

# LOOKING AT LANDSCAPE: THE UNEASY PLEASURES OF POWER

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Landscape is a central term in geographical studies because it refers to one of the discipline's most enduring interests: the relation between the natural environment and human society, or, to rephrase, between Nature and Culture. Landscape is a term especially associated with cultural geography, and although 'literally [the landscape] is the scene within the range of the observer's vision',<sup>1</sup> its conceptualization has changed through history. By the interwar period, for its leading exponents, such as Otto Schlüter in Germany, Jean Brunhes in France and Carl Sauer in the USA, the term 'landscape' was increasingly interpreted as a formulation of the dynamic relations between a society or culture and its environment: '*the process of human activity in time and area*'.<sup>2</sup> The interpretation of these processes depended in particular on fieldwork, and fieldwork is all about looking: 'the good geographers have first been to see, then they have stopped to think and to study the conclusions of others before finally recording their findings for us in maps and print'.<sup>3</sup> Just as fieldwork is central not only to cultural geography but also to the discipline as a whole, however, so too the visual is central to claims to geographical knowledge:<sup>4</sup> a president of the Association of American Geographers has argued that 'good regional geography, and I suspect most good geography of any stripe, begins by looking'.<sup>5</sup> The absence of knowledge, which is the condition for continuing to seek to know, is often metaphorically indicated in geographical discourse by an absence of insight, by mystery or by myopia; conversely, the desire for full knowledge is indicated by transparency, visibility and perception. Seeing and knowing are often conflated.

More recent work on landscape has begun to question the visibility of traditional cultural geography, however, as part of a wider critique of the latter's neglect of the power relations within which landscapes are embedded.<sup>6</sup> Some cultural geographers suggest that the discipline's visibility is not simple observation but, rather, is a sophisticated ideological device that enacts systematic erasures. They have begun to problematize the term 'landscape' as a reference to relations between society and the environment through contextual studies of the concept as it emerged and developed historically, and they have argued that it refers not only to the relationships between different objects caught in the fieldworker's gaze, but that it also implies a specific way of looking. They interpret landscape not as a material consequence of interactions between a society and an environment, observable in the field by the more-or-less objective gaze of the geographer, but rather as a gaze which itself helps to make sense of a particular relationship between society and land. They have stressed the importance of the look to the idea of landscape and have argued that landscape is a way of seeing which we learn; as a consequence, they argue that the gaze of the fieldworker is part of the problematic, not a tool of analysis. Indeed, they name this gaze at landscape a 'visual ideology', because it uncritically shows only the relationship of the powerful to their environment. This is an important critique of the unequal social relations implicit in one element of geographical epistemology, and the first section of this chapter examines these arguments.

Questions of gender and sexuality have not been raised by this newer work, however. This seems an important omission: the previous chapter cited Fitzsimmons's comment that cultural geography retained an interest in Nature, and also noted the feminization of Nature in geographical discourse. A consequence has been that, historically, in geographical discourse, landscapes are often seen in terms of the female body and the beauty of Nature. Here, for example, is one of the quotations from the previous chapter expanded to highlight the parallels that it makes between 'live, supple, sensitive, and active' Nature and a female body:

It is [in] the face and features of Mother-Earth that we geographers are mainly interested. We must know something of the general principles of geology, as painters have to know something of the anatomy of the human or animal body. . . the characteristic of the face and features of the Earth most worth learning about, knowing and understanding is their beauty.<sup>7</sup>

Stoddart's celebration of geography's exploration and fieldwork tradition similarly conflates the exploration of Nature with the body of Woman; for example, his frontispiece is an eighteenth-century engraving representing Europe, Africa and America as three naked women.<sup>8</sup> This feminization of what is looked at does matter, because it is one half of what Berger characterizes as the dominant visual regime of white heterosexual masculinism: 'women appear', he says, but 'men act'.<sup>9</sup> This particular masculine position is to look actively, possessively, sexually and pleasurably, at women as objects. Now, Berger's comments refer to the female nude in Western art; but I will suggest in this chapter that the feminization of landscape in geography allows many of the arguments made about the masculinity of the gaze at the nude to work in the context of geography's landscape too, particularly in the context of geography's pleasure in landscape. The second section of this chapter suggests that geography's look at landscape draws on not only a complex discursive transcoding between Woman and Nature, as the previous chapter argued, but also on a specific masculine way of seeing: the men acting in the context of geography are the fieldworkers, and the Woman appearing is the landscape. This compelling figure of Woman both haunts a masculinist spectator of landscape and constitutes him.

The pleasures that geographers feel when they look at landscape are not innocent, then, but nor are they simple. The pleasure of the masculine gaze at beautiful Nature is tempered by geography's scientism, as the last chapter suggested. The gaze of the scientist has been described by Keller and Grontkowski as part of masculinist rationality,<sup>10</sup> and to admit an emotional response to Nature would destroy the anonymity on which that kind of scientific objectivity depends. Keller and Grontkowski trace the tradition of associating knowledge with vision back to Plato, and they argue that by the seventeenth century the equivalence of knowing with seeing was a commonplace of scientific discourse. It remains so today. But when Descartes discovered that the eye was a passive lens, in order to retain an understanding of the accession to knowledge as active he was forced to separate the seeing intellect from the seeing eye. This was one aspect of the split between the mind and the body so much associated with his work, and it rendered the objects of the gaze separate from the looking subject: 'Having made the eye purely passive, all intellectual activity is reserved to the "I", which, however, is radically separate from the body which houses it'.<sup>11</sup> Such disembodiment separated knowing from desire, and protected men's scientific neutrality from Woman's wild nature. For Keller, the scientific gaze is another

aspect of the distanced, disembodied objectivity of science. However, as chapter 4 described, geographers are constituted as sensitive artists as well as objective scientists in their approach to Nature and landscape. This contradiction produces a conflict between desire and fear in visual forms. It creates a tension between distance from the object of the gaze and merger with it, which is at work both in the conflict between knowledge and pleasure – a conflict between ‘a highly individual response’ and ‘a disinterested search for evidence’<sup>12</sup> – and also within the pleased gaze. These complex contradictions between and within (social-)scientific objectivity and aesthetic sensitivity disrupt cultural geography’s claim to know landscape, as the second section argues. These disruptions are elaborated there through the work of psychoanalytic feminists who suggest that ‘the specificity of visual performance and address has . . . a privileged relation to issues of sexuality’.<sup>13</sup> This second section is adopting one of the tactics outlined in the previous chapter, then – finding contradictions in the Same. I argue that the structure of aesthetic masculinity which studies landscape is inherently unstable, subverted by its own desire for the pleasures that it fears.

The third section uses another tactic of critique, and looks at various attempts to re-present a different relation between subject and environment from other spectating positions. None draws on the structure which posits Woman as Nature in order to establish Man as Culture, and all stress differences between women. They begin to imagine different kinds of landscape.

