

NEGOTIATING THE NATION

The Work of Joyce Wieland

1968-1976

by

KRISTY ARLENE HOLMES

A thesis submitted to the Department of Art
in conformity with the requirements for
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Abstract

This thesis investigates the work of the Canadian artist and filmmaker Joyce Wieland (1930-1998) from the late 1960s to the mid-1970s in relation to its historical conditions of production and considers both her film and non-film work, including quilts, embroidery and prints. To examine these artistic media together not only provides a means to re-contextualize Wieland's work, but rethinks disciplinary boundaries and contributes to a renovation of both art historical and filmic methods of critical inquiry. Wieland's work from this period serves as an exemplary case study of the ways in which female artists have consistently had to negotiate contemporaneous constructions of femininity/feminism, modernity, and representation in relation to their art practice. I argue that Wieland consistently explored, through aesthetic means, the terms by which contemporary re-conceptualizations of gendered, classed, and raced identities were being defined as new national subjects within the Canadian nation-state. I begin by outlining the ways in which Wieland's work has been constructed within the dominant narratives of Canadian art and film, and argue that the disciplines that generated them, with their formalist and textual foci, inhibit larger discussions of the historical, political and cultural contexts of Wieland's art production. Each chapter subsequently examines an identity that emerged as a collective during the late 1960s in Canada –women, the working classes, French Canadians, and aboriginal peoples– that Wieland aesthetically explores. Through her engagement with second-wave feminism, the development of the New Left in English and French Canada, Québécois nationalism, and shifting notions of aboriginal identity, Wieland's art production visually materializes the intersection of feminism and nationalism –discourses that were actively circulating in Canada during this period.

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Dedicated in loving memory of Wojtech Jirat-Wasiutynski

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Chapter I

Introduction: Why the Work of Joyce Wieland Matters

In 1997, film scholar Lee Parpart stated of Canadian artist and filmmaker Joyce Wieland (1930-1998),

Like a true mother of the Canadian avant-garde –that strangely fitting sobriquet that’s cited in nearly everything written about Wieland– she has meant different things to all of her offspring. And the demands on her legacy can only intensify leading up to and after her death, as critics, filmmakers, artists and friends vie over different versions of her story.¹

Parpart’s observation is discerning, and one might think that Wieland’s death in 1998 would have incited a fair amount of sibling rivalry and academic squabbling. One might also think that her death would have spawned the retrospectives, monographs, journal issues or conferences befitting one of Canada’s “true visionary” artists.² Her death did generate the corollary life-affirming valourizations by way of two biographies, and the Art Gallery of Ontario quickly threw whatever works by Wieland it had in storage onto the gallery’s walls in time for her memorial service.³ There is, however, a discrepancy between what Parpart thought would happen after Wieland’s death and the reality of what has happened, which in terms of academic activity is very little. As an important cultural producer working from the late 1950s into the early 1990s, Wieland experimented with a variety of media and contemporaneous political, social and cultural subject matter. From her early, large paint-stained canvases and Pop-inspired comic/film-strip paintings to her three-dimensional assemblages, textile works, and films, her overtly humourous and

¹ Lee Parpart, “Mining for Joyce Wieland: *A Salt in the Park* and Other Treasures,” *Point of View* 32 (Summer/Fall 1997): 18.

² Dennis Reid, “Introduction,” in *The Films of Joyce Wieland*, ed. Kathryn Elder (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier Press, 1999), 9.

³ Iris Nowell, *Joyce Wieland: A Life In Art* (Toronto: ECW Press, 2001), and Jane Lind, *Joyce Wieland: Artist on Fire* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company Ltd., 2001).

often sexual and political subject matter have remained relevant and intriguing to scholars.

This thesis investigates the work of Joyce Wieland from the late 1960s to the mid-1970s in relation to its historical conditions of production. Unlike her contemporaries (namely, Michael Snow and Greg Curnoe), no book-length critical study of Wieland's work has yet been undertaken. This thesis offers a sustained critical engagement with Wieland's art production and, unlike other studies of her work to date, considers both her film and non-film work, including quilts, embroidery and prints. To examine these artistic media together not only provides a means to re-contextualize Wieland's work, but rethinks disciplinary boundaries and contributes to a renovation of both art historical and filmic methods of critical inquiry. Wieland's work from this period serves as an exemplary case study of the ways in which female artists have consistently had to negotiate contemporaneous constructions of femininity/feminism, modernity, and representation in relation to their art practice.

The masculine, self-referential, artistic avant-garde of the twentieth century has had difficulty recognizing and analyzing women's multifarious and disparate relationships to modernity.⁴ As such, an integral task of critical feminist art history and film studies has been to interrogate these relationships in order to provide political, cultural and ideological significance to feminist art practices. Griselda Pollock, for

⁴ The dominant narrative promulgated in such texts as H.W. Janson, *History of Art*, 5th ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc. and Harry Abrams, Inc., 1995) and the ideas advanced by art critics such as Clement Greenberg present the history of art as a progression of aesthetic shifts largely constructed as a Western phenomenon and reliant on the conceptualization of the artist as genius. It is also significant that texts by these scholars, and many others like them, include very few or no women artists. See Clement Greenberg, "Avant-Garde and Kitsch," *Partisan Review* 6, no. 5 (Fall 1939): 34-49; Clement Greenberg, "Towards a Newer Laocoon," *Partisan Review* 7, no. 4 (1940): 296-310, and John O'Brian, ed., *Clement Greenberg: The Collected Essays and Criticisms: Modernism with a Vengeance*, vol. 4 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

example, argues that examining these negotiations establishes women artists as political and social subjects and their art practice as intimately bound to its historical conditions of production:

We have to describe the historically specific positions from which women intervened in cultural practices as a whole, sometimes working in support of dominant social ideals, at other times critically resistant, often allied with other progressive forces. Always we need to map the changing definitions of the terms “artist” and “woman.” If we lack this sense of the ways in which women have heterogeneously *negotiated* their differential position as women in the changing class and patriarchal social relations, any historical account of women, art and ideology which we produce will be devoid of political significance.⁵

With Pollock’s assertion of a critical feminist art history in mind, I began my thesis research by asking a seemingly simple question: why did a white, female, middle-class, artist turn to the subject matter of the Canadian nation in the late 1960s, and what was the significance of such a turn? It soon became clear that Wieland consistently negotiated, through aesthetic means, the terms by which contemporary re-conceptualizations of gendered, classed, and raced identities were being defined as new national subjects within the Canadian nation-state. Consequently, I questioned why the social, political and cultural contexts of Wieland’s production, so integral to her artistic practice, had not been fully explored within existing scholarship. Wieland’s film and non-film work humourously and intellectually explores such contemporaneous issues as the North American second-wave women’s movement, the FLQ Crisis and Québécois nationalism, and shifting notions of aboriginal identity by using such imagery as that attached to the Canadian flag, the national anthem, and the prime minister. Her distinctly nationalist

⁵ Griselda Pollock, *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the Histories of Art* (London and New York: Routledge, 1988), 24. Pollock’s italics.

subject matter, combined with aesthetic techniques that are subversive in their anti-modern and feminine connotations, parallel the discourses of gender and nation.

Recent scholarship dealing with theories of gender and nation has suggested that nationalism and national projects are gendered phenomena, and that women participate in nationalist processes and are constructed by the nation-state in ways that are different, and often unequal, from those of men.⁶ As Deniz Kandiyoti succinctly states, the cohesion underpinning this developing body of literature is based on “recognition that the integration of women into modern ‘nationhood,’ epitomized by citizenship in a sovereign nation-state, somehow follows a different trajectory from that of men.”⁷ The relationships connecting nation, gender and feminist art practices are, however, more recent topics of study, and have been informed by these critical discussions of women’s unequal relationship to the nation-state, nationalism and citizenship. In one of the first anthologies devoted to the topic of nation, gender and feminist art practices, Tricia Cusack points out,

As abstract concepts, the nation, and nationalism, have to be “embodied” in ways that make them imaginable, especially through the means of art. Nations invariably claim a national architecture, while national heroes, myths and allegories are embodied in various visual media from sculpture to illustration. The public visibility of architecture and sculpture, and the

⁶ See Nira Yuval-Davis and Floya Anthias, eds., *Woman-Nation-State* (London: Sage, 1989); Deniz Kandiyoti, “Identity and its Discontents: Women and the Nation,” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 20, no. 3 (Winter, 1991): 429-43; Sylvia Walby, “Women and Nation,” *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 33, no. 1-2 (1992): 81-100; Nira Yuval-Davis, *Gender and Nation* (London: Sage, 1997); Lois West, ed., *Feminist Nationalism* (New York: Routledge, 1997); Nadejda Al-Ali, “Nationalisms, National Identities and Nation States: Gendered Perspectives,” *Nations and Nationalisms* 6, no. 4 (2000): 631-38; Deniz Kandiyoti, “The Awkward Relationship: Gender and Nationalism,” *Nations and Nationalism* 6, no. 4 (October, 2000): 491-94; Sylvia Walby, “Gender, Nations and States in a Global Era,” *Nations and Nationalism* 6, no. 4 (2000): 523-40; Tamar Mayer, *Gender Ironies of Nationalism: Sexing the Nation* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000); Vanaja Dhruvarajan and Jill Vickers, eds., *Gender, Race and Nation: A Global Perspective* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002).

⁷ Kandiyoti, “Identity and its Discontents,” 429.

mass dissemination of printed art, create powerful tools for national expression, as well as the potential for critical interventions.⁸

Wieland's art production visually materializes the intersection of feminism and nationalism, both of which were discourses actively circulating in Canada during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Not only was Wieland's own subjectivity as a majority-culture woman changing during this period, but also the ways in which she aesthetically treated nationalist processes (among them both shifting New Left politics in Canada and Québec and developing aboriginal and Québécois identities) were never divorced from her feminist point of view. It is important to point out, however, that her art production synthesized and rearticulated nationalist ideologies in ways that at times not only challenged, but were also complicit in a state-defined concept of national identity and citizenship. These nuances of Wieland's work –its resistances and compliances– are explored in the subsequent chapters of this thesis.

More broadly speaking, one of the overarching goals of this thesis was to use the work of Wieland as a case study through which to re-think the field of Canadian art history and the ways in which the discipline has been structured. In particular, I wanted to focus on a female artist who had been afforded a place within the dominant narrative of Canadian art history in order to critically investigate the terms of her inclusion. Why, for example, was Wieland one of only a handful of women artists included in major Canadian art history surveys, and why was she the first living female artist to have retrospectives at the National Gallery of Canada and the Art Gallery of Ontario? What happens to our understanding of Wieland's work when it is no longer tied to a narrative

⁸ Tricia Cusack, "Introduction: Art, Nation and Gender," in *Art, Nation and Gender: Ethnic Landscapes, Myths and Mother Figures*, ed. Tricia Cusack and Sighle Bhreathnach-Lynch (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 1.

that is both modernist and nationalist in structure? More specifically, I also wanted to use her work to explore the ways in which feminist art practices developed within Canada and, in particular, during the period of second-wave feminism.

Recent reassessments of the legacies of second-wave feminist art practices have noted the dominance of American and British art, theory, and scholarship.⁹ In this sense, exploring the art production of a Canadian artist who worked in both the United States and Canada contributes to an emergent body of literature that attempts to understand the ways in which feminist art practices developed outside of Anglo-American frameworks. As Hilary Robinson notes,

In an increasingly transnational environment, attention to the local is ever more important if art is not to be reduced to some bland international mainstream, and if artists and feminists are to speak across their differing identificatory processes and histories.¹⁰

In short, I want to initiate critical discussions about feminist art practices in Canada, about the ideologies maintained within the dominant Canadian art historical narrative, and about the limitations and advantages of art historical and filmic methods of critical inquiry. In an examination of the work of Joyce Wieland, all of these things come to matter.

“Archive Fever”

An integral aspect of this thesis, and one which distinguishes it from other examinations of Wieland’s work, is the primary research I conducted at the Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections at York University, Toronto, which houses Wieland’s personal papers. Wieland had arranged for the donation of her papers to York University

⁹ See Hilary Robinson, ed., *Feminism-Art-Theory: An Anthology 1968-2000* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 1-6.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 3-4.

in the late 1980s, and this substantial and invaluable resource has only been recently made available to the public since her death in 1998.¹¹ This vast archive, just over seven metres of textual records, contains material dating largely from the early 1970s to the early 1990s and consists of Wieland's personal files, including diaries, journals, notebooks, sketchbooks, letters, notes, photographs, and scraps of paper with lists of everything from vitamins to groceries to doodles, as well as newspaper clippings, scripts from her films, unpublished interviews, essays on her work that students had sent her, grant applications, passports and legal documents. With the exception of her divorce proceedings, correspondence with her former art dealer, Avrom Isaacs, and several legal documents, everything, including very intimate and personal notes and letters, is accessible.¹²

Like any examination of the work of a single artist there is a danger of fetishizing her life and consequently heroizing the artist. In Wieland's case, this is compounded by the fact that she is female and that one of the main bodies of research material for this thesis, her personal papers, is decidedly biographical in nature. I found it difficult, researching in the archive, to account for my very real emotional responses to the traces and fragments of a life once lived, and to the intimate nature and visual pleasure of the archival documents. It is, I would suggest, important to elucidate the fetishistic character

¹¹ I spoke with several archivists at York University and found that no one could tell me why York University was selected to house Wieland's papers. Kathryn Elder, the film and video librarian at York University and editor of several books on Canadian filmmakers, including Wieland, suggested that the former visual arts librarian at York University, Mary Williamson, had been instrumental in persuading Wieland to donate her papers. Interestingly, Dennis Reid, Director of Collections and Research at the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, told me that the AGO had been actively trying to secure Wieland's papers for its archives, stating, "we [AGO] wanted them, and it was a shock to us when they went to York. ...I can assure you that we never turned them down. To the contrary, we were pursuing them." Kathryn Elder, in discussion with the author, York University, Toronto, September 1, 2005 and, Dennis Reid, email message to author, July 8, 2007.

¹² These closed files will open to the public on January 1, 2050.

of the archive, which is both a public document and the remnants of a life. Despite warnings by Jacques Derrida that truth is an unattainable construction always in a constant and endless state of deferral, I could not help but think that I was going to find the one thing that would provide a new and exciting insight into Wieland's work.¹³ Of course, this did not happen and, instead, I have had to think of alternative ways of processing the archive that permit its fragmentary and expansive contents to inform an understanding of Wieland's art production, while simultaneously avoiding biographical indulgence.

One of the ways I sought to do this was by carefully considering other ways of theorizing an archive. In a recent essay, Carolyn Steedman noted,

Archive Fever comes on at night, long after the archive has shut for the day. Typically, the fever –more accurately, the precursor fever– starts in the early hours of the morning, in the bed of a cheap hotel, where the historian cannot get to sleep.¹⁴

Archive Fever, as Steedman suggests, is a pseudo-illness that the dutiful researcher contracts while working in an archive. The fever, as Steedman goes on to state, is really anxiety; it is anxiety produced by the overwhelming realization that “your craft is to conjure a social system from a nutmeg grater...” and the ultimate fear that “[you will] never *get it done*.”¹⁵ Steedman's essay, based on her own archival research, is prefaced by this discussion of Archive Fever in order to acknowledge Michel Foucault's and, more specifically, Derrida's critical discussions of the concept of the archive.

Introduced in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault's archive is really a metaphor for the way that Western discourses have traditionally favoured stable

¹³ Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins UP, 1976), 23-26.

¹⁴ Carolyn Steedman, *Dust* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2001), 17.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 18. Steedman's italics.

structures, totalities, and material documents that are subsequently transformed into “monuments” of history.¹⁶ Similarly, in his notion of the archive Derrida takes issue primarily with the desire for origins and beginnings, and he metaphorically characterizes this desire as an illness –Archive Fever.¹⁷ Steedman’s discussion of Archive Fever suggests that her own archive-based essay is not necessarily about offering any one particular account, truth, monument or totality, but about allowing the archive’s fragmentary and illogical nature to be a thing unto itself.

Consequently, archive is a misleading word as it no longer implies simply a repository of facts, books or documents. It can now be seen as a shifting and fluid signifier for an active and ongoing process where archive the noun is replaced by archive the verb, “to archive.” The archive is “living”; as Stuart Hall notes, it is “an on-going, never-completed project.”¹⁸ The notion of the archive as living, or as a processual rather than a stagnant or conclusive account of truth, characterizes an activity that runs counter to the fetishistic tradition of the “fantasy of completeness” –a fantasy that both Foucault and Derrida suggest stems from modernity’s desire for origins and truths.¹⁹ To think of Wieland’s personal papers as a living archive is to have them inform, rather than dictate, an understanding of her subject position and her art production. As Gen Doy has warned, if we do not have a “theory of history” that exists outside the discourse of the archive, the “archive will indeed formulate history for us, as well as our own place in historical discourse.”²⁰

¹⁶ Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (London: Tavistock Publications Ltd., 1972), 7.

¹⁷ Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1996).

¹⁸ Stuart Hall, “Constituting the Archive,” *Third Text* 54 (Spring 2001): 89.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 91.

²⁰ Gen Doy, *Black Visual Culture: Modernity and Postmodernity* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2000), 120.

