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Cartographies of Consciousness-raising: Mapping Out a Feminist Approach in the Work of Marlene Creates

Heather Webb

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ABSTRACT

Cartographies of Consciousness-raising: Mapping Out
a Feminist Approach in the Work of Marlene Creates

Heather Webb

Between 1987 and 1991, contemporary Canadian artist Marlene Creates (b.1952) produced three separate "memory map" series of mixed-media assemblages consisting of black and white photographs, text, hand-drawn "memory maps" and in some instances, natural elements selected from the environment. The works present the stories, remembrances and recollections by elderly inhabitants of their experiences in and relationships to specific geographical locales. In these works Creates' employed an autobiographical approach to explore the intersections between experience, identity and the land(scape). The specific concerns and social function of these works will be discussed as informed by and concerned with feminist theory and practice. This will be undertaken in order to show that an underlying political strategy informs both the production and the reception of these works.

To J. - in loving memory

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The work of contemporary Canadian artist Marlene Creates (b.1952) over the past eighteen years has been produced in and concerned with the natural environment. During the late 1970s and mid 1980s, Creates explored the relationship between human experience and the land(scape) through ephemeral land sculptures and photography. Beginning in 1987, Creates introduced a new approach to these ongoing concerns resulting in three separate "memory map" series produced between 1987 and 1991: *The Distance Between Two Points is Measured in Memories, Sault Ste. Marie 1987*, *The Distance Between Two Points is Measured in Memories, Labrador 1988* and *Places of Presence: Newfoundland kin and ancestral land, Newfoundland 1989-1991.*[1] Each series consists of mixed-media assemblages which incorporate black and white photographs, text, hand-drawn "memory maps" and in some instances, natural elements selected from the environment. In these works Creates has introduced the dimension of everyday human presence in the land(scape) by seeking out elderly inhabitants, including her relatives, from specific geographical locales and exploring their relationships to and experiences in those sites. This is

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[1]From this point on the titles of these works will appear in the following abbreviated forms; *Sault Ste. Marie 1987*, *Labrador 1988* and *Places of Presence*.

achieved through the use of their stories and remembrances and their recollections of these places in the form of hand-drawn "memory maps". The following discussion will focus upon these particular works and address the feminist method which informs them and thereby renders them politically engaged.

The term 'political' has not been explicitly used in conjunction with any previous discussion of Creates' artwork. When the political nature of her work has been alluded to in previous writings it is usually in discussions centered upon the *Labrador 1988* "memory map" series. This work was created in response to the topical, media-explored issue of low-level bomber test flight training by several NATO countries over Labrador. When the political nature of the *Labrador 1988* series is given mention it is often spoken of in a secondary manner; it is either viewed as one of the many 'layers of meaning' in the work or a reflection of the artist's concern over ecological issues.[2] The political nature of Creates' "memory map"

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[2]The viewpoint that the political aspect of Creates' *Labrador 1988* series is just one of many elements of the work is expressed by Janice Seline, Assistant Curator Contemporary Art, National Gallery of Canada, who writes; "Creates' work counters what have come to be dangerous, ignorant attitudes towards land use in Canada through a simple act of portraiture. Its political engagement is only one more layer in its many layers of meaning, a reconciliation of her social empathy with her artistic production." [Unpublished Curatorial Statement for works being considered for acquisition for the Collection of Contemporary Canadian Art, National Gallery of Canada, (2 November 1992): 2.] The relegation of the political aspect of her work to ecological issues is evident in the following quote by Susan Gibson Garvey; "Although Creates' work never involves the socio-political interventions commonly associated with activist artists, she is deeply concerned about ecological issues." [Marlene Creates: Landworks 1979-1991 (1993): 32.] Even in Jacqueline Fry's essay on the *Labrador 1988* series the political aspect of the work is only discussed in the second-last paragraph of her text when she writes; "Marlene Creates helps us to discover places which bear witness to the scandal created by the colonial system and by post-industrial marketing of the earth's resources." [The Distance Between Two Points is Measured in Memories, Labrador 1988 (1990): 58.]

series is thus regarded more as a resulting element in her artwork than as the motivating factor behind it.

To date, no criticism has situated Creates' work within the paradigm of feminist art production.[3] The working definition of feminist art which will be employed throughout this thesis does not refer to a "feminine" aesthetic per se; rather it will be used in relation to works which, in their specific concerns and social function, are informed by and concerned with feminist politics.[4] Several beliefs and

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[3]To my knowledge the only relationship drawn between Creates' "memory map" series and a feminist approach has been suggested by Sherrill Grace. In an article which includes a brief discussion of Creates' *Labrador 1988* "memory map" series, in addition to various plays, fiction and visual art, Grace "trace[s] an emerging counter-discourse of southern representations of North and show[s] how these re-negotiate and re-articulate the semiotics of gender and the conventions of northern narrative." In describing these works as counter-narratives to the dominant masculinist tradition of Canadian northern narrative, Grace discusses whether these counter-discourses can be described as feminist. ["Gendering Northern Narrative," forthcoming in Echoing Silence: Essays on Arctic Narrative, ed. John Moss (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1997).] I am indebted to Marlene Creates for bringing this hitherto unpublished article to my attention and wish to thank Sherrill Grace for permission to quote from it.

[4]This definition is informed by the approach taken by Rita Felski in her discussion of the relationship between aesthetics and feminist politics in literature. She writes, "no convincing case has yet been made for a gendered aesthetics, for the assertion that men and women write in distinctively different ways or that certain styles or structures in literature and art can be classified as inherently masculine or feminine. A feminist theory of art, then, must necessarily proceed differently, by showing how the general question of the range and potential of artistic forms in contemporary society can be related to the specific concerns of a feminist politics."[Beyond Feminist Aesthetics: Feminist Literature and Social Change (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 156.] The problematic issues raised by the concept of a distinct 'women's art' is also addressed by Janet Wolff, who writes, "To the extent that this concept depends on certain ideas of 'women's knowledge' (that is, the assumption that women's and men's experience and knowledge is in some important sense different), it seems essential to discuss questions of aesthetics in relation to questions of epistemology." [Feminine Sentences: Essays on Women and Culture (London: Polity Press, 1990), 68.] For a discussion of aesthetics, feminist theory and film in relation to the question of whether or not a feminine aesthetics exist, see Teresa de Lauretis, Technologies of Gender: Essays on Theory, Film, and Fiction (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987).

practices which are fundamental to the feminist movement inform Creates' outlook and by extension her artwork. Among these is the belief that 'the personal is political', that an interdisciplinary approach is important, and that political activism should be part of daily life. Broadly defined these aspects are involved in the action of consciousness-raising. Catherine A. MacKinnon defines consciousness-raising as "the major technique of analysis, structure of organization, method of practice, and theory of social change of the women's movement."[5] Following MacKinnon's definition, I will illustrate that consciousness-raising is the method of analysis employed by Creates. It also informs and structures her practice, and represents for her a method of social change. In applying the term consciousness-raising to Creates' work, I acknowledge that it is a term associated with the Women's Liberation Movement of the 1960s and 1970s; however, in this discussion I will re-invest the term with its less historically specific meaning: "the activity of increasing especially social or political sensitivity or awareness."[6]

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[5]Catherine A. MacKinnon, "Feminism, Marxism, Method, and the State," in Feminist Theory, ed. N. Keohane, M. Rosaldo, and B. Gelpi (Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1982), 5: quoted in Susan Sherwin, "Philosophical Methodology and Feminist Methodology: Are They Compatible?," in Feminist Perspectives: Philosophical Essays on Method and Morals, ed. Lorraine Code, Sheila Mullett and Christine Overall (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 13.

[6]Consciousness-raising in relation to the Women's Liberation Movement refers to the discussion groups formed by women in the 1960s and 1970s to explore their shared realities as women in patriarchal society. These groups played a significant role in the formative years of the feminist movement, however, they also came to symbolize a particular non-inclusive form of feminism; that of the white, middle-class, heterosexual woman. The definition which will be employed in this thesis is taken from the Oxford English Dictionary.

In endeavouring to place Creates' "memory map" series within the contextual framework of feminist art production, I will emphasize not only the personal beliefs of the artist which inform these works but also the theoretical discourses which surround and shape them. Creates employs an interdisciplinary approach to the concepts of experience and identity by looking to recent theoretical developments in several disciplines. Drawing upon various disciplines allows for the creation of a pluralistic and open-ended model in which a complex layering of meaning can occur. This approach allows the viewers to access the work on several levels and provides an opportunity for movement and interplay between the various conceptual layers resulting in a richer and more diverse 'reading(s)' of the work.

The ability to produce diverse 'readings' is an integral element of these works and reflects the influence of feminist and poststructuralist theories which question the "fixity of meaning which lies at the heart of liberal-humanist criticism."[7] Poststructuralist and feminist theories take into account the existence of pluralistic meanings as well as changes in meaning, and seek to uncover the power relations which produce and hierarcharize these meanings, and the ways in which they ultimately shape and define our subjectivity through the medium of language.[8] Poststructuralist theory, especially the writings of Michel Foucault, has influenced

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[7]Chris Weedon, Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory, (Oxford and Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, 1987; reprint, 1988 and 1991), 142.

[8]Ibid., 21.

recent approaches in a wide spectrum of disciplines including feminist, literary, geographical and cultural theories. The influence of poststructuralism in these specific disciplines is important to acknowledge as Creates' "memory map" series reflect, and in several instances have drawn upon, recent theoretical discourses from these areas.

The pluralistic and open-ended aspect of these works will form the basis of a discussion in Chapter 2 focusing on how the "memory map" series function on both a methodological and physical level. A spiral metaphor will serve as a model to illustrate how these works are activated and experienced by the viewers, in addition to describing how movement functions within the work itself. In both respects the movement does not adhere to a linear or hierarchical programme, rather the viewers participate in a constant movement and overlay between elements, objects and concepts. In these works, a continuous shifting between conceptual dichotomies such as the public and the private, nature and culture, and the self and others causes an intermingling and merging to take place, resulting in the displacement of oppositions entirely. This displacement will be discussed as representative of a feminist approach to experience.

A discussion centered primarily on the *Labrador 1988* series in Chapter 3 will focus on the theoretical developments which have occurred over the past three decades in the areas of human, cultural and feminist geographies. Feminist and cultural geographers, in particular, have sought to understand the links between a

person's experiences and conceptions of place and space and their subjectivity by looking at the ideological factors which shape and define those experiences. In the "memory map" series these ideological factors are shown to involve societal conventions such as land inheritance traditions, gender stereotypes in terms of men and women's daily activities, and also issues of race and marginalization which are often defined through 'official' discourses.

The central role narrative plays in the "memory map" series will be discussed in Chapter 4 in relation to feminist literature and politics and oral history traditions. This will be undertaken in order to show how an autobiographical approach inherently lends itself to exploring issues of identity and provides a means by which to transcend oppositional frameworks and increase awareness.

Throughout this discussion of Creates' "memory map" series I will map out the feminist approach which informs the production and function of these works. This process is shaped primarily by an understanding of art as ideology in which the ideas, beliefs, attitudes and values expressed in a work of art are viewed as intrinsically related to the artist's conditions of existence.[9]

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[9]Janet Wolff, The Social Production of Art, (London: The MacMillan Press Ltd., 1981) 49.

CHAPTER 2

Layering, Shifting, Spiralling

> As a shape, the spiral is fluid and allows infinite movement. But is it movement backwards or forwards? Is it height or depth? Draw several, each drifting into each and all this will be clear. ...I really don't see the point in reading in straight lines. We don't think like that and we don't live like that. Our mental processes are closer to a maze than a motorway, every turning yields another turning, not symmetrical, not obvious. Not chaos either.
>
> -Jeanette Winterson, Oranges are not the only fruit, 1991, xiii.

The opening quote by Jeanette Winterson underscores the primary significance of the spiral as an open-ended and fluid shape which allows infinite movement. A spiral-like movement is an integral element of the "memory map" series both in terms of their internal structure and the manner in which they are activated by the viewers. In a review discussing the *Labrador 1988* "memory map" series, Jill Pollock wrote that, "The viewer can become involved in a performance or in a participation with the art that, in some way, mimics the artist's process."[1] This chapter will focus on the physical and methodological attributes of these works and suggest that they not only reflect the artist's process but the processes with which the works are concerned, namely the intertwining of experience, knowledge and spatiality. The constant

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[1]Jill Pollock, "Marlene Creates, Presentation House Gallery, North Vancouver," ArtsAtlantic 38 (Fall): 38-39.

layering and shifting between several conceptual dichotomies which occurs in the "memory map" works results in a displacement of opposition. This aspect of the work will be situated within the context of a feminist approach to subjectivity.

Reading in Circles

The first "memory map" series entitled *The Distance Between Two Points is Measured in Memories, Sault Ste. Marie 1987* (plates 1 and 2), was produced in conjunction with an artist residency and subsequent exhibition, entitled *Sans Demarcation*, involving outdoor site-specific artworks in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, between June and October, 1987.[2] Michael Burtch, Director of the Art Gallery of Algoma, established the curatorial directive for this exhibition as an exploration into the complexities of identity."[3] Creates' work evolved from conversations with elderly members of the Sault Ste. Marie community, including Ojibway elders, in which she asked them about their memories of the places they had lived and worked. The resulting work consisted of four assemblages comprised of a "memory map" which was originally drawn by a member of the community and transferred onto a sheet of slate in the form of an incised drawing. This was accompanied by a black and white

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[2]This community-based public art initiative was organized by Visual Arts Ontario at the request of the Ontario-Quebec Commission for Co-operation and co-hosted by The Art Gallery of Algoma and the City of Sault Ste. Marie. The following twelve artists, six from Ontario and six from Quebec, were asked to participate: Raymonde April, Eva Brandl, Andrew Dutkewych, Nicole Jolicoeur, Murray MacDonald, Claude Mongrain from Quebec; and Marlene Creates, Mark Gomes, Brian Groombridge, Spring Hurlbut, Reinhard Reitzenstein, and Susan Schelle from Ontario.

