.) Charney used the historical research done on this site
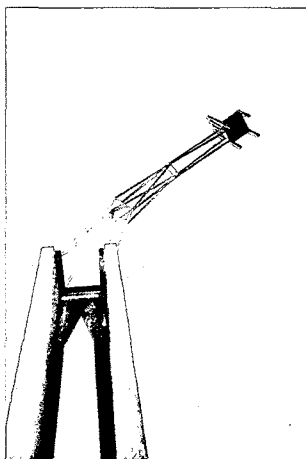


(Boyce 2001) to acknowledge its place in the history of Montreal, looking at it with an almost archaeological eye. His drawings of the site show layers upon layers of previous use of the site and its surroundings.

These older landscapes were stable, based on a naturalized grid. Towns were often built up around rivers, as Montreal was, and there was a grid, a geometry[94] that could be charted away from the river. The Architectural Garden makes reference to the cadastral grid and the growth of the streets in Montreal from the east and the south which are laid out on that grid. Charney locates a difference between the northern and the southern grids, the northern dictated by the mountain and Sherbrooke Street's urbanity,

> This shift in the alignment of the underlying system of land division is located on the northern boundary of the site, and is reflected in the garden in the shift between the two sets of organizational axes about which it was composed: the urban grid from the north is offset from, and superposed upon a second grid rising from the south. One grid is made to undercut the other. (Charney, 1989/1992, p. 92)

The low-lying walls, which sit on a north/south axis in the meadow bracketing the arcades, are a reference to these grids. The walls are also there to suggest both the eighteen inch wide "mitoyen" walls that divided property and the fieldstone walls that divided the early farm "rangs." "Rural and urban strata overlap" (Charney, 1989/1992, p. 95). The allegorical columns refer to both north and south (the chair in the air, for instance, referring to the Collège de Montréal pediment to the north, and others making reference to tenements, St. Cunégonde, factory smokestacks, silos, etc. to the south).

Order underlies the structure of both these Gardens. Martha Schwartz suggests that such order is "more humane" in our current built environment and "people should derive a sense of orientation in space that produces a subliminal sense of comfort and security. Simple geometric forms, such as circles and squares, are familiar and memorable images" (1993, p. 263).

This Garden displays more history than the JEM Park, and it is also in a very specific relationship to another site, the CCA, which had to be addressed substantially. Indeed, this relationship possibly dictates more to the Garden more than the site itself does. It is not "a neighbourhood garden"; it is public art space. Public sites do not spring from only one programmatic category, however. The JEM Park also has a history from which it springs, one which is more situated in its community. Even as I newly layer my place experience in these two spaces, they have their own layered histories.

The locations of these two Gardens are also expressive of their different biographies. The Architectural Garden's existence emerges from left-over space, because road (development) took precedence over dwelling, with the widening of Dorchester Blvd. and then the building of the on and off-ramps for the Ville Marie Expressway. "The road or street or highway became the armature, the framework of the landscape" (Jackson, 2002, p. 17).[95] The Vancouver Park, on the other hand, is situated away from urban density, and though much has grown up around it in recent years — both University buildings and privately developed residences — having to carve

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[94] Jackson (2002) lauds the grid as allowing flexibility and interchangeability, while Agrest (1996) argues that it "became an urban footprint regardless of topographical conditions" (p. 55).

[95] We could ask why the Architectural Garden, the creation of the Corridart artist, makes so little mention of the destruction involved in its own creation.

it out must not have been difficult. This Park too is formed and bounded by roads and boulevards. The requirement of improvement which is a part of the emphyteutic lease of the Architectural Garden land, and the requirement for investment in green space when developing property that resulted in the improvement to the JEM Park, are interestingly linked.

The different intentions of these two spaces might seem to make comparisons difficult, if not impossible. Originally my idea was to address gender in these spaces. I have never forgotten the comment by a library circulation assistant, when I was checking out a text on gender and architecture. She said, "is there sex in architecture, oh maybe tall buildings are phallic..." I found this encounter fascinating because I too strained to find gender in architecture. I could think of it in terms of some aspects of design, which are not people-friendly: Metro stations full of stairs, which privilege youth and mobility, and forget about mothers with babies and carriages or older people with arthritis or instability; great shiny but inevitably slippery-when-wet marble floors in banks; long dark insecure corridors in Montreal's much touted underground city. Women wouldn't design a space like this, I would think. Safety, inevitably, is a place where gender becomes obvious. I think of that in terms of the Architectural Garden. These stylized arcades, mirroring the CCA, are the most wonderful lurking places one could conceive of. Who comes to this isolated and hidden space at night? The JEM Park contains few obvious lurking spaces. The Mound and the Berm are easily and quickly seen around.

But are these spaces comparable? They are not. Their purposes, locations, uses, the money and politics involved in developing them[96], cannot be compared. Their complexities can be appreciated and their non-consumptive aspects celebrated. Their differing degrees of self-consciousness can be considered. Their use and other values can be critiqued. Certainly the Architectural Garden falls into the category of Architecture with a capital A, and the Jim Everett Memorial Park is more vernacular - monumental versus non-monumental, and gender would seem to be at play here. (If comparison were my purpose, Oberlander's Gardens at the Robson Square Law Courts would perhaps have been a more logical choice, as those gardens are intimately related to a building.)

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[96] The Architectural Garden cost ten times more than the Jim Everett Memorial Park.

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Swaffield (2002) discusses two contrasting positions in the role of "meaning" in landscape architecture design:

> On the one hand, the discipline should explore fundamental relationships among culture, technology, and nature through meaningful design. This leads to a strategy of social critique based upon the configuration of landscape as a symbolic system. On the other hand, there is the view that the essence of the discipline lies in creating healthy, functional, and pleasurable places for people and communities, to which significance and meaning will accrue over time. This latter position therefore focuses upon design strategies to enhance sensory experience, use and enjoyment. (p. 5)

If I use Swaffield's identification of these contrasts of meaning, Charney's work definitely sits in the first category and Oberlander's in the second. Oberlander herself says, "it is very important to experience discovery in the landscape... However, art must be integrated into the landscape to make spaces that are people friendly and environmentally responsible" (Hannah, 2003, p. 22). Charney has said, "I have always been involved in parallel disciplines – painting, sculpture, architecture." He regards them as "no more than registers in which the same concerns may be superimposed on one another" (1996, ¶ 1). I assume that Melvin Charney would not call himself a landscape architect. He has also said that he can't work with nature, he can only represent it (Boyce, 2001), and even the Orchard in the Architectural Garden represents the past plantings on the site itself.

Cornelia Oberlander does call herself a landscape architect, a woman in a profession that women were able to enter because of a historical association between women and nature. Sally Schauman has said that "landscape remains unconsciously coded as female, thus it is a trivial pursuit" (Kaplan Prentice, 2003, p. 166) and the concomitant correlation has had implications for both landscape architecture itself and for female landscape architects. The history of landscape architecture as a formal profession is relatively short in terms of human history, but designing and forming the landscape has probably occurred since agriculture started.[97] Gardening thus has a long history and Dianne Harris (1994) points out that it is in the 18th century "that we begin to find women staking the claim to the garden as their own special domain" (p. 115).

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[97] John Dixon Hunt says the garden is third nature, after the first nature of wilderness and the second nature of agriculture (2002).