Focussing a large part of my research on Wieland's personal papers also poses the danger of repeating previous patterns of analyses of Wieland's work that have consistently represented her art production as a direct expression of her personal life or of her "female sensibility." The over-identification with Wieland herself has proven to be a very real problem for scholars of her work. In the preface of the second edition of her influential text, *Points of Resistance*, for example, Lauren Rabinovitz discusses her first interview with Wieland for her book:

Armed with my tape recorder and notes, I was prepared to meet Canada's most famous living woman artist. But instead of the self-possessed, sophisticated *artiste* that I had expected to find, I faced a plump, middle-aged woman tearfully confronting a broken and emptied refrigerator while she mopped up a flooded kitchen. ... Wieland delayed the beginning of our interview while she made repeated phone calls to then-husband Michael Snow, a filmmaker, at his studio; he kept telling her he was unavailable to assist with any household emergencies. ... I was both unnerved and awed by this extraordinarily capable and obviously complex person who was so self-deprecatingly and resentfully a housewife first and an artist second.²¹

Rabinovitz sympathizes and identifies with Wieland as a woman, a housewife and, ultimately, a friend. The anecdote also gives the reader a sense that Wieland is an exceptional woman who struggles through adverse conditions on a daily basis—whether her relationship with her husband, household duties or her art practice—which constructs her as a passive victim of her circumstances. It is significant that the narrative Rabinovitz establishes is one of victimization, which, as I discuss more thoroughly in chapter 2, works by successfully creating sympathy in the reader. This sympathetic response is transferred into an understanding of Wieland's art production as a material vindication of her personal struggles; in other words, Wieland is heroized, and her work serves as a

²¹ Lauren Rabinovitz, "Preface to the Second Edition," in *Points of Resistance: Women, Power & Politics in the New York Avant-garde Cinema, 1943-71*, 2nd ed. (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2003), xiii-xiv. Rabinovitz's italics.

visual record of this. While Rabinovitz uses this anecdote as an example of the ways that women artists have had to contend with their personal relationships, art practice, and identities, it positions Wieland outside of notions of artistic avant-gardism and reinforces the importance of the biographical subject to an understanding of her art production.

Discussing the issue of biography and women's art production, Pollock notes that biographical material is, to a certain degree, important "for the belated production of women's *authority*"; however, as she succinctly goes on to argue, "Biography...can never be a substitute for history."²² Pollock points to the precarious line scholars navigate in affording women artists the agency that has historically been denied them, while avoiding the fetishization of that agency as distinctly biographical and void of either an understanding of the historical conditions of production or a critical vocabulary with which to discuss the meaning, value and function of the work. In her examination of the historical roots and contemporary problems characterizing the Western art historical canon, Nanette Salomon points out the different and unequal ways that biography has been used to examine work by women artists:

Whereas Vasari used the device of biography to individualize and mythify the works of artistic men, the same device has a profoundly different effect when applied to women. The details of a man's biography are conveyed as the measure of the "universal," applicable to all mankind; in the male genius, they are simply heightened and intensified. In contrast, the details of a woman's biography are used to underscore the idea that she is an exception; they apply only to make her an interesting case. Her art is reduced to a visual record of her personal and psychological makeup.²³

²² Griselda Pollock, *Differencing the Canon: Feminist Desire and the Writing of Art's Histories* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 107. Pollock's italics.

²³ Nanette Solomon, "The Art Historical Canon: Sins of Omission," in *The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Donald Preziosi (Oxford and New York: Oxford UP, 1998), 351.

An important aspect of critical feminist art history has been to expose the ways that biographical analyses construct understandings of women's art production rooted solely, as Solomon states, in their "personal and psychological makeup." Such analyses do not take into consideration the historical, political and cultural contexts of production, nor do they question the use and limits of biography as a structuring principle inherent to dominant art historical narratives.²⁴

In order to use Wieland's personal papers in a critical way and to avoid rooting discussion of her work in biography, it proved necessary to draw on other bodies of research material that would mitigate against reductive readings. I explored, for example, other archival resources, namely, the exhibition files at the National Gallery of Canada and the Art Gallery of Ontario. These sources, consisting mainly of press clippings and letters compiled on the occasion of Wieland's retrospectives in 1971 and 1987 respectively, provide a comprehensive account of popular press reactions to her work. This material has informed discussions of the ways in which Wieland and her art production have been positioned within the popular press, as well as the public's response to her retrospective at the National Gallery in particular.

Chapter Content

To establish a scholarly context for discussion, it was crucial to begin this thesis with a careful examination of the various bodies of literature that consider Wieland's work. In the following chapter, I outline the ways in which Wieland's work has been constructed within the dominant narratives of Canadian art and film, and argue that the

²⁴ For examples of essays that have addressed the issue of biography and feminist art practices see Janice Helland, "Culture, Politics, and Identity in the Paintings of Frida Kahlo," in *The Expanding Discourse: Feminism and Art History*, ed. Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard, 397-407 (New York: Harper Collins, 1992), and Anne M. Wagner, "Another Hesse," *October* 69 (Summer 1994): 49-84.

disciplines that generated them, with their formalist and textual foci, inhibit larger discussions of the historical, political and cultural contexts of Wieland's art production. I also discuss Wieland's presence within the feminist literature of art and film and explore the different ways and the extent to which each discipline has been transformed by feminist debates. Following these two introductory discussions, I argue that the historical, political and cultural contexts in which Wieland was working are integral to an understanding of her art production.

Each chapter therefore explores Wieland's aesthetic negotiation of emergent collective identities of the late 1960s in Canada, including women, the working classes, French Canadians, and aboriginal peoples. The chapters draw on both contemporaneous discussions of these collective identities (political manifestos, books, and journals, for example), as well as more recent critical reassessments of these identities. Discussion of the ways that Wieland negotiated her environment –aesthetically, culturally and politically– is informed by histories of both the second-wave women's movement in Canada, the development of New Left politics in English and French Canada, the Quiet Revolution and Québécois nationalism, the 1969 White Paper on Indian Policy, as well as recent discussions of the relationships between feminism, liberalism, and cultural citizenship.²⁵ Drawing on these other bodies of research material was necessary in order to avoid producing a thesis that ultimately “monographized” Wieland and her work; instead I strove towards paying, as Robinson notes, “attention to the local.”

In chapter 3, I focus on the re-conceptualization of women as citizens under the first Trudeau government (1968-1979) and, specifically, in relation to both the 1971

²⁵ The White Paper on Indian Policy is commonly used in place of its actual title: *Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy* [hereafter The White Paper] (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1969).

Royal Commission on the Status of Women and the second-wave women's movement. Using several of Wieland's film and non-film works that employ quilting, embroidery, and filmic experimentalism, I suggest that she destabilizes the patriarchal category of the liberal individual and, consequently, questions the place of this category as the foundation of a democratic, liberal welfare state. I argue that such an artistic engagement can be understood as a practice of cultural citizenship.

Chapter 4 explores the development of New Left politics in Canada and Québec during the late 1960s and early 1970s, focusing specifically on the New Democratic Party splinter group, Waffle, and radical Québécois *souverainiste* Pierre Vallières and the *Front de Libération du Québec* (FLQ). I argue that Waffle political leanings are evident in Wieland's work, in her critique of American capitalism and imperialism through the use of ecological and nationalist subject matter, and in her sympathetic construction of Québécois nationalism and identity.

Chapter 5 explores Wieland's artistic use of aboriginal imagery in her film and non-film work both in relation to the re-conceptualization of aboriginal identity and culture under the Trudeau government and the discourse surrounding the controversial 1969 White Paper. I argue that, while Wieland remained sympathetic to the numerous injustices suffered by aboriginal peoples in Canada, her art production is not free of the expression of colonialist power relations and, ultimately, favours a hegemonic cultural construction of aboriginal identity. In chapter 6 I conclude by suggesting that it is necessary for scholars to work toward developing critical frameworks for understanding the ways in which feminist art practices have been mediated by race, class, and the changing nature of gendered politics and sexual difference in Canada.

Who Cares About the 1960s?

Your parents, the baby boomers, are between 40 and 60 years old. They “stopped a war.” They “can’t remember the 60s” and they ruined everything for every generation to come. Though their politics were knee-jerk liberal 25 years ago, today they combine the worst of both parties. They pretend to be Democrats but secretly they vote Republican at the last second so they don’t have to pay taxes on the incredible amount of income they’ve accrued doing nothing. Almost everything bad about today can be traced back to them.²⁶

The quotation above is from a recent issue of the popular Generation X magazine, *Vice*, which devoted the particular edition in which this text appears to the baby-boom generation. Unlike boomers who often idealize and nostalgically recount the decade of their coming of age –the 1960s– many Gen Xer’s, including myself, remain cynical, skeptical, critical, yet ultimately fascinated by those years. Despite *Vice*’s negative construction of the boomer generation, the period boomers are most closely associated with, the 1960s, does warrant closer critical attention. Gen Xer’s should in fact, care. Thinking about what the 1960s means –historically, politically, socially, culturally, and artistically– I became increasingly aware of the importance of the decade to an understanding of the historical conditions of Wieland’s art production. Wieland’s work effectively and consistently navigates much of the 1960s countercultural preoccupation with anti-capitalism, pacifism, equality and justice. Part of my project therefore necessarily involved reassessing what the 1960s meant within the Canadian context. What became clear to me was the lack of critical and theoretical frameworks within which to study the 1960s in Canada, a situation that poses a dilemma for those wanting to examine its cultural production.

The “60s,” argue the editors of *The 60s Without Apology*, is

²⁶ *Vice* 12, no. 8 [c. 2004]: 56.

merely the name we give to a disruption of late-capitalist ideological and political hegemony, to a disruption of the bourgeois dream of unproblematic production, of everyday life as the bureaucratic society of controlled consumption, and the end of history.²⁷

The editors suggest that the 1960s is not necessarily a period of time, nor does it signify certain political, social or cultural events: rather it marks a broader global erosion of the structures, identities, and desires that the project called modernity had established.²⁸ This conceptualization of the 1960s is useful for re-considering the complex meanings generated by the visual arts during this period. During an era of unprecedented political, social, economic, and cultural radicalism, modernist notions of artistic avant-gardism, with its emphasis on the aesthetic, surface and textuality, no longer seemed a natural or relevant means of understanding the visual arts. North American artistic avant-gardes of the 1960s can therefore be seen as part of the larger countercultural challenges to the modernist project.

Recently, there has been much discussion about the 1960s –what they were, when they happened, and why they matter.²⁹ Such scholarship attests to the continued significance of the period and to the differing ways it has been solidified within discourse. The number of studies dealing with the 1960s is overwhelming, but they offer relatively little to those wanting to examine it in ways that are different from nostalgic

²⁷ Sohnya Sayres, Anders Stephanson, Stanley Aronowitz and Fredric Jameson, eds., *The 60s Without Apology* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press in cooperation with *Social Text*, 1984), 2.

²⁸ More recently, several scholars have convincingly structured their argument around the idea of the 1960s and the emergence of postmodernity. See David Steigerwald, *The Sixties and the End of Modern America* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), and Marianne DeKoven, *Utopia Limited: The Sixties and the Emergence of the Postmodern* (Durham and London: Duke UP, 2004).

²⁹ See Alan Hooper, "A Politics Adequate to the Age: the New Left and the Long Sixties," in *New Left, New Right and Beyond: Taking the Sixties Seriously*, ed. Geoff Andrews, Richard Cockett, Alan Hooper and Michael Williams, 7-25 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999); Andrew Hunt, "'When Did the Sixties Happen?' Searching for New Directions," *Journal of Social History* 33, no. 1 (1999): 147-61; David Frum, *How We Got Here: The 70s, The Decade That Brought You Modern Life (For Better or Worse)* (New York: Basic Books, 2000), and M.J. Heale, "The Sixties as History: A Review of the Political Historiography," *Reviews of the Political Historiography* 33, no. 1 (2005): 133-52.

chronological narratives of events, dates, and names, focused almost exclusively on the United States or Western Europe.³⁰ It is also surprising that, for a period so integral to the development of the modern Canadian nation-state, second-wave feminism, Québécois nationalism, aboriginal activism, the New Left, and civil rights, there are very few critical discussions of the 1960s in the context of Canada.³¹ As historian Ian McKay has noted, the 1960s remain “an understudied decade in Canada.”³² Myrna Kostash’s text, *Long Way From Home*, remains one of the few book-length studies of the 1960s and Canada.³³ While Kostash provides important and useful discussions of various activities, groups, and ideas, like many texts dealing with the 1960s, she does not provide a theoretical framework in ways other than those arising from a linear chronological narrative of events.

Thinking about history in conceptual terms, rather than as a linear narrative, is Fredric Jameson’s task in his seminal essay, “Periodizing the 60s.”³⁴ Jameson argues that to periodize the 1960s as a decade of narrative events (the assassination of the American

³⁰ Some of the many texts dealing with the 1960s include James Miller, *Democracy is in the Streets: From Port Huron to the Siege at Chicago* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987); John Blum, *Years of Discord: American Politics and Society, 1961-1974* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1991); Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage*, rev. ed. (New York: Bantam Books, 1993); Terry H. Anderson, *The Movement and the Sixties: Protest in America from Greensboro to Wounded Knee* (New York and Oxford: Oxford UP, 1994); David Farber, ed., *The Sixties: From Memory to History* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1994); David Farber, *Age of Great Dreams: America in the 1960s* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1994); James J. Farrell, *The Spirit of the Sixties: Making Postwar Radicalism* (New York and London: Routledge, 1997), and Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties: Social and Cultural Transformation in Britain, France, Italy and the United States, 1958-1974* (New York and Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998).

³¹ The few studies dealing with Canada in the 1960s include Myrna Kostash, *Long Way From Home: The Story of the Sixties Generation in Canada* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1980); Cyril Levitt, *Children of Privilege: Student Revolt in the Sixties: A Study of Movements in Canada, the United States, and West Germany* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984); Douglas Owsam, *Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby-Boom Generation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), and Pierre Berton, *1967: The Last Good Year* (Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 1997).

³² Ian McKay, *Rebels, Reds, Radicals: Rethinking Canada’s Left History* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2005), 227, n. 2.

³³ Kostash, *Long Way From Home*.

³⁴ Fredric Jameson, “Periodizing the 60s,” in *The 60s Without Apology*, 180.

president John F. Kennedy or the collapse of the American student group, Students for a Democratic Society, for example) is counterproductive and does little to facilitate understanding of the ways in which certain radical developments, such as the emergence of collective identities and the crisis of philosophy's subject, effectively re-conceptualized women, the working classes, minorities, and aboriginal peoples as new subjects of history on a global level.³⁵ As Jameson states,

We have described the 60s as a moment in which the enlargement of capitalism on a global scale simultaneously produced an immense freeing or unbinding of social energies, a prodigious release of untheorized new forces: the ethnic forces of black and "minority" or third world movements everywhere, regionalisms, the development of new and militant bearers of "surplus consciousness" in the student and women's movements, as well as in a host of struggles of other kinds.³⁶

Jameson's conceptualization of the 1960s is dependent on the idea of various "levels" of history –philosophical, political, economic, and cultural, for example– intersecting with each other despite the "internal laws" that each of these discourses possesses. Rather than thinking of the 1960s as a unified period characterized by chronological events, Jameson suggests that it is more productive to choose a theme or concept that emerged during the 1960s and to examine its occurrences across these various fields or levels. As Jameson suggests above, the enlargement of global capitalism during the 1960s (on an economic level) had as much of a role in mobilizing Western feminists to fight for wage equality (on a social level) as it did in the development of a third-world labour market (on a socio-economic level).

Following Jameson, I am interested in positioning the 1960s in Canada as a moment in which previously marginalized groups, including women, the working classes,

³⁵ Ibid., 179-81.

³⁶ Ibid., 208.

French Canadians, and aboriginal peoples, were being re-conceptualized as national subjects –as full and equal citizens within the Canadian nation-state. Under the Liberal prime minister Pierre Trudeau the federal government undertook several Royal Commissions, implemented new policies, and changed federal laws in order to eliminate various perceived barriers to equality. Envisioning a society that was equal, fair and just, and where each individual, despite race, gender, class or language spoken, was conceptualized as a citizen with guaranteed rights and freedoms, encapsulates Trudeau’s notion of the Just Society.³⁷ The Just Society was a national vision for a modern, unified Canada –a Canada that, not coincidentally, would be seen as reflecting 1960s countercultural demands for equality and justice– and Trudeau based his 1968 campaign for leadership of the Liberal party on this vision. In his memoirs, he recounts of his concept of the Just Society:

Achieving such a society would require promoting equality of opportunity and giving the most help to those who were the most disadvantaged. Social security and equalization payments, as well as a ministry of regional economic expansion, would give practical effect to these abstract principles. As well, I announced what we would do to redress the federal Canadian state’s traditional injustice towards French, the mother tongue of 27 per cent of the Canadian population.³⁸

Consideration of the ways in which Trudeau conceptualized federalism and liberalism as the foundation of his plan for national unity and re-definition of citizenship in Canada is integral to thinking about what the 1960s means within the context of Canada. It is also important to an understanding of the historical conditions of Wieland’s art production.

Wieland’s artistic negotiation of the modern Canadian nation –of the gendered, classed

³⁷ For further discussion of the Just Society see Pierre Trudeau, *Memoirs* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1993), 85-88, and Pierre Trudeau and Thomas S. Axworthy, “The Values of a Just Society,” in *Towards a Just Society: The Trudeau Years*, ed. Pierre Trudeau and Thomas S. Axworthy, 357-85 (Markham: Viking/Penguin Books, 1990).

³⁸ Trudeau, *Memoirs*, 87-88.

and raced identities that were being re-conceptualized as national subjects within the political imaginary and public consciousness— serve as an important register of the intersection of the cultural, economic, political, and social forces particular to the context of Canada in the 1960s.

The Process Called “Canada”: Liberal Hegemony and the Trudeau Government

In order to examine the work of Wieland within its historical context of production it is important to clarify the methodological approach I am employing to examine Canada, Canadian history and, specifically, the moment of the late 1960s and early 1970s. It would be easy to argue that Wieland’s films and works of art can be seen as celebratory, nationalistic representations of stereotypical myths and entrenched notions of Canada and Canadian identity. Wieland’s various uses of the Canadian flag, the national anthem, and the English and French languages, for example, could be understood as simply reflecting contemporaneous nation-building policies and strategies implemented under the first Trudeau administration. To position her work in this way, however, would negate the complexities of relations —political, social, economic, cultural, and sexual— inherent in any historical moment, while suggesting a particular construction of Canada largely defined in hegemonic cultural terms. Rather than considering Wieland’s art production a straightforward reflection of the past, I would argue that it is important instead to see it as a negotiation of these various relations.