[3]Fred Gaysek, "Sans Demarcation," Artviews (Summer 1987): 24.

photograph which Creates took at the places described by each map drawing and an arrangement of natural elements collected from each of the sites respectively: stones, slag, sand and a bundle of sticks.[4]

The *Sault Ste. Marie 1987* "memory map"series was re-worked (plates 3 and 4) by Creates resulting in a format which would be reproduced in both the *Labrador 1988* and *Places of Presence* series.[5] In the second version each assemblage featured a black and white portrait photograph of the person Creates interviewed. This was accompanied by a narrative text representing an excerpted portion of the interviewee's conversation with Creates in which they described a particular geographical place. The second version also included the original "memory map" drawing by the interviewee. A black and white photograph taken by Creates upon visiting the site described in both the narrative text and the "memory map" drawing was also part of each assemblage. In addition, a natural element selected from the site was installed under each assemblage in the form of a single rock, a log or a pile of sand, etc. This latter element would not, however, necessarily be included in each individual assemblage in the two subsequent "memory map" series.

The "memory map" series witnessed changes in the methodological and

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[4]Each sheet of slate measured 122 x 122 cm., and each black and white photograph measured 28 x 36 cm.

[5]The original version produced in conjunction with Sans Demarcation became part of the permanent collection of the Art Gallery of Algoma, Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. The photographs, narrative text and "memory map" which each assemblage in the second version featured were individual framed pieces each measuring 28 x 36 cm.

aesthetic approaches taken by Creates in her work. All three "memory map" works produced between 1987 and 1991 reflect a continuation of artistic concerns from Creates' earlier works involving ephemeral land sculptures, process works, photography and sculpture installations, however, they also represent a broadening perspective. This transition was described by Creates in a 1989 artist statement in which she stated, "For the past 10 years I have worked in remote areas where most of my projects and landworks were related to the 'natural' aspects of the sites. Then I became interested in what we would call the 'cultural': the people who have lived closest to these places."[6] In turning her attention to the 'cultural' Creates began to explore the links that exist between a person's perceptions and experiences of the environment and their conception of self. In a newspaper review of Creates' installation for the *Sans Demarcation* exhibition, Christine Rivet paraphrases a statement made by Creates regarding the significance of the work as the following, "Creates said what is special about her collection of Sault and area memory maps is not that they are accurate, rather that each map contains the personal history of the author, not the 'official history' of the area."[7] This process was informed by the viewpoint that "The land is not an abstract physical location but a *place*, charged with

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[6]Marlene Creates, "Statement 1989," in Marlene Creates: Landworks 1979-1991 (St. John's: Art Gallery, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1993), 20-21.

[7]Christine Rivet, "Ottawa artist stylizes subtle changes with the landscape," Sault This Week (Sault Ste. Marie), August 19, 1987, 10A.

personal significance, shaping the images we have of ourselves."[8]

The methodological shift in Creates' artistic production was also accompanied by changes in content and aesthetics. Human presence in the landscape was depicted in a much more integrated way compared to previous works in which it was either inferred or shown in a fragmentary manner. Also text, in the form of personal narratives, was introduced for the first time in her work. These narratives, together with the "memory map" drawings, convey people's memories, experiences and emotions functioning as representations of the links which exist between people and places.

Outlining the motivation behind her work, Creates has stated that, "I need to understand, as an artist and, more urgently, as a woman living at this time, what are the links between the material, natural world and lived experience."[9] Creates interest in the everyday lived experiences of people in the landscape is rooted in the politics of the personal which has formed the basis of feminist inquiry. The feminist 'motto' that 'the personal is political' asserts that a woman's subjectivity is conditioned by power relations inherent in patriarchal society which are dispersed through social organizations and discourses. By focusing on personal experience feminist theory has successfully exposed how power relations structure *all* areas of life ranging from

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[8]Marlene Creates, "Statement 1991," in Marlene Creates: Landworks 1979-1991 (St. John's: Art Gallery, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1993), 32.

[9]Marlene Creates, "Nature is a verb to me," in Rephotographing the Land, (Halifax: Dalhousie University Art Gallery, 1992), 10.

employment, economics, politics and education, to family life, culture and leisure, and self-identity. This approach, as Chris Weedon outlines, is crucial because "Theory must be able to address women's experience by showing where it comes from and how it relates to material social practices and the power relations which structure them. It must be able to recognize and account for competing subjective realities and demonstrate the social interests on behalf of which they work."[10] Feminist theory posits subjectivity as socially produced rather than innate or biologically determined and therefore as not having any inherent essential meaning. In her discussion of identity politics, Liz Bondi points out that, "to claim that experience is valid is not the same as claiming it to be true; rather, it allows experience to be understood as salient but contestable, rather than as a foundational, phenomenon."[11] The significance of this approach lies in the fact that subjectivity is not regarded as a fixed and constant entity thereby rendering personal agency and change possible.

The notion of identity as process, as performance, and as provisional is, according to Liz Bondi, in part reflective of the influence of poststructuralism in the politics of identity.[12] Poststructuralist theory views language as the medium through which individuals think, speak and give meaning to the world and their everyday lived

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[10]Chris Weedon, Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory, (Oxford and Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, 1987; reprint 1988 and 1991), 8.

[11]Liz Bondi, "Locating identity politics," in Place and the politics of identity, ed. Michael Keith and Steve Pile (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), 95.

[12]Ibid., 97.

experience. Language, like subjectivity, is considered to be pluralistic and historically, socially and temporally located. As Chris Weedon points out, however, "This does not mean that meaning disappears altogether but that any interpretation is at best temporary, specific to the discourse within which it is produced and open to challenge."[13]

The assemblage format chosen by Creates necessitates that the observer physically move in order to view each assemblage in its entirety as well as the series as a whole. In the *Sault Ste. Marie 1987* (plates 3 and 4) and *Labrador 1988* (plates 5 and 6) series especially, the layout of each assemblage appears to follow a linear configuration which would suggest at first glance that the assemblages are read in a left to right manner. Upon viewing the works however, it becomes apparent that one 'reads' these works in a much more complex and circulatory manner. The viewers constantly shift their focus and attention from one element to another and back again; from text to image, from image to text, from text to object from the environment, etc. Each element of the assemblage holds a significance of its own, however, its significance is enhanced and even sometimes transformed when its relationship to the other elements of the assemblage is considered. In addition, the relationships between elements in any one assemblage are placed within a wider context when contrasted to the contents of other assemblages.

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[13]Weedon, 85.

The complex layering and shifting movement which the viewers experience and enact in observing the "memory map" works mimics how we live our lives and the ways in which our experiences and subjectivity are constructed. We live our lives in detail and these details often overlap, are sometimes contradictory and usually take on a greater kind of significance when placed in context with other aspects of our existence. And often, when we contextualize these details patterns emerge, patterns which literally map out how we live our lives and who we are. This process, in addition to mimicking the manner in which subjectivity is constructed and experienced, also represents the methodological approach used in consciousness-raising. Consciousness-raising, as feminist philosopher Susan Sherwin aptly describes it, "...begins with personal experience, focusing on the details of that experience, and then collectively moves to a broader analysis. Generalizations emerge after a number of particulars are presented."[14]

Union of Opposites

> The spiral is open to a number of readings. In logic, it is an image of dialectical reasoning, of the contradiction and eventual resolution of opposites.
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> -Diana Nemiroff, Roland Poulin Sculpture, 1994, 18.

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[14]Susan Sherwin, "Philosophical Methodology and Feminist Methodology: Are They Compatible?," in Feminist Perspectives: Philosophical Essays on Method and Morals, ed. Lorraine Code, Sheila Mullett and Christine Overall (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 13.

In transferring their focus from one element to another, the viewers participate in a shifting and overlay process between such conceptual binaries as public/private, nature/culture and self/others. A continual dialogue between the public/private and the self/others is engaged through the autobiographical narratives and the "memory map" drawings. Jerry McGrath, in his review of the *Sault Ste. Marie 1987* series, referenced Creates' work as an alloy constituted from both public and private domains. This, according to McGrath, was achieved through the use of autobiographical memory which "while remaining personal, bears more than a single signature and individual telling carries something of collective disclosure."[15] The personal narratives and "memory map" drawings also reflect the imprint of the social on the spatial, or the cultural on the natural, and vice versa. In exploring people's everyday interaction with the landscape it becomes apparent to the viewers that a person's conceptions and experiences of the environment are culturally constructed. This intermingling aspect of Creates' "memory map" works is capably articulated by Sherrill Grace, who writes, "Creates, it seems to me, has reconstituted the co-ordinates of time and place, history and geography, so that we must register them together, as inseparable forces that inform each other, rather than as separate disciplines or categories for the control and domination of culture and nature."[16]

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[15]Jerry McGrath, "Art in the Soo, Sans Demarcation," Vanguard 17 no. 1 (February/March 1988): 11.

[16]Sherrill Grace (forthcoming), "Gendering Northern Narrative," in Echoing Silence: Essays on Arctic Narrative, ed. John Moss (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1997).

The displacement of binary oppositions in the "memory map" series situates Creates' approach to the concepts of identity, experience and place within a poststructuralist framework. Feminist and cultural studies, among others, have been influenced by poststructuralist theorizing of the relationship between language, subjectivity, social organization and power. In particular, poststructuralism has shown that dichotomous, dualistic modes of thinking, and hence speaking and being, are artificial distinctions which function as mediums through which relations of power are enacted by the privileging of one over the other. What has emerged from this is a cultural politics of difference which advocates, "that the two 'sides' of these dichotomies need not be taken to be polar opposites of each other, but might rather be understood as points in constant interplay."[17] The way in which this is achieved is illustrated by Gayatri Spivak, who states that the opposition between the public and the private becomes displaced if we consider that, "the fabric of the so-called public sector is woven of the so-called private, the definition of the private is marked by a public potential, since it *is* the weave, or texture, of public activity.[18] This process allows the distribution of the locus of power inherent in binary juxtapositions without

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[17]Lorraine Code, Sheila Mullet, and Christine Overall, eds. "Editor's Introduction," in Feminist Perspectives: Philosophical Essays on Method and Morals, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 7.

[18]Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Explanation and Culture: Marginalia," in Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures, ed. Russell Ferguson, Martha Gever, Trinh T. Minh-ha and Cornel West (Cambridge and New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art and the MIT Press, 1990), 377.

merely inverting the hierarchical relationship. The significance of this process is, according to Renee Baert, "if cultural identities are not fixed but rather relational structures in which otherness is integral to the process of symbolization, such articulations are cultural processes which can, though ever within relations of power, be de-articulated and re-articulated."[19]

The de-articulation and re-articulation of identity as it occurs in Creates' "memory map" series is achieved through the displacement of binary oppositions mediated by the act of memory. The fragmented, shifting and always provisional nature of experience and identity is indicative of how memory functions. Autobiographical memory is engaged in a constant movement and overlay between such polarities as the past and present and feelings of loss and recovery. Memories, like experience and identity, are constructions or compositions comprised of diverse types of knowledge in which polarities intersect and merge.[20] The significance and possibility of this movement is outlined by Jonathan Arac, who in paraphrasing

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[19]Renee Baert, "Introduction," in Territories of difference, ed. Renee Baert (Banff: Walter Phillips Gallery, 1993), 9.

[20]Psychologists, Martin A. Conway and David C. Rubin, state that, "Autobiographical memory is attractive to researchers because it constitutes a major crossroads in human cognition where considerations relating to the self, emotion, goals, and personal meanings, all intersect." They also write that, "a striking feature of autobiographical memory that has emerged from a number of independently conducted research programmes is that autobiographical memory is highly structured and that within this structure there is no specific type of knowledge which can be easily singled out as being a *memory*. Rather, memories are compilations, constructions, or compositions of knowledge." "The Structure of Autobiographical Memory," in Theories of Memory, ed. Alan F. Collins, Susan E. Gathercole, Martin A. Conway, and Peter E. Morris (Hove: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, 1993), 103-104.

Michel Foucault, suggests that memory can function as a political site of resistance, whereby the action of remembering, "transforms history from a judgement on the past in the name of a present truth to a 'counter-memory' that combats our current modes of truth and justice, helping us to understand and change the present by placing it in a new relation to the past."[21] Thus, by reconfiguring the relationships between past and present, nature/culture, public/private and the self and others, new conceptualizations of the self emerge which better reflect the complex, multiple and ever shifting nature of identity.

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[21]Jonathan Arac, ed. "Introduction," in Postmodernism and Politics, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), xviii: quoted in bell hooks, "Representing Whiteness in the Black Imagination," in Cultural Studies, ed. Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson and Paula Treichler (New York: Routledge, 1992), 344.

CHAPTER 3

Cartographies of Difference

In the accompanying artist's statement for the series entitled *The Distance Between Two Points is Measured in Memories, Labrador 1988* (plates 5 and 6), Marlene Creates suggested that the binary of nature/culture of Western civilization must be re-thought. Creates wrote, "It seems to me now that the ideological distinctions we (western industrial society) have made between nature and culture have separated us from the non-human part of the world, reinforcing the idea that nature exists separate from us."[1] The belief that a re-connection must occur between humanity and the "natural" physical world has been an underlying principle of Creates' work, however in the *Labrador 1988* series this relationship, or lack of, is looked at in ideological terms. Focusing on aspects of land use and spatial relations Creates explored how the division between nature and culture is propagated along racial and gender lines. At this level the relationship between human experience and the land(scape) is discussed in terms of ordering, framing and selection.

Wilderness as Home

The Labrador 1988 "memory map" series developed out of Creates' trip to

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[1]Marlene Creates, "Statement," in The Distance Between Two Points is Measured in Memories, Labrador 1988, (Vancouver: Presentation House Gallery, 1990), 15.

Northern Labrador in 1988 in which she visited three communities on the north-east coast: Nain, Hopedale and Davis Inlet. The series is comprised of eighteen assemblages featuring the stories and remembrances of Labradorian elders who reflect upon the places where they were born and/or lived for the greater part of their lives.[2] The majority of Inuit, Naskapi Innu and settlers of Euro-Canadian descent whose memories are presented in these works have moved to these communities over the years; some were moved there by the government.[3] As a result, their physical surroundings have been drastically altered and they have become dislocated from their traditional way of life. In her artist's statement Creates stated "Most of their stories (native and Settlers) revolve around a sadness at the loss of nature in their lives, now that they live in communities."[4] This sense of loss is tangible to the viewers upon reading the narrative texts which accompany each person's "memory map". In Joe Ford's narrative text (plate 7), he speaks of when he lived on an island, "Black Island. All the time...It's a beautiful place...I don't think about it much. I've got to be happy wherever I am." In the narrative text by Sam Winters (plate 8), the acquiescent

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[2]Each assemblage includes four framed panels, each 28 x 36 cm consisting of two black and white photographs (Selenium-toned silver prints), one story panel and a memory map drawing (pencil on paper). Most assemblages also include an object from the environment.