### **Landscape as Visual Ideology**

Recent critiques of the landscape idea in geography insist that landscape is a form of representation and not an empirical object. As Daniels and Cosgrove remark, ‘a landscape is a cultural image, a pictorial way of representing, structuring or symbolising surroundings’.<sup>14</sup> Whether written or painted, grown or built, a landscape’s meanings draw on the cultural codes of the society for which it was made. These codes are embedded in social power structures, and theorization of the relationship between culture and society by these new cultural geographers has so far drawn on the humanist marxist tradition of Antonio Gramsci, Raymond Williams, E. P. Thompson and John Berger. All of these authors see the material and symbolic dimensions of the production and reproduction of society as inextricably intertwined.<sup>15</sup> Cosgrove,

one of the most prominent theorists of the new critique of the landscape idea, defines culture as:

... symbolisation, grounded in the material world as symbolically appropriated and produced. In class societies, where surplus production is appropriated by the dominant group, symbolic production is likewise seized as hegemonic class culture to be imposed on all classes.<sup>16</sup>

In his work, landscape becomes a part of that hegemonic culture, a concept which helps to order society into hierarchical class relations.

Cosgrove points out that landscape first emerged as a term in fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century Italy, and he argues that it was bound up with both Renaissance theories of space and with the practical appropriation of space. Euclidean geometry was 'the guarantor of certainty in spatial conception, organisation and representation',<sup>17</sup> and its recovery paved the way for Alberti's explication of the technique of three-dimensional perspective in 1435. Other geometrical skills were being developed contemporaneously, especially by the urban merchant class, and these too involved the accurate representation of space: calculating the volume and thus the value of packaged commodities; map-making to guide the search for goods and markets; and surveying techniques to plot the estates that the bourgeoisie were buying in the countryside. All of these spatial techniques were implicated in relations of power and ownership. Cosgrove is particularly interested in Alberti because, using his manual, artists could render depth realistically, and so establish a particular viewpoint for the spectator in their painting – a single, fixed point of the bourgeois individual. (Cosgrove does remark that this individual was male, but does not develop the point.<sup>18</sup>) From this position, the spectator controlled the spatial organization of a composition, and Cosgrove argues that this was central to landscape images. Merchants often commissioned paintings of their newly acquired properties, and in these canvases, through perspective, they enjoyed perspectival as well as material control over their land. Cosgrove concludes that the idea of landscape is patrician because it is seen and understood from the social and visual position of the landowner. Other writers agree and emphasize the erasure of the waged labour relation in landscape painting. In the context of eighteenth-century English landscape painting, for example, Barrell notes that the labourers in these images are denied full humanity, and Bryson argues that the fine brushwork technique favoured in Western art until the late nineteenth century effaces the mark of the artist as

waged worker.<sup>19</sup> It is argued then that landscape is meaningful as a 'way of seeing' bound into class relations, and Cosgrove describes landscape as a 'visual ideology' in the sense that it represents only a partial world view.<sup>20</sup>

This is an extremely important critique of the ideologies implicit in geographical discourse. Its strengths are evident in the interpretation shared by cultural geographers of the mid-eighteenth-century double portrait of Mr and Mrs Andrews, by the English artist Thomas Gainsborough (Illustration 2).<sup>21</sup> In their discussions of this image, geographers concur that pleasure in the right-hand side of the canvas – those intense green fields, the heaviness of the sheaves of corn, the English sky threatening rain – is made problematic by the two figures on the left, Mr and Mrs Andrews. Berger, whose discussion of this painting geographers follow, insists that the fact that this couple owned the fields and trees about them is central to its creation and therefore to its meaning: 'they are landowners and their proprietary attitude towards what surrounds them is visible in their stance and their expressions'.<sup>22</sup> Their ownership of land is celebrated in the substantiality of the oil paints used to represent it, and in the vista opening up beyond them, which echoes in visual form the freedom to move over property which only landowners could enjoy. The absence in the painting's content of the people who work the fields, and the absence in its form of the signs of its production by an artist working for a fee on a commission, can be used to support Cosgrove's claim that landscape painting is a form of visual ideology: it denies the social relations of waged labour under capitalism. *Mr and Mrs Andrews*, then, is an image on which geographers are agreed: it is a symptom of the capitalist property relations that legitimate and are sanctioned by the visual sweep of a landscape prospect.

However, the painting of Mr and Mrs Andrews can also be read in other ways. In particular, it is possible to prise the couple – 'the landowners' – apart, and to differentiate between them. Although both figures are relaxed and share the sense of partnership so often found in eighteenth-century portraits of husband and wife, their unity is not entire: they are given rather different relationships to the land around them. Mr Andrews stands, gun on arm, ready to leave his pose and go shooting again; his hunting dog is at his feet, already urging him away. Meanwhile, Mrs Andrews sits impassively, rooted to her seat with its wrought iron branches and tendrils, her upright stance echoing that of the tree directly behind her. If Mr Andrews seems at any moment able to stride off into the vista, Mrs Andrews looks planted to the spot. This helps me to remember that, *contra* Berger, these two people are



Illustration 2 Mr and Mrs Andrews, by Thomas Gainsborough.

not both landowners – only Mr Andrews owns the land. His potential for activity, his free movement over his property, is in stark contrast not only to the harsh penalties awaiting poachers during the same freedom of movement over his land (as Berger notes), but also to the frozen stillness of Mrs Andrews. Moreover, the shadow of the oak tree over her refers to the family tree she was expected to propagate and nurture; like the fields she sits beside, her role was to reproduce, and this role is itself naturalized by the references to trees and fields.<sup>23</sup> As chapter 2 noted, this period saw the consolidation of an argument that women were more ‘natural’ than men. Medical, scientific, legal and political discourses concurred, and contextualize the image of Mr and Mrs Andrews in terms of a gendered difference in which the relationship to the land is a key signifier. Landscape painting then involves not only class relations, but also gender relations. Mr Andrews is represented as the owner of the land, while Mrs Andrews is painted almost as a part of that still and exquisite landscape: the tree and its roots bracketing her on one side, and the metal branches of her seat on the other.

Many feminist art historians have argued that heterosexual masculinism structures images of femininity: following that claim, my interpretation of the figure of Mrs Andrews stresses her representation as a natural mother. Obviously, her representation also draws on discourses of class and even nation. I emphasize her femininity, however, because there are feminist arguments which offer a critique not just of the discourses that pin Mrs Andrews to her seat, but also of the gaze that renders her as immobile, as natural, as productive and as decorative as the land. Such arguments consider the dynamics of a masculine gaze and its pleasures. The next subsection introduces their claim that more is involved in looking at landscape than property relations.