Women in landscape architecture have both benefited and been marginalized by the association of the female with nature. The first formal education for women in the U.S. in landscape design was started in 1901: the Lowthorpe School of Landscape Architecture for Women. Its founder was Judith Motley Low "who echoed the widespread belief that 'women were naturally adapted to this profession'" (Close, 1996). According to Close, in the early 1920s, landscape architecture was seen as a viable profession for women, a logical extension of women's traditional domestic roles. Despite this view, and establishment of the Lowthorpe School and others, women did not have an easy time entering the business of landscape architecture, and often needed a male (often architect) mentor in order to enter landscape architectural firms. Some women eschewed this route and started their own firms, and indeed only hired other women. Close states, however, that female landscape architects were often associated with designing plantings, rather than overall planning designs. The ebb and flow of women's success in landscape architecture continues today. So Cornelia Oberlander is a female member of a profession that has struggled to be defined as one, and women in that profession have equally struggled with recognition. Although women's presence in current educational programs is substantial, only recently Martha Schwartz, a well-known landscape architect, resigned in 2007 from her adjunct professor status at Harvard University because the Dept. of Landscape Architecture has not had permanent female faculty over its 106 year history.[98]

And we cannot ignore the element of art in Charney's Garden: these sculptural columns which are not nature. Inside (and frequently privately owned) artwork is often seen as problematic, as elitist, in the sense that those who visit museums or galleries are perceived as being already educated in the language of seeing. Public art is defined differently as art that is not in a museum – art that is out in the street, in a mall, on a plaza, in a sculpture park. It can be ephemeral or permanent. Critics who look at public art as a genre identify strong ideological differences in these forms. Suzanne Lacy distinguishes new genre public art from public art and states that new genre public art is "based on engagement" (1995, p. 19). She quotes artist Jo Hansen as saying "much of

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[98] She subsequently was persuaded to return. See www.insidehighered.com/news/2007/01/18/harvard retrieved June 21, 2008. (See Brown & Maddox (1982) for a history of the early education of women in landscape architecture.)

what has been called public art might better be defined as private indulgence" (p. 19). Lacy wonders about the definition of "public": "Is 'public' a qualifying description of place, ownership, or access? Is it a subject, or a characteristic of the particular audience? Does it explain the intentions of the artist or the interests of the audience?" (p. 20).

Public art is the result of a necessarily collaborative process which can impact forcefully on the final "product," both in terms of intention and aesthetics, as well as permanence. Public art is usually much more expensive than other forms of art. Funding imperatives and civic permissions create a cumbersome apparatus, which many artists find difficult to labor with.

New genre public art, as an art of "engagement," also faces the issue of values. Lacy (1995) says, it "is not only about subject matter, and not only about placement and site for art, but about the aesthetic expression of activated value systems" (p. 30). If it is so, then who decides on the expression of these value systems? The spatial politics and the "permanency" of these expressions create our public space inheritance. We see around us, in the monuments already created for us, political expressions of their time. Patricia Phillips states that "an earlier heroic and modernist idea of public art suppressed the significant differences, while looking for some sort of normative and central idea of public" (quoted in Lacy, 1995, p. 37). She suggests that now, in a more diverse culture, new expressions are being given to us that contain a multiplicity of identities and forms. Nonetheless, the "heroic" idea is often expressed, though in a different form, because public art is rarely about the small. The Viet Nam Veterans Memorial, for instance, or the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (both in Washington), have moved from the idea of the universal (soldier, victim) to the idea of the individual (naming). But their forms remain grand, and posit "a common foreground" (Jemison, quoted in Lacy, 1995, p. 39).

Patricia Fuller calls the bracketing of a piece of art as only aesthetic "the politically isolating demand for originality" (quoted in Lacy, 1995, p. 44), and suggests that we must get past "this bifurcation between the aesthetic and the social" (p. 43). The processes involved in public art require an understanding that goes beyond the finished forms. If public art is about both aesthetics and politics, its layered meanings must be made apparent. Phillips (1995) asks if the recent focus on public art is a criticism of

"dominant conventions of art practice and the cultural marketplace," an effort to "transfuse new iconographies into public circulation" or does it serve "as a diversion, a distracting attention from a contentious site?" (p. 64). She asks too "What is behind our backs when we stop to look at it? What does art encourage us to see – and urge us to overlook?" (p. 64). These are questions that can be rightfully asked of Charney's Garden. I have not elaborated on the domicide history of the Ville Marie Expressway, but it bears strongly on the creation of the Architectural Garden.

Public art is in place, and in a place. Site-specific public art responds to, and speaks to, the place in which it will be embedded. Past public forms have not always done that. The recently erected statue of Montreal local hero and wrestler, Louis Cyr, sits in a small park carved out of the St. Henri streets that he came from, a vernacular monument. We can contrast that with the heroic George Etienne Cartier Monument in Mount Royal Park, whose monumental construction sits very firmly in political ideologies (see Osborne, 1998), and whose site carries very particular historical and political connotations which appear to lack relevance today.

New monuments are created every day through public art. Judith Baca (1995) addresses some of the issues engaged therein by asking, "Who is the public now that it has changed color? How do people of various ethnic and class groups use public space? What ideas do we want to place in public memory? Where does art begin and end?" (p. 138). And where is it situated?

> Monuments, museums, parks, and tourism itself have hitherto been thought of more as frames than as forms. But they can easily been seen as covert art forms, effectively practiced, like advertising, by official and commercial "non-entities" rather than by celebrities more interested in art fame than in social power. The current art system, for all its "critical" trajectory, encourages this kind of real-world timidity. Just as tourists often deplore situations brought on by their own presence, so artists are complicitous in the way the world is seen. (Lippard, 1999, p. 5)

This discussion of public art might not seem relevant when looking at the Jim Everett Memorial Park. When I first approached both of these spaces, I did not necessarily think of them as entering into this discussion. While that might seem dismissive of the "art" aspect of the Architectural Garden, I was thinking more in terms of Park than Garden. Landscape architecture does have its own ideological discourse, but

it is not as much in the public purvue as the public art discussion. The ideology of landscape architecture is thus more tacit and implicit and doesn't often enter public language. That is interesting in and of itself. We should return to Baca's question: "What ideas do we want to place in public memory?" (1995, p. 138).

These spaces are distinctly themselves. My now complicated relationship with them enables me both to make that statement and to find it insufficient. Can we make the same demands of these two spaces? My now expanded, though still limited appreciation for the different approaches to landscape design helps me to understand some of the differing intentions of landscape artist/architects. It also informs me that as a user, as a co-author of a designed space, I can bring my demands to that space. Marc Treib (2002) asks, "must landscapes mean?" He contends that in the past, the intended significance of a garden, in more heterogeneous societies, would have been better understood and received by the users of the space/garden. Now, he suggests

> Significance ... is not a designer's construct that benignly accompanies the completion of construction. It is not the product of the maker, but is, instead, created by the receivers. Like a patina, significance is acquired only with time. And like a patina, it emerges only if the conditions are right. (2002, p. 101)

He adds "is it not possible to believe that pleasure is one of the necessary entry points to significance?" (2002, p. 100). Jane Gillette (2005) asks a similar question, playing on Treib's original query: "Can gardens mean?" She suggests the "possibility that real gardens are by definition incapable of meaning anything, or anything much, and that the strength of the garden – its ability to provide beauty and delight – lies in this very incapacity" (p. 85). By real, Gillette means the actual materiality of the garden and says that in dealing with a physical landscape, it is "frequently difficult to distinguish between the artifact and the meaning of the artifact, between the container of meaning, and the contents" (p. 88). When we are in the garden, we are in the garden, in other words. That path is a path; it may be a metaphor for something else, but it is also clearly a path. Unlike a written text, which can contain many concepts and metaphors, Gillette says that in a garden, "since the words of landscape are physical, only so many can be fitted, quite literally, into the site" (2005, p. 89). She suggests that the pleasure that Treib contends can be significant will spring more from the association with the "nature" part of the

garden than from the "culture" element. The intellectual ("cognitive") pleasure, she says, fades more quickly than the physical, natural one.