[3]During the 1950s and 1960s Labrador's native population was encouraged by the government to abandon small villages and a nomadic way of life for larger centres. The premise behind the relocation programme was that health and educational services would be more accessible and a better quality of life would be obtainable. These same incentives were used to resettle outport communities during the 1960s.

[4]Creates, "Statement," 15.

attitude expressed by Joe Ford is less present, he states, "If I was smarter like I was them days, I wouldn't be here. I'd be home. But I can't do nothing now. I got to be here. I finds it bad now sitting around like this every day. I used to go all around to those places by dog team. All of it. Everything." Hilda Dickers (plate 9), discusses Kanagiktok, the place where she was born and describes the emotional ties to that landscape in a strong, poetic way. Hilda states, "I love that place...And I'd go in the woods and all the trees was like arms around me. The trees was like company. I didn't feel alone. That's how I felt. I felt safe." The feelings expressed by these elderly people are not just nostalgic remembrances of by-gone days; rather, they reflect the intersections between experience, identity and the land(scape).

Prior to the government's relocation programme, the Innu of Labrador and Quebec lived a traditional nomadic life in which they inhabited tents and supported themselves in and off the land. In producing the *Labrador 1988* "memory map" series Creates stated that she "began to understand that there are certain things about their lives which are being left behind -- certain things that matter to them, their experiences of the world which are so different from my own."[5] In the narrative texts that accompany the "memory maps" drawn by the Innu, a sadness at the demise of their traditional life is expressed along with a palpable sense that the transition has not been easy. Joachim Nui (plate 10), states "Always lived in a tent. First time Innu

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[5]Ibid., 15.

people were staying in a house was 1967. That's Davis Inlet. After that people stopped going in the country, stopped taking their families ....I like sometime to stay in the tent. Don't like to stay in the house all the time." Mary Ann Noah (plate 11), in her narrative text talks about Old Davis Inlet and mentions that the only visible markers of their old way of life which remain today are the wooden structures from the tents and the circles of stones from the fires that were used for cooking. Sadness over the diminished role that nature now plays in their daily activities is perhaps only secondary to the distress experienced over the loss of control over their lives which has occurred as a result of their relocation into these communities. For the Inuit and especially the Innu the price has been high with increasing crime, violence, sexual abuse, alcohol abuse, and perhaps most tragic of all, frequent suicides occurring amongst their people.[6] The loss of control over their lives has come about with the dissolution of their traditional way of life in which they lived off the land and participated in a culture based on mutual dependency and respect. Implicit in this loss of control is a loss of self-esteem and a sense of identity.

"This Land is My Land, This Land is Your Land"

Rob Shields, in his book entitled Places on the Margin, states, "Sites are never

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[6] In a 1986 report entitled Mortality of Labrador Innu and Inuit, Dr. Kay Wotton, a physician who worked in native Labrador towns cited the suicide rate amongst Labrador's native peoples as three times that of other communities in the North. This is quite alarming considering the native suicide rate in Canada is six times the national average. See Cathy White, "Labrador: the worst problems in the Canadian North," Atlantic Insight 8 (October 1986): 26-31.

simply locations. Rather, they are sites for someone and of something."[7] Implicated in this statement are the questions: Who are these sites for? What are these sites to be used as? and ultimately, Who decides? These questions are posed by Creates in her *Labrador 1988* series in relation to Labrador and its Native peoples. In her artist statement Creates explained that the series was motivated primarily by two interconnected issues, the first involving the demythification of Labrador as an unpopulated wilderness area. The second related issue involved a protest by Creates against the practice of low-level jet bomber flight training over Labrador by several NATO countries.[8] In discussing this issue, Creates wrote,

> there is a persistent common image of Labrador as a pristine, untouched wilderness - a no-man's land - and therefore a suitable place for these military activities. But this is not so. The Quebec-Labrador peninsula has been inhabited for thousands of years by people who have a profound grasp of the land because of their long history there.[9]

The militarization of Labrador and Newfoundland dates back to 1938 when a large air force base jointly operated by Canadian and American Air Forces was established at

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[7]Rob Shields, Places on the Margin: Alternative geographies of modernity, (New York: Routledge, 1991), 7.

[8]Countries that have been involved in low-level test flights from Goose Bay, Labrador, include Britain, the United States, and the Netherlands. The Canadian Air Force does occasionally carry out test flights from Goose Bay, Labrador, however, the majority of low-level jet bomber flight training by the Canadian Forces is conducted from the base located at Cold Lake, Alberta. This information was provided to the author by Colonel Pigeon, Department of National Defence, Ottawa, during a phone conversation which took place on 26 April 1995.

[9]Marlene Creates, "Nature is a verb to me," in Rephotographing the Land, (Halifax: Dalhousie University Art Gallery, 1992), 9-10.

Gander, Newfoundland. A second base was created in 1941 at Goose Bay, Labrador, by the Canadians and Americans in order to meet the military needs created by World War II. After 1945 the airbase at Goose Bay was used co-operatively by both the Canadian and American Forces, serving as a strategic site command for the U.S.A. during the Cold War era. The Americans discontinued their use of the Goose Bay airbase in 1990, but by this point in time British, German and Dutch air forces were already using the base to carry out their own low-level jet training flights.[10]

For the past sixteen years, parts of Labrador have been subjected to sustained low-level jet bomber flight training carried out under the auspices of NATO from the Happy Valley-Goose Bay Canadian Air Forces Base. The people who are particularly affected by these activities are the Innu of Labrador and Quebec, the majority of whom live along the Quebec-Labrador border, one of two portions of land designated by the Canadian government for low-level test flights. The test areas cover some 100,000 square kilometres of land north and south of the Goose Bay airbase, sections of land consisting mostly of bush to which the Innu return to each spring and fall in order to hunt and fish. The Innu "see the military activity as a desecration of the land,

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[10]The British have been involved in low-level jet training from the Goose Bay, Labrador airbase since the 1950s and began testing the Vulcan bomber fighter on a regular basis in the early 1980s. Germany has been testing F4 jet fighters from the Goose Bay base since the 1980s. The Dutch began using the Goose Bay, Labrador airbase to perform low-level test flights in 1985. I am indebted to Colonel Pigeon, Department of National Defence, Ottawa, for this information.

a violation of their rights, [and] a threat to the environment."[11] The most vocal and physical protests against the low-level training flights have come from the Innu who live in Sheshatshit, located approximately fifty kilometres from Goose Bay, Labrador. Over the years they have mounted numerous peaceful protests in response to increased flying activity and to a proposed NATO tactical fighter weapons training facility which was to be built in Goose Bay. The protests by the Innu have often taken the form of 'tent-ins' whereby tents have been erected on the runways of the Goose Bay airbase. On several occasions protesters have been arrested, charged with public mischief and jailed. Between 1986 and 1990 protests by the Innu escalated in reaction to the Government of Canada's bid for a NATO tactical fighter weapons training facility which was to be built at Goose Bay. According to one newspaper article appearing in the Montreal Gazette, the proposed NATO centre would have enabled aircraft to practice air-to-air combat and bombing and would have resulted in the number of low-level flights to increase six-fold, from a current number of 6,300 per year in 1988 to 40,000.[12] In 1990 NATO awarded the centre to Canada's only competitor, Turkey. Although relieved about NATO's decision regarding the tactical fighter weapons centre, Labrador's Innu still faced increasing military activity and vowed to continue their fight against all low-level NATO flights, a fight which still

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[11]Marie Wadden, "Fear of Flying," Montreal Gazette, 25 June 1988, B1.

[12]Ibid., B1. According to Colonel Pigeon, Department of National Defence, Ottawa, since 1986 the approximate number of low-level test flights per year is 6,000.

continues today.[13]

In her artist's statement Creates acknowledged that the militarization of Labrador does not appear explicitly in this work, rather the personal experiences and remembrances by settlers and Native peoples about their homeland are presented. Rob Shields, in his discussion of "the socially-maintained *reputation*" of places and spaces, states, "A clear distinction must be made between research into people's existential participation in their environment and research into the culturally mediated reception of *representations* of environments, places or regions which are 'afloat in society' as 'ideas in currency'."[14] Creates' *Labrador 1998* series, in my opinion, does both. The narrative texts and "memory maps" delve into people's existential participation in their environment(s), while the juxtaposition of those same narrative texts and Creates' artist's statement explores the different representations of Labrador which are 'afloat in society'. Creates' artist statements are presented alongside the "memory map" work and when read in conjunction with the series, it becomes apparent that she views human perception of place, as well as place, to be moulded by historic, cultural and economic factors as well as language and subjective experience.

The conjunction of language, meaning, power and subjectivity forms the axis

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[13]In 1996 the Canadian government signed a ten year agreement with the United Kingdom, Germany and the Netherlands which allows the low-level military training flights over Labrador and eastern Quebec to increase to 15,000 per year. See "Canada signs low-level flight deal," The Chronicle Herald (Halifax), 21 February 1996, C13.

[14]Shields, 14.

point around which the *Labrador 1988* series rotates. Discussing the central importance of language to poststructuralist theory, feminist theorist Chris Weedon states that,

> the common factor in the analysis of social organization, social meanings, power and individual consciousness is language. Language is the place where actual and possible forms of social organization and their likely social and political consequences are defined and contested. Yet it is also the place where our sense of ourselves, our subjectivity is constructed.[15]

Language is therefore viewed as the medium through which ideologies are given meaning, distributed and shared as well as contested and, ultimately, changed. This approach to language has influenced recent studies undertaken by cultural and sociological geographers in which emphasis has been placed on the interpretative element of narratives and accounts about places. As a result, the relationship between language and place is often revealed to be a politicized one.

In the *Labrador 1988* "memory map" series the relationship between language and place is viewed by Creates as a political construct. Discussing this work, Creates stated,

> Because of the "wilderness" image (promoted by governments, the tourism industry, and even more idealistically in some current visual art), Labrador has been perceived as a no-man's-land, an empty landscape, and as such, an appropriate setting for such violent and contemptible activities as low-level flying and bombing. Few

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[15]Chris Weedon, Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory, (Oxford and Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, 1987; reprint, 1988 and 1991), 21.

Canadians know anything about what is in operation in Labrador.[16]

Creates' approach to the Labrador/NATO issue relates to recent studies in the discipline of geography which have focused on how places and sites become 'labelled' and associated with particular values, feelings or activities and how these relationships become established and changed by looking at the power relations involved. Focusing on marginal places, Rob Shields suggests, "The social definition of marginal places and spaces is intimately linked with the categorisation of objects, practices, ideas and modes of social interaction as belonging to the 'Low culture', the culture of marginal places and spaces, the culture of the marginalised."[17] Geographic marginality is therefore equated with being on the cultural periphery of society. The alignment of geographic and cultural peripheries by Shields is of particular relevance to the discussion of Labrador and its Native peoples. Labrador occupies the position of "other" in several binary relationships simultaneously: for example, the geographic dualism of centre/margin, the post-industrial dichotomy of urban/rural, as well as the cultural binary of high/low. The positioning of Labrador and its inhabitants, especially its Native peoples, as the "other" allows for the objectification and consumption of the land and its peoples. In her intelligent and probing catalogue essay for the exhibition *Maskunow: A Trail A Path*, Joan Borsa succinctly points out

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[16]Marlene Creates, "The Distance Between Two Points is Measured in Memories, Labrador 1988," in Marlene Creates: Landworks 1979-1991, (St. John's: Art Gallery, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1993), 23.

[17]Shields, 4-5.

how this process works:

> The less obvious the signs of integrated human presence or the greater the difference between inhabitant and visitor, the greater the tendency to objectify, commodify and consider the sight/site as consumable. To be able to succeed at domination (mastery) a certain level of indifference seems necessary.[18]

Borsa goes on to state that this level of indifference is often promoted through representations, whether it be art, written text, legal systems or educational institutions, that circulate images which define and project what is accepted and permissible behaviour and what is to be considered natural or normal. As Creates points out in her artist statement, the representation of Labrador presented in various discourses is that of an uninhabited, vacant landscape and therefore an appropriate venue for activities which would not be acceptable or tolerated in more populated, more 'civilized' areas of the country. Alexander Wilson, in "Art, Geography and Resistance," discusses the long tradition in Canada of producing images of a barren and unexplored environment which is separate from human experience and the ways in which certain contemporary artists are countering these images in their works. Wilson points out that the approach taken by the majority of artists is "to make visible the relations between human cultures and the natural world in a way that does not involve separation."[19] In the case of Creates' *Labrador 1988* series, and indeed all her

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[18]Joan Borsa, "Whose Stories, Which Nature: Retracing Faint Paths," in Maskunow: A Trail, A Path, (St. John's: Art Gallery, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1991), 6.

[19]Alexander Wilson, "Art, Geography and Resistance," The Massachusetts Review XXXI no. 1-2 (Spring-Summer 1990): 242.

"memory map" series, it is through the insertion of people and their narrative histories that the gap is bridged.

Geographies of the Everyday

In producing the *Labrador 1988* series Creates stated that she "wanted to bring forward a picture of Labrador with names and faces and personal histories so that the landscape could be seen as a place that did actually have a meaning to people."[20] Creates' approach to the land(scape) as a place of personal meaning parallels theoretical developments which have occurred in the past thirty years in the discipline of geography, especially in the areas of human, cultural and feminist geographies.[21] These relatively recent discourses have focused on the concepts of place and space, and the ways in which notions and experiences of both define and construct an individual's understanding of their contextual world. The indivisibility of human beings from their environment(s) is a fundamental premise shared by these interrelated yet distinct geographical approaches. Rob Shields stresses the fact that concepts of place and space are not abstract theoretical entities but central aspects of

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[20]Layne Christensen, "Memories of Labrador communities part of exhibit," East London Reporter, 26 September 1991, 10.

[21]As discussed with the author during an interview conducted at Creates' home/studio, St. John's, Newfoundland, on 25 July 1993. The relationship between the "memory map" series and recent theory is summed up by Marlene Creates as follows, "my work has not been informed or directed by a lot of theory...I would have to say that most of my work and the conclusions I come to are from my own experiences and painstakingly slow thoughts...But I am obviously not a "naive" either. I have inklings about what is going on at the theory level in the academic world and some of these ideas give me more confidence, almost permission in a way, to express the way my brain works." [letter from Marlene Creates to the author dated 29 June 1995.]

our daily lives, he writes, "...a 'discourse of space' composed of perceptions of places and regions, of the world as a 'space' and of our relationships with these perceptions are central to our everyday conceptions of ourselves and of reality. Understandings and concepts of space cannot be divorced from the real fabric of how people live their lives."[22] For human geographers this relationship necessitated a methodological approach to geography which addressed people's perceptions of and emotional responses to places. This approach employed phenomenological research to recover people's involvement with places in an attempt to overcome the subject-object dualism and discounting of emotional meaning imposed by positivist approaches.[23] The human geographer Edward Relph, defined this practice as "an acceptance both of the wholeness and indivisibility of human experience, and of the fact that meaning defined by human intentions is central to all our existence."[24] By emphasizing the importance of everyday lived experience, human geographers explored the individualistic and therefore pluralistic interpretations of places by different people.