### *Woman, landscape and Nature*

This subsection begins to examine the gaze which sees landscapes, and it focuses on the construction of the landscape as feminine. I concentrate mainly on feminist interpretations of nineteenth-century landscape paintings in Europe and North America. The massive social, economic and political upheavals in those places during that period – upheavals which included the colonial explorations through which geography developed as a discipline – meant that many of the schema previously used by artists to represent the world seemed increasingly outmoded, and new iconographies were sought to articulate the



changes producing and reproducing the lives of art's audience, the bourgeoisie. By the mid-nineteenth century, the emergence of this new public for paintings was fuelling a vigorous debate about the role of art: art was drawn into debates about social, political and moral standards which might structure the emerging modern world and, as feminists have remarked, central to these wider issues was the figure of Woman – fallen, pure, decadent, spiritual.<sup>24</sup> Parker and Pollock suggest that the very importance attached to Art in the realm of Culture reasserted the association of women with the natural:

... woman is body, is nature opposed to culture, which, in turn, is represented by the very act of transforming nature, that is, the female model or motif, into the ordered forms and colour of a cultural artefact, a *work* of art.<sup>25</sup>

Woman becomes Nature, and Nature Woman, and both can thus be burdened with men's meaning and invite interpretation by masculinist discourse: for example, chapter 3 has already discussed the way in which feminine figures can stand as symbols of places. It should be emphasized that the 'naturalization' of some women is asserted more directly than that of others: allegorical figures especially, but also, in bourgeois and racist society, working-class and black women.<sup>26</sup> Thus the visual encoding of nineteenth-century Western hegemonic masculinist constructions of femininity, sexuality, nature and property are at their most overtly intertwined in the landscapes with figures set in the colonies of Europe and America. To take an example relevant to one of geography's heroic self-images, Theweleit has suggested that the image of the South Sea maiden 'began to construct the body that would constitute a mysterious goal for men whose desires were armed for an imminent voyage, a body that was more enticing than all the world put together',<sup>27</sup> and perhaps the most well-known paintings which fuse beautiful, sexual, fertile, silent and mysterious Woman with a gorgeous, generous, lush Nature are Gauguin's paintings of Tahitian women. In perfect stillness, they offer the produce of their island to him in the same gesture as they offer themselves, their breasts painted like fruits and flowers.<sup>28</sup> The first French encounter with Tahiti is described by Stoddart as one of the founding moments of scientific geography, and the encounter that he chooses to elaborate is a sexual one. Tahitian women represent the enticing and inviting land to be explored, mapped, penetrated and known.<sup>29</sup> This subsection concentrates on the representation of female figures in landscapes, then, in order to examine one moment of the complex transcoding of

femininity and Nature in the field of vision. I suggest that, as well as contextualizing stories of geography's beginnings, the conflation of Woman and Nature can also say something about contemporary cultural geography's visual pleasure in landscape.

Lynda Nead has demonstrated the complexity of the social relations which were mediated in images of the landscapes at the heart of Empire, and she stresses the importance of gender relations to the representation of both class and nation. Nead suggests that, in the face of the transformations of the Victorian era, 'confirmation and reassurance . . . were two of the most important functions of nineteenth-century cultural discourse',<sup>30</sup> and one of the most resonant symbols in England was that of the village in the countryside. The social stability associated with the village – people and land in traditional harmony – was so strong that by the 1840s landscape painting was for many art critics a contender as the truly national art genre of England.<sup>31</sup> A contrast between the town and the country has a long tradition in English culture, of course, but by the mid-nineteenth century, despite the continuing arguments for the urban as the centre of civilization and progress, images of the countryside showed a rural idyll which gained much of its impact in opposition to representations of the city as polluted and depraved.<sup>32</sup> The fields and villages of England were painted as embodying all the virtues that the towns had lost – stability, morality and tranquility – and social harmony was fundamental to this discursive construction. The rural idyll was envisioned as a village community. Everyone knew their place, and the harmony of such a community was centrally represented through 'natural' gender differences. Ideas about natural order were epitomized in the 'natural' difference between men and women, with women naturally natural mothers. Nochlin stresses the importance of the rural working mother figure to the rhetoric of Nature and the natural in her discussion of nineteenth-century French paintings of peasant life: 'The peasant woman, as an elemental, untutored – hence eminently "natural" female – is the ideal signifier for the notion of beneficent maternity'.<sup>33</sup> And Nochlin describes how the stress on the naturalness of this role led to peasant women being equated directly with the land and animals they tend in many of these genre scenes – both were shown as essentially reproductive.

The supposed closeness of women to Nature was also explicit in other painting genres of the period, particularly those in which classical, fantastical or allegorical women appear surrounded by wild Nature. Dijkstra has catalogued these imaginary scenes in European and American nineteenth-century art.<sup>34</sup> Often nude, in England these

images of women required a classical gloss to withstand the puritanism of some critics, although bourgeois patrons adored them.<sup>35</sup> Elsewhere, in Europe and America, less excuse was needed to paint nudes: sleep was a popular allegory allowing scenes of women in unself-conscious abandon, oblivious to the spectator's gaze. In the eyes of nineteenth-century morality, such sexual potential brought these women excitingly close to Nature, and they are found in fields and woods throughout late nineteenth-century bourgeois art: 'Passive but fertile, they personify what had come to be a standard conception of woman as the infinitely receptive, seed-sheltering womb of a sweltering earth'.<sup>36</sup> As nymphs and dryads they entwined themselves in trees, or lay on the leaf-covered earth, languid and passive, so that, according to Dijkstra's somewhat over-empathetic account, 'we can almost hear them call to us like animals waiting to be fed'.<sup>37</sup> In a final iconographic twist, women became allegories of nature itself; for the seasons, for weather, for the time of day, for flowers.<sup>38</sup> In making such a parallel between Woman and Nature these paintings offered the possibility that women could be used as Nature was: 'did not the earth, nature herself, meekly permit her body to be plowed, seeded, stripped, and abused by man?'<sup>39</sup> Nature and Woman were equally vulnerable.

This equivalence between Woman and Nature leads Armstrong to compare the female nude in Western art directly to a landscape:

The female nude, when free of narrative situations, is most often constituted frontally and horizontally – as a kind of landscape, its significant part the torso, its limbs merely elongations of the line created by the supine, stretched-out torso.<sup>40</sup>

The female figure represents landscape, and landscape a female torso, visually in part through their pose: paintings of Woman and Nature often share the same topography of passivity and stillness. The comparison is also made through the association of both land and Woman with reproduction, fertility and sexuality, free from the constraints of Culture. Incorporating all of these associations, both Woman and Nature are vulnerable to the desires of men. Armstrong examines this vulnerability by arguing that if Art and the spectator constitute both Woman and Nature as what they work on and interpret, they do so especially by looking at both in a similar manner. Both are made to invite the same kind of observation. Rarely do the women in landscape images look out from the canvas at the viewer as an equal. Their gaze is often elsewhere: oblivious to their exposure, they offer no resistance to the regard of the spectator. Perhaps they will be looking in a mirror,

allowing the viewer to enjoy them as they apparently enjoy themselves. If they acknowledge the spectator/artist, they do so with a look of invitation. The viewer's eye can move over the canvas at will, just as it can wander across a landscape painting, with the same kind of sensual pleasure. Here is another parallel between Woman and landscape: the techniques of perspective used to record landscapes were also used to map female nudes, and the art genre of naked women emerged in the same period as did landscape painting (Illustration 3).