The nature-culture "divide" can, in a sense, be physically experienced in the Architectural Garden. There is a significant contrast between sitting under a shady apple tree in the Orchard, smelling the grasses, hearing the wind whip the leaves of the trees, watching the sunlight dapple the ground, and then walking the Promenade, cemented, hard under the feet, hot and exposed, the allegorical Columns towering, static monuments. I would have preferred that these representations be closer to the ground, so that I could examine them and experience them on a human scale. In that sense, reminiscent of ruins overrun by ivy, the Arcades are a meeting place of nature and culture that I can appreciate and bodily move through. It is interesting that as the "plantings" continue to grow in the Architectural Garden, the nature element has become more foregrounded. An Orchard is after all an orchard. What I appreciate in the Jim Everett Memorial Park is that it does not carry a sense of divide between nature and culture; rather it is a space to be inhabited. Is this a gendered difference? If so, what are the strengths associated with inhabitable space?
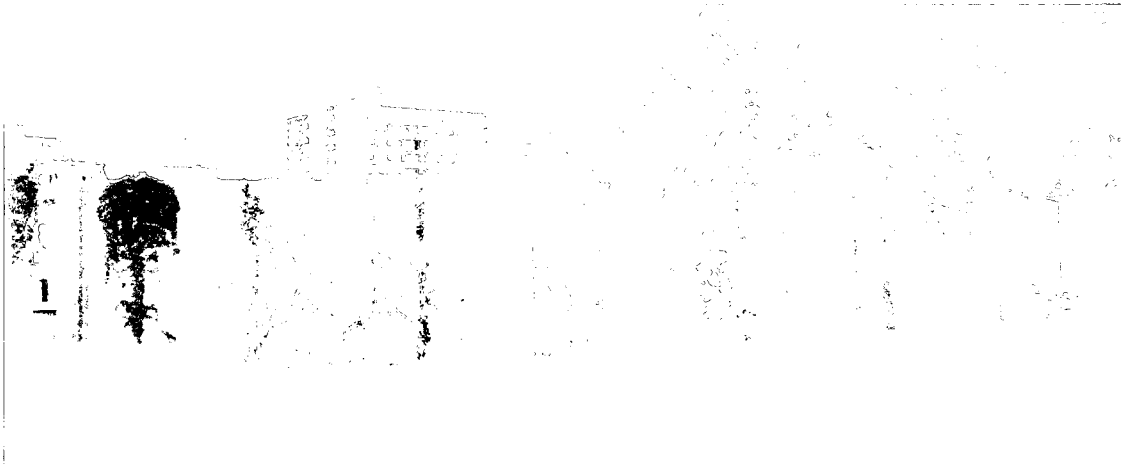


## Back to my intention

When I approached these two spaces, I was using them as examples of how mapping space photographically could foster topographical intimacy. The fact that the local one intrigued me and the other was 3000 miles away and I had never seen it didn't

seem to matter. Indeed, in the end it didn't. I had a similar experience of generating intimacy. But these spaces are not the same. They don't have the same intention, and so they shouldn't be compared that way. I had the same intention, and that can be compared.

Isn't all photography about setting boundaries and margins – framing – what is in our view, whether that be a riot, a battlefield, a child, a plant, a mountain? The spatial turn in geography has "coincided" with several turns in photography of place (and in other arts, as well as elsewhere) from universalized ideas of beauty as sublime and thus somehow sacred to more secular, layered, mundane and manipulated views. For both the photographer and the viewer, photography of place holds memory, longing, cultural history, and present imaginings. Without these elements, such photographs would sit stiff, static, without the richness of relationship and meaning that photographs of people or events can carry.

In photographing place, intention becomes the question. We don't tend to question why people are photographed – the personal, for memory and posterity; the formal, for media use, for documenting, for policy. Nor do we question the need or desire to photograph events. But place can be seen as a more ambiguous subject, when it is not engaged in celebrating the "sublime" of landscape. Marlene Creates (1992), a Canadian photographic artist, says, "the challenge for artists now is to represent ourselves and our associations with our places – however close and whatever size we consider them to be – authentically and respectfully. ... A new environmental and political morality has made changes in our actions: where we go, what we do, and how we represent the land" (p. 10). She is placing this responsibility in the context of environmental consciousness, both small (in making environmentally ethical decisions about use and disposal of artists' materials) and large (in using art as an aesthetic forum to create a layered and thoughtful response from the viewer).

Photographing place inevitably brings in the issue of memory. Memory sits in place. "Representing the land" does indeed carry the responsibility of honouring the memory in that land. This is not nostalgia, but rather a visual means of acknowledging relationship, of seeing landscape as layers of stories, ecological and human. The sustainability perspective of the Jim Everett Memorial Park takes on that responsibility.

It not only structures how this Park was designed and is maintained, it also situates the Park in a broader conversation. It responds to and contributes to that conversation. In that, it is a participant in our current and historical discourse on ecology and the meaning of nature. Hunt says, "gardens...have always been ways of mediating the physical world..." and suggests that gardens are "if not ways of actually coming to terms with the first and second natures, at least retrospective ways of registering how we have come to terms with them" (2002, p. 133).

The Architectural Garden, as well, through a more stylized approach, tells us about our European history on the site. It invigorates our memories, which in an urban environment in particular, too quickly forget what was there before and what was eliminated to make-way-for. A silencing of place results, with a concomitant silencing of ourselves. Bachelard (1969a) says of memories that "the more securely they are fixed in space, the sounder they are..." (p. 9). "Each one of us, then, should speak of his roads, his crossroads, his roadside benches" (p. 11). Learning the layered history of the spaces we frequent can embed topographical intimacy, while deepening our visual and cultural capacity to see and question other spaces in the same way. I stated at the beginning of this chapter that I wanted to see if I could capture these two spaces wholly, to see if they could fully take place, as current spaces of "volitional learning" in my adulthood. The long duration and the twists and turns of my photographic mappings and visits to these spaces have shown me that "fully taking place" is a charged phrase. Place, like my self, is always becoming, so there can be no conclusion, only continued exploration, carrying forward the place reading lessons I have learned here.

In Chapter 6, I recount my final investigation of place for the purposes of this inquiry. By finding Salmon River, that childhood landscape remembered mainly through photographs and rephotographing it for myself, I generate the linking of past and present that a photo album represents. Through this meaningful creation of photographic and embodied contributions to my personal and family archive, I round out my itinerary.
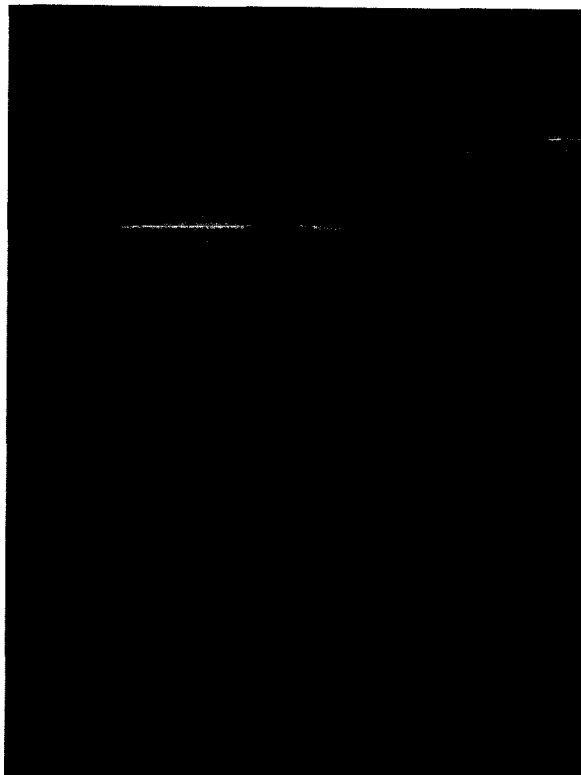
# Chapter 6. Finding Salmon River
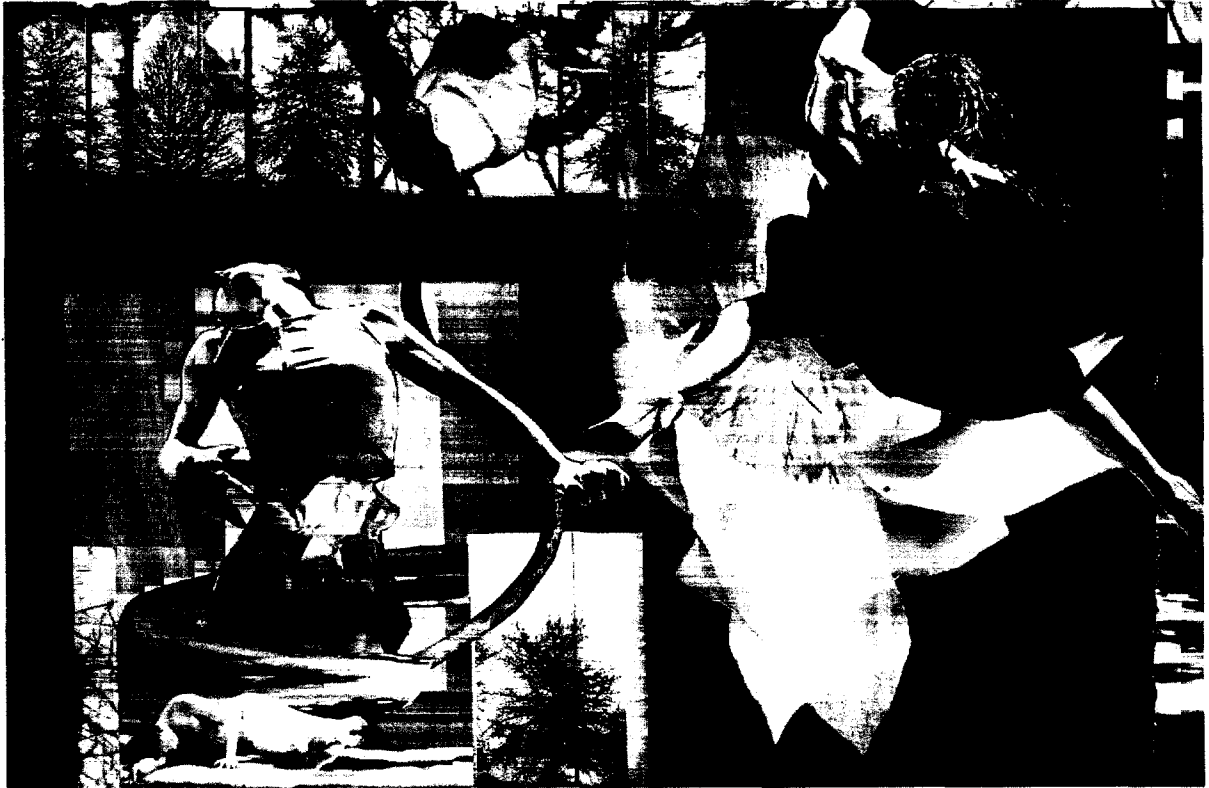
The creative act is based upon the paradoxical ability to stay focused on what is happening, while letting go of the need to control outcomes.