Ian McKay has argued that we need to entirely rethink what Canada is. He suggests that a productive, and critical, way of doing this is to see Canada as a process rather than a given place or a tangible thing.³⁹ As he states, “Canada is best grasped, not

³⁹ See Ian McKay, *The Challenge of Modernity* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1992); Ian McKay, “After Canada: On Amnesia and Apocalypse in the Contemporary Crisis,” *Acadiensis* 28, no. 1 (Autumn

as a place, an essence, a nation or a transcendental ideal, but as a *process* unfolding in time and space....”⁴⁰ With this in mind, Canadian history is no longer “all that happened that was important to the inhabitants in northern North America,” but “what happened as part of the hegemonic *process* through which a ‘Canada’ came into being and became a state in northern North America.”⁴¹ This process to which McKay refers effected the “implantation and expansion over a heterogeneous terrain of a certain politico-economic logic –to wit, liberalism.”⁴² He uses the term “liberal order” to refer to this re-conceptualization of Canada as a process of implementing and maintaining liberalism, in other words, of making liberalism hegemonic. Constructing Canada as a liberal order allows for an analysis of the intersections of those who “articulated its values” and the “insiders” and “outsiders” who resisted them.⁴³

As McKay has suggested, the process of liberalization can be seen as one of political and cultural hegemony.⁴⁴ In the writings of Italian neo-Marxist Antonio Gramsci the concept hegemony refers to the relationship between different classes in society; in order for one class to exercise power over another –a governing class for example– this class must consistently persuade other classes that it is in their best interest to support this governing class.⁴⁵ The dominant class does this by taking into account the interests and needs of other classes and by always convincing, rather than forcing, them into support. As McKay succinctly states,

1998): 76-97; Ian McKay, “The Liberal Order Framework: A Prospectus for a Reconnaissance of Canadian History,” *Canadian Historical Review* 81, no. 4 (December 2000): 616-45; McKay, *Rebels, Reds, Radicals*.

⁴⁰ McKay, “After Canada,” 86. McKay’s italics.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² McKay, “The Liberal Order Framework,” 621.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ McKay, *The Challenge of Modernity*, xiv.

⁴⁵ For a succinct discussion of Gramsci’s concept of hegemony see Roger Simon, “Gramsci’s Concept of Hegemony,” in *Gramsci’s Political Thought: An Introduction*, 22-29 (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1991).

In short, a hegemonic class exercises moral and intellectual leadership and presents itself convincingly as the “true voice of the people.” At the core of hegemony is the ability of a fundamental class, through compromise and the creation of a persuasive political language, to speak to and for the “subaltern” or dominated classes it leads, and to construct a long-term historic bloc through which the rule of a few people in particular social positions comes to seem like the *only* legitimate way a society can be governed.⁴⁶

McKay suggests that liberalism in Canada has been hegemonic since the nineteenth century, and that during the mid-twentieth century it was used to transform nineteenth century subjects into late-twentieth century citizens.⁴⁷ It was in the 1960s, McKay notes, that “most of what we now take for granted about ‘Canada’ –its bilingualism, its flag, its democracy, its limited social egalitarianism– was constructed.”⁴⁸ These nationalist constructions can be seen as a process of “Canadianization,” a process through which Canada attempted to re-brand itself as a nation rather than a British colony. McKay’s discussion is useful in reassessing the 1960s in Canada as a period when liberalism was being mobilized to construct new concepts of citizenship and national, political and gendered identities. In this sense, Trudeauvian liberalism was successful precisely because it was constructed as hegemonic; it was presented as the only legitimate way Canada could remain a united country and the only means through which the individual rights of all citizens, despite gender, race, class or language, could be protected.

There is perhaps no other political leader in Canada’s history who has attracted, and continues to attract, so much personal and political attention as Pierre Trudeau.⁴⁹

Even as recently as 2006, popular press coverage of the Trudeau family borders on the

⁴⁶ McKay, *The Challenge of Modernity*, xv. McKay’s italics.

⁴⁷ McKay, “After Canada,” 87, and McKay, “The Liberal Order,” 641.

⁴⁸ McKay, “After Canada,” 87.

⁴⁹ For general discussions of the first Trudeau administration see Christina McCall-Newman, “Pierre Trudeau and the Politics of Passion: The Liberal Party, 1965-1972,” in *Grits: An Intimate Portrait of the Liberal Party*, 53-134 (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1982), and Christina McCall and Stephen Clarkson, *Trudeau and Our Times: The Magnificent Obsession*, vol. 1 (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1990).

obsessive.⁵⁰ Canada's newest gossip magazine, *Hello!*, went so far as to compare the Trudeau family to John F. Kennedy's family, stating that he "was our JFK."⁵¹ Within academic literature, there is a similar interest and idealization of Trudeau the person. In the second volume of their account of Trudeau and his political legacy, Christina McCall and Stephen Clarkson state, quite simply, that "for better and for worse, Pierre Trudeau changed Canada."⁵² Echoing their statement, Linda Cardinal suggests, "To be sure, it is as if the ideas of one man had been enough to transform the destiny of a whole country."⁵³ Writing just after Trudeau's death in 2000, Stephen Clarkson pointedly notes that, even though other prime ministers have contributed lasting political legacies, it is Trudeau "with whom we identify the state at its apogee."⁵⁴ Even left-wing political theorists and writers Robert and James Laxer note that, with the election of Trudeau to power, "an era of ditch-water politics, of narrow and irrelevant inter-party bickering, was ending, opening up a new era for Canada."⁵⁵ The importance these historians afford to Trudeau and the Trudeau governments is certainly not unprecedented in Canadian historical scholarship. Not only have few prime ministers in Canada's history remained in power as long as he; few have received so much media attention. While these factors have no doubt contributed to the way Trudeau has been idealized within the popular press and academic literature, this idealization permeates even more critical discussions by

⁵⁰ See *Hello!*, September 7, 2006, and *Chatelaine*, October 2006.

⁵¹ *Hello!*, 70.

⁵² Christina McCall and Stephen Clarkson, *Trudeau and Our Times: The Heroic Delusion*, vol. 2 (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc., 1994), 12.

⁵³ Linda Cardinal, "Citizenship Politics in Canada and the Legacy of Pierre Elliott Trudeau," in *From Subjects to Citizens: A Hundred Years of Citizenship in Australia and Canada*, ed. Pierre Boyer, Linda Cardinal and David Headon (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2004), 163.

⁵⁴ Stephen Clarkson, "Charisma and Contradiction: The Legacy of Pierre Elliott Trudeau," *Queen's Quarterly* 107, no. 4 (Winter 2000): 605.

⁵⁵ James Laxer and Robert Laxer, "The Canadian Liberal System: Trudeau's Inheritance," in *The Liberal Idea of Canada: Pierre Trudeau and the Question of Canada's Survival* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1977), 15.

scholars such as Cardinal and Laxer and Laxer. It is therefore important to separate discussion of Trudeau the person from consideration of the ways in which Canada was re-imagined and re-articulated as a modern, liberal nation-state during the late 1960s and early 1970s.

After becoming prime minister of Canada in 1968, Trudeau set in motion an extremely ambitious plan for national unity. At its most fundamental level, this plan attempted to implement new concepts of Canadian identity, citizenship, and democracy, rooted in the notion of the Just Society, in order to quell perceived threats to national unity. This, in short, was Trudeau's concept of federalism and it was deeply rooted in classic nineteenth century liberal ideals and the belief that a strong centralist government, which recognized the rights of the individual at the federal level, would form the foundation of the modern Canadian nation. Nowhere are Trudeau's federalism, his beliefs about nationalism, and the future of Canada more pronounced than in his essays, "Federalism, Nationalism, and Reason," which was originally published in *The Future of Canadian Federalism* in 1965, and "New Treason of the Intellectuals," which was originally published in *Cité libre* in 1962.⁵⁶ Although written years before Trudeau became prime minister, these essays effectively outline his governing philosophies and serve as a blueprint for subsequent reforms to Canadian law, the constitution, and federal policies.

In "New Treason of the Intellectuals," Trudeau envisions Canadian federalism as an experiment in governing nation-states with multiple ethnic and linguistic groups. He

⁵⁶ See P.A. Crepeau and C.B. Macpherson, eds., *The Future of Canadian Federalism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965).

states that if English and French Canada would consider collaborating to create a pluralistic state,

Canada could become the envied seat of a form of federalism that belongs to tomorrow's world. Better than the American melting-pot, Canada could offer an example to all those new Asian and African states...who must discover how to govern their polyethnic populations with proper regard for justice and liberty. ...Canadian federalism is an experiment of major proportions; it could become a brilliant prototype for the moulding of tomorrow's civilization.⁵⁷

Trudeau was optimistic about what the Canadian nation could be, and his federalism promoted belief in the primacy of the individual, governed by reasoned political discourse, as the way to manage nationalist passions, such as Québécois nationalism, that were perceived as a threat to the Canadian nation. As Trudeau argues in "Federalism, Nationalism, and Reason,"

federalism has all along been a product of reason in politics. ...It is an attempt to find a rational compromise between the divergent interest-groups which history has thrown together; but it is a compromise based on the will of the people.⁵⁸

Trudeau's federalism is thus a precarious balance between appeasing minority groups while finding a common thread—a "compromise," or what he also calls a "national consensus"—amongst all Canadians in order to sustain a unified nation as the ultimate will of the people.⁵⁹

As a liberal, it is not surprising that justice, equality, and the freedom of the individual informed Trudeau's political writings and his notion of the Just Society. As McKay has suggested, such values are often perceived as "self-evidently good," but they are also "contestable and historically relative terms of a particular and probably transient

⁵⁷ Pierre Trudeau, "New Treason of the Intellectuals," in *Federalism and the French Canadians* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1968), 178-79.

⁵⁸ Pierre Trudeau, "Federalism, Nationalism, and Reason," in *Federalism and the French Canadians*, 195.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 189, 193.

political program.”⁶⁰ With its utopian outlook and 1960s counterculture-like espousal of equality, it is perhaps difficult to see Trudeauvian liberalism critically.⁶¹ While the guarantee of equality to all individuals appears paramount within Trudeauvian liberalism, it is an equality that is also limited by the fact that Canada is a capitalist state. McKay, for example, argues that while liberty, equality and property are the core values of liberalism, it is equality that always remains subordinate; in other words, equality is a concern as long as it does not “unduly” impinge or disrupt capitalist accumulation or the functioning of labour markets.⁶²

Nowhere has this become more apparent to students of culture than in recent discussions of official multicultural policy (Bill C-93), implemented in 1971 by the Trudeau administration. The policy was promoted as one that recognized all socio-cultural and ethnic groups within Canada as equal and proclaimed that “although there are two official languages, there is no official culture, nor does any ethnic group take precedence over any other.”⁶³ Himani Bannerji argues that multicultural policy came at a time when there was a

rapid influx of third world immigrants into Canada, as well as in a moment of growing intensity of the old English-French rivalry. ...It also sidelined

⁶⁰ McKay, “The Liberal Order Framework,” 629, 630.

⁶¹ Scholars who have criticized the Trudeau governments often do so by holding Trudeau personally responsible for the “crisis of Canada” –the perception that his governing philosophies and policies resulted in Canada’s lack of a constitution. See Kenneth McRoberts, *Misconceiving Canada: The Struggle for National Unity* (Toronto: Oxford UP, 1997); Guy Laforest, *Trudeau and the End of a Canadian Dream* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s UP, 1995), and Guy Pratte, “What Makes a Country? Trudeau’s Failure as a Leader,” in *Trudeau’s Shadow: The Life and Legacy of Pierre Elliott Trudeau*, ed. Andrew Cohen and J.L. Granatstein, 355-66 (Toronto: Random House, 1998).

⁶² McKay, “The Liberal Order Framework,” 624.

⁶³ White Paper (Announcement of Implementation of Policy of Multiculturalism within Bilingual Framework) quoted in Smaro Kamboureli, “The Technology of Ethnicity: Canadian Multiculturalism and the Language of Law,” in *Multicultural States: Rethinking Difference and Identity*, ed. David Bennett (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), 213.

the claims of Canada's aboriginal population, which had displayed a propensity toward armed struggles for land claims....⁶⁴

Scholars such as Bannerji, Eva Mackey and Richard Day have argued that the liberal rhetoric of multicultural policy –its insistence on cultural equality for all citizens– masks the state's agenda of “managing” diversity and difference by avoiding discussion of how unequal power relations have developed from capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchal society.⁶⁵ As Trudeau makes clear in his writings, managing the “divergent interest groups” within Canada is crucial to his concept of federalism and national unity, but he couches the achievement of this unity in ways that deny equality in political, economic, and social terms. Bannerji provides a succinct critique of multiculturalism in this sense, stating,

The legacy of a white settler colonial economy and state and the current aspirations to imperialist capitalism mark Canada's struggle to become a liberal democratic state. Here a cultural pluralist interpretive discourse hides more than it reveals. It serves as a fantastic evocation of “unity,” which in any case becomes a reminder of the divisions. Thus to imagine “com-unity” means to imagine a common-project of valuing difference that would hold good for both Canadians and others, while also claiming that the sources of these otherizing differences are merely cultural. ...The nation state's need for an ideology that can avert a complete rupture becomes desperate, and gives rise to a multicultural ideology which both needs and creates “others” while subverting demands for anti-racism and political equality.⁶⁶

Constructing Canada as a process of installing a liberal order allows us to see how the “self-evidently good” intentions of maintaining liberalism obscure the very real aliberal inequalities and injustices integral to it.

⁶⁴ Himani Bannerji, *The Dark Side of the Nation: Essays on Multiculturalism, Nationalism and Gender* (Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press, 2000), 9.

⁶⁵ See Eva Mackey, *The House of Difference: Cultural Politics and National Identity in Canada* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999); Richard Day, *Multiculturalism and the History of Canadian Diversity* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), and Bannerji, *The Dark Side of the Nation*.

⁶⁶ Himani Bannerji, “On the Dark Side of the Nation: Politics of Multiculturalism and the State of ‘Canada,’” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 31, no. 3 (Fall 1996): 110.

Situating Joyce Wieland's work within these particular historical conditions of production and within the framework of the liberal order allows for a more complex understanding of her position as a cultural producer and establishes her identity as related to the differences produced by the networks of cultural, political and feminist politics circulating in Canada during late 1960s and early 1970s. At a moment that can be seen as an experiment in redefining who could be a national subject, Wieland's art production is both resistant and complicit in contemporaneous articulations of liberal hegemony; in this sense, her work can be seen as negotiating the nation.

Chapter II

The Discursive Negotiation of Joyce Wieland's Art Production

Joyce Wieland is Toronto-born in her mid-thirties, and a woman –all woman and at least a yard around, all in the right places. She is also an artist, the finest female artist this country has produced (sorry, Emily), and as an artist, often as a woman too, she is as spiky as she is well-rounded. She is, and it is a denigration of her talents, best-known as the wife of artist Michael Snow.

Barrie Hale, 1967¹

Wieland herself is both rounded and well rounded, a plump woman whose physical form reminds one of her softly inflated motherly quilts.

Jay Scott, 1987²

These statements, made by an art and film critic respectively, were published twenty years apart, despite the fact that their striking similarity suggests otherwise. It is not uncommon to find this type of deprecating and condescending commentary about Wieland or her art production. While such comments are more prevalent in popular-press accounts of her work, the sexism and the neglect of her subject matter in favour of discussions of her role as wife or her physical appearance taint much of the literature on Wieland's work. It is not surprising that by the 1980s feminist film theorists, and to a lesser degree feminist art historians, began to question such essentialist constructions which appeared only to serve patriarchal agendas. In her highly influential essay, "The Mummification of Mommy," Kass Banning argues that such irreverent scholarship developed because "there is no tradition of either critical or feminist writing to draw from in this country [Canada]." ³ She highlighted one of the central problems regarding scholarship about Wieland's work, and about the work of any Canadian woman artist for

¹ *Toronto Telegram*, 11 March.

² "Full Circle: True, Patriot Womanhood: the 30-year Passage of Joyce Wieland," *Canadian Art* 4, no. 1 (Spring): 56.

³ Kass Banning, "The Mummification of Mommy: Joyce Wieland as the AGO's First Living Other," in *The Films of Joyce Wieland*, ed. Kathryn Elder (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier Press, 1999), 37.

that matter: the lack of critical frameworks for discussing and understanding the ways in which feminist art practices developed in Canada.

It is important to pay close attention to the ways that differing agendas of art historians, film historians, and feminist theorists have constructed narratives of Wieland's work in the absence of critical feminist frameworks that are particular to the context of Canada. In short, it is now time to revisit some past debates and to ask some new, disruptive questions. For instance, how is it possible that a feminist approach remains integral to some current analyses of Wieland's work while in others it is not? Why has the dominant narrative of Canadian art history remained largely untransformed by feminist debates? What does the presence or absence of discussion of Wieland's work in art historical, film, and feminist scholarship tell us about how her production has been served by these disciplines, and what type of "Wieland" is consequently produced by each?

At the root of my analysis is a careful consideration of Wieland's function and meaning in both art historical and film studies, an important point that surprisingly has remained unexplored. Film scholars have provided a substantial amount of critical scholarship dealing with Wieland's films, while art historians have provided relatively few critical accounts of her work in any medium. As a result, within Canadian film studies discourse she has often been characterized as "mommy" and regarded as a pioneer in experimental filmmaking.⁴ It is now necessary to make transparent, re-

⁴ See for example Kass Banning, "Canadian Avant-Garde Cinema," in *Practices in Isolation: Canadian Avant-Garde Cinema*, ed. Richard Kerr (Kitchener-Waterloo: Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery, 1986); Parpart, "Mining for Joyce Wieland," 17-18, 20-21; John Porter, "Artists Discovering Film: Post-War Toronto," *Vanguard* 13, no. 5-6 (Summer 1984): 24-26; John Porter, "Consolidating Film Activity: Toronto in the 60's," *Vanguard* 13, no. 9 (November 1984): 26-29; Bart Testa, *Spirit in the Landscape* (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1989).

position, and re-evaluate the discursive tendencies of art history, film studies, feminism, modernism, nationalism, and biography in order to afford both Wieland's film and non-film work the critical examinations that they demand.