One of the earliest discussions of this kind of visual power over the representation of women was Berger's.<sup>41</sup> Like his reading of *Mr and Mrs Andrews*, his arguments focus on the question of ownership. Speaking of the woman in a nude painting, he says that 'this nakedness is not, however, an expression of her own feelings; it is a sign of her submission to the owner's feelings or demands'.<sup>42</sup> Just as he argues that the painting of a landscape in oils was a sensuous celebration of land ownership, so he claims that the representation of a woman in oils turns her too into a commodity, passive and prostrate, able only to welcome the gaze of the owner of the canvas. Being an owner gives material and visual power over property, whether that be land or the image of a woman.

Feminist art historians have acknowledged the force of Berger's account, but they suggest that not only the commodification of art and sex (and land) is involved in 'the landscape of the reclining torso';<sup>43</sup> so too are the (hetero)sexual fantasies of both artist and spectator. It is the imagined and desired sexuality of the female nude that is offered to the (implicitly masculine) spectator. Nochlin was one of the first feminists to argue that the sexuality of the Western female nude was represented only through masculine desires:

As far as one knows, there simply exists no art, and certainly no high art, in the nineteenth century based upon women's erotic needs, wishes, or fantasies. Whether the erotic object be breasts or buttocks, shoes or corsets, a matter of pose or of prototype, the imagery of sexual delight or provocation has always been created about women for men's enjoyment, by men.<sup>44</sup>

This means that the sensual topography of land and skin is mapped by a gaze which is eroticized as masculine and heterosexual. This masculine gaze sees a feminine body which requires interpreting by the cultured knowledgeable look; something to own, and something to give pleasure. The same sense of visual power as well as pleasure is at

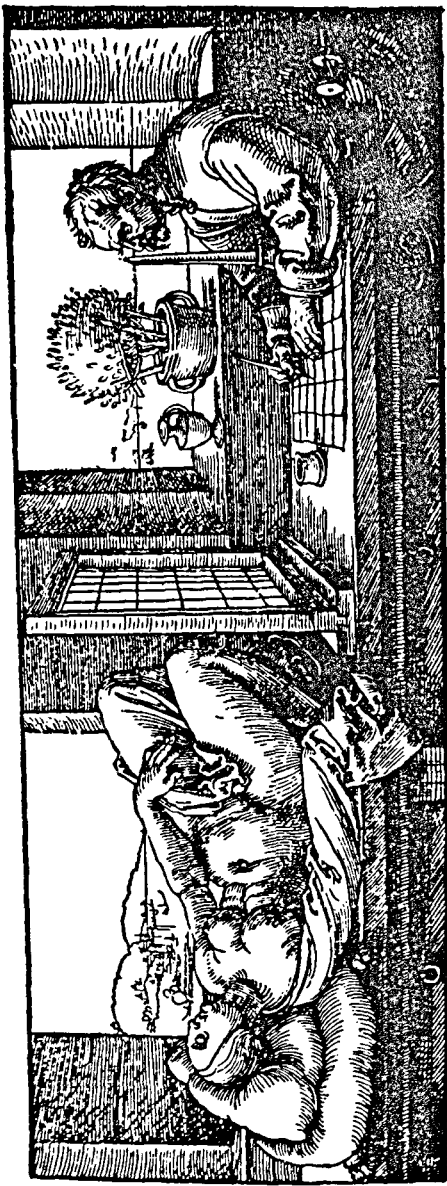


Illustration 3 A Draughtsman Drawing a Nude, by Albrecht Dürer.

work as the eye traverses both field and flesh: the masculine gaze is of knowledge and desire.

This discussion of the visual representation of women and landscape has concentrated on the complex construction of images of 'natural' Woman as the objects of male desire. I have argued that Nature and Woman are represented through masculinist fantasies, and that makes looking pleasurable. Women are seen as closer to Nature than men because of the desirable sexuality given to them in these images and other discourses. In a rare and welcome discussion of pleasure in landscape images, Daniels reveals this desire at work.<sup>45</sup> Noting Berger's claim that painting has an energy which pulls the viewer further from the visible *status quo* than they could manage alone, he suggests that images of the countryside evoke deep and pleasurable emotional responses which can empower; and this pleasure is described in Berger's words, as 'a going further than he could have achieved alone, towards a prey, a Madonna, a sexual pleasure, a landscape, a face, a different world'.<sup>46</sup> This conflation of hunting, a virgin and the single male orgasm stands as a summary of the pleasure of landscape. Pleasure in landscape, it appears, is for straight men's eyes only.

### *A blind spot in geographers' ways of seeing*

There is a great reluctance among geographers to engage critically with this masculine pleasure, even though pleasure in the landscapes encountered during fieldwork is, as the previous chapter commented, frequently admitted (even erotic pleasure is occasionally conceded). Daniels, for example, only prostrates himself before the aesthetic power of landscapes in speechless admiration: he seems to share Tuan's belief that, in confronting the mystic power of art, 'the proper response is silence'.<sup>47</sup> The critical evasion of a pleasure described as a fundamental human experience aligns this newer cultural geography with the discipline's aesthetic masculinity.

The refusal to address the pleasure which marks this cultural geography as masculinist is enabled in part by the ideological notion of Art as the ultimate form of human expression: its pleasure is assumed to be untainted by the specificity of social relations. It is also enabled by the use of the metaphor of landscape as text. The visual, new cultural geographers argue, can be interpreted only if it is understood as textual and then read.<sup>48</sup> Texts may include visual images – the techniques of geometry and perspective learnt from books, for example, in the Italian Renaissance – as well as written political, economic or cultural texts, and the metaphor has been detailed by Barnes and Duncan:

... a landscape possesses a similar objective fixity to that of a written text. It also becomes detached from the intentions of its original authors, and in terms of social and psychological impact and material consequences the various readings of landscapes matter more than any authorial intentions. In addition, the landscape has an importance beyond the initial situation for which it was constructed, addressing a potentially wide range of readers. In short, landscapes are characterized by all those features that Ricoeur identifies as definitive of a text.<sup>49</sup>