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[22]Shields, 7.

[23]Ibid., 15. Gillian Rose discusses the humanistic conception of place as a response to the positivist approach which dominated the geographical discipline in the 1960s. She writes, "Humanistic geographers characterized positivism as a form of scientific rationality, and they had two, related, criticisms of it. The first was that scientific rationality could not explain the causes of the patterns that it could model and correlate with such technical sophistication, because it was uninterested in the social and political processes in which spatial patterns were embedded. The second was a disbelief in the claims to objectivity and neutrality made by practitioners of statistical and positivistic techniques. [Feminism and Geography, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 41-42.]

[24]Edward Relph, Place and Placelessness, (London: Pion Limited, 1976), 7.

In all three "memory map" series Creates has incorporated the methodological approaches advocated by phenomenologists and human geographers, such as in-depth interviewing and an emphasis on 'soft' or qualitative data.[25] In exploring the relationship between human experience and place Creates has focused on the emotions and perceptions of the people for whom these sites have particular significance. The results are individual interpretations of those places in the form of hand-drawn "memory maps" as well as personal narratives expressing a wide range of emotions. Creates is interested in how different people perceive the same area of land, how they distinguish one place from another and what constitutes a landmark for them. The differences in people's perceptions of the same place which emerge in Creates' "memory map" series reinforce the observation put forth by Edward Relph, that "place has a range of significances and identities that is as wide as the range of human consciousness of place."[26] Human geographers did acknowledge, however, that certain meanings would be shared and that particular patterns and experiences of the environment are reproduced amongst individuals and/or groups. In the *Labrador 1988* and the *Places of Presence* series (plates 12-16), some patterns do emerge in the "memory maps" which reflect shared experiences between individuals in terms of their interaction with the environment. In both series the predominant pattern which

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[25]Women and Geography Study Group of the Institute of British Geographers, Geography and Gender: An Introduction to Feminist Geography, (London: Hutchinson, 1984), 36.

[26]Relph, 7.

emerged demonstrated that spatial relations are generally experienced differently by women and men.

The differences which are visible in the "memory maps" drawn by women and men in Creates' series help to explain why a feminist approach to geography has developed over the past two decades. Although human geographers emphasized everyday experience as an important element in geographical investigations, feminist geographers believe that "there is a failure to move beyond the necessary stage of description, self-revelation and empathy to an explanation and analysis of the reasons for those experiences: this in turn is related to a failure to consider how power relations and inequalities in society are interlinked."[27] Inherent in this failure by human geography to consider the links between power relations and inequalities in society is the absence of any discussion of women and their experiences and perceptions of place and space. In the rhetoric of human geography the experience of men is taken as the rubric for all human experience. Gillian Rose, in her discussion of feminist geography states that feminists have emphasized the "importance of spatial structure in the production and reproduction of masculinist societies."[28] This approach views the activities of women as they are constituted in the environment as bound to the power relations and the prevalent gender stereotypes of that society. The distinction between public and private spaces, and the respective gender binary linked

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[27]Women and Geography Study Group of the Institute of British Geographers, 37.

[28] Rose, 17.

to those spaces, have led feminist geographers to stress the extent to which women's movements in public space are confined due to patriarchy's equivalence of the "feminine" with the domestic realm.

In the *Labrador 1988* and the *Places of Presence* series, differences in spatial experiences and perceptions by women and men are generally reflective of traditional gender roles in Western society. Creates found that, when asked to draw a "memory map" of the same place, women and men would generally produce two types of drawings. In almost every instance, the men were able to represent hundreds, if not thousands, of square miles of coastline on the same sized paper on which the women had sketched the immediate area around their homes. In the *Labrador 1988* series the "memory maps" drawn by spouses Rosie Webb (plate 17) and Chesley Webb (plate 18), as well as those by siblings Clara Voisey (plate 19) and Jim Voisey (plate 20), are characteristic of these gender-inflected perceptions. The differences which emerge between women and men in their respective "memory maps" demonstrate that an individual's perceptions of the environment are constructed by their experiences of it and will often, although not always, reflect and reproduce the dominant ideologies of their culture.

The extant to which women and men's interaction with the environment is culturally defined is evident in the *Places of Presence* "memory map" series in relation to land inheritance traditions in Western society. In the assemblage *where my grandmother was born*, the inheritance of land by four generations of women is

described. In the narrative text of Joan Freake *née* Jewer (plate 21), she states, "The reason that the land has passed to women is there wasn't anyone else to give it to, only women." This simple statement underscores what Joan Borsa has pointed out, that, "at some point certain hierarchies and meanings are in place and seem natural. Over time and through everyday activities we enact, repeat and reproduce what already exists, losing sight of the specific social and historical conditions that have naturalized certain concepts, behaviours and traditions."[29] Feminist geographers, however, do not view men and women's movements in relation to the environment as fixed and non-negotiable; rather, it is understood that an individual's conceptions and experiences of place and space are culturally constructed in the same way as gender roles are, and as such are open to contestation and re-configuration. This viewpoint is shared by Creates, and her "memory map" series function as a medium through which a questioning and challenging of cultural bias can occur.

Ordering, Framing and Selection

Discussing the intersection of gender, space and status, Daphne Spain writes, "spatial segregation is one of the mechanisms by which a group with greater power can maintain its advantage over a group with less power. By controlling access to knowledge and resources through the control of space, the dominant group's ability to

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[29]Borsa, 5.

retain and reinforce its position is enhanced."[30] Although Spain's work deals exclusively with how architectural and geographical spatial arrangements have established and reinforced male power and privilege at the expense of women, her arguments can be expanded to include any marginalized group. In the *Labrador 1988* "memory map" series, Creates has shown how space and power can intersect on multiple levels and the mechanisms through which this power is disseminated and enacted. The *Labrador 1988* and *Places of Presence* series illustrate Michel Foucault's statement that "a whole history remains to be written of *spaces* - which would at the same time be the history of powers."[31] In this respect, the relationship between human experience and the land becomes a discussion of ordering, framing and selection. Framing purposes a representation of reality, however, it exists as a construct which is achieved by the limiting of that reality, through the removal of context or the action of ordering. In the "memory map" series Marlene Creates has illustrated how our daily interactions with the land, like the land itself, are ordered and framed. Simultaneously, however, Creates provides the viewers with the tools by which to dismantle these constructs through the action of consciousness-raising.

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[30]Daphne Spain, Gendered Spaces, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 15-16.

[31]Michel Foucault "The Eye of Power," in Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 149.

CHAPTER 4

Narratives of Discovery

> Our whole conception of ourselves as a people, individually and collectively, is based on those pictures and images which may or may not correctly correspond to the actual reality of the struggles with nature and nurture which produced them in the first place. But our capacity to confront the world creatively is dependent on how those images correspond or not to that reality, how they distort or clarify the reality of our struggles. Language as culture is thus mediating between me and my own self; between my own self and other selves; between me and nature. Language is mediating in my very being.
>
> -Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature, 1986.

Through the incorporation of autobiographical narratives in the "memory map" series Creates has chosen a format which inherently lends itself to exploring and questioning issues of self-identity. According to Leigh Gilmore, autobiography in the postmodern era exists as "a site of identity production; as texts that both resist and produce cultural identities."[1] In this chapter the central role narrative plays in

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[1]Leigh Gilmore, "The Mark of Autobiography: Postmodernism, Autobiography, and Genre," in Autobiography and Postmodernism, ed. Kathleen Ashley, Leigh Gilmore, and Gerald Peters (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1994), 4.

directing the social function of the "memory map" series will be discussed in relation to feminist literature and politics and oral history traditions.

In recent years much has been written on autobiography with particular emphasis on the role it has played in the feminist movement.[2] Rita Felski suggests that it has emerged as a predominant feminist literary format as "a consequence of the central importance given to personal change within feminist politics...."[3] In feminism, the method employed in order to achieve both agency and social change has predominantly been consciousness-raising. Autobiography has functioned as a medium which facilitates awareness due to its ability to make public that which has been viewed as 'private'.

Julia Swindells outlines two basic premises underlying the use of autobiography politically by feminists as the following; firstly, that in order to achieve social and political change the experience of oppression must be articulated first-hand, and secondly, that the autobiographical must be viewed as collective testimony rather

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Peters (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1994), 4.

[2]For example: Rita Felski, Beyond Feminist Aesthetics: Feminist Literature and Social Change, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989); Personal Narratives Group, eds. Interpreting Women's Lives: Feminist Theory and Personal Narratives, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989); Liz Stanley, The auto/biographical I: The theory and practice of feminist auto/biography, (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1992); Leigh Gilmore, Autobiographics: A Feminist Theory of Women's Self-Representation, (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1994); Julia Swindells, ed. The Uses of Autobiography, (London: Taylor & Francis, 1995).

[3]Rita Felski, Beyond Feminist Aesthetics: Feminist Literature and Social Change, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), 51.

than be looked at in terms of individualism.[4] The focus on collectivity rather than individuality in feminist inspired autobiography is based in the politics of the personal. Details of a life-story are approached in terms of their relationship to larger social structures rather than as aspects signifying a unique or unusual life or experience. This approach is informed by the understanding, as expressed by Michael M. J. Fischer, that, "The individual is one locus for the intersection of wider historical processes. The frame of a life history or an autobiography is one experiential field for identifying the ways these intersections articulate."[5]

Competing Voices

In the previous chapter it was shown that Creates' *Labrador 1988* "memory map" series demonstrated how the relationship between subjectivity, experience and place is constructed through relations of power. The demythification of Labrador as an uninhabited vacant land(scape) is achieved in this work by the insertion of people and their narrative histories. Discussing the inclusion of narrative text in the *Labrador 1988* series, Jill Pollock wrote, "Creates has discovered a format which opens up perceptual processes, rather than closing them down. It is important, in her

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[4]Julia Swindells, "Autobiography and the Politics of 'The Personal'," in The Uses of Autobiography, ed. Julia Swindells (London: Taylor & Francis, 1995), 213.

[5]Michael M. J. Fischer, "Autobiographical Voices (1,2,3) and Mosaic Memory: Experimental Sondages in the (Post)modern World," in Autobiography and Postmodernism, ed. Kathleen Ashley, Leigh Gilmore, and Gerald Peters (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1994), 92-93.

work, that stories are told, not just for their specifics but for the act of telling. And through the act of telling, through the many voices represented, the viewer can find a place."[6] The place that Pollock alludes to in the above quote is that of a vantage point from which the viewers can synthesize, analyse and ultimately dismantle the power relations and systemic bias contained within the dominant discourses surrounding Labrador and its Native peoples. The autobiographical narratives in the *Labrador 1988* series counter what Joan Borsa refers to as the objectification, consumption and mastery of the land and certain peoples, which is promoted and legitimized through representations and information which surround us daily. This countering is achieved in two ways; firstly, these personal narratives present the viewers with people and experiences which have been, to a large degree, silenced and made invisible. Secondly, these narratives function to dissolve the distance that Borsa has stated is crucial in order to establish power relations and oppositional frameworks.

It is the intimate quality of each assemblage which allows this distance to be collapsed. In observing each assemblage the viewers enter into the person's home by way of each black and white portrait photograph in which the person is presented in the context of their living room, even Noachim Nui who is shown inside his tent. In addition the viewers become active listeners to the telling of each individual's feelings, remembrances, experiences and histories as they read the personal narratives.

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[6]Jill Pollock, "Marlene Creates, Presentation House Gallery, North Vancouver," ArtsAtlantic 38 (Fall 1990): 39.

The manner in which the narrative texts function in the *Labrador 1988* series underline Rita Felski's assertion that, "the formal features of feminist confession[7] are thus closely related to the social function which it is intended to serve, encouraging a particular form of interaction between text and audience."[8] In the "memory map" series Creates has employed several of the formal features which Felski attributes to feminist autobiography. One aspect evident in Creates' work is the focus upon personal feelings, experiences and relationships which are presented in an unrelativized first-person narrative. In all three "memory map" series the personal narratives which are presented by Creates often contain forthright expressions of emotion and provide insights into aspects of the speaker's lives. For example, in the *Labrador 1988* series Sidney Dicker (plate 22) prefaces his physical description of Nain, Labrador with an intimate portrait of himself. Dicker's stated, "When I was a young man I got married to an Inuk woman, forty years ago. I have twenty-two grandchildren. The hardest of all was having no father to teach me the things I wanted to know. Hunting and fishing. If I had to live it over, I'd live it all over the same way again. But I wouldn't want to go through losing a son again."

Another aspect which Felski states often exists in feminist autobiography is a

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[7]Felski defines her use of the term "confession" in relation to feminist autobiography in the following way; "I use 'confession' simply to specify a type of autobiographical writing which signals its intention to foreground the most personal and intimate details of the author's life." Felski, 87.

[8]Ibid., 100-101.

"frequent reliance upon an informal and nonliterary style which establishes a relationship of intimacy between author and reader."[9] This aspect is clearly present in the casual, conversational character of the narrative texts which is maintained by the transcription of the 'oral' voice of the speaker. In producing the "memory map" works Creates chose to transcribe the oral narratives of the speakers by writing down their words as they were spoken to her. Creates did not use a tape recorder to record the conversations she had with each individual as she felt the use of a tape recorder was too intrusive. Creates did however, use a tape recorder to record her own narratives which are presented in the *Places of Presence* "memory map" series in order to maintain the 'oral' quality present in the other narratives. The transcription of the 'oral' voice is cited by Felski as a typical formal device used in feminist confession in order to convey immediacy and promote intimacy. This is achieved in the "memory map" series because the transcription of the speaker's 'oral' voice enables a sense of individual articulation and even dialect to be projected. As a result the viewer(s) 'hears' the person's voice in reading their autobiographical text.