<div align="right">Shaun McNiff (2003, p. 93).</div>

I don't know why it became such a quest:
finding Salmon River.
First we couldn't find it on the map.
Perhaps that's why.
Then it moved its way under my heart.

My dead father's diary entry located it:
beyond Huntingville.
Months of waiting for the journey.
Fearful of not finding it.
The desire to do so like a thirst.

A late fall day with its warm sun.
Geese on the St. Francis River.
The drive through imagined views.
Silence of farms, broken by crows.
Back and forth along the roads.

The final sighting of the place itself:
barely remembered by my body,
burned in memory by the photographs.
The moment of turning mythology into reality.
Place of simple joy, joyful again.

(Susann, November, 2007)

October 26[th,] 2007, was a golden day – unusually warm and sunny. I got off the bus at the Sherbrooke Bus Station[99] and stood in the sunshine waiting for Sandra[100] to pick me up. Across the parking lot, and past the road, I could see Riviére St. François, Canada geese gathered on the river's far edge. Soon we were travelling south on the Lennoxville road, heading to Huntingville. Huntingville is small – a brief array of houses and a white wooden church high up on a bank. Across from the church is a small bridge, which leads to the mill on the other side; a small dammed waterfall generates 0.3

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[99] This is housed in the old CN train station.
[100] Sandra is an old friend who lives in Sherbrooke.

megawatts for Hydro Quebec. As we zipped along the two-lane highway to and then through Huntingville, I examined the photographs I had brought with me, a page of eight small two inch xeroxed reproductions of all the Salmon River photographs I had found in my mother's photo album.[101]

Quick glimpses of the river down the hill to the left of the road did not encourage me to think that we would actually find the place imaged in these photographs. Indeed, my feelings about looking for Salmon River were mixed; I was unsure why my desire to find it had been building over the last few months. After "locating" it through my father's journal entries, I had been thinking of Salmon River as "post-memory," and of the photographic relationship that all four siblings have with this place. I wanted to bring it into the present. I wanted it present in my mind's eye. For various reasons, my Salmon River foray had been delayed for some time and this had only added to the anticipation and excitement (quite oddly) that I was feeling. I also understood that even if I didn't find the exact spot, the effort had to be made.

As we continued driving, the road began to curve away from the river, not towards it. We stopped in Milby and retraced our route. Sandra was convinced the
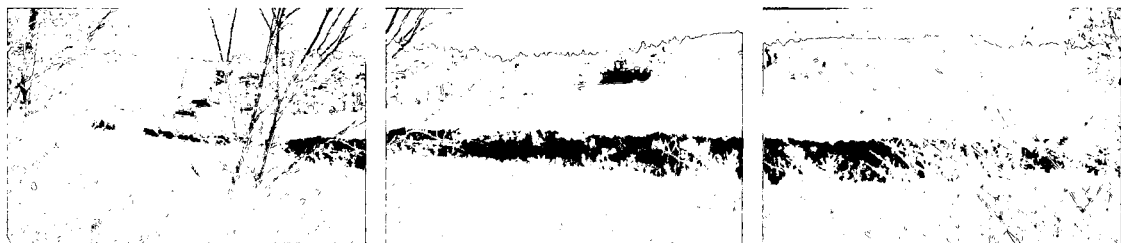


location would be on the other side of the river. I favoured a glimpse of the river on the highway side close to a farm, where the pebbled outcroppings in the narrow flow of water appeared to resemble the photographs. Nonetheless, we passed the farm again and returned to Huntingville where we crossed over the bridge (admiring the dam) and turned south again. Down one cul-de-sac after another, we found ourselves above the river. I took some photographs. We kept on driving, again moving away from the river and into quiet farmlands with houses few and far between and the only sound the distant hum of farm machinery and the loud cawing of crows. The sun on the yellow leaves of the far

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[101] I did not at that time have the scanned memory frame from David.

hills was enchanting.  I felt I was in a parallel universe, so close to Sherbrooke in actuality, and yet in another world.

Finally we acknowledged that the road would not end up back at the river, and we retraced our path to again cross over the bridge.  A park in Huntingville right beside the river beckoned.  But the river's edge was bordered with bulrushes and grasses and there was none of the pebbled beach indicated in the photographs.  We headed back towards the farm.  We turned off the highway and down the hilly half-kilometer drive to the farmhouse, stopping part way.  We could see another road branching away from the one we were on, which obviously went down towards the river.  I took some photographs.  More Canada geese were evident on this river.  When we reached the house, an eager dog bounced at the door of the car barking, but was friendly enough as I took my page of photographs and rang the doorbell of the farmhouse.  A man[102] who appeared to be in his mid-thirties stepped out.  I explained why I was there, and he peered closely at the small

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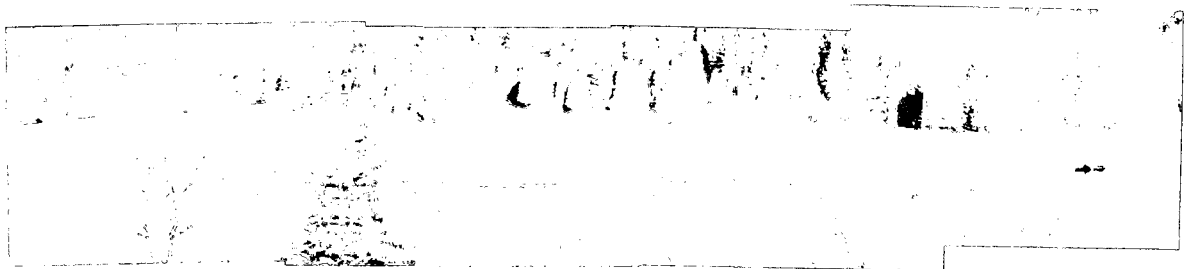
[102] Although this man gave me his name, I did not ask for permission to use it, so I do not name him or his family.