The meaning of any landscape/text is open to interpretation and contestation, they imply: the author of the landscape/text is dead. But then I find their stress on the fixity of the landscape/text puzzling. Obviously most landscapes are physically solid, but this surely matters little to geographers so concerned with meaning and culture. But if meaning is not stable, what does 'objective fixity' mean? The 'concretization' of the landscape/text is not an uncommon claim, and Short, for example, suggests that texts 'are language made solid, conversations frozen in print and picture'.<sup>50</sup> I suggest that the notion of solidity is necessary in order to imply the possibility of certain knowledge about landscape. For in all of this work the only representations of landscape which seem able to retain their interpretive certainty (overtly at least) are those of the geographers themselves. The deflection of the notion of contested texts away from geographers' own writing is made explicitly by Barnes and Duncan when they remark that 'to understand critically *our own* representations, and also those of others, we must therefore know the kinds of factors bearing upon *an author* that makes an account come out the way it does'.<sup>51</sup> The move from a personalized 'our' to an abstract 'author' shifts the focus of this argument about the specificity of texts away from geographers and towards somebody else. This removes the geographer from the interpretive rules that he applies to the texts of others, and renders him invincible as an author – all-seeing and all-knowing. He can reveal the contestation over another landscape image, and in so doing establishes the acuity and insight of his own reading. As Burgess has remarked in the context of a discussion about postmodern built landscapes, 'the analyst remains in the dominant position of telling readers what these landscapes mean for the people who purchase and live in them'.<sup>52</sup> Removing himself also makes him invisible, because his texts then remain part of the anonymous voice of hegemonic geographical discourse. The texts of the new cultural geography remain, overtly at least, unmarked: (embodied) specificity is banished and distant authority put in its place. The metaphor of landscape as text works to establish an authoritative

reading, and to maintain that authority whenever emotion threatens to erupt and mark the author as a feeling subject. Knowledge/texts/evidence are asserted over and against emotion. Daniels himself uses text to staunch his own admission of desire: he repeats the quotation from Berger twice, almost like a talisman against the disruption of which it speaks. Those few words name that pleasure for Daniels, and their reiteration seems to stabilize it, delimit its impact, and ground it so that knowledgeable discussion can proceed around it. The textual metaphor aims to stabilize disruptions and demonstrate learning and sensitivity: landscape textualized renders geographers' knowledge exhaustive. It performs as another example of aesthetic masculinity in geography.

Textualizing landscape is an attempt to deny the phallogentrism of the geographic gaze, while also establishing a specific masculinity as the norm through which to access visual knowledge. The revelation of the masculinity of the gaze at landscape is thus highly disruptive to cultural geography's authoritative claims to interpret landscape, and within the dualistic structure of geographical knowledge it encourages a retreat back to a disinterested and therefore disembodied search for evidence and truth. This is geography's tense oscillation between knowledge and pleasure. Visual pleasure is seen as something disruptive, and its persistence leads to cultural geographers' suspicion of landscape as secretive, ambiguous, duplicitous, mysterious and Other – feminine again.<sup>53</sup> Their 'lust' for landscape dissipates, and this 'invariably prompt[s] the questions "Why did I read this?" "Why did I go there?" "Why did I desire her?"'<sup>54</sup> But visual pleasure never ends, and has its own contradictions. Theorists of the visual argue that there is a specific logic of the gaze and that visual pleasure is deeply bound into the regulatory fictions of heterosexuality.<sup>55</sup> The next section addresses this pleasure and its repressions, and suggests that the retreat to a critical distance is no escape at all. Geographers are pursued by their internal enemy, which ensures the failure of their efforts to stabilize their knowledges.

### **Sexuality in the Field of Vision**

The recurring but uneasy pleasure that geography finds in landscape, acknowledged but never addressed, is a version of the discipline's aesthetic masculinity. This section examines the persistence of its visual pleasure, and emphasizes that pleasure's disruptions and contradictions in order to subvert that masculinism's claims to exhaustive-



ness. I will draw on the arguments of feminists working with Freud and with Lacan's re-reading of Freud, because several have focused on the contradictoriness of 'sexuality in the field of vision' through these forms of psychoanalysis.<sup>56</sup>

Clearly, there are many problems with any engagement between psychoanalysis and feminism. Many feminists argue that both Freud and Lacan take patriarchy for granted and do not theorize change – the latter problem epitomized by Freud's notorious claim that 'anatomy is destiny' – and Lacan has been criticized even by those feminists drawing on his work for his implicit phallogentrism.<sup>57</sup> Psychoanalysis has therefore been condemned as incapable of challenging the oppression of women.<sup>58</sup> Nonetheless, for writers such as Elizabeth Grosz, Juliet Mitchell, Laura Mulvey and Jacqueline Rose, all of whom I draw on here, a critique of the hold that ideologies have over our innermost psyches must inform any liberatory politics: further more, psychoanalysis, for all its problems, is the only elaborated theory available that takes the sexuality of the subject as its fundamental problematic. Their feminist appropriation of psychoanalysis stresses two themes; both of which, they argue, allow for failures in and resistances to ideology. The first is the unconscious. The unconscious is the location of powerful desires, impossible to satisfy, repressed by the conventions of society but constantly threatening to make themselves known, and they argue that it allows for the constant possibility of disruption to the norms of everyday life. The second is the stress in Lacan's work on the symbol and the image, which leads Rose to comment on the 'fictional nature of the sexual category to which every human subject is none the less assigned';<sup>59</sup> Lacan insists on the difficulty of human identity and even on its failure. The feminist encounter with Lacanian psychoanalysis suggests that it is possible to undermine the relentless Sameness of masculinist codes of meaning by reading for the disruptive symptoms of its desires. With Grosz, I would argue that:

... feminists cannot afford to reject or accept [Lacan's] work. This ambivalence is not, however, a failure to 'make up one's mind'. Rather, from the present vantage point, it can be seen as a tactical position enabling feminists to use his work where it serves their interests without being committed to its more troublesome presumptions.<sup>60</sup>

This section will trace some of the contradictions and disruptions in geography's ambivalence towards landscape, for the insistence on the fragility of human identity also informs feminist psychoanalytic

interpretations of masculinist visual pleasure. In the work of both Freud and Lacan, a strong 'identificatory investment in images' is outlined, replete with difficulties and contradictions,<sup>61</sup> for when 'describing the child's difficult journey into adult sexual life, [Freud] would take as his model little scenarios, or the staging of events, which demonstrated the complexity of an essentially visual space, moments in which perception *founders*'.<sup>62</sup> The seen image is central to feminist psychoanalytic theory: the gaze is theorized as being eroticized, so that 'visual space [is] more than the domain of simple recognition'.<sup>63</sup> The gaze is eroticized through heterosexual desire. Its power in racist contexts also depends on the whiteness of the spectator, as Gaines has argued.<sup>64</sup> This section argues that these feminist psychoanalytic commentaries offer an eloquent critique of geography's white, heterosexual, masculine gaze, a gaze torn between pleasure and its repression.