The casual and conversational character of the narrative texts in the *Labrador 1988* series is also accomplished by the fact that in several of the personal narratives the speaker addressed Creates directly. Hilda Dickers (plate 9), in describing the place where she was born, Kanagiktok, said to Creates, "This is the place where we

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[9]Ibid., 101.

lived. When you sees the woods my dear, you'll know you're getting handy to Kanagiktok Bay." Joe Ford (plate 7), in describing Black Island where he lived stated, "Up where my house is there's boulders you know. You'll like it. It's a beautiful place." In Sybilla Nitsman's narrative text (plate 23), she talked about her marriages and children and told Creates "When I was young like you I never thought I would be an old woman."

Ultimately, in viewing each assemblage, the observers 'spend time' with these individuals resulting in a process of identification to occur. The identification of the viewers with these individuals is important to the social function of the *Labrador 1988* series. Joan Borsa suggests that the power that lies in identifying with, and/or feeling compassion for, a person is that "one could fully integrate with and be a part of the situation one finds oneself in."[10] In other words, the identification process disallows the positioning of Labrador and its inhabitants as the objectified "other." The narrative texts in the *Labrador 1988* series challenge the dominant representations of Labrador and its peoples which are 'afloat in society' by raising the viewer's awareness about the situation in Labrador and the mechanisms which render these alternative realities invisible. In her discussion of language and poststructuralist theory, Chris Weedon suggests that, "Once language is understood in terms of competing discourses, competing ways of giving meaning to the world, which imply

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[10]Joan Borsa, "Whose Stories, Which Nature: Retracing Faint Paths," in Maskunow: A Trail, A Path, (St. John's: Art Gallery, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1991), 6.

differences in the organization of social power, then language becomes an important site of political struggle."[11] In the *Labrador 1988* series, language, in the form of these personal narrative texts, truly functions as a political battleground.

Ties That Bind

In keeping with the previous "memory map" series, *Places of Presence: Newfoundland kin and ancestral land, Newfoundland 1989-1991* (plates 12-16), focuses on the experiences and relationships of individuals to specific geographical places. The personal histories, memories and experiences featured in this work, however, are those of the artist and her relatives, the Freakes and the Laytes. The *Places of Presence* work is comprised of three separate yet related assemblages which collectively trace the birthplaces of Creates' maternal grandmother, grandfather and great-grandmother in Newfoundland.[12] The assemblage entitled *where my grandmother was born* features the stories and "memory maps" of five of Creates' relatives in addition to Creates' autobiographical text and "memory map". As indicated by the title of the assemblage the stories and recollections focus on the place where Creates' grandmother was born in Lewisporte, Newfoundland. The

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[11]Chris Weedon, Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory, (Oxford and Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, 1987; reprint, 1988 and 1991), 24.

[12]The installed dimensions for the assemblages entitled *where my grandmother was born* and *where my grandfather were born* are 161 cm high x 6.5 m long x 18 cm deep, plus floor space each; the installed dimensions for the assemblage entitled *where my great-grandmother was born* are 161 cm high x 7.5 m long x 18 cm deep, plus floor space.

assemblage entitled *where my grandfather was born* similarly describes the place where Creates' grandfather was born in Lewisporte, Newfoundland by way of six individual perspectives, including Creates'. In the assemblage entitled *where my great-grandmother was born* the place described is Joe Batt's Arm, Fogo Island, Newfoundland. This assemblage features a total of six "memory maps" and seven narrative texts. As in the previous two assemblages for the *Places of Presence* series Creates has also included her narrative text and "memory map" relating to the place her great-grandmother was born. In each of the three assemblages Creates has accompanied each person's narrative text and "memory map" with a portrait photograph of the person and either one or two photographs taken at the place described in each person's narrative and map. The exceptions are Creates' contributions which do not feature a portrait photograph.

The *Places of Presence* series was motivated primarily by two concerns. Foremost was Creates' desire to learn more about her maternal family history which was ignited by her initial visit to Newfoundland in 1981 and her subsequent relocation to St. John's, Newfoundland four years later. An additional concern which influenced the content of this series was the issue of appropriation of voice. Initially Creates had considered producing a work dealing with the memories and experiences of MicMac elders in Newfoundland, however, her sensitivity to the issues of representation and appropriation ultimately resulted in the creation of a work which takes the notion of 'speaking for ourselves' quite literally.

Focusing on the places/spaces of her ancestors and living relatives Creates introduced her own experiences, memories and emotions for the first time in the "memory map" series. Creates' narrative texts are from the perspective of a visitor attempting to connect to a part of her history rather than the "othering" gaze of a tourist. Discussing this work, curator Renee Baert, stated that, "...the work, produced in the years following Creates' move, after two generations, back to her family's homeland, asserts a claim to a 'place' within her adopted community. Unlike the immigrant from another land who is dispossessed of native roots, Creates' work derives force from its reclamation of a dispossessed heritage within her country of birth."[13] A sense of displacement and even sadness is communicated by Creates in her narrative text which forms part of the assemblage entitled *where my grandmother was born* (plate 24). Creates recalled her initial visit, accompanied by her mother, to the ancestral land of her grandmother and relates the transference of that land through four generations of women in the family, and the recent selling of a portion of that family land to strangers. In this narrative text Creates' stated, "It's a very strange feeling that the land where my great-grandparents lived and where my grandmother was born, now belongs to strangers, and it feels like a forbidden place where I can't go anymore. When I collected the leaves from my great-grandparents' big old aspen

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[13]Renee Baert, Margins of Memory (Windsor: Art Gallery of Windsor, 1994), 5. Baert prefaces this by stating that "In Newfoundland, the oldtimers' expression for 'where are you from?' is 'where do you belong to?' The expression encapsulates the idea that 'home' is an absolute, fixed at birth - suggesting a skeptical view toward outsiders."

trees, I felt like I was trespassing."

Expressions of sadness over changes which have taken place on these ancestral lands permeates several of the narrative texts featured in the *Places of Presence* series. These changes range from the selling of land to non-family members to development and land use changes, and in some cases, changes in a way of life. Similar to the two previous "memory map" series this work conveys the strong emotional bonds between people and specific places in addition to fractures which have occurred over time. Indeed, it was the fracture of two generations from this land which motivated this work. Discussing the personal significance of this series, Creates stated that, "When I listen to stories of my family's history in Newfoundland (which I've never heard before), I sense that these stories come from a past that affects me. When I walk around the land, when I choose the stones from the shore, when I look at my notes and photographs, I feel a poetic inheritance that cuts across me as a woman and an artist."[14] The notion of inheritance and of a past, transmitted through narrative, affecting and impacting upon Creates' sense of identity is indicative of the way story-telling functions. Cultural and postcolonial studies have emphasized the important role story-telling plays in the production of cultural identities, especially amongst aboriginal peoples. Story-telling exists as one of the oldest mediums through which historical and cultural consciousness is produced. In

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[14]Marlene Creates, "Places of Presence: Newfoundland kin and ancestral land, Newfoundland 1989-1991," in Marlene Creates: Landworks 1979-1991 (St. John's: Art Gallery, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1993), 31.

aboriginal cultures, story-telling does not function on the level of nostalgia, rather it is a valid means of connecting to the past, remembering in order to re-enact the past and to reconfigure the present. Discussing the significance of oral traditions in relation to the production of aboriginal cultural idenities, Gail Guthrie Valaskakis has stated that, "...it is the power of narrative as teaching, prayer, song experienced through collective heritage which makes stories so valued and so important in Indian country."[15] Writer Peter Gard, in a review of the exhibition *Maskunow: A Trail A Path*, aligned Creates' *Labrador 1988* series with oratorio and "songline".[16] This latter aspect is, in my opinion, most evident in the *Places of Presence* series. According to Robin Ridington, "The oral traditions of people who are native to this land are a form of discourse that connects them to the land and to the generations that have gone before."[17] In the *Places of Presence* series the narratives of Creates' relatives function in the same manner through the transmission of individual and collective memories and experiences of several generations in relation to specific geographical places.

Although the *Places of Presence* series has a personal significance for the artist, the narrative texts in this work function, in terms of reception, in the same manner as in the two previous "memory map" works. These autobiographical

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[15]Gail Guthrie Valaskakis, "Parallel Voices: Indians and Others - Narratives of Cultural Struggle," Canadian Journal of Communication 18 no. 3 (Summer 1993): 286.

[16]Peter Gard, "Maskunow: A Trail A Path," ArtsAtlantic 36 (Winter 1990): 9.

[17]Robin Ridington, Little bit know something: Stories in a language of anthropology. (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1990), 190: quoted in Valaskakis, 286.

narratives prompt the viewers to explore their own relationships to the land, and in so doing, their sense of self. This is achieved by the fact that "sometimes the *truths* we see in personal narratives jar us from our complacent security as interpreters 'outside' the story and make us aware that our own place in the world plays a part in our interpretation and shapes the meanings we derive from them" [italics mine].[18]

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[18]Personal Narratives Group, eds. Interpreting Women's Lives: Feminist Theory and Personal Narratives, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989), 261.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

The three "memory map" series produced by Creates between 1987 and 1991 are not large-scale works in terms of their physical size nor are they overt, political statements in the tradition, for example, of Barbara Kruger. Rather these works exist as small, intimate gestures on the part of the artist. The physical attributes of the "memory map" works reflect Creates' unease with large-scale political activism and her advocation of a "one-by-one approach" or, as she refers to it, the "ripple effect."[1] In other words, Creates' feels her artwork is successful if it can offer up an alternative to a previously held and often unchallenged conception, one person at a time. In this thesis I have argued that the way in which this is achieved in the "memory map" series is through the action of consciousness-raising.

Creates' "memory map" series are involved in an investigation of, what sociologist Michael Keith and cultural geographer Steve Pile have termed, the identity politics of place and the spatialized politics of identity.[2] In these works Creates has

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[1]Comments made by Marlene Creates during an interview with the author at her home/studio, St. John's, Newfoundland on 25 July 1993.

[2]Michael Keith and Steve Pile, "Introduction Part 1: The Politics of Place," in Place and the Politics of Identity, ed. Michael Keith and Steve Pile (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), 2.

employed an autobiographical approach to explore the intersections between experience, identity and the land(scape). In presenting these personal narratives and "memory maps" Creates is not concerned with whether or not the places described are accurately depicted. Rather Creates views the "memory maps" as "lived maps," as representations filtered through memory and experience. The interest for Creates lies in how each individual interprets a place and the variations and similarities between different peoples' interpretations. The personal narratives and "memory maps" which are presented by Creates in these works exist as ideological representations which indicate some of the ways in which a person's experiences and conceptions of place/space and their subjectivity are culturally constructed. In the *Labrador 1988* and *Places of Presence* series issues of gender, race and marginalization emerge as significant social factors which shape and define a person's experiences of the land(scape) in addition to their sense of self. Thus, the personal narratives and "memory maps" presented by Creates reflect "the ways in which the social and spatial are inextricably realized one in the other; ...[and] the circumstances in which society and space are simultaneously realized by thinking, feeling, doing individuals and also...conjure up the many different conditions in which such realizations are experienced by thinking, feeling, doing subjects."[3]

Discussing her work Creates has written,

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[3]Ibid., 6.

> My works are questions not answers. That is really important to me. The works are questions that I am asking, above all to myself. These questions, almost without exception, have to do with the complexities of our human relationship to and presence in the ('natural'/physical) world. I do the work I do to articulate and explore the questions. ...Now I have so many questions that I couldn't begin to spell them out, but one which I could mention that preoccupies me, wherever I go, is: "What is the meaning of the place I find myself in at the present moment?" In other words, "Where am I?"[4]

Liz Bondi, in discussing the use of spatial terms of reference in identity politics, states, "...that one of the consequences of the spatial metaphor is that the question 'Who am I?' evident in some versions of identity politics becomes 'Where am I?'"[5] In the "memory map" series Creates, in my opinion, has employed the spatial metaphor of place in order to explore issues of identity, her own as well as that of others. In these works the notion of place as an absolute, fixed essence or entity is countered by the presentation of various representations of places, oftentimes of the same place, by different individuals. Place is revealed to be multiple and changeable, and above all, culturally produced and constructed. The notion of place, and therefore subjectivity, as socially produced is, as previously outlined, inherently feminist in its approach.

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[4]Letter from Marlene Creates to the author dated 21 November 1995.

[5]Liz Bondi, "Locating identity politics," in Place and the politics of identity, ed. Michael Keith and Steve Pile (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), 98.