While Wieland, as one of Canada's most important artists and filmmakers of the twentieth century, has been afforded attention from both the popular press and academia, there is no critical study of her work situating it within the socio-cultural and political moments of its production, nor in relation to the development of feminist theories of the last thirty years. In this chapter, I outline the ways in which Wieland's work has been constructed within the dominant narratives of Canadian art and film and argue that such disciplinary boundaries inhibit larger discussions of the historical, political and cultural contexts of Wieland's art production. I also examine how Wieland's work has been taken up by feminist scholars, and I explore how these debates relate to broader discussions about the development of feminist theory and the trouble it poses to disciplinary art history and film studies.

Dominant Narratives: Canadian Art History

In 2002, art historian Mark Cheetham noted,

Canadian art history presents an odd dilemma to those who teach or study it: the material encountered is often compelling, but the texts one might use as a resource are lamentably dated in terms of method, media and chronological coverage, or all three. ...This situation has been begging for attention for many years.⁵

As Cheetham rightly points out, one of the most evident problems regarding visual art in Canada is the lack of critical writing. The existing literature consists predominantly of survey texts and exhibition catalogues, which results in an art historical narrative that is

⁵ Mark Cheetham, Book review of *Sights of Resistance: Approaches to Canadian Visual Culture*, *University of Toronto Quarterly* 72, no. 1 (Winter 2002/2003). Accessed online, www.utpjournals.com/product/utq/721/721_review_cheetham.html.

formalist, museum-based, and “official.” Such rigid parameters make it difficult to accommodate alternative media such as film and textiles, discussions of socio-cultural and political contexts, and the role of gender and cultural difference in informing artistic agency and production. Consequently, the work of female producers, such as Wieland, is not served well by the dominant Canadian art historical narrative. Perhaps the bigger issue to explore is why the dominant narrative of Canadian art took shape the way it did, and why it has remained largely unaffected by feminist, gay/lesbian, transgender studies, or postcolonial debates.

From the early to mid-twentieth century, the publication of several surveys helped to consolidate the history of Canadian art as a field of study.⁶ Texts by Newton MacTavish, William Colgate, Graham McInnes and Donald Buchanan, among others, established a narrative that linked the development of visual art with that of the colony-to-nation narrative of traditional Canadian history.⁷ Chapters in these surveys, for example, are organized around key nation-building moments such as the arrival of French and English explorers, Confederation, and the World Wars. The attention they pay to the history and development of such institutions as the Ontario Society of Artists (1872), the Royal Canadian Academy (1880), and the National Gallery of Canada (1880) emphasizes Canada’s increasing cultural autonomy from Britain. Inferred in such discussions is the

⁶ See Newton MacTavish, *The Fine Arts in Canada* (Toronto: MacMillan, 1925); Graham McInnes, *A Short History of Canadian Art* (Toronto: MacMillan, 1939); William Colgate, *Canadian Art: Its Origin and Development* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1943); Donald Buchanan, *Canadian Painters: From Paul Kane to the Group of Seven* (Oxford and London: Phaidon Press Ltd., 1945); Graham McInnes, *Canadian Art* (Toronto: MacMillan, 1950); R.H. Hubbard, ed., *An Anthology of Canadian Art* (Toronto: Oxford UP, 1960); R.H. Hubbard, *The Development of Canadian Art* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1964), and R.H. Hubbard, *Three Hundred Years of Canadian Art* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1967).

⁷ See for example, Donald Creighton, *Dominion of the North: A History of Canada* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1944); Donald Creighton, *Story of Canada* (Toronto: MacMillan, 1959); Harold Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1930); Arthur R.M. Lower, *Colony to Nation: A History of Canada* (Toronto: Longmans Green, 1946), and Arthur R.M. Lower, *Canada: A Nation and How It Came To Be* (Toronto: Longmans Green, 1948).

idea that cultural production, and specifically the visual arts, is an integral aspect of a nation's identity. There is particular importance placed on the notion that Canada, as a colonial nation, cannot claim indigenous artists or an aesthetic style, a situation that renders the mobilization of the visual arts for nation-building purposes that much more challenging and significant. Graham McInnes, for example, argues that

In any estimate of Canada's artistic contribution it must be remembered that it is very hard for young countries to create an art of their own. ... Such countries as the United States and the British Dominions import wholesale the technical advancements, and often the artistic canons forged on foreign lands. Face to face with a new and primitive environment, building a new civilization, artists are inclined to see through European eyes.⁸

The moment when a so-called Canadian art is realized comes in discussions of the Group of Seven. Donald Buchanan, for example, argues that "the nationalist awakening, when it finally came, proved to be a mingling of both native stimulus and new techniques. ...it reached its culmination in the formation of the Group of Seven in 1920."⁹ Robert Hubbard states that

The twenty years or so following 1910 were the period during which the first national movement in Canadian art took place. ... National feeling... swept Canada after Confederation and [resulted in the] establishment of art as a national activity. But that movement had produced no distinctly Canadian style of painting. Such was to be the achievement of the painters of the second and third decades of the twentieth century. ...The leaders of this "National Movement" were a group of young painters who were assembled in Toronto in 1913.¹⁰

Newton MacTavish notes of the work of the Group of Seven that "here and there, one is tempted to perceive, a national note is struck, a sounding of the buoyant, eager, defiant

⁸ McInnes, *A Short History of Canadian Art*, 2.

⁹ Buchanan, *Canadian Painters*, 5.

¹⁰ Hubbard, *An Anthology of Canadian Art*, 23-24.

spirit of the nation....”¹¹ In writing about these early treatments of Canada’s art history, Anne Whitelaw suggests that “[m]any of the texts written from the 1930s to the 1960s sought to establish an artistic chronology that would lay the groundwork for the establishment of the Group of Seven as Canada’s ‘national school.’”¹² It was the Group of Seven’s focus on the Canadian landscape and their artistic style that, as Whitelaw goes on to argue, were perceived as representative of a shift from imitating European aesthetic styles to producing an original, authentically “Canadian” artistic style.¹³ In other words, the work of the Group of Seven is constructed in these texts as the embodiment of Canadian cultural nationalism.

The mode of analysis employed in surveys from the first half of the twentieth century is primarily formalist, and descriptions of works of art appear alongside names, dates, and biographies of artists.¹⁴ Discussing the paintings of George Theodore Berthon, for example, MacTavish states,

They are Victorian in style and feeling, and they have a somewhat literal or photographic quality. But they are highly convincing and convey an authentic impression of personality. They are sound in construction and dignified in effect, and they must have been well executed technically in order to have retained their present freshness and clarity of colour.¹⁵

In his discussion of the work of Group of Seven member Arthur Lismer, McInnes writes, “In his turbulent, gusty canvases he comes closer than anyone else to the giant rhythms and the heaving fecundity of the earth.”¹⁶ MacTavish and McInnes, among others, establish a narrative that is not only linked to nation-building, but

¹¹ MacTavish, *The Fine Arts in Canada*, 159.

¹² Anne Whitelaw, “To Better Know Ourselves: J.Russell Harper’s *Painting in Canada: A History*,” *Journal of Canadian Art History* 26 (2005): 20.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 19.

¹⁴ The term formalism refers to a type of analysis that focuses on describing the visual aspects of a work of art such as colour, line, brushstroke, and texture.

¹⁵ MacTavish, *The Fine Arts in Canada*, 9-10.

¹⁶ McInnes, *A Short History of Canadian Art*, 85.

one that places value, and subsequently meaning and importance, on the aesthetic qualities of a work of art.

Surveys published in the latter half of the twentieth century continue the nation-building narrative of these earlier texts. In 1966, J.Russell Harper published *Painting in Canada*, which established him, as Whitelaw suggests, as “the father of Canadian art history,” and his text as the “narrative and analytical framework that would set the standard for the study of Canadian artistic production for decades to come.”¹⁷ The Canada Council commissioned the text for Canada’s Centennial celebrations in 1967, and it was published in both English and French.¹⁸ In the preface Harper writes, “This country’s art also takes on more meaning when examined as an integral part of the life of an expanding nation.”¹⁹ Chapters are subsequently titled to identify artistic periods, such as the “French Colony,” the “English Colonial Period,” “The New Dominion” and, in the twentieth century, “Nationalism and Internationalism.”

Whitelaw points out that as a text created for the hundredth anniversary of Confederation, the narrative Harper outlines can also be seen as reflective of the Centennial ideology of “improving relations between francophones and anglophones in Canada.”²⁰ As she goes on to argue, Harper’s regionalist approach, which emphasized art production in previously marginalized areas such as the Atlantic provinces and Québec, re-conceptualized what constituted Canadian art.²¹ Like the earlier surveys, Harper also employs a visual analysis in his discussions of works of art. While he is careful to

¹⁷ Whitelaw, “To Better Know Ourselves,” 11.

¹⁸ Harper’s book was not the only art historical survey published for the occasion of Canada’s Centennial. See Hubbard, *300 Years of Canadian Art*.

¹⁹ J.Russell Harper, *Painting in Canada: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press and Les Presses de l’université Laval, 1966), vii.

²⁰ Whitelaw, “To Better Know Ourselves,” 11.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 16.

explore the historical context of the periods he covers, he does rely on descriptive and generalized analyses. For example, after providing a detailed description of a painting identified with painter Frère Luc's residence in New France, he states, "Frère Luc's canvases are much more sophisticated than anything previously seen in the colony and must have moulded tastes of churchman and laity alike. Virtually every early Quebec painter marvelled at and studied these and others ascribed to this artist."²²

Following a similar ideological trajectory to that of Harper, in 1973 Dennis Reid published *A Concise History of Canadian Painting*, now regarded as the standard survey text dealing with the history of Canadian painting.²³ Reid notes in his preface that he has relied on the work of Harper for the first several chapters and suggests that in addition to *Painting in Canada*, Harper's *Early Painters and Engravers in Canada* "are the two firm legs upon which Canadian art history now stands."²⁴ He goes on to state,

This guide to looking at the work of Canadian painters was written in the belief that of all the arts in Canada, painting is the one that most directly presents the Canadian experience. Painters in Canada have consistently reflected the moulding sensibility of the age: a history of their activities inevitably describes the essence of our cultural evolution. And painting is probably the only one of our cultural activities of which the productions of the "two nations" can be examined virtually as a whole.²⁵

Reid not only constructs the history of Canadian art as an academic discipline, but also as a cultural practice that embodies the "essence" of Canadian identity. In addition, he relies on biography and visual analysis as his primary methodology. In his discussion of the work of Emily Carr, for example, he writes that

²² Harper, *Painting in Canada*, 11.

²³ Dennis Reid, *A Concise History of Canadian Painting*, (Toronto: Oxford UP, 1973). A second edition, published in 1988, covers works up to the 1980s.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 8.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

in paintings such as *Forest, British Columbia* (VAG) of about 1932 she portrayed the rain forest itself in the same plastic terms as she earlier had treated the Indian poles. Elaborately interlocking growth is painted sculpturally, as though it were an intricate carving, revealing glimpses of the inner life of the forms.²⁶

While both Reid's and Harper's texts employ similar colony-to-nation narratives to those of early-twentieth century surveys, they also include work from the 1960s – Harper's being the first text to do so. Examining the ways in which the visual arts from the 1960s have been discussed within surveys reveals the challenge contemporary art production posed to a dominant narrative linked so intimately with nation-building. Harper, for example, does not see any unifying subject matter or style that is particularly Canadian in works of art from the early 1960s. He characterizes the period from 1945 to 1966 as “turbulent” and argues that “no national style has emerged out of this seething activity.”²⁷ Harper suggests that this is a period when Canadian artists have been influenced by “international” styles and argues that “artists of revolutionary ways have lost interest in the Canadian landscape and in man at work and play. This is, instead, art which is a play of aesthetics; it deals entirely with the emotions, the subjective emotions of both the artist and viewer.”²⁸

It is evident that work from the 1960s does not easily fit into the nation-building narrative that Harper employs, and it not surprising that when the second edition of his book was published in 1977 he ended his study at 1960. It is also understandable that Harper might be reluctant to include contemporary art because, as Whitelaw has

²⁶ Ibid., 158.

²⁷ Harper, *Painting in Canada*, 383.

²⁸ Ibid., 414.

suggested, his scholarly research field was nineteenth century Canadian art.²⁹ As Harper states in the preface of the second edition,

It seemed appropriate to complete the survey at about 1960 rather than extend it to embrace more recent developments. By that date older figurative approaches to painting were being challenged by radicalism throughout the country in an effective way, and subsequent developments seem to belong in an evolving present rather than fitting into a historical perspective.³⁰

Reid is similarly reluctant to historicize and categorize works from the early 1960s and suggests that while artists working during this period can be seen as part of a “continuing Canadian tradition,” and that, artistically, the 1960s have been the “most dynamic decade of all,” he is unable to assess the impact of this work on the field of Canadian art.³¹ It is not until the second edition of his text, published in 1988, that Reid places work from the 1960s within the context of the dominant art historical narrative.

Whitelaw has observed of Harper’s discussion of the visual arts and the 1960s that he credits the impact of international avant-garde movements with weakening the link between Canadian nationalism and the visual arts.³² This observation is one that characterizes several other discussions of art production in Canada in the 1960s. Reid, for example, notes that it was during the 1960s that Canadian artists rose to “international significance” and highlights the importance that American art critic Clement Greenberg, as well as American artists such as Kenneth Noland, Frank Stella, and Willem de Kooning, had on the visual arts in Canada.³³ Reid notes,

²⁹ Whitelaw, “To Better Know Ourselves,” 9-11.

³⁰ J. Russell Harper, *Painting in Canada: A History*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), vi.

³¹ Reid, *A Concise History*, 264, 305.

³² Whitelaw, “To Better Know Ourselves,” 23.

³³ Reid, *A Concise History*, 264. The word “international” is misleading because the primary artists and art movements that are mentioned in surveys as influencing Canadian art production are American. Serge Guilbaut has discussed the way in which American avant-garde art in the mid-twentieth century, namely

The workshop that summer [of 1962] had been conducted by Clement Greenberg, the New York critic who had been involved with Painters Eleven in Toronto five years before. ...He encouraged them...to abandon even those last vestiges of Abstract-Expressionist mannerisms that were evident in their work in order to seek a more direct expression through the configuration of simple forms of colour. [Kenneth] Lochhead responded most readily, abandoning the calligraphic, black-grey-and-white “action” paintings he had been making in favour of large, simple “colour” paintings like *Dark Green Centre* (AGO) of 1963.³⁴

Like Harper, Reid’s analysis focuses on the formal qualities of the work, and he suggests that Greenberg’s influence on Canadian art production was purely aesthetic.

Published on the occasion of Expo 67 in Montréal, *A Century of Great Canadian Painting* also suggests the increasing amount of art production unconcerned with establishing a Canadian style, stating, “But to younger, less solidly established painters Canada was beginning to take on once again the feeling of a cold and comfortless outpost.”³⁵ The text goes on to argue that even though the subject matter and style of contemporary art in Canada had been affected by international avant-gardes, it was still “Canadian”:

The era of the painting that was meant to be a national propaganda poster seems to be gone. Whether the painter is Harold Town in Toronto or Michael Snow in New York or Jean-Paul Riopelle in Paris, the language is international; only the accent is local.³⁶

In his text *Contemporary Canadian Painting*, William Withrow also suggests that there is no unified style or subject matter in contemporary Canadian art, arguing, “To me, at least, the nationality is simply not there. ... The paintings illustrated in this book are, to me,

Abstract Expressionism, came to be seen as an international style, see his *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art: Abstract Expressionism, Freedom, and the Cold War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

³⁴ Reid, *A Concise History*, 273-74.

³⁵ Expo 67, *A Century of Great Canadian Painting* (Expo 67), 29.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 30.

both individual to their creators and international in their approach.”³⁷ Like the text created for Expo 67, Withrow’s account suggests that even though there is no overtly Canadian subject matter or style, the visual arts can still be seen as linked to cultural nationalism:

But at one stage in the Canadian experience, the art of the Group of Seven served our image of ourselves very well. Now our collective experience has out-stripped that art. ... Yet in spite of this, there *is* a kind of nationalism in Canadian painting. A non-objective painting by Borduas is Canadian... What matters is that as a Canadian I *know* it was painted by a Canadian: I know that such a Canadian painting exists. It enters into my feelings about Canada that I know it is a country that has painters.³⁸

Harper, Reid, Withrow and the text produced for Expo 67 all suggest the difficulty that art production in Canada posed during the 1960s to a dominant narrative linked so closely to nation-building. Their studies also highlight the continued allegiance to such a narrative in the way that they justify the importance of the visual arts to Canadian cultural nationalism despite the fact that contemporary art production does not necessarily “look” Canadian.

Despite the difficulty that art production from the 1960s posed to scholars, it is also a period that is idealized as a moment of cultural rebirth. Several scholars writing in the early 1970s embraced 1960s art production in Canada as a pivotal moment in cultural nationalism. William Townsend, for example, writing in the 1970 text, *Canadian Art Today*, notes that the art scene in Canada was seen as a “backwater” until the 1949-1951 Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences (more commonly known as the Massey Commission), Expo 67 and Centennial year, and the National Gallery’s 1968 exhibition of contemporary Canadian art, “Canada: Art

³⁷ William Withrow, *Contemporary Canadian Painting* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1972), 16.