Mulvey's account of the gaze and identity begins with scopophilia, pleasure in looking.<sup>65</sup> Mulvey argues that this pleasure is voyeuristic: it is curious, controlling and distanced. As the child enters subjectivity, this voyeurism shifts and is joined by other ways of looking. Especially important in this process is what Lacan called the 'mirror stage', which is the moment at which the child begins to realize, by seeing its image in a mirror or in the reactions to its actions by its mother or nurturer, that it is a bounded body. The child pleasures in this, too, and again and again affirms itself through the reflections of others. This recognition of self in images outside the self is narcissistic, and the tension between narcissism – identification with the image – and voyeurism – a distancing from the image – is central to the continuing dynamics of the gaze. This contradiction is there in the mirror stage itself, for the seen unity of the subject is in fact a fantasy. It is a coherence seen in a mirror from a distance: the unity perceived with the image depends on a split between the child and the mirror or its mother/nurturer, and this mirror/mother is what I have also been calling the Other. This moment of recognizing oneself is a moment of misrecognition: every look re-enacts the subject's split between its gaze and its image, itself and the external order. The gaze is then always torn between two conflicting impulses: on the one hand, a narcissistic identification with what it sees and through which it constitutes its identity; and on the other a voyeuristic distance from what is seen as Other to it.

Feminists argue that this contradictory gaze is not sexually neutral. As Mulvey argues, it constitutes:

*Woman as image, man as bearer of the look . . . in a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between*

active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its fantasy onto the female figure, which is styled accordingly.<sup>66</sup>

The (hetero)sexuality of the active gaze is structured as masculine in phallogocentric cultures and societies, and feminists argue that it is central to the construction of sexual difference. Their arguments focus on the Oedipus/castration complex, through which boys are forced to repress their desire for their mother through the threat of castration. (This first repression forms the unconscious.) This threat marks the mother as the site of lack because she is seen as already castrated. It is important to note here how the mother comes to signify lack, because it is at this point that accusations of biological determinism are most often levelled at Freud and Lacan. Mitchell insists that 'in and of itself, the female body neither indicates nor initiates anything'.<sup>67</sup> She emphasizes the fictional, not biological, nature of identity: this must be an account of the formation of masculine and feminine positions; not, as in Mulvey's polemic, of men and women. Mitchell's remarks also stress the centrality of a certain vision to the constitution of Woman as lacking, since it is only through the sight of patriarchal law that the mother's genitalia come to signify lack or castration. As Grosz notes, 'the female can be construed as castrated, lacking a sexual organ, only on the information provided by vision'.<sup>68</sup> As in the mirror stage, the look is again central to subjectivity, and the active look which sees the mother as lacking rather than simply different is phallogocentric. The active look is constituted as masculine, and to be looked at is the feminine position. But this is not a coherent look: narcissistic identification with the powerful, pre-Oedipal, phallic (m)Other and voyeuristic fascination with her lack remain, and so the look 'oscillates between memory of maternal plenitude and memory of lack'.<sup>69</sup>

These connections between identity and vision suggest why visual pleasure recurs in geographical discourse: it is a fundamental part of the masculine subjectivity which shapes and is constituted through that discourse. And geography's pleasure in landscape images can be interpreted through the psychoanalytic terms across which the gaze is made – loss, lack, desire and sexual difference. One possible reading follows. It is a supplement to the argument of the previous chapter about the ambivalence of geography towards Mother Nature. It is an insistence on the disruptions of the Other in the gaze of the geographic Same; it is a sustained attempt to undermine both the anonymity of the authoritative cultural geographer and the stability of his claims to knowledge.

I will begin with the mother. Pollock notes that there is 'a function

for the image as a means to regain visual access to the lost object', the lost object being the mother before her denial through the Oedipus/castration complex.<sup>70</sup> Images of women, of Nature, of Mother Nature and the 'maternal natural landscape', to quote Sauer again, can assuage the loss of the pre-Oedipal mother because they offer plenitude, passivity, lushness, nurturance and incorporation: this chapter and the last have already quoted geographers celebrating all these qualities in landscape. Pleasure in landscape comes partly from its seductively sexual vision of narcissistic reunion with the phallic mother. The work of Kolodny on the metaphors used by European male settlers of North America to describe the land that they were colonizing demonstrates just such a comforting elision between the land and Woman.<sup>71</sup> She argues that the earliest immigrants compared the continent to a Woman and developed the European pastoral tradition into:

... what is probably America's oldest and most cherished fantasy: a daily reality of harmony between man and nature based on an experience of the land as essentially feminine – that is, not simply the land as mother, but the land as woman, the total female principle of gratification – enclosing the individual in an environment of receptivity, repose, and painless and integral satisfaction.<sup>72</sup>

The metaphor of land-as-woman affected men's attitudes towards the environment in complex ways, and Kolodny locates this complexity in the conflict induced by the metaphor itself. The land was imagined as a mother, whose generosity and abundance were marvellous, Edenic, but which could overwhelm settlers and corrupt their efforts at self-sufficiency. To distance themselves from this possibility, men continued to work the land, to explore it and to penetrate its mysteries, and this invoked another aspect of land-as-woman, the land as irresistible temptress. 'Implicit in the metaphor of land-as-woman was both the regressive pull of maternal containment *and* the seductive invitation to sexual assertion'.<sup>73</sup> As the ownership and exploitation of territory for agriculture and for the raw materials of the new industries grew in the nineteenth century, this ambiguity led to increasing unease in North American male writers' relationship to their landscapes. Domination of the land began to be seen as both incest and rape, and the horror of this necessitated a psychological and emotional separation from the land and from woman. Kolodny argues that this separation, together with the indifferent land's refusal to be either Mother or Mistress, legitimated the degradation of the landscape then and continues to destroy it now.

Kolodny's work points to some of the contradictions involved in seeing the land as feminine, as both Mother and object of desire. She hints at a fear of Mother Earth, and this has been noticed by several commentators on white bourgeois masculinity. Wild and threatening landscapes haunted Victorian Europe, and colonialists' deep horror as well as their fascination with foreign lands can be understood through this. Fear of being unmanned by a too-generous landscape has been noted by Kolodny in the case of the European settlement of North America. Stott describes a different fear in her discussion of the novels of Rider Haggard, in which the horrors of the Africa imagined by white explorers are embodied in the overwhelming and ghastly figure of She.<sup>74</sup> Theweleit too pursues the theme of terrifying feminized landscapes in his study of the soldiers of the interwar German *Freikorps*: here, he argues that they saw threats to the land of Germany through images of deluge and engulfment, and Theweleit characterizes their horror as a fear of dissolution into the mother.<sup>75</sup> The powerful phallic mother can herself threaten in these different ways because, as Mulvey notes, 'the representation of the female form in a symbolic order . . . speaks castration and nothing else'.<sup>76</sup> If images of women can disavow lack, they also necessarily represent it; 'as the place onto which lack is projected, and through which it is simultaneously disavowed, woman is "symptom" for the man'.<sup>77</sup> Landscape can then be not the welcoming topography of nurturing mother but terrifying maternal swamps, mountains, seas, inhabited by sphinxes and gorgons. These accounts of the desired and feared Mother, both phallic and castrated, suggest one interpretation of Stoddart's account of the encounter of the first scientific geographers with Tahiti.<sup>78</sup> He too tells of pleasure and horror, both embodied through Tahitian women. His story is of a crew member who is seduced by Tahitian women: this is the feminization of the land to be penetrated and known, already mentioned. But the man returns to the ship and says that whatever punishment the captain devises for him could not be worse than the women themselves. I wonder what part of his anatomy he feared for most. Perhaps it is no coincidence that Stoddart's is one of the finest accounts of the pleasures in the small details of landscape: a fetishized response to the fear of castration by Woman.