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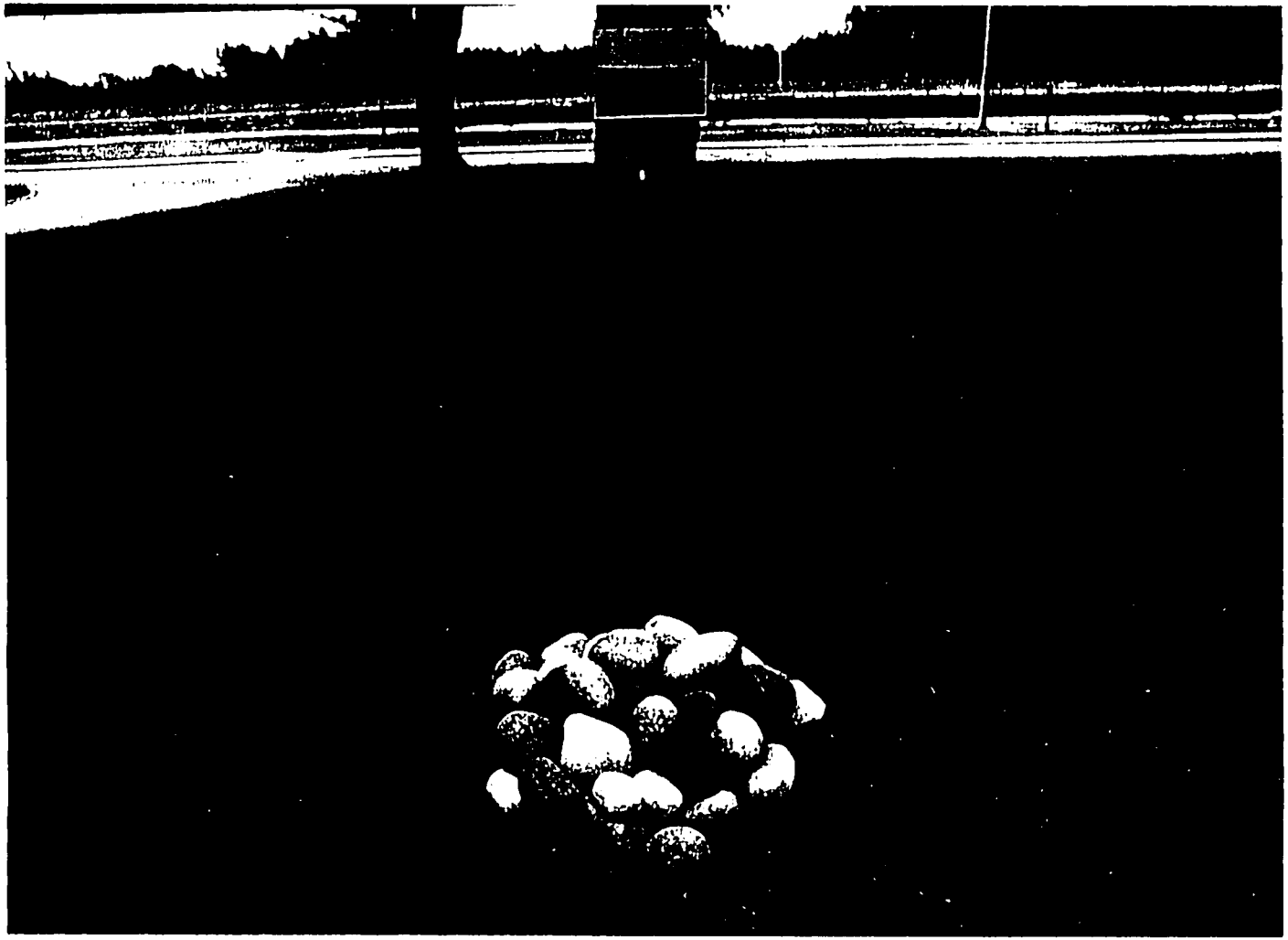
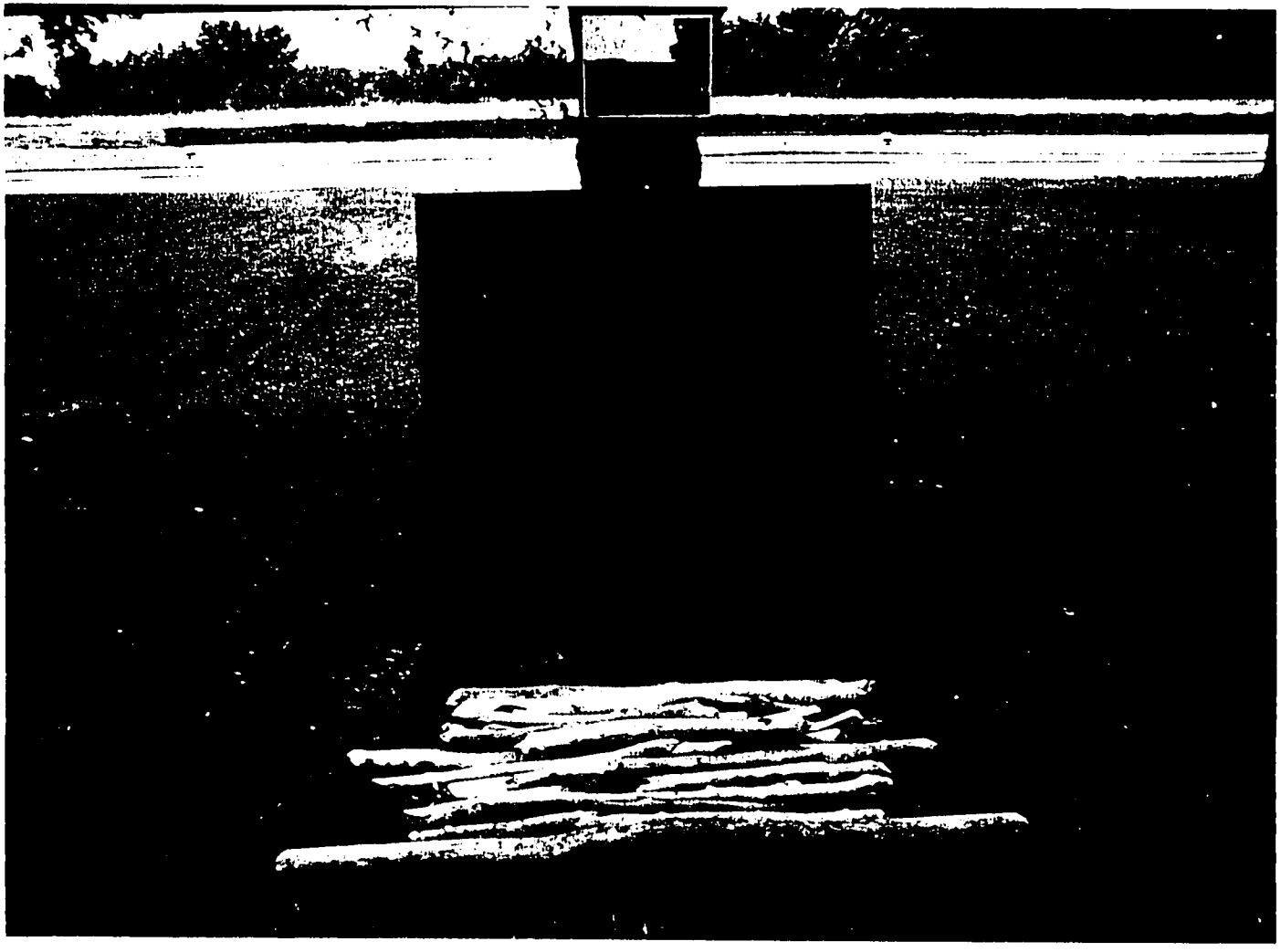
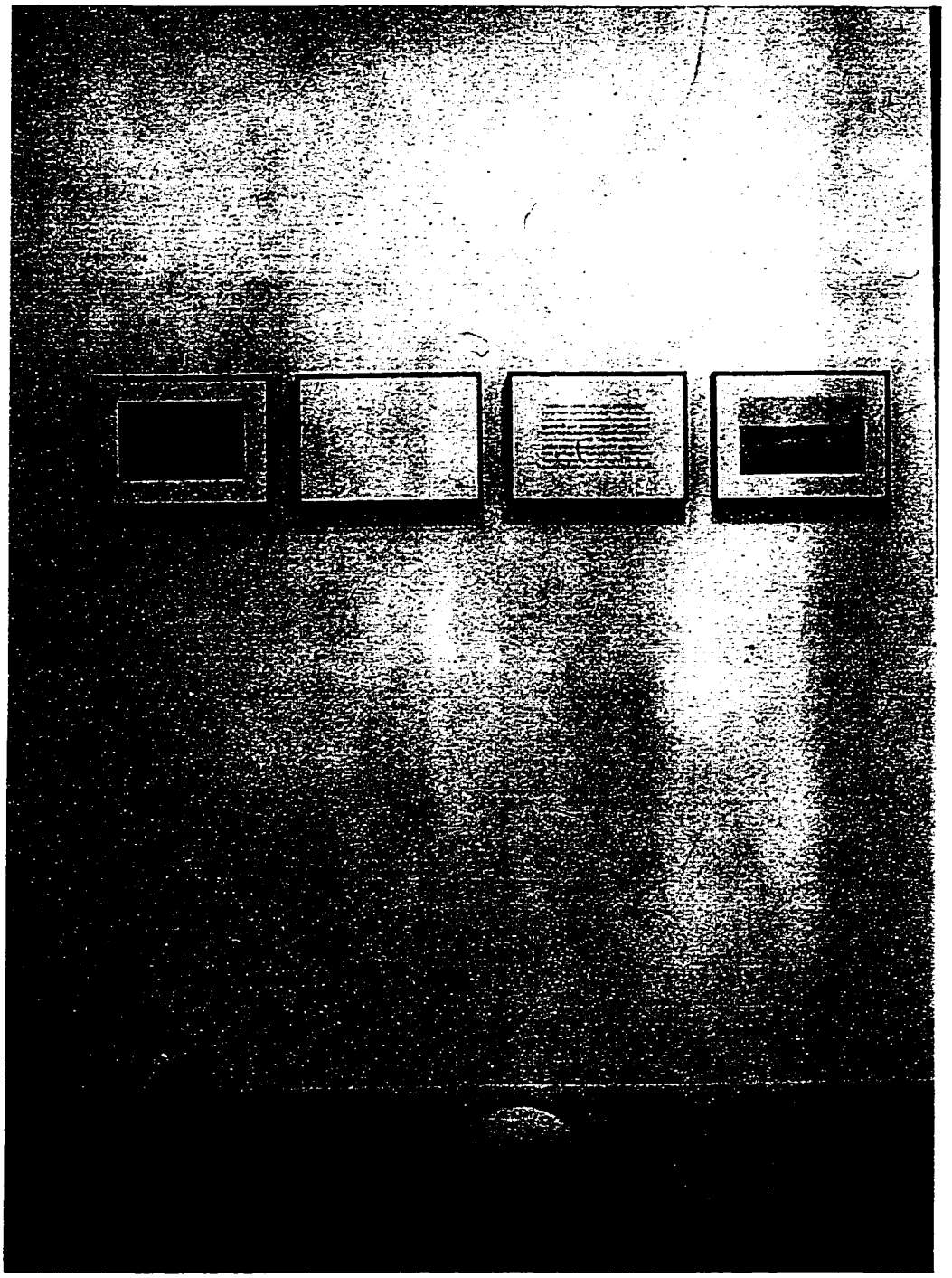
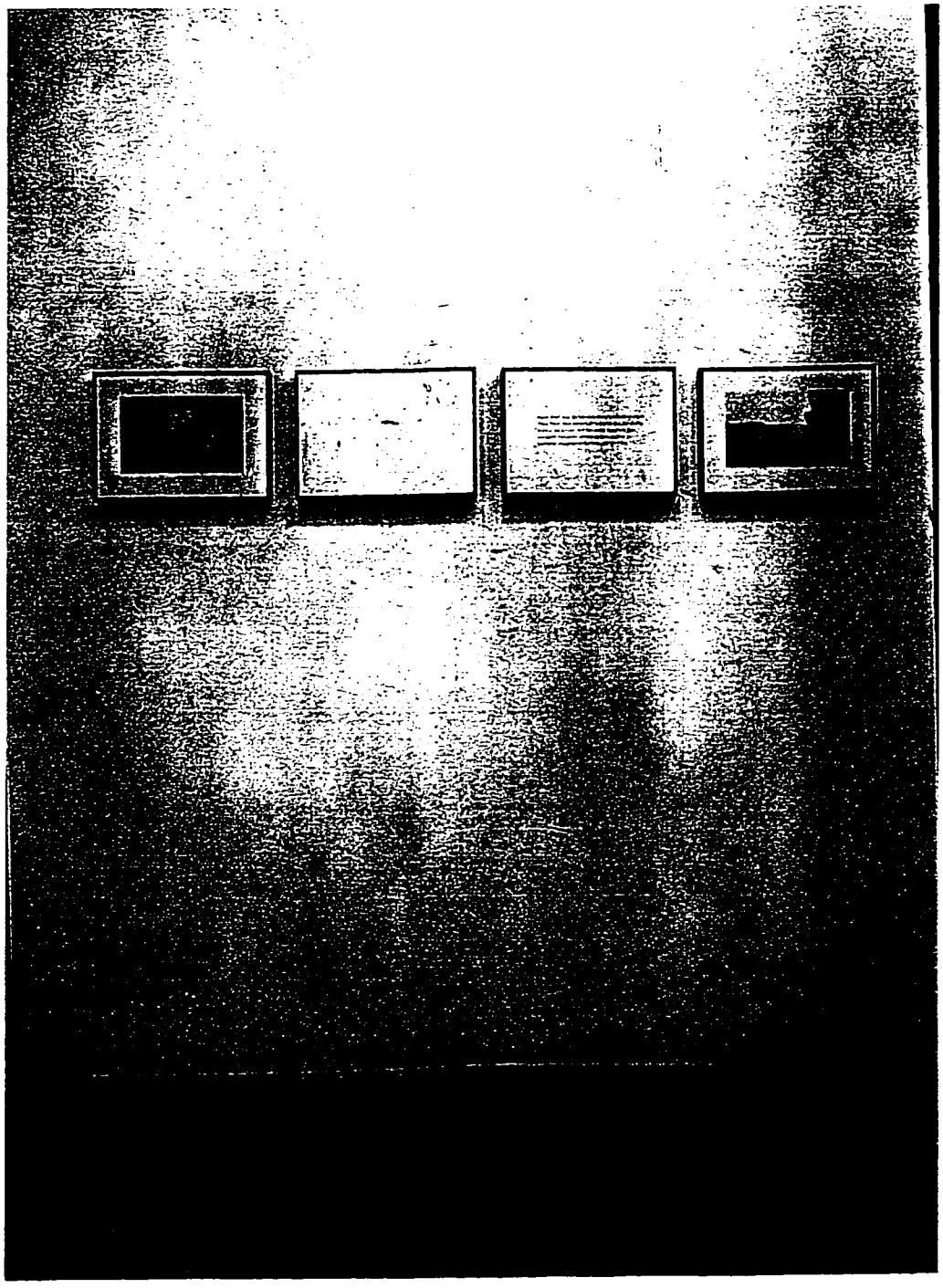