³⁸ Ibid. Withrow’s italics.

d'Aujourd'hui," which travelled to major cities in Europe.³⁹ This was a period when the Canadian federal government was invested in promoting cultural activities and institutions as an integral part of defining national identity. Writing in 1972, Withrow, for example, makes a connection between nationalism, the 1960s, and the visual arts:

The excitement and achievement of the sixties reached its peak in centennial year. The national consciousness, the new sense of national identity and purpose with which Canada had emerged from the Second World War, had been growing quietly, steadily. Now it exploded in joyous celebration. And, for the first time, the Canadian public visibly shared the excitement and pride in their nation's creative achievement that had hitherto seemed the private experience of only a few professionals and collectors.⁴⁰

Despite the fact that the work of very few women artists is included in twentieth century surveys of the visual arts in Canada, the work of Wieland figures prominently. I would argue that this is due, in part, to the ways in which art production from the 1960s has been constructed within the literature as both lacking an authentic Canadian subject matter and as a moment of cultural rebirth. A formal and visual analysis of Wieland's work, with its explicit nationalist imagery, as well as her use of the conventionally "feminine" and accessible medium of craft (exemplified in a work such as *O Canada Animation* (fig. 7) is, I would argue, integral to her inclusion within the dominant narrative of Canadian art. The ways in which her work is constructed as anti-intellectual, untheoretical, and as embodying Canadian cultural nationalism are not only the terms by which her art production is included, but are also integral to advancing her own political agenda.

Within the dominant narrative of art in Canada, Wieland's work is positioned as important because it is constructed as embodying Canadian cultural nationalism.

³⁹ William Townsend, ed., *Canadian Art Today* (London: Studio International, 1970), 5.

⁴⁰ Withrow, *Contemporary Canadian Painting*, 14.

Wieland's 1964 work, *Cooling Room II*, for example, is included in the Expo 67 production, *A Century of Great Canadian Painting*. The caption reads, "Love is what Miss Wieland (who is married to the painter Michael Snow, pp. 76 and 88) usually comments on in her art, and very often her comment is a wry, occasionally a sad or vulgar one."⁴¹ The inclusion of Wieland's work in this study is significant because it situates her within the historical development of the visual arts in Canada. Reid was first to include work by Wieland within the context of a survey, and he situates her, together with Dennis Burton, Jack Chambers, Greg Curnoe, Robert Markle, and Michael Snow, at the centre of a new artistic avant-garde that revolved around the Isaacs Gallery, a commercial gallery in Toronto. He argues that "by 1961 there was unmistakably a 'new' Toronto scene and the Isaacs Gallery was its centre."⁴² Barrie Hale, an art critic writing in the catalogue for the 1972 exhibition, "Toronto Painting 1953-1965," also argues that the activities revolving around the Isaacs Gallery –poetry readings, happenings, and experimental film and dance– were integral to defining the 1960s artistic avant-garde in Canada.⁴³ Reid notes that the countercultural artistic scene revolving around the Isaacs Gallery was "exploited most successfully" by the paintings Wieland exhibited there in 1962.⁴⁴

The analysis Reid provides of these works is couched in formalism. In his words Wieland's 1961 work, *Time Machine Series*, is "a great round shape –suggestive of an open vagina as well as of a fleshy clock– floats in a sea of ethereal blue."⁴⁵ While Reid

⁴¹ Expo 67, *A Century of Great Canadian Painting*, 113. Wieland had also created the quilted work *Confedspread* (1967) for the Canadian Government Pavilion at Expo 67.

⁴² Reid, *A Concise History*, 293.

⁴³ Barrie Hale, *Toronto Painting: 1953-1965* (Toronto and Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada/Art Gallery of Ontario, 1972).

⁴⁴ Reid, *A Concise History*, 294.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

does not discuss Wieland's works that engage in the subject matter of the Canadian nation, his inclusion of her work within the context of a revival of artistic avant-gardism within Canada constructs her work as important to the development of the visual arts in Canada and, consequently, to the maintenance of cultural nationalism. Even in essays written in the late 1970s, Wieland's work continues to be viewed as important because of its perceived celebration of the Canadian nation. Writing on nationalism and Canadian art in *artscanada* in 1979, Michael Greenwood states of Wieland's work that it

constitutes a sustained love affair with her notion of and hope for Canada, a condensation of possessive and erotic feelings into epitomes of what to her is essentially a benevolent Motherland whose actual awe-inspiring grandeur is tenderly domesticated in quilted images, appliquéd or silk-screened, of lake and mountain, indigenous beasts and flora.⁴⁶

Perhaps one of the most evident indications that Wieland's work had come to be seen as embodying Canadian cultural nationalism is the critique of her art production by Barry Lord. In 1974, Lord published *The History of Painting in Canada*, which took a Marxist approach to the dominant narrative of Canadian art. In his introduction, he positions the visual arts in Canada as an integral component in the fight against British and American cultural imperialism. If Canadian art is going to be territorialized as a discipline, Lord is adamant that it be a grassroots, "people's" discipline, rather than an academic bourgeois one. As Lord argues in his introduction,

Our rulers have kept us ignorant of our proud history, and even less informed about the history of our culture. This is no accident: a nation without a culture has no future at all. Knowing the history of our art as a part of the heroic struggles of our people is a powerful weapon in the

⁴⁶ Michael Greenwood, "Some Nationalist Facets of Canadian Art," *artscanada* (December/January 1979-1980): 71.

hands of a colonial people. It helps us to understand what we are fighting for. This book is intended as such a weapon.⁴⁷

Lord's zeal for the visual arts in Canada as an agent for cultural, political and social change suggests the continuing importance the visual arts had in terms of defining Canadian cultural identity. His text is significant because it is one of the first to provide an extensive discussion of Wieland's work and to place such a discussion within the history and development of Canadian art.

Lord's approach is critical of Canadian cultural nationalism; among other things, he sees it as unable to address political issues stemming from American imperialism.⁴⁸ He also argues that "the artist who has taken this cultural nationalism farthest is Joyce Wieland."⁴⁹ Lord criticizes Wieland for living in New York City and selling out to an American system that he sees as imperialist and oppressive, especially in relation to Canada and Canadian cultural autonomy. Lord consequently argues that the work from Wieland's 1971 retrospective at the National Gallery is really "a slap in the face to patriotic Canadians. It was actually U.S. pop art using Canadian symbols as mass-marketed 'images.'"⁵⁰ He does concede that Wieland's involvement with Canadian Artists Representation (CAR, the union for artists in Canada) and with the "struggle for Canadian liberation" does suggest that she is interested in anti-imperialist causes.⁵¹ However, his lengthy critique of Wieland's work as "cosmetic nationalism" suggests the extent to which understandings of her art production were intimately linked with Canadian cultural nationalism.

⁴⁷ Barry Lord, *The History of Painting in Canada: Toward a People's Art* (Toronto: NC Press, 1974), 9.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 214.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 215.

While Wieland's work has been afforded a prominent place with the dominant narrative, the terms by which she is often introduced into discussion are those of wife (of Michael Snow) or eccentric. Reid introduces Wieland into his text by stating, "At Graphic [a film animation company in Toronto where both Snow and Wieland worked in the early 1950s], Snow met the woman he would later marry. Joyce Wieland (b. 1931), a Torontonians who had joined the company...."⁵² Lord introduces Wieland into his text in a similar way: "But for Snow and his wife *Joyce Wieland*, whom he met while working with [Graham] Coughtry at a Toronto film animation studio called Graphic Associates...."⁵³ Other scholars introduce Wieland by pronouncing on her physical appearance or personality. In his 1972 study, *Four Decades: The Canadian Group of Painters and Their Contemporaries, 1930-1970*, Paul Duval introduces Wieland by describing her as "feminine to the fingertips" and her art production as "belong[ing] in a singular Wieland-created world. As an artist, she is a loner who has created works that are at once irreverent, sensuous and happy."⁵⁴ Withrow introduces Wieland into his book, "A short, plump woman, unmindful of her appearance, Joyce Wieland was born in Toronto, elder daughter of British immigrants."⁵⁵ The characterization of Wieland as a wife, an eccentric, a loner, or "wild" in appearance reinforces the idea that, while she is included within the dominant narrative, she continues to operate outside of it and especially outside the modernist notion of the artist, with its defining qualities of genius, originality, and masculinity. This construction of Wieland as naïve and non-threatening is subsequently transferred onto an understanding of her art production as anti-intellectual

⁵² Reid, *A Concise History*, 291.

⁵³ Lord, *The History of Painting in Canada*, 211. Lord's italics.

⁵⁴ Paul Duval, *Four Decades: The Canadian Group of Painters and Their Contemporaries, 1930-1970* (Toronto and Vancouver: Clarke & Irwin, 1972), 180.

⁵⁵ Withrow, *Contemporary Canadian Painting*, 122.

and untheoretical –an understanding that draws from both institutional literature and the popular press.

The major body of writing that deals with Wieland's work in a more detailed manner can be found in exhibition catalogue essays. While these catalogue essays focus exclusively on Wieland's work, the analyses employed often draw on generalizations and misconceptions found in the popular press. In 1985, Sandra Paikowsky curated an exhibition at the Concordia Art Gallery in Montréal dealing with Wieland's paintings from the mid-1950s to the mid-1960s and, in connection with it, published a short essay for the catalogue. In it, Paikowsky begins with Wieland's biography and then moves into a descriptive, formal analysis of her work. She makes stylistic comparisons between Wieland's work and modern American art movements and artists, such as Abstract Expressionism and Willem de Kooning, arguing, "Her admiration for de Kooning's *February* is expressed in a short piece in the second volume of *Evidence*, 1961" and "Wieland's early painting from 1956 to 1958 reflects that widening influence in North America of the figurative wing of Abstract Expressionism."⁵⁶ Her other discussions of works are purely descriptive, among them her comment that "line is an essential element in the *Summer Blues* pictures and it tempers the unfinished, almost sloppy appearance of the surface."⁵⁷

Paikowsky does address more theoretical issues pertaining to Wieland's work in her discussion, specifically the artist's feminist concerns. Wieland states in the essay that "feminism is something I take for granted; I am not a theoretician."⁵⁸ Rather than question Wieland about this, Paikowsky states simply that "Wieland dislikes being

⁵⁶ Sandra Paikowsky, *Joyce Wieland* (Montréal: Concordia Art Gallery, 1985), 2.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

labelled a feminist....”⁵⁹ In this way, her essay plays into the popular notion that Wieland’s work operates outside of a theoretical or critical framework, such as feminism, which results in an anti-intellectualization of her art production. Susan Crean, writing in *This Magazine*, perpetuates this idea that Wieland’s work is naïve and untheoretical:

Hers is not museum art, in format, size or feel; and you don’t have to come equipped with a theory in order to understand it. The images, stories and symbols she uses are the stuff of daily life and everyone’s history: airplanes and sailboats, hearts and flowers, flags and beavers, Laura Secord and Nellie McClung.⁶⁰

Writing a review in the Toronto *Globe and Mail*, Carole Corbeil reiterates Crean’s views, arguing that “on the plus side, viewers are given the leaven of Wieland’s joyous breadth without being dragged down by leaden theory.”⁶¹ Crean’s and Corbeil’s construction of Wieland’s art production as anti-intellectual and untheoretical is similar to the way that Paikowsky draws on popular press views that her work operates outside existing boundaries of avant-garde art practices or theoretical frameworks such as feminism.

The exhibition catalogue for Wieland’s 1987 retrospective at the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO), *Joyce Wieland*, was the first book-length publication about her film and non-film work. American film scholar Lauren Rabinovitz, American art historian Lucy Lippard, and AGO curator Marie Fleming provided the three essays featured in the catalogue. Together, the retrospective exhibition and the catalogue are important because the exhibition was the first retrospective afforded to a living female Canadian artist by the AGO, the catalogue was the first book-length study of Wieland’s work, and an intense debate developed surrounding the writing of the catalogue essays by two American

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Susan Crean, “Standing Up for Canada: The Erotic Nationalism of Joyce Wieland,” *This Magazine* 21, no. 4, (August/September, 1987): 14.

⁶¹ Carole Corbeil, “Capturing Power of Wieland’s Art,” *Globe and Mail*, September 18, 1987.

scholars. Marie Fleming's essay, "Joyce Wieland: A Perspective," uses biography in order to create a coherent narrative. Statements such as "Many of her childhood memories surface later in her work –blood on the sheets, chalk on the blackboard, the loss that is unexplainable..." suggest that Wieland's work can best be understood through knowledge of her life.⁶² Like Paikowsky, Crean and Corbeil, Fleming reiterates an anti-intellectual conceptualization of Wieland's work. She writes,

Wieland is not a theorist...She realized she did not want to belong to any group –political, economic, feminist, artistic– for which she must surrender or compromise her aesthetic, humour, or joy in her subject. Hers is a language of imagination and emotion, of intuitive insights and incisive humour...Not surprisingly with an artist whose work has a personal, often autobiographical dimension, Wieland's *oeuvre* shows a sense of the flux of life.⁶³

Such comments perpetuate the notion that Wieland's work operates outside theoretical frameworks and that it is self-referential rather than culturally or politically relevant.

In a series of unpublished notes found in Wieland's personal papers made in response to Fleming's essay, Wieland conveyed her disappointment in what she saw as the author's misrepresentation of her and her art practice. Wieland writes, "I have some serious concerns about form and specific concerns about content that I have stated in a manner that may seem blunt. This is not meant to be, in any way, an attack on Marie. I simply wish the *truth* about me to be stated as clearly as possible."⁶⁴ It appears that Wieland placed an immense amount of trust in the catalogue's ability to legitimize her art production, as she goes on to note that "this is the *only* serious text on my work that has

⁶² Marie Fleming, *Joyce Wieland* (Toronto: Key Porter Books/Art Gallery of Ontario, 1987) 23.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁶⁴ Joyce Wieland fonds, Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections, York University, 1988-003/002, File 31 [hereafter CTASC]. Wieland's italics.

been written to date. I want it to be more accurate and true to me than it is at present.”⁶⁵

Wieland’s primary concerns were what she perceived as the lack of reference to her work as “pioneering” and the constant comparison of her work to others, she writes, “In general –too much reference to those who influenced me; too little emphasis on my strengths and influence on others.”⁶⁶ “I feel uneasy,” she goes on, “about *constantly* being shadowed by analogies and influences. In many many cases *I* influenced others.”⁶⁷

Wieland was adamant that she was a pioneer in advancing issues such as ecology, sexuality, and the importance of craft as a tool for political dialogue, and that this should be made explicit in the essay. “There are three issues,” she notes

that have been central to all the work I’ve done –Ecology, women’s issues (women’s craft as a political platform), sexuality– these central issues barely come through, let alone clearly. These are *pioneering* efforts. The word pioneer isn’t even mentioned in the essay, how many times do I have to prove myself before I’m given the recognition I deserve?⁶⁸

Wieland’s concern regarding Fleming’s essay is not surprising given that this was the first book-length study of her work, but perhaps more importantly, it also reveals

Wieland’s own acute sense of the ways her work had been treated in scholarship and, to borrow Pierre Bourdieu’s term, the symbolic capital at stake in the catalogue essays.

One of the most vehement attacks on Wieland’s exhibition and the catalogue essays came from film scholar Kass Banning. Banning’s highly critical essay, “The Mummification of Mommy,” questioned the AGO’s motivation for holding the retrospective in the first place, as well as its hiring of two American scholars, Rabinovitz

⁶⁵ Ibid. Wieland’s italics.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid. Wieland’s italics.

⁶⁸ Ibid. Wieland’s italics.

and Lippard, to write the catalogue essays.⁶⁹ Banning argues that Wieland's retrospective provided an opportunity to critically reassess her work in light of contemporary feminist debates of the 1980s, but because of the lack of critical frameworks for discussing feminist art practices in Canada, it only repeated previous analyses of her work. Banning notes that Fleming "echoes the popular press in her reliance on personality, and does not provide a way out of the biographical conundrum," while the thrust of Rabinovitz's and Lippard's essays "restores the tenets of 1970s American feminism."⁷⁰ In discussing the catalogue essays Banning argues,

The catalogue realizes every fear for it: it bites the lure of biography, falling into the same trap as its predecessors –the popular press. Through the persistent pursuit of questions and intention and biographical context, Fleming and Lippard attempt to pin down their subject by naming her as eccentric and determined.⁷¹

Addressing Lippard's essay, "Watershed: Contradiction, Communication and Canada in Joyce Wieland's Work," Banning argues that while American feminism is itself not the issue, when applied to the context of Canada it becomes "an agent of colonization, by conflating the differences between woman artists in different countries."⁷² It was, however, Wieland herself who had suggested to the curator of the retrospective, Philip Monk, that Lippard and Rabinovitz write the essays.⁷³ Wieland's suggestion to have American scholars write about her work may seem curious given that the critique of American cultural imperialism is a predominant aspect of her work from the late 1960s and early 1970s. This, together with Lippard's admitted ignorance of Wieland's work,

⁶⁹ Banning in Elder, *The Films of Joyce Wieland*, 29-43.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 39, 34.

⁷¹ Ibid., 38.

⁷² Ibid., 41.

⁷³ Philip Monk (Director/Curator, Art Gallery of York University), in discussion with the author, Kingston, Ontario, March 21, 2006.

make her seem an unlikely candidate to write an informed account of the “truth” Wieland seemed so desperate to have revealed.⁷⁴

It is in the recently published second edition of Rabinovitz’s book, *Points of Resistance*, that an answer is suggested. Rabinovitz evidently wanted to quell the attacks she had faced for writing the catalogue essay and she recounts in the preface that she asked Wieland why she and Lippard were asked to write the essays, rather than approach Canadian scholars with the task. According to Rabinovitz, Wieland responded,

Where were they ten years ago? Where were they when you and Lucy were first writing about my work? Sure, they all want to write about me now that I have a retrospective at the AGO, a traveling show, and magazine covers. But when none of them paid any attention to my work, you and Lucy were treating it seriously.⁷⁵

While this is perhaps partly a strategic ploy on Rabinovitz’s part to justify her work, it is indicative of the anger Wieland felt towards a community of scholars whom she viewed as uninterested in her work.