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photographs. I asked, to be sure, if this was the Salmon River. He said yes, but of course its real name was the Ascot River. I mentioned the photographs were over fifty years old, and much growth would have occurred to bushes and trees since then. To him it did not look familiar at first, as together we looked, first to the photographs, and then down to the river below the farm. But it became obvious that the pebbled outcroppings in the photographs strongly resembled those lying just below us. Then he told me that his grandfather used to allow people to go down to the beach for a small price ($1.00), and that his mother and sister had continued on with the practice, until new regulations regarding toilets and insurance had proved too expensive and forced them to stop.
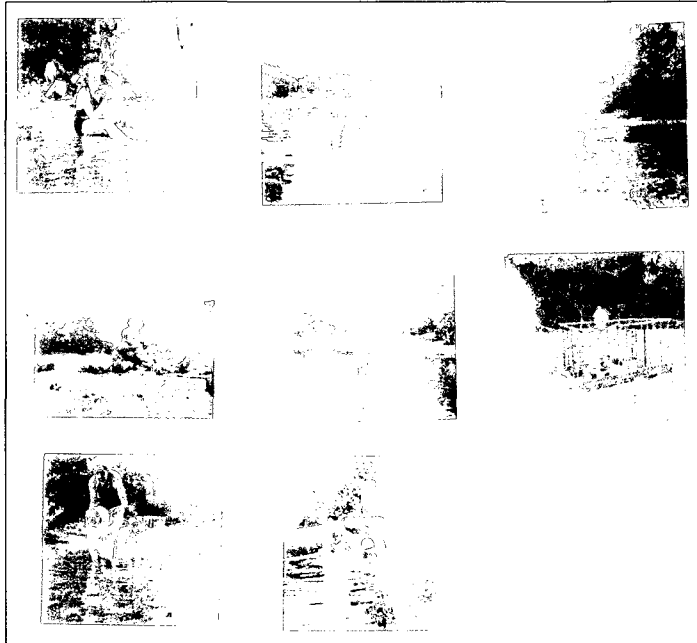
I knew then that it was here that our family had come – this was "our" Salmon River. The branch road we had seen was the one that cars would have used to go down to the river, and probably explains the time our taxi driver got caught in the mud, as it was (and is) unpaved. Now a fence blocks the road half way down. I

didn't ask if I could go down that road[103] all the way to the river, (nor was I invited to), but merely if I could take photographs from the edge of the property near the house, overlooking the river, and he gave me permission.

As I took the photographs in the sunshine, peering through trees half-denuded of leaves, I tried to 'see' as well, not just photographically, trying to squeeze not only the view but also the place itself into my heart. I glanced down at a wooden sign propped against a small shed, with the name of the owners on it, owners of this property since
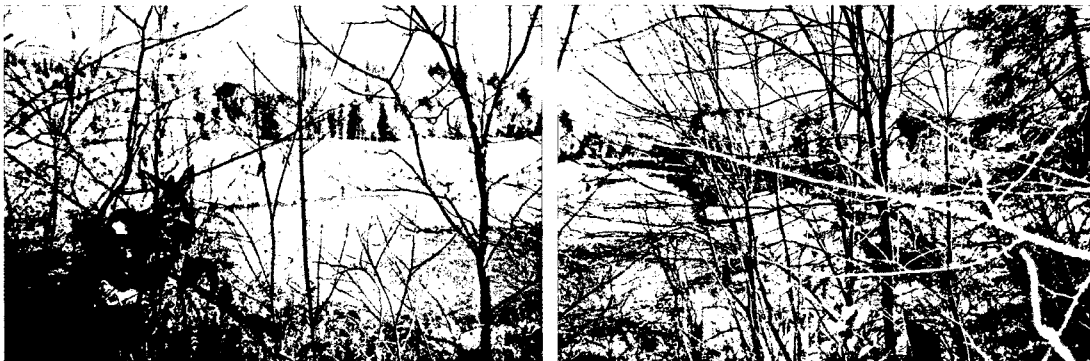


1909, as the man had informed me. I thought of 1953 and of our family down by the river, privileged visitors from the city, another world. Even on this day in 2007, Sherbrooke seemed far away in this quiet, flowing place.

When I returned to the car and we drove up the farm road to the highway, I had a deep feeling of completion and satisfaction that is hard to explain. Was this a closure, or an opening? I was unsure. I considered Bachelard's warning: "the dialectics of *yes* and *no,* which decides everything ... Unless one is careful..." (1969a, p. 211). It doesn't have to be decided; it doesn't need to be closed. This return was necessary and it is done, but it is not over. I have the photographs but I also carry that day – October 26th – in both my embodied and memory eye.

The "inexactness" (Miller, 2006, p. 461) of this place contrasts with the ordered, bounded parks/gardens I was discussing in the last chapter. While the transition from street to park can be more or less, here there was a sense of enclosure that came over one gradually. I was not "in" it, and then "out" of it, by stepping one way or driving another.

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[103] As Heddon (2008) says, "different bodies produce different knowledges" (p. 105). My younger body would have asked to go down that road; my older body recognized its limitations. Thus I had access to one sort of "knowledge" about this place, not less true, just what it is.

Rural space allows that expanded sense of littorality – more a zone than an edge, softer, less demarcated. It is hard to convey that perceived lack of demarcation, the gentle, more 'natural' order of the worked hills and tree lines, and the low flowing river.

## Autotopography in Salmon River

Why does Salmon River, open, yet closed, feel like the culmination of these photographic journeys of the last few years? Its richness, I believe, stems from the ways in which it carries both the interior domestic and the exterior place-based themes of autotopography, and the ways in which the "doing" of Salmon River layers memory and photography. Firstly, there is the Salmon River montage, the physical memory frame referred to in Chapter 4, part of my "museum of the self" inheritance. In our photographically lean family home, this memory frame had some meaning, which I cannot access, but only acknowledge. That these two gendered montages were always mounted, wherever my mother lived, proves their meaning. As a participant in a study of physical (domestic) mementos says, "these photos are in the grain of the room, they're not just there because they can be..." (Petrelli, Whittaker & Brockmeier, 2008, p. 8). Why these photos? What meaning did they hold?
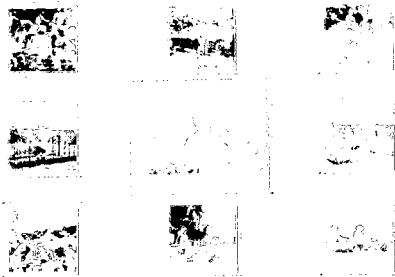
González suggests that such displays are "rhetorical tactics" (1993, p. 85). If one is to look at these two memory frames, never separated while my parents were alive, one can conceive of the messages – that boys and girls carry different meanings, that family is primary, and that happiness is most possible (most visible) in outside space. The girls' montage is more posed, and my

father is absent, presumably the taker of the photographs. The boys' montage is more spontaneous, and my father is present in some of the photos, my mother presumably taking these. My father, I believe, mounted both these memory frames. Indeed, as I mentioned before, the majority of the photographs in the only extant family album are labelled with his handwriting. Of all the photographs in both montages, only one depicts us in an inside space. While this may have more to do with the limited camera technology of the time, I feel it also speaks to my perception that outside space use was very important in my family and perhaps particularly to my father, the curator in these instances. Our created family too was paramount: my mother lost her mother when she was four, and was raised by relatives; my father lost his father when he was 18, and his family fell apart. Of the mementos that we keep, González suggests that "apparently used as mnemonic devices, these objects may also…act as a screen to veil a hidden memory or desire" (1995, p. 135).

Are these what González calls "a self-persuasive text on an intimate scale" (1993, p. 89) and functioning "rhetorically; to convince ourselves of something which we wish to be or have been, to locate identity…" (p. 90). She is suggesting in fact that such objects act as memory prompts in an almost architectural sense, that "memory becomes a process of *situating*" (p. 90). In this, she is referring to Francis Yates' (1966) description of how memory was retained in classical times, through an association with place and placed objects.

Whatever their meaning for my parents, their constant placement, first in our shared home and later, in my mother's home, meant that these memory frames were always present for myself and my siblings. Perhaps it was inevitable, then, that I would try to seek out this place known mainly through the photographic, in the course of this inquiry.

My journey to find Salmon River then becomes autotopography in Heddon's framework. She uses the term "to signal more specifically the location of a particular individual in actual space, a locatedness that has implications for both subject and place" (2002a, ¶ 2). In my seeking out of Salmon River, the relationship between topographical intimacy and photography becomes highlighted. In what I now view as the penultimate

act of my inquiry, I sought to bring materiality to the photographic relationship my siblings and I had with the place called Salmon River.