This fear also motivates the voyeuristic gaze which sustains a gap between the subject looking and what they see. The voyeuristic gaze is investigative and controlling, instituting a distance from and mastery over the image. Such a distance is established from both the (M)Other and the masculine self during the Oedipus/castration complex, and

through this self-denial of bodily pleasures and visualization of the self, the masculine body is erased. This has epistemological consequences:

The masculine is able to speak of and for women because it has emptied itself of any relation to the male body . . . The establishment of the ego through its visual representation in the mirror-image forms the pre-conditions for the alienation required for language, in the first instance, and for knowledge and truth in the second. The evacuation of the male body is the condition required to create a space of reflection, of specul(ariz)ation from which it can look at itself from the outside.<sup>79</sup>

This once again affirms that the disembodied gaze of knowledge is masculine. The disembodiment of the voyeur establishes the claim of the phallogentric look to be transcendent, pure and universal. Moreover, that single viewpoint identified by Cosgrove as bourgeois also enacts a masculinist self-erasure, because 'the condensation of the gaze and the body of the viewer into another single point . . . reflects the viewer back at himself in the form of invisibility'.<sup>80</sup> The inherent fears in geography's visual pleasures, its suspicion in its pleasure, produce its persistent refusal to problematize its pleasure – geographers are invisible to themselves.

However, as chapter 4 remarked, geography does have a tradition of celebrating its encounters with Nature: the self-erasure of the voyeuristic gaze is contradicted by the narcissistic assertion of self through what is seen. The heroic ethos of fieldwork can be contextualized through Mulvey's classic essay on Hollywood cinema, which suggests that the image of landscape as a perspectival space centred on the hero – geographer or movie star – is a necessary part of the grandeur and authority of masculinity.<sup>81</sup> Mulvey argues that our enjoyment of movies comes partly from our sheer pleasure in looking, but also that films re-enact our own mirror stage and force us, male or female, to identify with the self-certain he(ro). We see ourselves on the screen, ourselves as we would like to be – movies visualize the ego ideal in the form of their hero. The use of landscape structured through Renaissance perspective is central to this process:

. . . the active male figure (the ego ideal of the identification process) demands a three-dimensional space corresponding to that of the mirror recognition in which the alienated subject internalised his own representation of his imaginary existence.<sup>82</sup>

Here, Cosgrove's discussion of perspectival techniques is important for its insistence that it is not inevitable that 'the specular image positions the child within a (perspectivally organised) spatial field':<sup>83</sup> perspective as a way of seeing is historically and culturally specific, and so must Mulvey's account be. However, if – contingently – heroes in landscapes correspond to the coherent, active subjects that we (mis)recognize in the mirror, this process surely accounts for some of the satisfaction of fieldwork for geographers. They see themselves as the ego-ideal hero in a landscape; they can assert and establish their manliness in the face of Nature. In other words, they can secure an identity for themselves through a visualized relation to the mirror/mother. And this narcissism, this attempted assertion of the self through the Other, also underpins the claim fully to know the land: it 'apprehends an objective reality which is wholly manifest and exists solely for him: he misses nothing'<sup>84</sup> – hence, once again, the authority of geographical knowledge of landscape.

The intersections of voyeurism and narcissism, then, structure geography's gaze at landscape. The gaze which identifies lack in the compelling vision of Nature as Woman maintains a voyeuristic distance from that which represents lack; but it is also compelled to gaze and gaze again through its desire to interpellate itself through the feminine. This produces contradictions in the gaze, and the above discussion implied at several points that these contradictions intersect with the tension that geographers themselves recognize between pleasure and knowledge. When desire becomes too persistent – when the Sirens sing too loudly – geography claims to revert to objective knowledge. However, the final suggestion of this section's efforts to mark the phallogocentric repressions of cultural geography is that, despite its fears and all its efforts, geographical knowledge is deeply complicit with its pleasures. Geographers try to repress their pleasure in landscape by stabilizing their interpretations as real; but that knowledge is, in its need for critical distance, implicated in the pleasures of voyeurism. They try to win knowledge through intimacy with the land, and their intimacy becomes narcissistic. Geography's opposition between pleasure and knowledge does not hold. Cultural geography is seduced despite itself by what it fears. As Cixous notes in her discussion of dualisms, 'the movement by which each opposition is set up to produce meaning is the movement by which the couple is destroyed'.<sup>85</sup> In the words of Irigaray, 'the quest for the "object" becomes a game of Chinese boxes. Ever receding'.<sup>86</sup> The quest for knowledge of aesthetic masculinity is a dynamic process constantly attempting closure and constantly failing: wherever it rests, its contradictory desires will allow no such com-

promise. Its desire for complete knowledge can never be satisfied. The unknowable feminine will recur. This is cultural geography's erotics of knowledge.

### **I Won't Play Nature to Your Culture**

This masculinity entails costs. In her critique of the gaze as it constitutes knowledge of the contemporary city, Deutsche asks:

What repressions enable the equation of voyeuristic models of knowledge with objectivity and adequacy? Whose subjectivities are the casualties of epistemologies that produce total beings? What violence is enacted by authors who speak and pretend that reality speaks for itself? Who signifies the threat of inadequacy so that others may be complete? Whose expulsion and absence does completion demand?<sup>87</sup>

The absence of a 'feminine' or 'black' or 'homosexual' position from which to look in the foregoing discussion provides the answer to this question. The particular dominant gaze constructs access to knowledge of geography as a white bourgeois heterosexual masculine privilege. And this gaze is not only the gaze at the land, although its dynamics are most clearly revealed there: it is also a gaze at what are constituted as objects of knowledge, whether environmental, social, political or cultural. Caught in the geographic landscape, people are looked at by a contradictory and exclusionary masculine gaze, which cannot see women because they are the social subjects most in the shadow of Woman, and puts even the men it can see in a feminized, subordinate position. And this in turn necessitates a further question:

If there is no more 'earth' to press down/repress, to work, to represent, but also and always to desire (for one's own), no opaque matter in which theory does not know herself, then what pedestal remains for the ex-sistence of the subject? If the earth turned and more especially turned upon herself, the erection of the subject might thereby be disconcerted and risk losing its elevation and penetration. For what would there be to rise up from and exercise his power over? And in?<sup>88</sup>

Irigaray's mischievous query invites some discussion of feminist efforts to dislodge the Mother Earth/Father Culture opposition, and this returns the discussion once again to the question of strategies of critique.