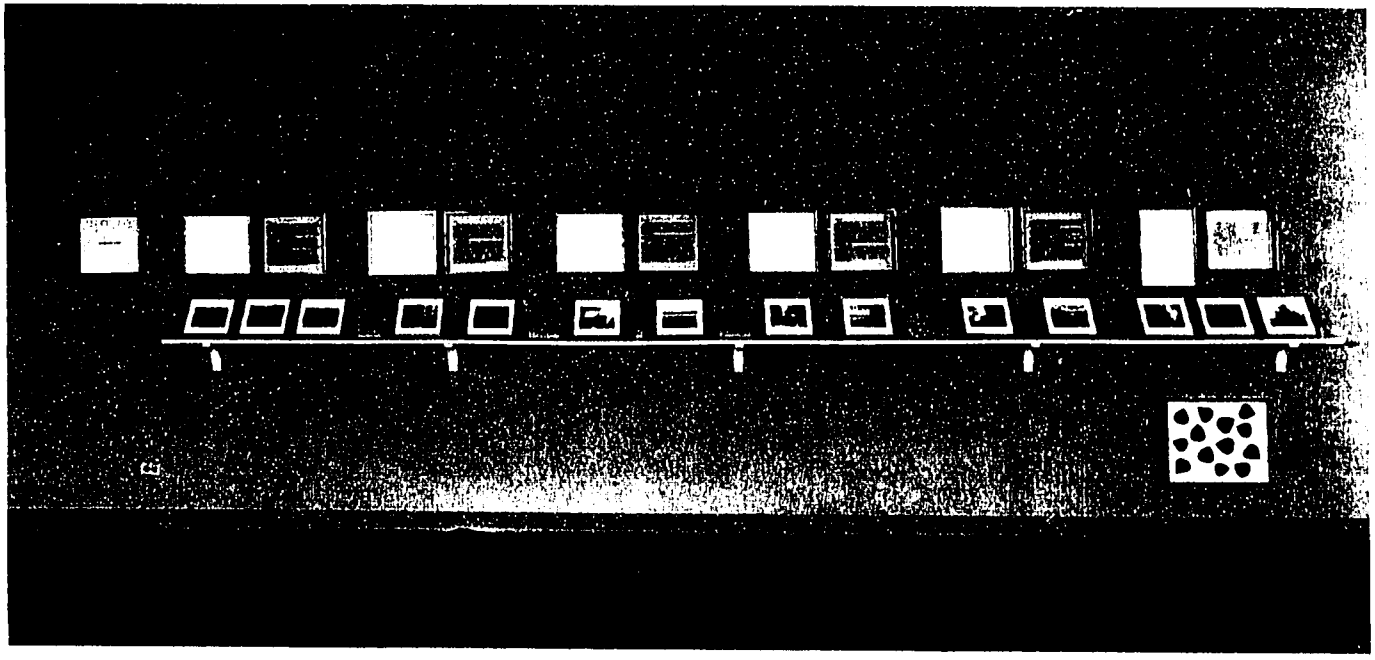
I lived out on an island. Black island. All the time. Still there, house on Black Island. Belongs to my son now. I don't own anything there any more. Up where my house is there's boulders you know. You'll like it. It's a beautiful place. I used to make beer you know. Rhubarb beer. Boy that's beautiful. The rhubarb grew right in front of the house, right under the window. I used to bottle it up. Whatever kind of bottle I could get. I used to see a lot of schooners from Twillingate and all those places. I used to entertain the Newfies. I played the squeeze box too. We used to have some fun you know. I was prepared. When I saw a schooner come in, I had the beer all ready. Anything for a bit of fun. I don't think about it much. I've got to be happy wherever I am.

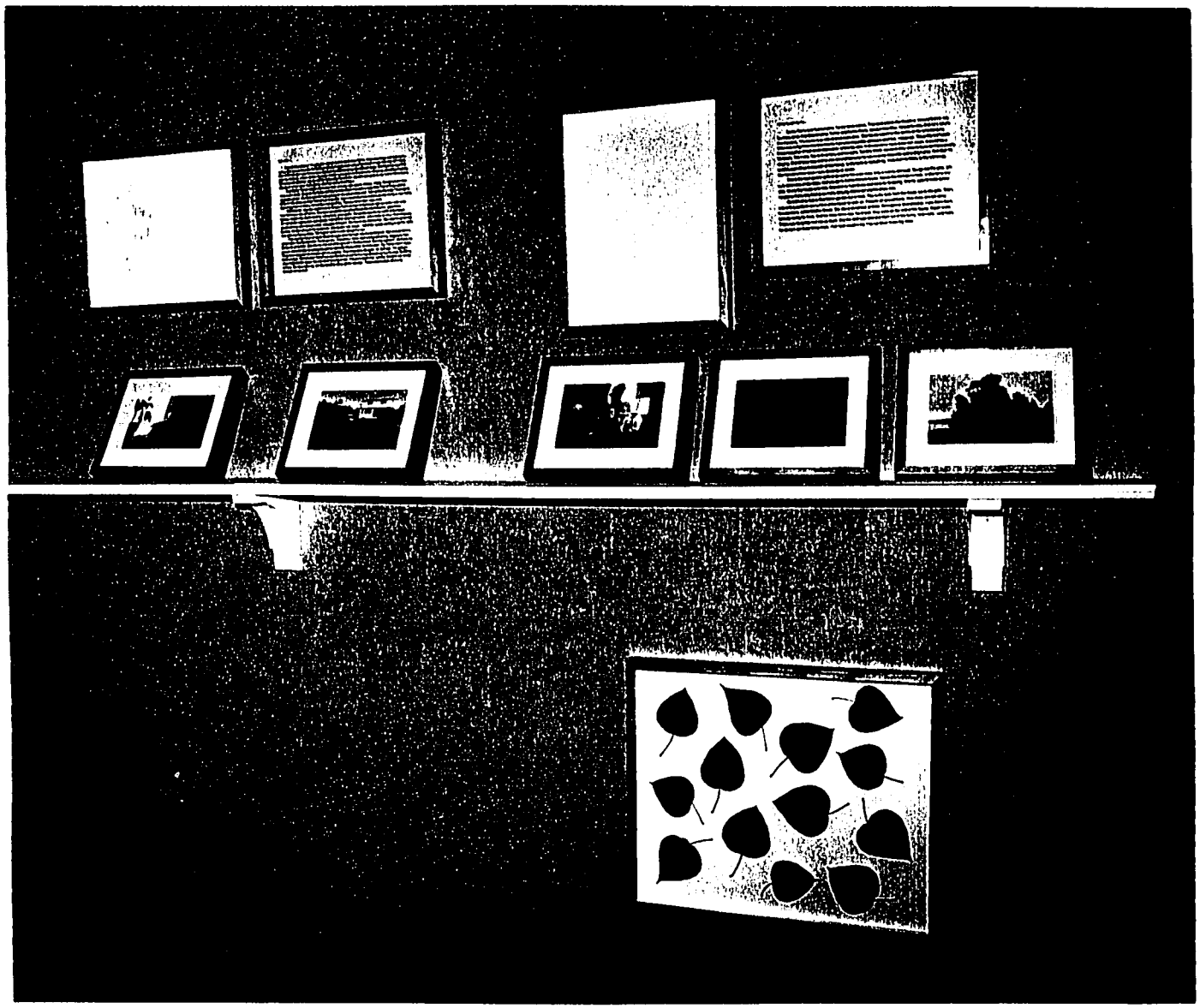
Used to be a fine old place. Kamarsuk. Three houses. But there was a lot of people when we were all together. We used to wear mostly skin clothes them days, right to the mitts and everything. We mostly growed up on meat such as caribou, seal meat, birds, stuff like that. If I was smarter like I was them days, I wouldn't be here. I'd be home. But I can't do nothing now. I got to be here. I finds it bad now sitting around like this every day. I used to go all around to those places by dog team. All of it. Everything. Now out here there was three little small islands, one after the other, right in the middle of the run. We used to go this way to go home. Long ways off. About twenty-two miles. It would only be like a cloud when you were there looking at the homeland. You could hardly make out the old hill. Like a cloud.

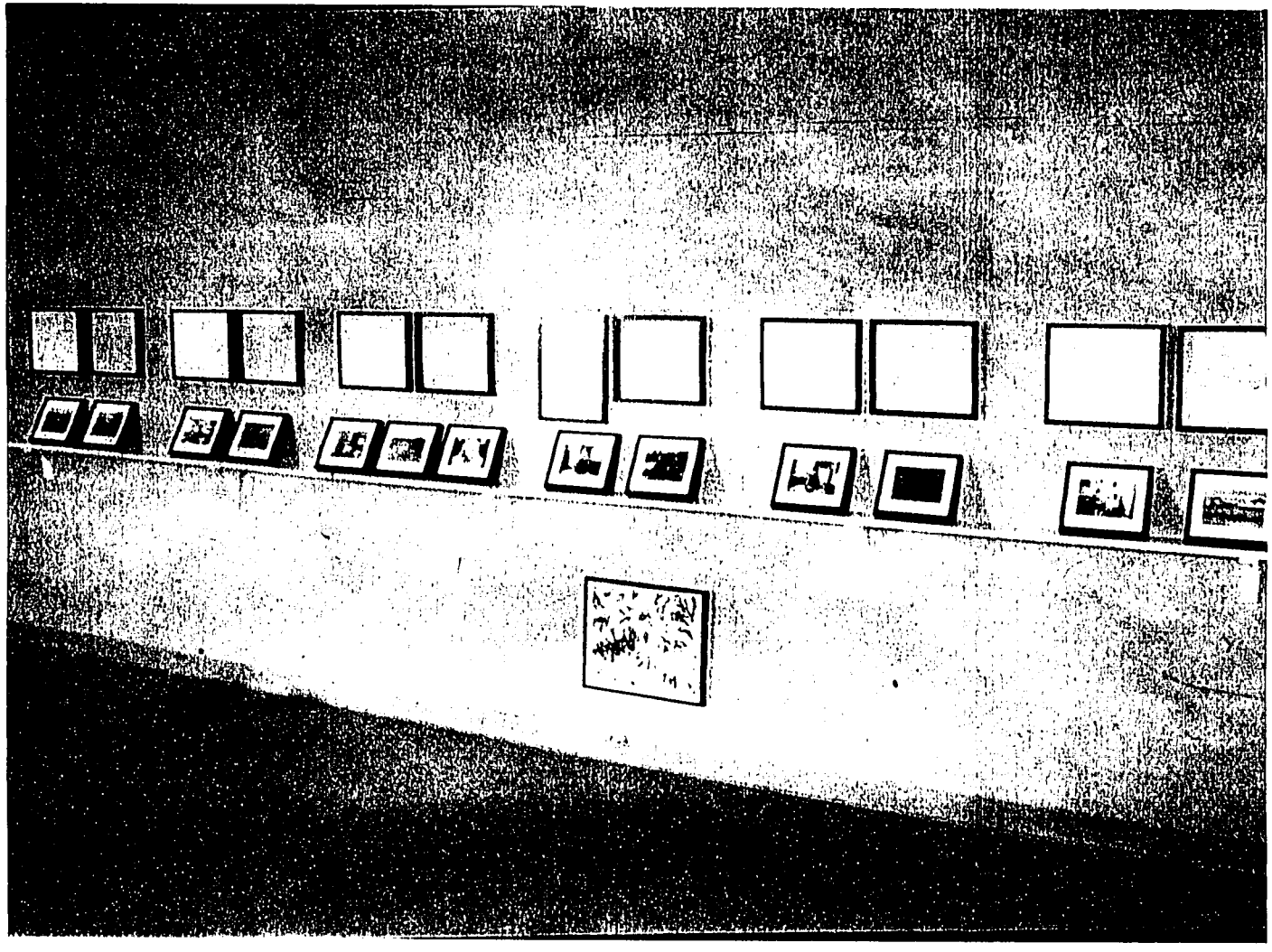
I was born in 1910 in Kanagiktok. It's a very very pretty place. It's a forest of trees. Oh that was beautiful my dear. I love that place. John would come down here to Hopedale to go to the shop in March, by dog team. And leave me alone. Say we was getting short of coal oil, lamp oil. Or we might be getting short of tea or sugar. And there was nothing I enjoyed any better my dear. And I'd go in the woods and all the trees was like arms around me. The trees was like company. I didn't feel alone. That's how I felt. I felt safe. Yes, beautiful, beautiful. This is the place where we lived. When you sees the woods my dear, you'll know you're getting handy to Kanagiktok Bay.

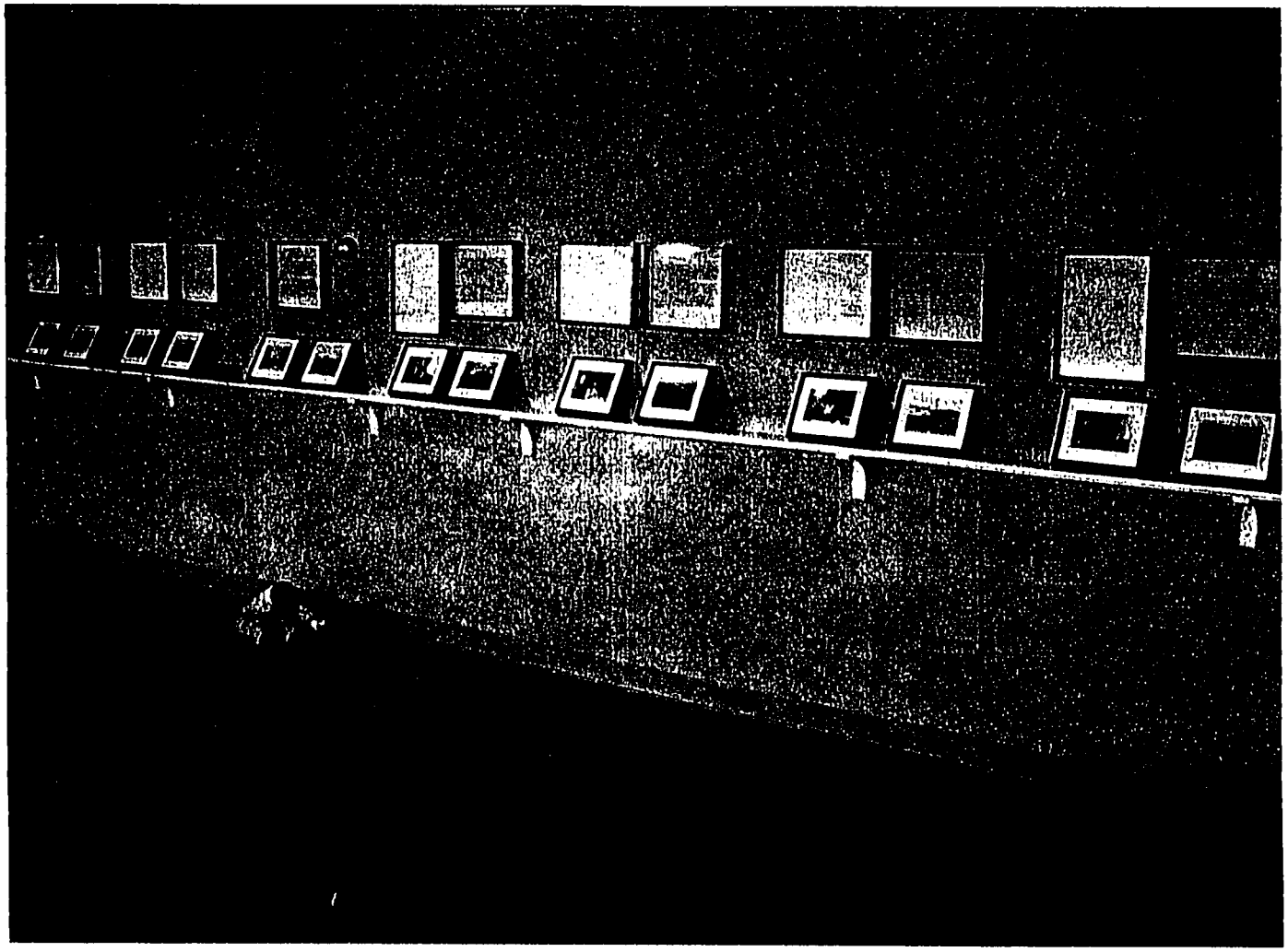
Always lived in tent. First time Innu people were staying in a house was 1967. That's Davis Inlet. After that people stopped going in the country, stopped taking their families. 1966 was the last time I went in the country with the whole family. After that I got a job. Now it's only sometimes for two or three days for caribou hunting. I like sometime to stay in the tent. Don't like to stay in the house all the time. In the wintertime when the boughs get dry, never take it out. Just put new ones on top. In the summertime not the same thing. When it gets dry, take it out and put new ones. Every week put new ones. Shitats. That means boughs. Three kinds of boughs we use in the tent. Girls get the boughs in the woods. That's girls' job. Always like that, girls and women. My two daughters and four more girls got these boughs yesterday. Six girls.