Michael Snow defines photographs as "events-that-become-objects" (Langford, 2007, p. 128). Through this autotopographical work, I have both created objects (photographs) from events, and events from photographs (objects). And importantly, I have been in the photographed places and thus, I myself have been an event in those places. Tim Cresswell suggests that place itself is an event. "Place provides the conditions of possibility for creative social practice. Place in this sense becomes an event rather than a secure ontological thing rooted in notions of the authentic. Place as an event is marked by openness and change rather than boundedness and permanence" (2004, p. 39). Nuala Johnson suggests that "treating the landscape as a theater or stage broadens the imaginative scope of interpretation by suggesting that life gets played out as social action and social practice as much as it does by the reading implied by the text metaphor" (2004, p. 322).

Salmon River is a new place/event, "performed and practiced" (Cresswell, 2004, p. 39), neither our lived present nor our consciously remembered past, imagined through photography and re-imagined through rephotography. Always, with memory, as well as with the photograph, the silent forgetting and the not-photographed sit with us. I used place to penetrate that silence. As Lucy Lippard suggests "[Place] is temporal and spatial, personal and political. A layered location replete with human histories and memories, place has width as well as depth" (1997, p. 7).

The layers of Salmon River, enjoyed as children, mounted photographically, recorded in my father's journal, now experienced and photographed by my adult self and represented for my siblings, are rich with both intended and serendipitous meanings, over time and in space. Like Mike Pearson who returned to his home village in Wales and conducted a guided tour with the villagers, stopping at ten sites in order to perform an act of memory called "Bubbling Tom," I have done this to "re-embody the traces the landscape has left in me: to relocate myself" (Pearson, 2000, p. 175).
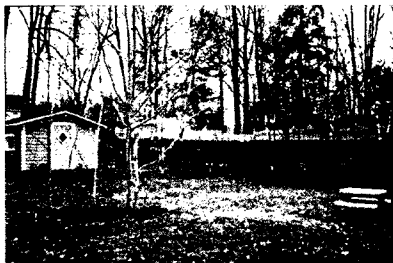
The final act of my inquiry – of the re-location of self – took place the next day. In what felt like a closing of the archive of 75 Heneker St., I brought photographs of older versions of the house (1955, 1987, 2002) to the current owner. I had encountered her on my April 2007 visit to Sherbrooke. She had come out of the house and asked me what I was doing, photographing her house.[104] Following my explanation, she had invited me around the back, and I had been able to take photographs of the yard, from inside the space, rather than outside. I had mentioned that I had older photographs, and that I would mail them to her. Somehow I never did. Perhaps that was because I had wanted to give them to her in person. In the pouring rain, I knocked on the door – the familiar/unfamiliar door. It opened, and I could see inside to the living room, with grandmother and children sitting on their sofa watching television.



I had no curiosity, or interest, in being invited inside (nor was I invited). Instead I took out the photographs and showed them briefly to the woman and her husband, handing them over. Her thanks in my ear, I took my leave, turning only once to take one last photograph. I appreciated the symbolism of this act only later.

**Beyond nostalgia**

When I started my Commonplace Book, I wrote that I was afraid this was just nostalgia. I wanted to be sure to go "beyond nostalgia" as Mitchell and Weber (1999) suggest, looking for the storied narrative that is not "useless longing" (p. 5). My popular understanding of nostalgia then was of sentimentality, of longing certainly, the usefulness of which was questionable.

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[104] On previous rephotography visits, I had knocked on the door, but no one was ever home.

However, Deborah Tall (1993) traces the "revealing history" of nostalgia. Its original meaning was homesickness. It was "described in European medical encyclopedias up until the nineteenth century as fatal" (p. 120). It was particularly rampant in armies and in young women of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, who were sent from their homes to work elsewhere, as maids or other types of servants. This old meaning, new to me, pointed to longing, not as useless but with a purpose.

Tall says the understanding of nostalgia as longing for home then shifted "from being primarily a geographical disease to a psychological one rooted in time" (1993, p. 121). Nostalgia thus became a longing for the past, as it is understood today and often denigrated as retrograde and conservative. Tall and Kathleen Stewart (1988) both suggest that this shift occurred because of a move from place to time as a marker, as we live what Stewart calls "an increasingly fluid and unnamed social life" (1988, p. 227). She suggests that nostalgia posits "a 'once was' in relation to a 'now' [and] creates a frame for meaning... By resurrecting time and place, and a subject *in* time and place, it shatters the surface of an atemporal order and a prefab cultural landscape" (p. 227). Indeed, the potential of the "animating vision of nostalgia" (Hirsch & Spitzer, 2003, p. 83), is used by others as a "regenerative model" (Wiley, 1998, cited in Heddon, 2008, p. 98; see also Ladino, 2004, Mitchell & Weber, 1999) and is not seen to be innately or necessarily retrograde or reactionary. Indeed, Jennifer Ladino suggests nostalgia "can be a mechanism for social change, a model for ethical relationships, and a useful narrative for social and environmental justice" (2004, p. 89). González considers nostalgia "an internally structured lack" (1993, p. 137), which she suggests, can never be filled, because in some ways it never was. In this, she echoes Weber (1991) and his idea that past has never fully taken place. This of course makes the gap a very lively place with which to engage with a placed past "once intimately familiar, now infinitely strange" (Heathfield, 2000, p. 189). Sean Scanlan says that "now, nostalgia may be a style or design or narrative that serves to comment on how memory works. Rather than an end reaction to yearning, it is understood as a technique for provoking a secondary reaction" (2004, p. 4).

In my nostalgic work, then, the past becomes actively illuminated in the corners of places, bringing them up into the light after years, decades, of their languishing in

shadow. Photography is the art and craft of luminescence. Once captured, these images can remain in the light, in the reactivated archive, contributing to the re-membering that felt so necessary. "…the task is not only to remember, but to remember strenuously—explore, decode, and deepen the terrain of memory. Moreover, what is at stake is not only the past, but the present… In memories, too, begin responsibilities" (Hoffman 1997, cited in Tall, 2006, p. 221). Chapman (1997) states that the present can be critiqued and understood through the values and meanings of the past, but this is "dependent on the moment of intervention being recognized" (p. 51), or perhaps in terms of inquiry, provoked.

"Memory and history are not the same," Martha Langford notes (2007, p. 8). Marius Kwint (1999) suggests that the increasing emphasis on memory stems from an understanding that history "should fully admit to its illusory and constructed nature…" and that "for a truer understanding of the significance and causality of the past, we should reckon more with memory, embracing all its subjective viewpoints, since awareness of the past depends on it" (p. 1). In these projects, I have mostly ignored History, or the idea of a collective cultural memory. I have learned, indeed, that the presumed collective memory that my siblings and I should have shared was only faintly collective, and our experience of it was, like Nast and Pile's (1998) description of "place-bodies," both unique and universal. I have in a way approached these childhood spaces with a child's apparently history-less eye.

Sontag suggests, "there is no such thing as collective memory… but there is collective instruction. All memory is individual, unreproducible—it dies with each person. What is called collective memory is not a remembering but a stipulating: that this is important, and this is the story of how it happened, with the pictures that lock the story in our minds" (2003, p. 85/86). History has traditionally been embedded through public photography, memory through private photography. I have been serving "the ends of memory" (Keenan, 1998, p. 63), not History, in my childhood landscapes projects. History may have been better served by my public space photography of the Architectural Garden and the Jim Everett Memorial Park.

Nonetheless, is it our individual responsibility to acknowledge our memory, acknowledge our past and its effect on the present, in an active way? Do we need to

bring the thread forward, to illuminate the corners, to trace the places and of course the people who have formed us? Deborah Tall (2006) asks, "now, my generation of protected children is drowning itself in the unremembered past out of the need for – what?" She answers, "Perhaps some kind of mooring in the wide world of choice. Or atonement for how easy it is to forget the common human lot of suffering" (p. 264).