In 2004, the AGO held an exhibition of work by Wieland and her contemporary Robert Markle that dealt with the female body. Entitled *Woman as Goddess: Liberated Nudes by Robert Markle and Joyce Wieland*, the catalogue featured an essay about Wieland’s drawings by art historian Brenda Lafleur, “The Body in Trouble.” Lafleur provides a discussion of Wieland’s nude drawings in relation to psychoanalytic theories of the gaze as posited by Kaja Silverman and Jacques Lacan. She suggests that Wieland’s drawings of bodies, and in particular of nude women, “trouble” conventional depictions of the human form by Western canonical artists such as Titian and Ingres.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Lippard in Fleming, *Joyce Wieland*, 3-4.

⁷⁵ Rabinovitz, *Points of Resistance*, xvii.

⁷⁶ Brenda Lafleur, “The Body in Trouble,” in *Woman as Goddess: Liberated Nudes by Robert Markle and Joyce Wieland* (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario, 2003), 26.

Using the work of Silverman and Lacan, Lafleur argues that Wieland's images of bodies, often depicted as fragmented and unrefined, allow for multiple and alternative ways of looking that are disrupted by a never-completed desire for wholeness. The process of looking at Wieland's images of bodies operates, according to Lafleur, like a "circular narrative between promise and disappointment, and then back again...."⁷⁷ Lafleur notes in her conclusion that the state of scholarship on Wieland's work is lamentable, and that her essay is an attempt to "reconfigure and reinscribe Wieland's works and how we think about them."⁷⁸ Lafleur's essay suggests that, even though Wieland's work has been afforded a prominent place within Canadian art history, the scholarship produced does not provide ways of understanding her art production that exist outside of the modernist and nationalist frameworks that comprise the dominant narrative.

Feminist Narratives: Art History

In his essay, "'There Are Many Joyces': The Critical Reception of the Films of Joyce Wieland," film theorist Michael Zryd offers several suggestions for further research on Wieland's art production. He states,

Caught between the contradictory discourses of "the eternal feminine" and femininity understood as a social construction, between the desire for recognition by (patriarchal) institutions and the dangers of tokenism, Wieland and her art would provide a fascinating case study of the tensions and important diversity of post-fifties feminist thought.⁷⁹

Having positioned Wieland as an artist who was prolific during the second-wave feminist movement, and who dealt explicitly with the female body, sexuality, and notions of femininity, Zryd is right to point out that Wieland's art production as a whole should be examined in relation to the tensions and debates that feminism and feminist theory have

⁷⁷ Ibid., 34.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 37.

⁷⁹ Zryd in Elder, *The Films of Joyce Wieland*, 209.

generated over the last twenty years because, surprisingly, it has not. The dominant narrative of art in Canada, with its links to nation-building and emphasis on formalist analyses, makes it difficult to examine art practices that are concerned with gender, female subjectivity, and feminism, and there are few critical frameworks for understanding the development of feminist art practices in Canada.⁸⁰ Despite this, a number of essays explore the relationship between Wieland's visual art and her feminist concerns. While such scholarship is important, I would argue that feminist interventions into the dominant narrative of Canadian art do little to shift the focus away from the formalist and textual analyses that inform it.

In 1987, Monika Gagnon took on the task of mapping out a preliminary history of feminist art practices in Canada in her essay "Work in Progress."⁸¹ She traces this history by discussing some of the first all-women art exhibitions, among them the National Gallery's 1975 show "Some Canadian Women Artists," and points to the discrepancy between the way the institution treats exhibitions of work by male and female artists. Gagnon uses Wieland's 1987 retrospective at the AGO as an example of how the institution, by trumpeting Wieland as "Canada's foremost *woman* artist," identified her art production as "contained and controlled by her gender, and also as superior to the

⁸⁰ More recently there have been exhibition catalogues, articles, and books that have addressed specific women artists working in Canada, but they do not provide broader conceptual feminist frameworks. See Joyce Zemans, Elizabeth Burrell and Elizabeth Hunter, *New Perspectives on Modernism in Canada: Kathleen Munn and Edna Taçon*, (Toronto: Art Gallery of York University/Editions du GREF, 1988); Judith Mastai, "The Anorexic Body: Contemporary Installation Art by Women Artists in Canada," in *Generations and Geographies in the Visual Arts: Feminist Readings*, ed. Griselda Pollock, 135-45 (London: Routledge, 1996); Lianne McTavish, "Body Narratives in Canada, 1968-99: Sarah Maloney, Catherine Heard, and Kathleen Sellars," *Woman's Art Journal* 21, no. 2 (Autumn 2000/Winter 2001): 5-11, and Tanya Mars and Johanna Householder, eds., *Caught in the Act: An Anthology of Performance Art by Canadian Women* (Toronto: YYZ Books, 2004).

⁸¹ Monika Gagnon, "Work in Progress: Canadian Women in the Visual Arts 1975-1987," in *Work in Progress: Building Feminist Culture*, ed. Rhea Tregebov, 101-27 (Toronto: Women's Press, 1987).

hundreds of other artists who are women.”⁸² Gagnon goes on to argue that part of the reason it has been difficult to define feminist art practices in Canada, and by extension a reason that they have not been critically discussed, is that cultural production in Canada is largely supported by government agencies, such as the Canada Council and the Art Bank, which promote or maintain hegemonic art historical ideologies and art practices.⁸³ Gagnon argues that “Throughout the Seventies and early Eighties, women were greatly underrepresented within the various funding bodies, in administrative decision-making positions, participation on granting juries and as recipients of grants.”⁸⁴ In doing so, she underscores the importance of examining the relationship between women artists and cultural institutions in order to understand the development of feminist art practices in Canada.

In her 1998 essay “A Tale of Three Women,” Joyce Zemans builds on Gagnon’s discussion by using the work of Kathleen Munn, Vera Frenkel, and Wieland to examine how museum practices and the policies of granting agencies discriminate against women artists.⁸⁵ Zemans argues that while Wieland can be seen as a “success story,” art historians and critics have tended to read that success exclusively through her gender. Thus early reviews of Wieland’s work focus on her loveable naïveté rather than critically engaging with her art.⁸⁶ In the second half of the essay Zemans examines the history of institutional support for women artists in general by looking at the collecting policies of major museums and the success rates of women artists competing for grants. Zemans

⁸² Ibid., 106-07. Gagnon’s italics.

⁸³ Ibid., 113-14.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 114.

⁸⁵ Joyce Zemans, “A Tale of Three Women: The Visual Arts In Canada/A Current Account/ing,” *RACAR* 25, no. 1-2 (1998, published Spring 2001): 103.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 107.

concludes by stating that, while women artists have accomplished much, “Within the Canadian arts community, we still require a consolidation of feminist scholarship and innovative strategies to rework traditional approaches to the theory and history of art.”⁸⁷

There are very few book-length surveys of women artists or feminist art practices in Canada and those that have been published, such as Maria Tippet’s 1992 book, *By A Lady: Celebrating Three Centuries of Art by Canadian Women*, and Gunda Lambton’s 1994 book, *Stealing the Show: Seven Women Artists in Canadian Public Art*, do little to shift understanding of art production in Canada away from its links to nation-building and formalist analyses. Tippet’s text, for example, is chronologically organized into chapters with such titles as “Beginning Residents, Visitors, and Pioneers,” “Laying the Foundations,” and “Between the Wars,” thus echoing the organizational structure of the dominant narrative of Canadian art. In the introduction Tippet states, “This book celebrates the achievements of Canadian women artists; their recognition is long overdue. Through three centuries of art-making in Canada, women artists have been ignored, forgotten and marginalized.”⁸⁸ She focuses on “celebrating” Canadian women artists and goes on to note that “despite economic, social and commercial restraints, women have produced a diverse and vital body of work. By celebrating it, we can help these women and their successors take their rightful place in the canon of Canada’s art history, and in the consciousness of Canadians.”⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Ibid., 116.

⁸⁸ Maria Tippet, *By A Lady: Celebrating Three Centuries of Art by Canadian Women* (Toronto: Viking Penguin, 1992), xi. Despite the narrative that Tippet constructs, the text features women painters primarily, excluding the vital contributions made by artists working in textiles, performance, video, and film.

⁸⁹ Ibid., xiii.

The introduction suggests that Tippet is not concerned with questioning the dominant narrative of Canadian art, but with positioning women artists within it. In her review of the text, Janice Helland argues that Tippet fails to use critical or feminist theory in order to construct understandings of women's art production outside of the established (patriarchal) discipline of Western art history, or in relation to the particular historical, political and cultural contexts of Canada.⁹⁰ She states quite simply that "[Tippet's] work is not a feminist intervention into art history."⁹¹ Tippet provides a detailed list of women artists working in Canada from the early-nineteenth to the late-twentieth centuries, and stresses biography and descriptive analyses of works of art. In her discussion of Wieland's work, for example, Tippet writes,

[Wieland] can be credited with many accomplishments, including helping to blur the boundaries between art, craft and the media; making female and male sexual imagery, political and ecological issues acceptable themes for Canadian artists; introducing the narrative, the personal and the autobiographical into Canadian painting; and finally, as a Canadian and a woman she played a large part in showing that women artists could and ought to have a prominent place in the male-dominated art world.⁹²

Tippet's discussion, though it acknowledges Wieland's work as important, positions her within a narrative that continues to deny the political dimensions inherent in feminist art practices.

In *Stealing the Show*, Lambton included Wieland as one of seven women artists creating public art in Canada.⁹³ While her book focuses on the work of women artists working in Canada, she, like Tippet, does not situate her analysis outside of formalism

⁹⁰ Janice Helland, "Book review of *By a Lady: Celebrating Three Centuries of Art by Canadian Women*," *Journal of Canadian Art History* 15 (1992): 125-33.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 125.

⁹² Tippet, *By a Lady*, 162.

⁹³ Gunda Lambton, *Stealing the Show: Seven Women Artists in Canadian Public Art* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP, 1994).

nor does she address their art production within a feminist framework. Lambton begins with Wieland's biography and goes on to describe several of her public commissions as well as other of her works of art and films. Writing of Wieland's 1967 trip across Canada, for example, Lambton notes that

she travelled to the West, filming the country as she went along. Images of winter, of the North, became part of the vocabulary of her first full-length feature film, *Reason over Passion*. The title, based on the words by Pierre Elliott Trudeau, was used in 1968 for two of her best-known quilts, *Reason over Passion* and *Raison avant la Passion*. In the execution of these works Wieland mischievously sabotages the meaning of the title: both quilts are double-bed size; rose colours and heart shapes associated with passion belie the (male, intellectual) message of the appliquéd letters.⁹⁴

Writing a review of the book in the *Women's Art Journal*, Adele Ernstom argues that Lambton's approach is modernist in its insistence on the autonomy of the work of art and in its lack of engagement with feminist concerns regarding the relationship between female subjectivity, the public space, and art production.⁹⁵ While Lambton sees Wieland's work as important, she frames her discussion within a biographical narrative and employs formalist analyses in examining her work.

One of the few critical feminist examinations of Wieland's art production has, in fact, come from film scholar Lauren Rabinovitz. In her 1980 essay "Issues of Feminist Aesthetics," Rabinovitz compares Wieland's 1971 retrospective at the National Gallery, "True Patriot Love," to Judy Chicago's 1979 installation, *The Dinner Party*.⁹⁶ Her agenda was to grant Wieland's exhibition the feminist agency that, when seen in the light of such blockbuster exhibitions as *The Dinner Party*, it had clearly been denied. In "True

⁹⁴ Ibid., 86.

⁹⁵ Adele Ernstom, "Book review of *Stealing the Show: Seven Women Artists in Canadian Public Art*," *Women's Art Journal* 18, no. 2 (Autumn 1997/Winter 1998): 55.

⁹⁶ Lauren Rabinovitz, "Issues of Feminist Aesthetics: Judy Chicago and Joyce Wieland" *Women's Art Journal* 1, no. 2 (Autumn 1980/Winter 1981): 38-41.

Patriot Love,” Rabinovitz argues that Wieland, unlike Chicago, financially and psychologically acknowledged the help she received in creating her craft-based works. She goes on to argue that Wieland’s focus on craft-based works with nationalistic imagery complicates the relationship between the female body and Canadian nationalism, and results in a more powerful, and more nuanced, feminist intervention than Chicago’s work, which it pre-dated by eight years. In the recent anthology, *Feminism-Art-Theory*, Rabinovitz’s essay was re-printed and is framed within a chapter that concerns itself with the importance of the aesthetic choices women artists make in order to reconcile their art practices with their political thinking.⁹⁷ The inclusion of Rabinovitz’s essay repositions Wieland’s art production in relation to larger shifts and debates within feminist theory and art history. It does not, however, provide an understanding of Wieland’s work in relation to the particular art historical and feminist contexts of Canada.

More recent examinations of Wieland’s art production have, however, been more contextual and critical. In her essay, “*True Patriot Love: Joyce Wieland’s Canada*,” Christine Conley provides critical discussion of the artist-book Wieland created for her retrospective, “True Patriot Love,” as a postmodern “allegory” of a feminized Canadian history.⁹⁸ Conley argues that the artist-book, a photographic reproduction of a government document superimposed with images of Wieland’s works of art, film scripts, Group of Seven paintings, and poems, is a hybrid collection of nationalistic and feminine imagery that suggests an alternative to the stereotypically masculine construction of the nation. Conley suggests that situating Wieland as an allegorist, one who appropriates imagery and reuses it for different means, allows for an examination of her artist-book as

⁹⁷ Robinson, *Feminism-Art-Theory*, 346-52.

⁹⁸ Conley in Cusack and Bhreathnach-Lynch, *Art, Nation and Gender*, 95-112.

a “transformation of the female imaginary” through the discourse of the nation.⁹⁹ Conley is one of the few art historians who have paid particular attention to examining Wieland’s non-film work within a theoretically-informed conceptual framework—in this case, in relation to the notion of allegory as derived from Walter Benjamin and Craig Owens. While Conley provides an important analysis of Wieland’s work, a concept such as allegory does not explain the relationship between Wieland’s art production and real historical, political, cultural, and feminist contexts.

Johanne Sloan, for example, takes such contexts into consideration in her article “Joyce Wieland at the Border.” Sloan pays close attention to the development of New Left politics in Canada and the ways in which Wieland’s non-film work, through her literal and metaphorical depictions of the Canada/US border, visually engages in the New Left, anti-American rhetoric circulating during the late 1960s and early 1970s in Canada.¹⁰⁰ From the outset, Sloan distinguishes her analysis from those of feminist film historians by stating, “Much of the best scholarship on Wieland’s visual art has been informed by feminism; I want to investigate how Wieland’s art work also resonated with the ‘New Left’ articulation of nationalism, and with a radical critique of U.S. economic and foreign policies.”¹⁰¹

Dominant Narratives: Film Studies

From P. Adams Sitney’s inclusion of Wieland’s films in his influential essay “Structural Film” to the ways in which feminist film theorists renegotiated her

⁹⁹ Ibid., 96.

¹⁰⁰ Johanne Sloan, “Joyce Wieland at the Border: Nationalism, the New Left, and the Question of Political Art in Canada,” *Journal of Canadian Art History* 26 (2005): 81-104. I have also made a similar argument, “Negotiating the Nation: ‘Expanding’ the Work of Joyce Wieland,” *Canadian Journal of Film Studies* 15, no. 2 (Fall 2006): 20-43.

¹⁰¹ Sloan, “Joyce Wieland at the Border,” 81-82.

experimentalism in relation to psychoanalytic theory, as well as more recent re-contextualizations of her films in relation to theories of gender and nation, Wieland's presence in film discourse is a substantial one. The only book-length study about Wieland's work (aside from two biographies) is in fact an anthology devoted to her films. Edited by Kathryn Elder, *The Films of Joyce Wieland* was published in 1999 following Wieland's death and the subsequent retrospective screening of her films by Cinematheque Ontario.¹⁰² Elder has stated that she felt a younger generation of scholars should have easy access to what she viewed as the most important critical writings about Wieland's films, and that she hoped the anthology would ignite new critical discussions that had appeared to stagnate by the end of the 1980s.¹⁰³

Wieland's work provides an interesting case study through which to explore the differences between the disciplinary approaches of art history and film studies towards feminist art practices. While the dominant narrative of Canadian art has been slow to grant agency and cultural authority to feminist art practices, the dominant narrative of film has, to a larger extent, been transformed by feminist debates, although, as I argue, the degree to which this transformation has occurred remains contested territory. One reason critical scholarship developed in relation to Wieland's films stemmed from the favour her turn to experimental filmmaking in New York City in the mid-1960s found in emerging discussions of "New American Cinema." Prominent film critics and theorists, such as P. Adams Sitney, David Curtis, Jonas Mekas, and Annette Michelson, situated experimental film activity in New York City during this period at the centre of a new

¹⁰² Kathryn Elder (film and video librarian), in discussion with the author, York University, Toronto, September 1, 2005.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

international avant-gardism.¹⁰⁴ The presence of Wieland's work in film discourse is thus decidedly different from its situation in art historical discourse: where discussion of her visual art appears only within the dominant narrative of Canadian art, treatment of her films appears within the dominant Western history of film.

While living in New York City, Wieland turned to filmmaking as her primary medium of art production. In the dominant narrative of avant-garde film the moment of her arrival has been defined as "structural." Structural film has more recently lost much of the symbolic capital it once had, both as an avant-garde art practice and within the discourse of critical film scholarship. The rigid characterization of this type of film practice, outlined in 1969 by P. Adams Sitney in his seminal essay "Structural Film," has resulted in analyses that focus almost exclusively on the formal properties of the filmic medium and, consequently, do not easily accommodate discussions of female authorship and the socio-historical and political contexts of production.¹⁰⁵ Such a deterministic, and thus limited, aesthetic practice has more recently led critic Jackie Hatfield to express concern over the general lack of critical writing about experimental film and video and the tendency for the existing literature to be unduly concerned with medium specificity.¹⁰⁶

The now-classic definition of structural film was first described by Sitney as being characterized by "a fixed camera position (fixed *frame* from the viewer's perspective), the flicker effect, loop printing (the immediate repetition of shots, exactly

¹⁰⁴ See David Curtis, *Experimental Cinema* (New York: Universe Books, 1971); Jonas Mekas, *Movie Journal: The Rise of the New American Cinema 1959-1971* (New York: Macmillan, 1972), and Annette Michelson, ed., *New Forms in Films* (Montreux: Corbax, 1974).