Mulvey's work has been criticized for the zero options that it offers the female spectator of cinema – either a sadistic identification with the male hero, or a masochistic identification with the passive heroine.<sup>89</sup> Mulvey addressed this difficulty in her later work by suggesting that the female spectator was 'restless in its transvestite clothes'.<sup>90</sup> She suggests that women can shift between the options of passivity or activity offered to them, and such shifts can become deliberate manipulations of position. This echoes the critical strategy of mobility with which the previous chapter ended, but specifies it in the visual field: as Doane remarks, such a mobility there produces a 'defamiliarisation of female iconography' which destabilizes the masculine structure of the look.<sup>91</sup> Other feminists prefer to emphasize the disruptive power of the unconscious as a radical contribution to a feminist critique of phallogentrism. In terms of the gaze, Lacanians argue that some kind of disturbance of its pleasure is unavoidable; because our identificatory moments are never wholly successful, 'the relationship between viewer and scene is always one of fracture, partial identification, pleasure and distrust'.<sup>92</sup> Following this stress on disruption and uncertainty, de Lauretis has suggested that the unconscious could be seen as a site of resistance against masculine and feminine identities.<sup>93</sup>

To conclude this chapter, this final short section examines some feminist work which occupies a spectating position that enacts neither the dominant masculine gaze nor an essentialist Womanly alternative. This work challenges the identification of Woman as natural and of Nature as Woman achieved through the gaze at landscape. It resists that transcoding not by offering a simple 'feminine' alternative to masculinist vision, because, as the previous chapter argued, that would simply be to invert an already existing opposition and to repeat its closures once more. Rather, this section focuses on challenges to the hegemonic masculine gaze which offer explicitly contingent alternatives to its voyeurism and narcissism even as they invoke 'women' and 'the feminine'. The authors here take up the position of a female spectator who, while working within a phallogentric economy of meaning, nonetheless refuses to sanction its codes: she contests them by manipulating them.

One continuing form of resistance against the fictional identities of phallogentrism has been the effort by feminists, as daughters, to re-imagine the mother as the subject of desire, and to explore motherhood as a symbol of a non-phallogentric mode of social relation. Given the powerful interpellation of Nature as Mother in Western culture, this effort has some implications for seeing the land. This is obviously a complex move and encompasses a wide range of feminist writers,

including the radical feminists discussed in the previous chapter. However, several non-essentialist feminists have argued that women see the environment differently from men; or, rather, that there is a feminine position from which to perceive the land. This claim can be based in psychoanalytic work. Irigaray, for example, insists that 'for girls, the mother is a subject who cannot readily be reduced to an object',<sup>94</sup> and the suggestion that women thinking through a position as mothers/daughters will have a more nurturing attitude towards Nature has already been made by many feminists drawing on the work of Chodorow. These include the geographers Janice Monk and Vera Norwood, who gathered together a collection of essays on the landscapes of the American South West which argue that many women have wanted to live in harmony with the environment there.<sup>95</sup> Unlike Chodorow, however, Monk and Norwood pay a good deal of attention to differences among women in the South West, contrasting Anglo, Hispanic and Native American women in order to avoid positing an essentially feminine relation to the land. They stress that different women have painted the southwestern desert, written about it, represented it in their craft work and photographed it, with rather different aims, motivations and results. Kolodny's work on the letters, diaries and novels of some women on the American frontier before 1850 insists on difference too, both social and historical.<sup>96</sup> Kolodny notes that the writers she looks at were all by definition educated and therefore middle-class; they were also white, and this shaped their relationship to the land. These women, like their fathers and husbands and sons, wanted to transform the wilderness they found themselves surrounded by in the east of North America. But they did not want to subdue and exploit it as men did; rather, they saw the frontier as a place in which to make gardens, a place where a landscape of harmony between soil and weather and plants and people was possible, a place in which relations among people would reflect the tenderness of caring for the land. Later, when women left the claustrophobic wooded regions of the east and moved west, the open prairies of Illinois and Texas were perceived as ready made gardens. Always, 'they dreamed . . . of locating a home and a familial human community within a cultivated garden', and this dream was part of their social location as white bourgeois women and the concomitant importance to them of the distinction between the public and the private.<sup>97</sup> Their relationship to the land was mediated by their particular domestic role. Geographer Jeanne Kay has written about similar women in the second half of the nineteenth century, and she also maps their imagined geography through their domestic spaces and relationships.<sup>98</sup>

She suggests that the social relations which developed from their concern with their gardens and domestic labour gave them a specific position from which to see the land. A network of interaction replaced the individualized and domineering view of the single point of the omniscient observer of landscape: they placed themselves in a contingent position defined in relation to friends and neighbours.

Other feminists have stressed not so much the position of the viewer of the land, but the focus of the gaze which re-presents the land. Susan Ford has also discussed gardens, those of late-Victorian England, and she argues that to do as gardens invite and focus on the details challenges the grand sweep of the masculinist gaze: she suggests that both in its design and in the small-scale pleasures that it affords, the garden constitutes one form of a non-phallogocentric look.<sup>99</sup> Pollock too has explored the specific spaces of the nineteenth-century bourgeois to find examples of an equal gaze between artist and subject, looking at the work of Cassatt and Morisot in the gardens and houses of Paris.<sup>100</sup> She suggests that in their paintings there is a tendency to abandon the wide and grand view and instead to represent a more confined space which both shows and reworks the limits placed on avant-garde women by their domestic position. She suggests that the reworking involves 'the rearticulation of traditional space so that it ceases to function primarily as the space of sight for a mastering gaze, but becomes the locus of relationships'.<sup>101</sup>

All of these accounts posit a feminine relationship to landscape, yet all refuse to see an essential femininity. They offer a 'feminine' resistance to hegemonic ways of seeing which dissolves the illusion of an unmarked, unitary, distanced, masculine spectator, but which also permits the expression of different ways of seeing among women. They suggest that strategies of position, scale and fragmentation are all important for challenging the particular structure of the gaze in the discipline of geography, but offer no single better alternative. Their accounts self-consciously manipulate the notion of femininity in order to subvert hegemonic ways of seeing without imposing an alternative which could only assert a specific femininity as universal in an equally repressive manner. Their task is to develop 'the conditions of representability of another social subject',<sup>102</sup> and it is a task which is addressed again in the next chapter.

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