Robin Moore asks if it is "important that adults remember the places they knew as a child?" (1986, p. 19). He wonders what "the difference [is] between an adult who is able to recall rich and memorable images, and someone who cannot?" (p. 19). In his view, that memory can contribute to our understanding of what needs to be created and available for children now. He adds,

> Children who live exclusively in a secondary media environment – where the present always consists of effortless images of past and future states – inevitably pose a threat to the future of the planet because such images substitute vague dreams for those intuitive values that can only be acquired by live experience of the biosphere. (Moore, 1986, p. 21)

Memory can be an unsteady methodology and an unreliable witness. But combined with the photograph and with place, that unsteady methodology becomes more tangible. Indeed, it is in the staging and performance of memory that the possibility of understanding lies. Public memorializing differs from memory, and has become a commonplace, from the monumental and often ideological (publicly funded memorials) to the small and apparently personal (spontaneous roadside memorials to victims of car accidents). Marita Sturken points out, however, that in these instances photographs become part of "the traffic between personal memory, cultural memory, and history" (1999, p. 178). She gives as an example how personal photographs are left at places of memory like the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial in Washington. These family photographs enter the public sphere in this way and become a form of silent commentary, containing their own ideology.

Memorials, however, are neither memory nor history. Though my photographs are now entered in the "traffic" that Sturken mentions, this thesis is not a memorial. It is an exploration of devices of memory. Aligning photography and place to elicit and evoke memory and narrative, as I have done in these projects, has expanded the repertoire of devices of memory. Place/photograph becomes an artefact that González says "as

either catalyst or mask, herald or code,...will always provoke the subject to decipher them" (1995, p. 136). Provoked to go back, to ride the "re" of re-membering, re-photographing, re-searching, I have created this layered autotopography consisting of materialized memories in the form of photographs, collages, my Commonplace Book, and indeed, this thesis. Beyond these artefacts, however, I have also performed memory through site visits, memory interviews with my siblings, and engaging physically with the creation of the artefacts. The fingering over of memory is a layered, rich and seemingly infinite resource. Annette Kuhn suggests, "memory work is rather like peeling away the layers of an onion that has no core: each level of analysis, while adding more knowledge, greater understanding, also generates further questions" (2007, p. 290).

## Thesis as Commonplace Book

In reviewing my work, I come to the conclusion that this thesis is a Commonplace Book, writ large. It is both an archive and a learning tool, as Commonplace Books were originally intended to be. Materials are created and gathered for contemplation, physically within its pages, and simultaneously, through their choice, positioning, and exploration, the materials are considered analytically. As Philip Dyck (1997) says of the Commonplace Book, "If [it] is an example of the cumulative, it is informed by the analytic." This is one version of what "memory might look like" (Thomas, 1994, cited in Dyck, 1997). In this place photo album, called a thesis and equipped with annotations and references, I have filled out the sparse Allnutt family album. Our move from Sherbrooke to Montreal is not recorded photographically, but through this inquiry, I have sufficiently documented change to re-locate myself, to grasp, to discharge dislocation. I have implanted memory, re-occupied space, and taken up an embodied position and voice, where once they felt lacking.

This Commonplace Book is also autotopography in the same way as I feel Salmon River was: my museum of the self combined with performance through rephotography. That performance was enacted through both the embodied act of photographing on site, and the subsequent, apparently disembodied, act of stepping back and writing the photograph for the ear of the other. Finally I join performance and inquiry by both making and taking my place.

## Things I didn't do

How can I formulate the things I didn't do, but not consider them as limitations? I could call them other possible outcomes, or more things that I could do, or my readers could take up. When I entered my doctoral program, I had gender on my mind. The spaces I ended up inhabiting over the years of my projects naturally brought changes, both personal and professional. I began to internalize an idea of the gendered lens, because I, as a woman, was engaging in these embodied acts of photographic tagging of my environment. This active endeavour was my gendered "position," which didn't need to be investigated. Now in the time of reflection that is inherent in the wrapping up of an inquiry, I see that I did not fully grapple with how the form takes over. A fully reflexive position is, of course, not possible. In the process of reflection one is becoming, and this process is ongoing and endless; this cannot be stopped and examined, because in the examination, more change is occurring. The becoming self can be acknowledged, and indeed is framed in these pages, but the self is not a photograph. It is not still.

In my desire, for instance, to stay away from safety in public space for women, to consciously not explore the "geography of women's fear" (Valentine, 1989 and see Koskela, 1997), I have ignored it almost completely. Deirdre Heddon (2008) admires a 15 mile walking performance project done by Carl Lavery (*Mourning Walk*, "retracing the path his father used to take" (p. 113)), but adds, "I know that if he were me he would continuously be looking over his shoulder and scanning the horizon ahead, rather than contemplating his father. I resent this, of course...." (p. 113). In my choices of spaces to explore in this autotopography inquiry, I have photographed only during the day, and sometimes with company, and as I point out in Chapter 5, I chose bounded spaces. I acknowledge this as one of the normalized safety decisions that girls and women still must make on a daily basis, and it cannot be ignored. However, Hille Koskela suggests that an emphasis on "studying the forms of oppression" doesn't assist us in understanding how "women actively take possession of space in various ways, and actively shape their social space" (1997, p. 316). We can "learn (or re-learn) to be spatially confident" (p. 316). The element of tagging which I experienced in my projects expands possibilities. A non-consumptive activity, photographing allows one to inhabit space, to linger, to be purposeful and extend one's sphere of influence, and further, one's field of seeing.

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Too, when I entered the childhood landscapes portion of my study, I intended to address gender, as well as age and place in the family. As I proceeded into family memories with my siblings, gender interestingly receded. In our description of the ranges we inhabited as children, I began to see that with two exceptions, our ranges coincided. One exception was the Sherbrooke mountain, which Chris remembers visiting by himself; my sister and I have no memories of going to that isolated location. On the other hand, my sister and I remember going to Key Brook, an even further and isolated place. We went with each other, however, not alone, and on at least one occasion, with friends. We all spent time alone in circumstances, as Sara notes, that we might not now consider safe. Gender appears not to have entered my parents' considerations of our possible ranges of exploration – at least memory does not supply that perception. Was middle childhood less gendered then?

Too, there could have been expanded readings of the rural space I entered when I rephotographed Salmon River, or of the social world my siblings and I inhabited growing up in a small city in the fifties in Quebec. I could have pushed at the similarities and differences between our current spaces. There is always more to do, more questions to unfold. However, I value the things I did accomplish in this inquiry.

**Usefulness and resonance: The ear of the other**

**Usefulness**

The criteria I apply to my work are usefulness and resonance. The usefulness of this inquiry can be seen in its playing out of ways of using the tools of photography to construct a place story. Following Bachelard's advice, I have spoken of my "roads …crossroads…roadside benches; I have mapped my "lost fields and meadows" (1969a, p. 11). Acknowledging how we make place and place makes us, I have gone beyond words to mark the places of memory through photography, and then used those visuals to generate new textual understandings. I have created a (re)newed archive by approaching spaces that were previously unknown to me in a attempt to show how topographical intimacy can be sown, and does not have to be waited for, or earned through time. I have used the double vision of both research participant and researcher. I hope I've shown evidence of the meaning that can be seized through these processes. As a woman,

tagging some of my public space environments through photography has been a forceful experience. There is an empowerment inherent in this process of laying claim to our place in the world, no matter how temporarily, how fleeting, through this framing, identifying, and cataloguing.

My Commonplace Book is only one model of place "reading lessons." There could be many more. Recent inquiries (among others, Kuhn & Emiko McAllister (2006), O'Donoghue (2005, 2007), and Knowles & Thomas (2002)) show varied ways to evoke and utilize memory, place and photography. In these studies, place and photography proved to be valuable tools in identifying structural influences on identity. As well, they speak to Sontag's contention that memory is individual, though the uses for the staging and performance of memory can be collective and cultural, and interrogate that "stipulating" that Sontag describes (2003).

The difficulty remains of showing a personal process. That performance cannot always be fully seen. Deirdre Heddon makes that amply clear in her re-performance of Mike Pearson's "Bubbling Tom" performance. Because she had not been able to participate in Pearson's performance, but had only read about it, she felt she wanted to know more. "I was not there, and yet I love this performance. I was not there, can I write about this performance?" (2002b, p. 175). Challenged by these questions, Heddon followed in Pearson's footsteps (with his knowledge), travelling the trail of his writing, talking to some of the villagers who had attended his performance, and showing us photographs of herself in those places. She calls it "performing the archive" and says "this is for the performer, the spectators, and for those who, like me, were not there, but wish they had been" (2002b, p. 174). Not only does Heddon show the photographs that were taken of her in this performance, she shows the pages from Pearson's text (2000) which refer to each of her(his) photographed locales.