¹⁰⁵ P. Adams Sitney, "Structural Film," in *Film Culture: An Anthology* (London: Secker and Warburg Ltd., 1971), 326-49.

¹⁰⁶ Jackie Hatfield, "Expanded Cinema –Moving Image Future Experiment and Exhibition," in *Experiments in Moving Image*, ed. Jackie Hatfield and Stephen Littman (Surrey, UK: EpiGraph Publications Ltd., 2004), 2.

and without variation), and rephotography off of a screen.”¹⁰⁷ This definition stresses the form and texture of the film medium itself, subverting the conventional emphasis of filmmaking on content and narrative, or story, in favour of process and textuality. Sitney places Wieland’s films within this structural definition and cites her, Michael Snow and Hollis Frampton, among others, as integral to the movement’s formation in New York City. Sitney introduces Wieland into the body of his text by stating, “Joyce Wieland, the wife of Michael Snow, has used loop effects for at least two kinds of structure.”¹⁰⁸ Despite this condescending introduction, Sitney returns to a discussion of her so-called structural films: *Sailboat* (1967-68), *1933* (1967-68), *Catfood* (1968), and *Reason Over Passion* (1967-69). He describes the essential components of the films:

In *Catfood* (1968), she shows a cat devouring fish after fish for some ten minutes. There seems to be no repetition of shots, but the imagery is so consistent throughout...that it is just possible that shots are recurrent.¹⁰⁹

Despite Sitney’s purely formal engagement with Wieland’s films, her inclusion in the essay is important; not only did it acknowledge Wieland as an important part of the structural film movement, but it also revealed that the terms with which the dominant narrative of film studies negotiated feminist film practices were exclusively formalist.

In 1970, Sitney published a review of Wieland’s films in *artscanada* with the intention of “approach[ing] a definition of her style through its historical context.”¹¹⁰

Throughout the article, Sitney acknowledges her films as important but has difficulty analyzing and examining them in relation to any one particular style, structural or other.

Sitney writes,

¹⁰⁷ Sitney, “Structural Film,” 327. Sitney’s italics.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 337.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ P. Adams Sitney, “There is Only One Joyce,” *artscanada*, no. 142/143 (April, 1970): 43.

The future course of Joyce Wieland's films is unpredictable. Looking at her achievements to date, which are substantial, one sees a nexus of aspects that have not yet crystallized into a single form. She seems to foster and encourage the contradictions within her works... Obviously the great influence on Joyce Wieland's formal aspirations has been her husband, Mike Snow... [who] has vigorously oriented himself and discovered his strength within the concerns of the Structural film. Wieland has not.¹¹¹

While Sitney had categorized Wieland as a structural filmmaker in "Structural Film," he is unable to maintain the application of that definition to her work. His discussion is also contingent upon positioning Snow's films as the embodiment of his definition of structural film and Wieland's films as negotiating Snow's particular aesthetic rather than structuralism in general. Sitney supports and finds value in Wieland's films, but is unable to comfortably situate their subject matter in relation to their sometimes-structural form, suggesting that her debt to structuralism is owed to her husband. Discussing Wieland's film, *Reason Over Passion*, Sitney states, "With its many eccentricities, it is a glyph of her artistic personality: a lyric vision tempered by an aggressive form, and a visionary patriotism mixed with ironic self-parody."¹¹² Sitney's analysis employs gendered vocabulary, suggesting a feminization of the film's content; a "lyric vision" developed from her personality that has been mediated by the "aggressive form," or masculine nature, of structural film. Sitney's discussions of Wieland's films suggest the difficulty he has reconciling her experimentalism with subject matter that is couched in both feminist and nationalist terms.

Following a similar interest in structuralism to that of Sitney, in 1971 Regina Cornwell published "'True Patriot Love': The Films of Joyce Wieland" in *Artforum*, one of the foremost art journals in North America at the time. Cornwell begins by stating that

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid., 44.

Wieland's films "elude easy categorization" and attributes this to a "cross-fertilization process at work between film and the other art forms in which she works."¹¹³ This is an important point, but Cornwell does not develop it, comparing in a few sentences only *Handtinting* (1967-68) and *Reason Over Passion* to Wieland's quilted works. Instead, Cornwell briefly discusses Wieland's films, including *Sailboat*, 1933, *Dripping Water* (1969) and *Handtinting*, focusing on their structural aspects, such as the use of titles and loops in *Sailboat* and 1933.¹¹⁴ In Cornwell's discussion of *Dripping Water*, for example, she focuses on the formal properties of the film, noting that Wieland emphasizes the film frame through the juxtaposition of sound and image, and the way the repetitive patterns made by the water "look like oscillating grains of film emulsion, reminding one again of the film material itself."¹¹⁵ The appearance of Cornwell's essay in *Artforum* solidified Wieland's position in artistic discourse as that of a structural filmmaker, and Cornwell did little to push her analysis of Wieland's films beyond characterizing them as primarily formal exercises in experimental filmmaking.

Throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s, Wieland screened her films at important galleries and festivals, including the Museum of Modern Art in New York City in 1968, the World Experimental Film Festival in Knokke-le-Zoute, Belgium, in 1968-69, and the Edinburgh International Film Festival in 1968-1972. Wieland's involvement in such events was no doubt due in part to several favourable reviews her films received by important critics of the time, including Jonas Mekas and Manny Farber. Mekas's column, "Movie Journal," was featured in the popular New York City newspaper, *The*

¹¹³ Regina Cornwell, "'True Patriot Love': The Films of Joyce Wieland" *Art Forum* 10, no. 1 (September, 1971): 36.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 37.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

Village Voice and was devoted to discussion of the contemporaneous emergence of New American Cinema, or expanded or underground cinema, as it was sometimes known. As Mekas puts it, this style of cinema “was not looked upon as cinema. My colleagues either ignored it or hit it right between the eyes.”¹¹⁶ In 1969, Mekas included Wieland in a column discussing structural filmmakers: “I find them the most dynamic and most productive group of artists working in cinema today,” he wrote, “and one that is making the most interesting and most original contributions to [film].”¹¹⁷ In 1972, after seeing a screening of Wieland’s film *Pierre Vallières* (1972), Mekas stated that it is “one of the most effective political films I’ve seen.”¹¹⁸ Manny Farber, writing in *Artforum* in 1969, discusses Wieland’s films *Catfood*, *1933*, and *Rat Life and Diet in North America* (1968). He is particularly complimentary of several scenes from *Rat Life* where the juxtaposition of colours, especially in the scene where the “rats” eat from the “millionaire’s” dinner table, and the way she staged certain shots lead him to conclude that Wieland is perhaps “more than a diary-like recorder of domestic enthusiasms.”¹¹⁹

While Wieland’s films had found favour with Sitney, Cornwell, and other major film critics of the time, and she had to a large degree established herself as a key participant in the avant-garde film scene, discussion of her films was omitted from Sitney’s seminal book, *Visionary Film*, when it was published in 1974.¹²⁰ *Visionary Film* was one of the first book-length studies of twentieth century American avant-garde film, and it established film as an avant-garde practice equal to, and as important as, other artistic avant-gardes, while coherently outlining what is now considered the dominant

¹¹⁶ Jonas Mekas, *Movie Journal*, ix.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 345.

¹¹⁸ Jonas Mekas, “Movie Journal,” *The Village Voice*, July 13, 1972.

¹¹⁹ Manny Farber, “Film,” *Artforum* 7, no. 5 (January 1969): 73.

¹²⁰ P. Adams Sitney, *Visionary Film: The American Avant-Garde* (New York: Oxford UP, 1974).

narrative of experimental film studies. First published in 1974, and again in 1979 and 2002, Sitney's book refers to Wieland by name only in the opening paragraph of his chapter on structural film (and, even then, he spells her name incorrectly):

Michael Snow, George Landow, Hollis Frampton, Paul Sharits, Tony Conrad, Ernie Gehr, and Joyce Wieland have produced a number of remarkable films apparently in the opposite direction of that formal thrust. Theirs is a cinema of structure in which the shape of the whole film is predetermined and simplified, and it is that shape which is the primal impression of the film.¹²¹

Rabinovitz has argued that *Visionary Film* was the culmination of an increasing desire throughout the 1960s to legitimize cinema, and especially experimental cinema, as an art form and to have such a narrative intimately linked to New York City, an already established avant-garde artistic centre.¹²² As Rabinovitz argues, "Sitney promoted cinema aesthetics as a Romantic quest for self-knowledge set within a Modernist conception of film history as groups of 'film objects' inside a closed system of formal practices."¹²³

Such a modernist, and thus limited, structure had difficulty accounting for feminist art practices. Zryd, although more sympathetic to Sitney's and Cornwell's analyses of Wieland's films, notes that Wieland's absence from *Visionary Film* points to the ways in which her films overtly challenged structural categories, which consequently "limited her exposure among an important audience for experimental films that emerged with the rise of film studies in the 1970s."¹²⁴ Zryd's observation is important because it points to the early 1970s as a pivotal moment when film studies solidified into an

¹²¹ P. Adams Sitney, "Structural Film," in *Visionary Film: The American Avant-Garde 1943-2000*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford UP, 2002), 347-48.

¹²² Rabinovitz, *Points of Resistance*, 16.

¹²³ Ibid., 16-17.

¹²⁴ Zryd in Elder, *The Films of Joyce Wieland*, 206-07.

academic field, and texts such as *Visionary Film* established the groundwork for the discipline.

In 1970, Anthology Film Archives opened in New York City and it, alongside such texts as *Visionary Film*, helped established film as an academic field, and filmmaking as an important artistic practice. The Anthology was to be both a repository of cinematic “masterpieces,” known as The Essential Cinema Repertory, and a venue where these films could be accessed and continuously screened. The committee in charge of selecting films for The Essential Cinema consisted of Sitney, Mekas, Stan Brakhage (who was later replaced by James Broughton), Peter Kubelka and Ken Kelman. The Essential Cinema began with approximately 330 films and, to date, the works of only four women filmmakers are included.¹²⁵ When Anthology opened, it issued a manifesto stating its aims:

Anthology Film Archives is the first film museum exclusively devoted to the film as an art. What are the essentials of the film experience? Which films embody the heights of the art of cinema? The creation of Anthology Film Archives has been an ambitious attempt to provide answers to these questions; the first of which is physical –to construct a theater in which films can be seen under the best conditions; and second critical –to define the art of film in terms of selected works which indicate its essences and parameters.¹²⁶

Rabinovitz has argued that the formation of the Anthology was symbolic of avant-garde film’s institutionalization and entry into modernism’s patriarchal complacency, stating that it “represented the degree to which the dominant discourse could no longer admit the variety that had been one of independent film’s hallmarks

¹²⁵ They are Maya Deren, Helen Levitt, Marie Menken and Leni Riefenstahl. For a discussion of the films in The Essential Cinema collection see P. Adams Sitney, ed., *The Essential Cinema: Essays on the Films in the Collection of Anthology Film Archives* (New York: New York UP and Anthology Film Archives, 1975).

¹²⁶ <http://www.anthologyfilmarchives.org/history/manifesto/> (accessed July 27, 2006).

before institutionalization.”¹²⁷ Wieland’s films were not included in *The Essential Cinema*, and she vocalized her displeasure in several interviews on more than one occasion. In a 1974 interview with Debbie Magidson and Judy Wright, Wieland states,

When Anthology Film Archives came into existence in New York, which was a place to collect classics of the New Cinema as well as world cinema, the founders of it were the same men who judged which films were classics and which weren’t. Naturally they got a selection of the male Structuralists and didn’t choose any films made by women. Since their policy was never to give out reasons of choice or rejection, I never had a clue, and had to surmise that none of my works were classics. ...The whole thing I am talking about made me very strong because I left it behind. It is no different than what has happened to many other women. It is really a wonder that any women filmmakers have managed to survive.¹²⁸

In a 1981 interview with Rabinovitz, Wieland goes further in voicing her displeasure:

There was a tendency within the avant-garde in terms of writing and criticism to underrate my work because I wasn’t a theoretician. Many of the men were increasingly interested in films about visual theories. I feel there was a downgrading of my work. It didn’t get its proper place, its proper consideration, especially at Anthology Film Archives, where they secretly judged which films they would select for their archives. ...That was a turning point for me in New York. I came all the way with all those people, and I really loved it. Then I was left out of the Archives, and I thought, “Goddam that shit. You could have Maya Deren, and you could have Marie Menken.” ...Then I simply thought, “I’m not going to live or die by their standards of film excellence. I live by my own rules.”¹²⁹

If Wieland’s expression of defiance is any indication of the climate among feminist cultural producers, it should not be surprising that by the early 1970s, feminist filmmakers and scholars in general began to challenge the patriarchal modernist structure of the dominant narrative of film.

¹²⁷ Rabinovitz, *Points of Resistance*, 176.

¹²⁸ Debbie Magidson and Judy Wright, “Interviews with Canadian Artists: Debbie Magidson and Judy Wright interview Joyce Wieland,” *Canadian Forum* 54 (May/June 1974): 61-62.

¹²⁹ Lauren Rabinovitz, “An Interview with Joyce Wieland,” *Afterimage* 8, no.10 (May 1981): 10-11.

Feminist Narratives: Film Studies

In the early 1970s, feminist filmmakers and theorists in North America began to question the dominant narrative of film, an activity that culminated, one might argue, in the 1989 manifesto, “Let’s Set the Record Straight.” Seventy-six filmmakers, both men and women, charged the organizers of the 1989 International Experimental Film Congress in Toronto with upholding an outdated avant-garde film “canon.” The manifesto states,

The time is long overdue to unwrite the Institutional Canon of Master Works of the Avant-Garde. It is time to shift focus from the History of Film to the position of film within the construction of history. The narratives which take up this new task must respect the complexity of relations among the many competing and overlapping histories which make up the activity within the field.¹³⁰

They go on to state that “[the organizers’] efforts in Toronto against the Funnel Experimental Film Centre and against feminist film theory speak for themselves.”¹³¹ The manifesto was significant for several reasons, but perhaps most importantly it brought attention to, and generated debate around, the continued limitations of the dominant narrative of film, especially in relation to experimental film. Even as recently as 2002, debate surrounding the manifesto managed to ignite fierce response; writing in the online forum *Frameworks*, filmmaker Al Razutis heatedly responded to other filmmakers and theorists debating the manifesto and the Congress, stating, “Yes, let us, who were involved in experimental/avant-garde film at the time, ‘set the record straight’ and let those who weren’t there or whose knowledge is gleamed from bits and pieces of recycled

¹³⁰ “Let’s Set the Record Straight,” http://www.holonet.khm.de/visual_alchemy/manifesto/congress.html (accessed July 6, 2006).

¹³¹ Ibid.

psycho-analysis and historical detritus listen first, or shut the fuck up.”¹³² Such vehement statements suggest the symbolic capital that is at stake when a structure such as a dominant narrative is threatened. They also convey a sense of the magnitude of the challenge that feminist filmmakers and theorists faced from the 1970s onwards.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, feminist film theorists such as Kay Armatage, Kass Banning, Anna Gronau, Laura Mulvey, and Lauren Rabinovitz challenged the rigid patriarchal construction of the dominant narrative of film by critically examining films by women such as Wieland, and by proposing new ways to understand and explore female spectatorship and the role of feminist film practices in the historical and contemporary avant-garde.¹³³ For the sake of argument, one might suggest that the dominant narrative of film has been more inclusive than most disciplinary narratives. In *Visionary Film*, Sitney did include a number of women filmmakers in his text, such as Maya Deren and Yvonne Rainer, and the Anthology Film Archives included films by Maya Deren and Marie Menken in its original selection. While Sitney and the Anthology Film Archives afford these women artists a place within the history of avant-garde film, discussion of their films and entry into this narrative is based purely on the formal qualities of their work and their affinity to an established patriarchal construction of what constitutes avant-garde art.

The addition of women artists to an already existing dominant narrative without altering the terms by which that narrative has been constructed, or the exclusions it

¹³² “Response to Let’s Set the Record Straight,”

http://www.holonet.khm.de/visual_alchemy/mainfesto/razutisaside.html (accessed July 6, 2006).

¹³³ See Laura Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” *Screen* 16, no. 3 (Autumn 1975): 6-18; Anna Gronau, “Avant-Garde Film by Women: To Conceive a New Language of Desire,” in *The Event Horizon: Essays on Hope, Sexuality, Social Space and Media(tion) in Art*, ed. Lorne Falk and Barbara Fischer, 159-76 (Toronto: The Coach House Press, 1987), and Lauren Rabinovitz, *Points of Resistance*.

perpetuates, is a process Griselda Pollock has termed “additive.”¹³⁴ She suggests that while “adding” women artists to a dominant narrative is indicative of its ability to tolerate diversification and pluralism, such a process does not offer explanations of women’s art production that are non-patriarchal and non-bourgeois. Such critical engagement, Pollock goes on to argue, must come from the political project of the women’s movement and be based in “a politics of knowledge.”¹³⁵ I would argue that scholars such as Sitney, Cornwell, and Mekas were not operating from such a place, and as a result they deny feminist film practices the very political ground these practices stand on.