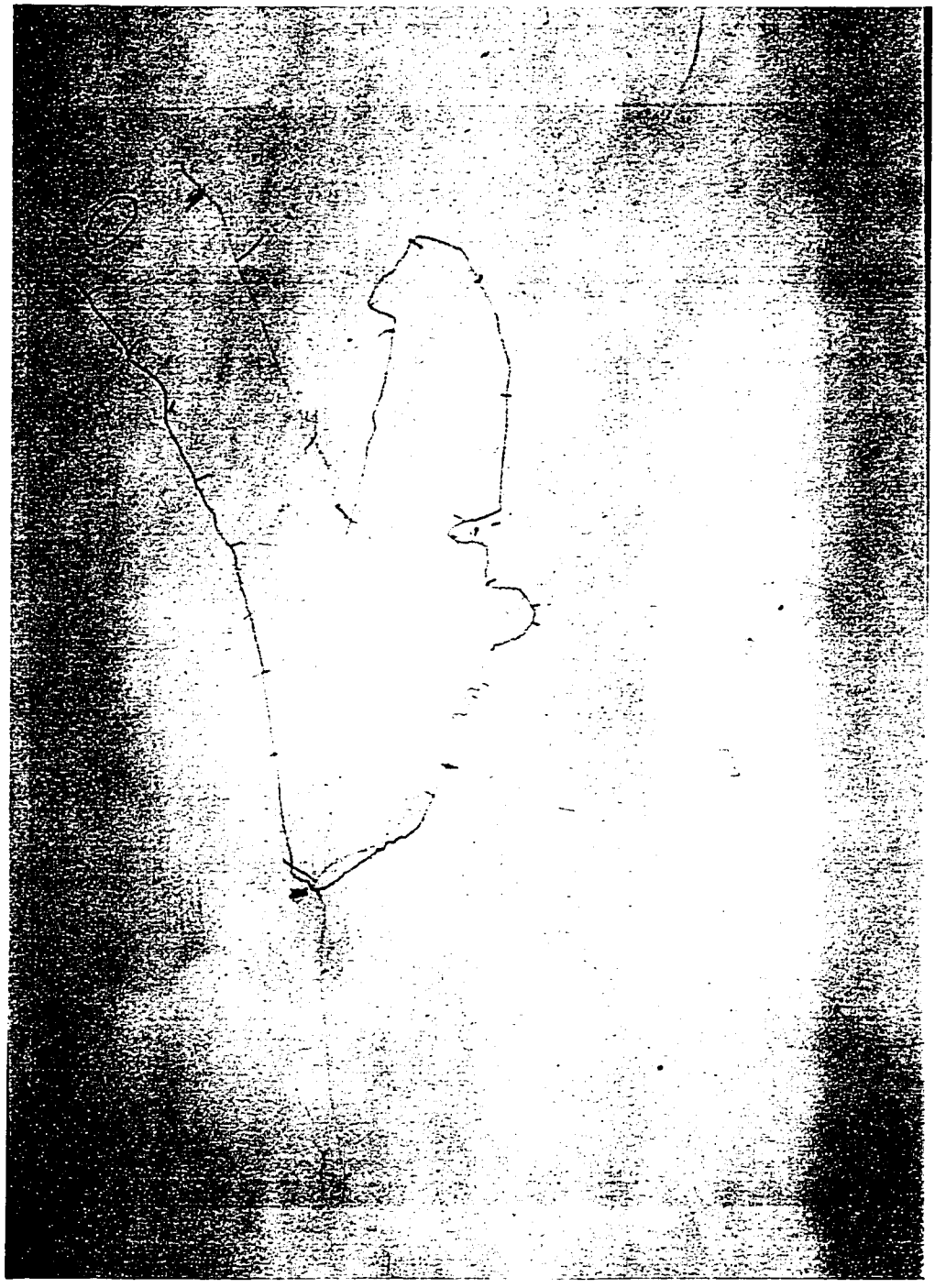
When I was in the country I stayed in a tent. Fall, winter, spring, then summer. Me and my mother and my father and my brothers. The Hudson's Bay here. The store manager's house. This house is the first one, the one in Old Davis Inlet. The warehouse. Another warehouse. I don't know how many. Two or three I think. Our church. It's not in there no more. When the people died they go up here. My mother's buried up there. We put our tent handy to the church. If you go down there now, you can see where they put the tents. Looks old. Rocks in a circle outside tent. Make a fire to make some tea and fry fish.

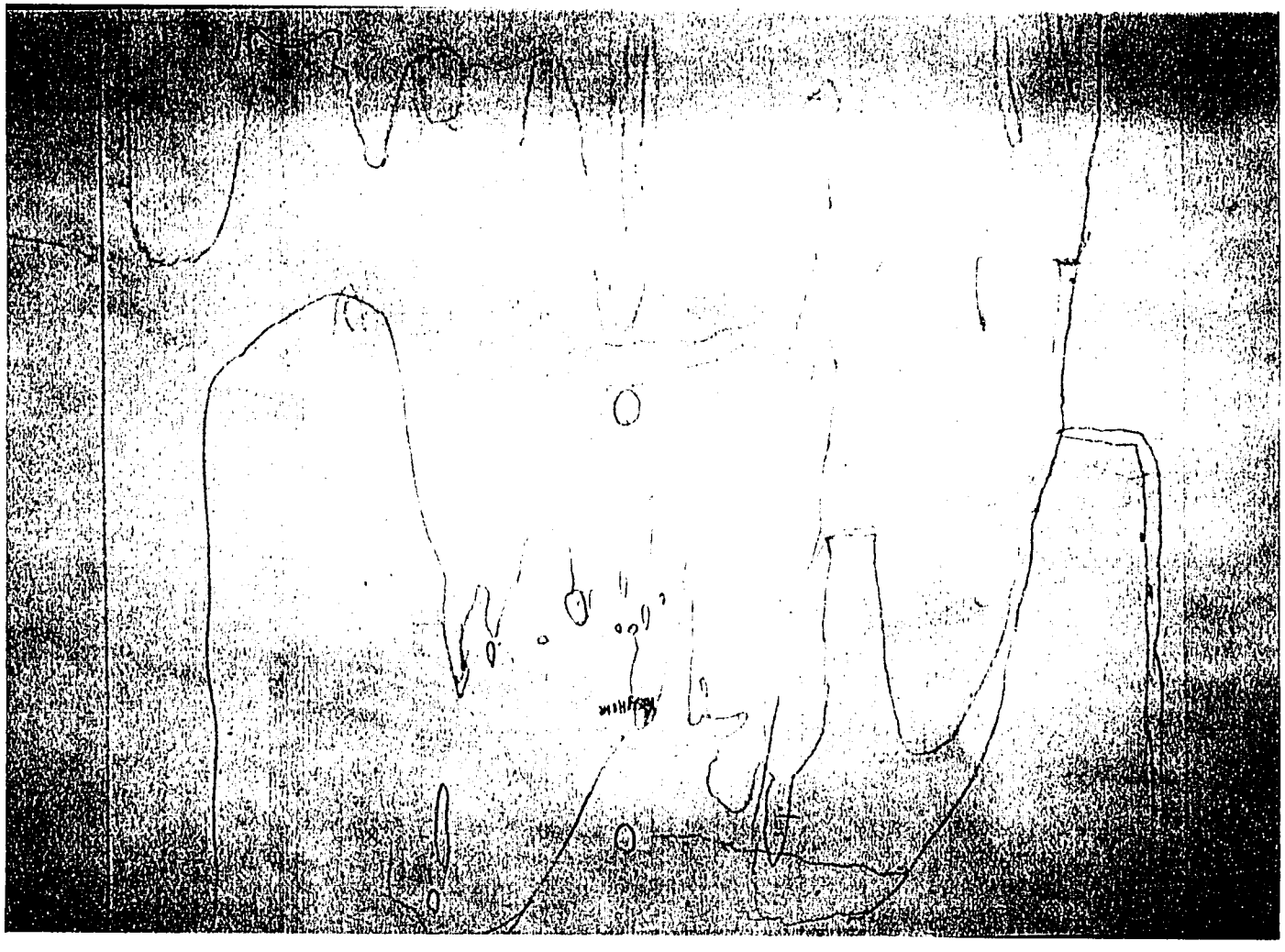












The house was back here. This is the cemetary side. This was the grass meadow, they used to call it. The house that's there now is right in the middle of the land, whereas Grandfather's house was over here. And the well was over here. And this is the road that went out to the gate. And this was Grandma's front garden. Over here, you went down over a slight bank and that was the water. That was fenced. The outhouse was down there. Then there was the woodhouse. This was a great big swinging gate. And this was the path. The oxen would pull the cart to come in on his own land. The woodhouse, next to the house. And this was the, well, the barn they called it, the horse's thing. This was the boundry between Grandma's land and Uncle Uriah's land. The grass meadow went from the road to the water. Because the house was back here in the corner, right near the boundry, this was why it looked like a gigantic piece of land. A child's conception. I was only nine when I lived up there. I don't know why I picture everything as being square. Now in by the house, right there, there was damson tree and an apple tree.

I lived in Grandpa's house when I was nine, for fourteen months. Mom and I went down there to look after Grandpa and Uncle Ralph. You see, the land was Grandma Turner's land, right from the water into the track, the railroad track. It seems as if he gave more to Grandma. She got a strip from the water, crossing the road, to the track. Uncle Uriah, he went from Grandma's boundary down to the church, on the water side. And Aunt Phoebe Rowe, then, got from the road to the track. The reason that the land has passed to women is that there wasn't anyone else to give it to, only women.

When I was a young man I got marrried to an Inuk woman, forty years ago. I have twenty-two grandchildren. The hardest of all was having no father to teach me the things I wanted to know. Hunting and fishing. If I had to live it over, I'd live it all over the same way again. But I wouldn't want to go through losing a son again. The centre of town those days was the church. Close to ghe beach. One bad thing they got done here now is building up the place. This place here at one time was all green with lots of little flowers. We call them buttercups those little yellow flowers. And all the little brooks were clean. But since they started building it's ruined. When it blows hard we get a lot of sand.

They brought us here from Okak, 1918, 1919. I was six, going seven. Because the flu was on. In the Harmony. That's the big old boat. Three masts. I was only seventeen when I married first. He died around 1940 I suppose. He got the pneumonia. No doctors here then. My children were all kind of small. Seven children. Five boys and two girls, and two little boys dead. And when he died I was thinking what am I going to do with my children now. Then I married to a man from here Hopedale. My children were grown up by then. I adopted two, too. When I was young like you I never thought I would be an old woman. I came here to this house in 1948. The old mission house is there. The ministers and storekeepers were all in there. They had families, lots of families. And the church here now. My house. Not too long, not too big. Right handy to the church. I can make sealskin boots yet. I'm right happy to do them yet. We used to sew with the lamp in the night. We had to make them, they had no shoes, no rubbers, nothing like that. We never thought this was hard. Only now when we think about what we done. You just do it, do it, what you can.

The first time I went to Newfoundland was 1981 and it was Easter weekend. I took my mother with me and I had my twenty-ninth birthday when I was there. We stayed at Jennie's house. Jennie's house is on the land that came from her mother, Melinda, and Aunt Melinda got the land from her mother, that's my great-grandmother, Tamar. And Tamar got the land from her parents. And now Glenna, that's Jennie's daughter, has built her house on the same land again, right in front of her mother's house. That's four generations of women that the land has passed to. I remember that the property on the water side of the road was really grown over, full of big high bushes all grown up, and the house that was there had been boarded up. And there was a little shed. Anyway, Jennie and Mom and I walked across the road and walked around over on that side. Jennie pointed out that the old rosebush beside the shed, that was still alive, had been her grandmother's rosebush, my great-grandmother Tamar's rosebush. And I took a picture of it because of that.

Mom and I also, just the two of us, walked around the old cemetery. The cemetery is between the two places: it's between where my grandmother was born and where my grandfather was born. In other words, my grandfather married the girl next door, only for the cemetery in between, where the ancestors of both of them were buried. I remember that Mom was particularly moved standing in front of her grandparents' graves. That would be Tamar and Nathaniel Turner, my great-grandparents. I think she was sad because she'd never known her grandparents, because her parents left Newfoundland after her older sister was born and they moved to Toronto, where my mother was born. And they never returned, that is, her parents never came back, not even for a visit. So my mother never went to Newfoundland either, until she was, well, my mother must have been in her fifties the first time she ever went to

Newfoundland.

When the last daughter of Tamar and Nathaniel died, the land on the water side of the road was left for years and years with nobody knowing exactly who it belonged to, although there was Jennie, right across the road, who had always lived here and all this land belonged to her grandparents at one time. Now the land over on the water side has since been sold by a public auction. And the person that bought the land has tidied the place up a bit. But there's a lot of big high bushed left, so that from the road it still looks pretty hidden. And I don't know if the rosebush is still there because I haven't been able to see it, either from the cemetery or from the road. It's a very strange feeling that the land where my great-grandparents lived and where my grandmother was born, now belongs to strangers, and it feels like a forbidden place where I can't go anymore. When I collected the leaves from my great-grandparents' big old aspen trees, I felt like I was trespassing.