This explicit identifying of the ephemerality of a performance makes a vital point about arts-based research. One could also extend this idea of the ephemeral to all research processes. Once they are completed, the evidence disappears, and we as the audience are left with the traces, the results. Heddon's re-performance pushes at the edges of the idea of replicability and reliability. The question that she asks – "I was not there, can I write about this performance?" – is a very profound one. I have trusted that

the academic companions I have referred to, and relied on, in this knowledge journey were indeed reliable. But I wasn't there when they did their work, and I only have their traces as evidence of it. Their writing is a surrogate for the work itself, just as this thesis is a surrogate for the process of making and the experience of doing that I have engaged in. But the more visible their doing, the more trustworthy I find their surrogate.

Thus in this thesis, I have attempted to make visible my decision-making about processes and my struggles with representation in bringing place to the fore. As Geertz says, "It is a matter of giving shape to things: exactness, force, intelligibility" (1996, p. 262). Place's place in our lives needs to be given shape. Its influence on the forming of our identities needs to be explored, acknowledged, taken into account, and not taken for granted. And since one can't live in the world in general, paying attention to the particular involves educating ourselves and those with whom we interact about the ways and means of paying attention, so we can push aside the palimpsest to glimpse beginnings, inscriptions and possibilities.

### Resonance

Resonance addresses the ear of the other. Who is that other? The others in these projects are not only the reader, they are visibly my siblings, and less visibly, my parents. When I tell 'my' story, it is always inevitably the story of others. As Riggins (1994) notes, a partial story is told. But all stories are partial; one can never bring in the entire nuance, the detail, photographic or textual, that would tell the 'whole' story, the 'real' story. That would only be my 'real' story, in any case. "Ingeniously, we know there is always more to know" (Richardson, 1994, p. 518). And, like Riggins, part of my 'real' story is the relationship I have with these others, in which respect and remembrance play simultaneously.

And when I speak of 'my' place, it is not only my place. As Deirdre Heddon notes of her re-performance of Mike Pearson's work, "space is not owned and so, ' paradoxically in a site-specific performance, it also speaks others, speaks differently, and is spoken otherwise. It is never only Pearson's actions, memories, events, that are recited. There are always more" (2002b, p. 185). Just as she found echoes of her own childhood landscapes as she travelled his, so too I suggest that the readers of my

autotopography can find ways to situate themselves in this work, and explore their own positionalities. Like Pearson, I hope this work brings about "other stories, and stories about stories" (Pearson, 2000, p. 176), and an awareness of the placedness of our stories. Stories alone are not enough, but the awareness they generate can increase our sensitivity in our encounters with others, in particular others not familiar with our "heres." Opened up to other "heres," we are alerted to difference(s).

Whether the reader is one of my siblings who is familiar with these spaces, or someone who has never, and will never, experience these particular places, there is hopefully a resonant quality to my photographic explorations that can be useful and perhaps inspiring. For it was through the doing – the place-visiting, place-photographing, place-reflecting and place-writing – that insights, personal and cultural, were engendered. Eudora Welty, in speaking of the camera, says, "… It was what I used, at any rate, and like any tool, it used me" (1996, p. 164). The same could be said of memory and place, and therein lie the challenges and rewards of the exploration.

In memory, that felt recall of all our long-gone here-and-nows,
what matters is what matter *is:* the palpable presence
of the palpable present, the perfect
flawfulness of the unabsolute
                    held.

            Nick Bozanic (2005)





a common story
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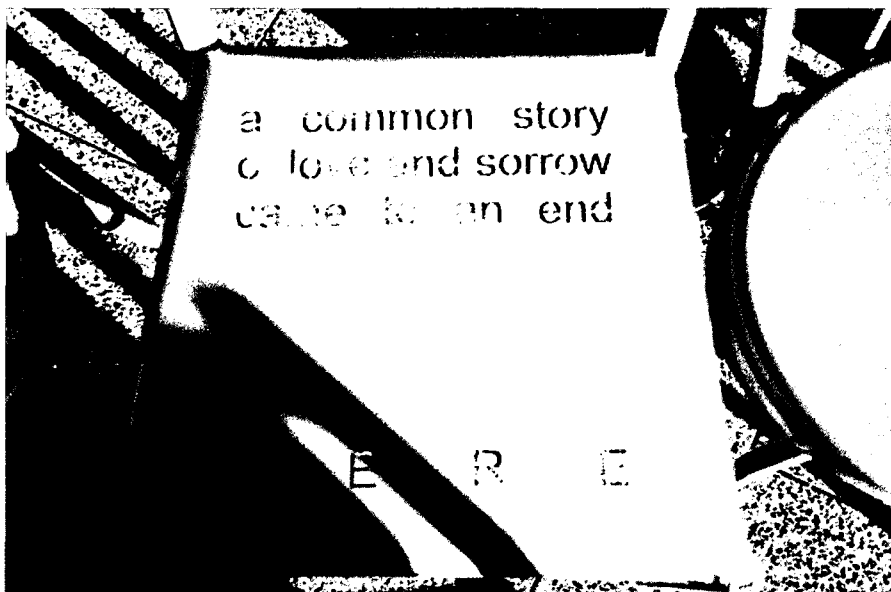
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### c) Consent form: Sibling participants

Dear participant:

This part of my research project asks the following question: What influence do our childhood landscapes have on our current landscapes and identity? What can we learn from looking at siblings' memories of their childhood landscapes?

I hope that this research project will contribute to an understanding of the ways in which adults remember their childhood landscapes, and the meaning these childhood landscapes hold in the present. I am also interested in the ways that photographs, both of past and present places, might contribute to the meaning of place.

The research will be participation in short interviews during which I will ask you questions about your memories of your childhood landscapes. These interviews will be taped, with your permission. We will also look at available photographs of our childhood landscapes, and will use these photographs to provoke memory and association. Photographs of your current spaces may also be considered. If you permit, some of these photographs will form part of the "text" of the thesis.

Being a participant in this project will require a certain time commitment and a willingness to share your experiences verbally. Your identity cannot be kept confidential since a major portion of this research will include my own memories, and you will be identified as my siblings. However, I will ask you if what I have heard in the interviews is what you intended. Transcripts will be sent to you for your reactions and responses and you may add, delete or modify anything that you believe does not represent you or your ideas. I will be the only one listening to and transcribing these tapes. The tapes will be returned to you to do with as you wish, following the completion of the study.

I will not use a passage of your direct spoken or written words, or any photographs, without your express permission. I will also share research findings with all sibling participants. You may withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason.

If you agree to join the research project, do you agree that the information I gather from the taped interviews may be used as research data? _____

Do you agree to the conditions? _____

Please sign this consent form as your consent will allow me to proceed with my research project.

Signature: _____

Please print name: _____

Date: _____

**d) Consent form: Park participants**

Dear participant:

This part of my research project asks the following question: How do we experience public space? What is the difference between the perceived intention of an architect or designer of a public space, and the experience of a user of that space?

I hope that this part of my research project will contribute to an understanding of the differences between design intention and user experience in a public space.

The research will be participation in a short interview during which I will ask you questions about your experience and feelings of being a user of this public space. This interview will be taped, with your permission.

Being a participant in this project requires a very short time commitment and a willingness to share your experiences verbally. Your identity will be kept confidential by using a pseudonym. There will be no reference to any identifying characteristics.

I will be the only one listening to and transcribing this tape. The tape can also be returned to you to do if you wish, following the completion of the study.

If you agree to join the research project, do you agree that the information I gather from the taped interview may be used as research data? _____

Do you agree to the conditions? _____

Please sign this consent form as your consent will allow me to proceed with my research project.

Signature: _____

Please print name: _____

Date: _____

_____

My email address:

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# Appendix B. List of photographs

Date indicates when photograph was taken.
All photographs since 1987 taken by S. Allnutt unless otherwise indicated.

**Page**

# Appendix C. List of collages

Original size of collage is indicated following date.

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