The only language used to discuss Wieland’s films in the late 1960s and early 1970s was that of structuralism, and in the mid-1970s through to the early 1980s, shifting allegiances within film studies towards questions of gender, the male gaze, and women’s ideological role within film generated a new language and alternative frameworks through which to critically discuss film as a feminist practice. However, feminist film scholars actively writing and engaging in feminist debates of the 1980s, including Kay Armatage and Kass Banning, did not extend these discussions to Wieland’s non-film work. Despite this, the agency afforded to Wieland by feminist film scholars is of vital significance, as it re-territorialized Wieland’s films in light of critical developments in feminist theory, namely, the reformulation of psychoanalysis by French poststructuralist theorists Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva. Analyses of Wieland’s films by Armatage and Banning in relation to the concept of *l’écriture féminine* was a radical departure from the modernist structural framework of Sitney and Cornwell. While such feminist interventions into understandings of Wieland’s films are important, this is not to

¹³⁴ Pollock, *Vision and Difference*, 22.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 23.

suggest that they are any less formalist. I would argue that the degree to which feminist repositionings gave agency to the historical conditions of Wieland's art production is limited.

As early as 1973, Kay Armatage and Linda Beath published "Canadian Women's Cinema," an essay that discussed Wieland's films in light of the first Women's Film Festival in Toronto.¹³⁶ The following year Debbie Magidson and Judy Wright published an extensive interview with Wieland in *Canadian Forum*, in which she discusses her films at length in relation to feminism, Canadian cultural nationalism, and politics. When Magidson and Wright ask Wieland about her role in the structural film movement, Wieland replies,

I didn't know it was a movement until we separated. Now it is thought of historically, and is discussed as a really important movement, like Cubism.... We influenced each other, and made wonderful films. However, when it came to my work affecting anyone it was never mentioned. I am forced to talk in terms of influences etc. because that was one of the manifestations of the discrimination. Yet when books have been written to document this movement my work is relegated to a woman's place, small that is.¹³⁷

This statement suggests that Wieland was acutely aware in 1974 of how she was being archived in film scholarship. Armatage, four years previously, had interviewed Wieland for the Canadian film journal, *Take One*. A similar rhetoric was advanced by Armatage's questions, and the interview format allowed Wieland to state her intentions and make transparent her feminist agenda, which is evident in her now-famous statement, "I think of Canada as female."¹³⁸ These interviews suggest that Wieland's agency and

¹³⁶ Kay Armatage and Linda Beath, "Canadian Women's Cinema," in *Women and Film: 1896-1973* (Toronto: Women and Film Festival, 1973).

¹³⁷ Magidson and Wright, "Interviews with Canadian Artists," 61.

¹³⁸ Kay Armatage, "Kay Armatage Interviews Joyce Wieland," *Take One* 3, no. 2 (November/December, 1970, published 1972), 24.

subjectivity are integral to defining and understanding her art practice. Magidson, Wright and Armatage give voice to a Wieland that had been previously suppressed by critics and scholars who categorized her as structural filmmaker, wife, eccentric or sentimentalist.

In 1982, Rabinovitz completed her doctoral thesis about the films of Maya Deren, Shirley Clarke and Joyce Wieland.¹³⁹ The thesis was amended slightly and published in 1991 (and again in 2003) as *Points of Resistance: Women, Power & Politics in the New York Avant-garde Cinema, 1943-71*. In 1982, Rabinovitz also published “The Development of Feminist Strategies in the Experimental Films of Joyce Wieland,” which was one of the first essays to question Sitney’s categorization of Wieland’s films as structural.¹⁴⁰ Rabinovitz writes that

historically, American film critics have treated Wieland’s work within the context of structural film development. But viewed from a feminist perspective, the ways in which Wieland’s films differ from her contemporaries’ are significant and provide a celebration of female motifs, symbols and experience while satirizing patriarchal power.¹⁴¹

The essay is a shorter version of some of the larger and more complex issues she deals with in *Points of Resistance*, where she devotes two chapters to Wieland and her personal and aesthetic relationships to the structural film movement and the second-wave feminist movement.¹⁴² Rabinovitz provides a straightforward biography of Wieland in the first chapter, discussing the artist’s career as a painter before she left for New York City, her marriage to Snow, her inability to have children, and her growing feminism. It is a narrative that builds in anticipation of Wieland’s climactic moment of “greatness,” which

¹³⁹ Lauren Rabinovitz, “Radical Cinema: The Films and Film Practices of Maya Deren, Shirley Clarke, and Joyce Wieland” (PhD dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 1982).

¹⁴⁰ Rabinovitz in Elder, *The Films of Joyce Wieland*, 107-17.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 107.

¹⁴² Rabinovitz, *Points of Resistance*, 150-215.

Rabinovitz sees as her film work. Rather than designate Wieland's films as purely structural, Rabinovitz is careful to state that

however helpful such discursive placement may have been to Wieland's career, the structural film label narrowed Wieland's critical reception to the confines of formalist-centred concerns. Critics ignored other features –the political dimensions of the subject matter, the domestic interactions, the role of the female body as the site of enunciation, the disruption of linear narrative, and authoritative point of view as the organizing logic.¹⁴³

In *Points of Resistance* and her later essay, "The Development of Feminist Strategies," Rabinovitz provides one of the first sustained discussions of Wieland's films as products of a specifically feminist art practice that overtly challenged the categorizations made by Sitney and others. Rabinovitz effectively argues that, because Wieland's films borrowed from structuralism, feminism, nationalism, and *cinéma-vérité*, this does not mean that they are any less avant-garde than those of her contemporaries.

While Rabinovitz's discussions of Wieland's films as a feminist art practice remain some of the most important scholarship on her art production to date, ultimately they are no less textual than earlier formalist analyses. For example, Rabinovitz states of one of Wieland's most overtly political films, *Rat Life and Diet*,

Rat Life reintroduces Wieland's humorous sense of play and exploration of intimate spaces close to the body. Sequences show the gerbils loose amid the dirty dishes of a finished supper while they are on the lam. ... While continuous close-ups may have been necessary to scale the gerbils as actor protagonists, they also keep action centered close to the camera eye. The space is further flattened through frame superimpositions of titles and red crosses.¹⁴⁴

In "The Development of Feminist Strategies," Rabinovitz states that Wieland's film, *Reason Over Passion*, is "really a self-reflexive statement about the nature

¹⁴³ Ibid., 167.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 169.

of cinematic viewing” and adds in one sentence that “such a statement also provides an apt metaphor for the Canadian struggle for self-identity.”¹⁴⁵

By the late 1970s and early 1980s, the notion of a stable, unified subject “woman” as the political basis of feminism was being questioned. The seemingly straightforward relationship between “woman” as signifier of a collective women’s experience, which had been the basis of the 1960s second-wave feminist movement, was seen increasingly as an exclusionary, one-dimensional and essentialist construction. It was viewed as incapable of allowing for the differences of women’s experiences and, in particular, the importance of race, class and sexuality to the formation of female subjectivity.¹⁴⁶ The ideological basis for the feminist accounting for difference stemmed, in part, from poststructural theory as discussed by Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida, and psychoanalytic theory, namely the writings of Jacques Lacan and the feminist re-working of these ideas by Luce Irigaray, Hélène Cixous and Julia Kristeva.¹⁴⁷ While Lacan’s constitution of the subject was couched in the negative –the subject either possessed the phallus or did not, hence the concept of “lack”– feminist theorists, such as Kristeva, suggested that before the individual entered into the symbolic realm, or the Law of the Father, there was perhaps a purely feminine space –what she termed the semiotic or pre-symbolic. This space is where the individual experiences pleasures, feelings, and

¹⁴⁵ Rabinovitz in Elder, *The Films of Joyce Wieland*, 111.

¹⁴⁶ For a discussion of this debate see Linda Alcoff, “Cultural Feminism versus Post-Structuralism: The Identity Crisis in Feminist Theory,” in *The Second Wave: A Reader in Feminist Theory*, ed. Linda Nicholson, 330-55 (New York and London: Routledge, 1997).

¹⁴⁷ For a discussion of feminist theory and its relationship to poststructuralism see Chris Weedon, *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory*, 2nd ed. (Oxford and Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), and for an interesting discussion on poststructuralism’s impact on feminist art practices see Linda S. Klinger, “Where’s the Artist? Feminist Practice and Poststructural Theories of Authorship,” *Art Journal* 50, no. 2 (Summer, 1991): 39-47. For writings by Lacan, Irigaray, Cixous and Kristeva see Jacques Lacan, *Écrits* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1966); Toril Moi, ed., *The Kristeva Reader* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986); Hélène Cixous, *La Jeune née* (Paris: Union generale d’éditions, 1975); Abigail Bray, *Hélène Cixous: Writing and Sexual Difference* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), and Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, trans. Catherine Porter with Carolyn Burke (Ithaca NY: Cornell UP, 1985).

closeness to the mother. The notion of *l'écriture féminine* was invoked by these feminist theorists in order to suggest a return to this space –that of the feminine. For Cixous and Irigaray, *l'écriture féminine* is writing grounded in women's experiences of the body and sexuality, experiences that are not mediated by men and patriarchy. As Linda Alcoff has noted, the poststructural critique of subjectivity for feminists “seems to hold out the promise of an increased freedom for women, the ‘free play’ of a plurality of differences unhampered by any predetermined gender identity as formulated by either patriarchy or cultural feminism.”¹⁴⁸ Essays on Wieland's work from the 1980s are theoretically located within these larger debates surrounding identity politics and are preoccupied primarily with examining her films in relation to the concept of *l'écriture féminine* as discussed by Cixous and Kristeva.

In 1986, Banning published “Textual Excess in Joyce Wieland's *Handtinting*,” which was one of the first discussions of psychoanalytic and semiotic theories in relation to Wieland's 1967 film *Handtinting*. Like Rabinovitz, Banning's larger agenda in the essay was to fracture the categorization of Wieland's films as exclusively structural, as she points out:

In the 1979 edition of his book *Visionary Film*, Sitney's revised consideration of structural film omits the original discussion of Wieland's films. We could mark this as a profound absence, an acknowledgement of difference, an inscription of Wieland's excess, signalling her uncontainability. If structural film is a foundation garment fashioned by men, “Joyce” (as Sitney would have it) is the film artist who exceeds its strictures.¹⁴⁹

Banning's essay focuses on *Handtinting* and applies Kristeva's notion of the pre-symbolic to discuss the ways in which the film presents an “acoustic, perceptual and

¹⁴⁸ Alcoff, “Cultural Feminism versus Post-Structuralism,” 339.

¹⁴⁹ Banning in Elder, *The Films of Joyce Wieland*, 130.

tactile” experience that precedes its formal and representational qualities.¹⁵⁰ The rhythmic quality of the film, the images of women’s bodies, and its corporeality, suggest to Banning that there is a “something additional” or an “excess” in the film that cannot be explained by the structural label, but is more in line with the pre-linguistic, sensorial, feminine space of the pre-symbolic. Banning clearly distinguishes her analysis from previous analyses of Wieland’s films that equate female imagery with an essentialist notion of “woman,” as she argues:

My attempt here is however to trace a textual activity, a movement, rather than to search for feminine motifs in the form of radical content; this is the attempt to explain the text and its activities as a practice of difference, inscribed. It is not the translation of some pre-linguistic essence of woman, but a textual system where difference is conceived as an act of subversion operating through, and against, conventional syntax/grammar.¹⁵¹

Banning’s essay brings Wieland’s film work into larger feminist discussions involving alternative ways of examining art production that employ the female body without reducing that analysis to essentialist readings. To trace a textual filmic process as a feminist intervention was, for Banning, to differentiate essentialist constructions that posited the female body as the site of contestation.

The following year, Armatage responded to Banning in her essay, “The Feminine Body: Joyce Wieland’s *Water Sark*.” Armatage begins by addressing Banning’s argument, but notes,

although I concur with Banning’s reluctance to participate in a critical practice which has become identified with a sociologizing and phenomenological approach which has little apparent strategic value as a feminist activity, I find it difficult to make such sharp distinctions in relation to Wieland’s work.¹⁵²

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 131.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 132.

¹⁵² Armatage in Elder, *The Films of Joyce Wieland*, 136.

Armatage argues that the female body, for Wieland, is a crucial site of subjectivity, and that an understanding of her films cannot be reduced to a textual analysis of movement and sensorial experience alone. Using Wieland's film *Water Sark* (1964-65), and Cixous's and Irigaray's notion of *l'écriture féminine*, Armatage argues that difference is in fact articulated through the form of the body, and that Wieland explores this as a way of countering the phallic hegemony of masculine subject matter.¹⁵³ According to Armatage, the film employs self-reflection and playful bodily discovery that are in line with Cixous's discussions of the feminine body as a "house" to explore and take pleasure in.¹⁵⁴ Rather than discussing Wieland's use of the female body as an essentialist representation of "woman," Armatage argues that her assertion of the female body is another form of "excess" that challenges characterization of her films as structural and modernist.

Banning's and Armatage's reassessment of Wieland's films in relation to *l'écriture féminine* is significant because it questioned the limitations of the dominant narrative of film, granted agency to Wieland's subjectivity, and situated understanding of her films in relation to the development of feminist theory. Like Rabinovitz, however, both Banning's and Armatage's examinations remain rooted in formalism. Their insistence on the importance of textual analysis, whether as an unseen movement or in the female body, is consequently similar to previous formalist analyses.

By the late 1980s, the notion of *l'écriture féminine* and psychoanalytic and semiotic theorizations of the female body and subjectivity were increasingly seen as unable to account for historical and material changes in women's lives. Psychoanalytic

¹⁵³ Ibid., 141.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 137.

and semiotic theories, while important to theorizations of women's subjectivity, were seen as unable to explain differences of class, race, sexuality and power relations between women and men. Janet Wolff, for example, notes that concepts such as *l'écriture féminine* "often depend on an assumed basic, unchanging identity of 'woman' and women's bodies, which ignores the realities of historical change, social production, and ideological construction."¹⁵⁵ Elizabeth Grosz, however, has argued that, while Kristeva's and Irigaray's discussions of the female body can be seen as essentialist constitutions of female subjectivity, it is important to have a feminist conception of the body that is mediated and understood in terms of both biologic and social factors.¹⁵⁶

Consequently, female subjectivity began to be theorized in multiple and theoretically diverse ways.¹⁵⁷ Judith Butler, for example, argued in her important text, *Gender Trouble*, that gender is not something innate to women, but is instead performed.¹⁵⁸ Such a radical reconsideration of gender troubled previous characterizations of gender as intimately connected to an internal or biological essence of womanliness; Butler instead suggests that female subjectivity is constructed through repetitive everyday acts, or performances, that reinforce gender on a daily basis. In her highly influential essay, "A Cyborg Manifesto," Donna Haraway envisioned a new type of female subjectivity that could participate in a "postgender" world. A hybrid identity of human, machine, and organism, the cyborg is an identity that challenges the technology of capitalism and the unified subjectivity of previous feminisms. Haraway's criticism of

¹⁵⁵ Janet Wolff, "Reinstating Corporeality: Feminism and Body Politics," in *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader*, ed. Amelia Jones (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 421.

¹⁵⁶ Elizabeth Grosz, "Philosophy, Subjectivity and the Body: Kristeva and Irigaray," in *Feminist Challenges: Social and Political Theory*, ed. Carole Pateman and Elizabeth Grosz, 125-43 (Boston: Northeastern UP, 1986).

¹⁵⁷ For a succinct overview of these debates see Moya Lloyd, *Beyond Identity Politics: Feminism, Power & Politics* (London: Sage Publications Ltd., 2005).

¹⁵⁸ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London: Routledge, 1990).

1960s and 1970s constructions of a unified notion of female subjectivity is pointedly addressed in her concluding sentence, “I would rather be a cyborg than a goddess.”¹⁵⁹ Butler’s and Haraway’s analyses point to the different ways in which feminism and feminist theory have shifted over the last fifteen years towards thinking about female subjectivity as hybrid, unstable, multiple and in-process, rather than unified and static. More recent analyses of Wieland’s films can be seen as reflective of these tendencies, and of shifts in feminist theory as scholars have become more concerned with exploring the ways in which Wieland subverts traditional gendered subjectivities/processes in her films by highlighting cultural and political constructions that have been gendered as feminine and masculine.

Brenda Longfellow’s essay, “Gendering the Nation: Symbolic Stations in Quebec and Canadian Film History,” examines Wieland’s film *Reason Over Passion* as a feminist re-working of “those versions of state nationalism which foreground technology and instrumental reason as the modus operandi of political and cultural nationality...”¹⁶⁰ Longfellow explores how the gendering of nation-building and nationalism as masculine has been parodied by Wieland in the way *Reason Over Passion* recalls the filmic cross-Canada train journey, historically stemming from early CPR propaganda films used to entice immigrants to Canada.¹⁶¹ She suggests that the ideological effect of such films is rooted in a patriarchal, colonial understanding of the land as an empty space to own and

¹⁵⁹ Donna Haraway, “A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s,” in *The Gendered Cyborg: A Reader*, ed. Gill Kirkup, Linda Janes, Kath Woodward and Fiona Hovenden (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 57. See also Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (London: Free Association Press, 1991).

¹⁶⁰ Brenda Longfellow, “Gendering the Nation: Symbolic Stations in Quebec and Canadian Film History,” in *Ghosts in the Machine: Women and Cultural Policy in Canada and Australia*, ed. Alison Beale and Annette Van Den Bosch (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1998), 169.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 171-73.

dominate –a construction that Wieland fractures by humourously and ironically manipulating and distorting stereotypical signifiers of Canada.¹⁶²

In one of the most recent critical accounts of women and Canadian film, *Gendering the Nation: Canadian Women's Cinema*, Longfellow and Lee Parpart discuss Wieland's films within the context of gender and nation. Longfellow examines Wieland's 1976 film, *The Far Shore*, as a parody of Canadian nationalism effected through the trope of melodrama. She argues that through melodramatic features, such as the marriage of Ross and Eulalie as "a microcosmic version of official state federalism," and the character of Tom, who is "the perfect embodiment of melodrama's (and feminism's) recurring fantasy of the feminized man," Wieland subverts both the institution of marriage and the idea of national identity, as rooted in reasoned political discourse.¹⁶³ In her essay "Cowards, Bullies, and Cadavers," Parpart examines the depiction of the male body in relation to nationalism in Wieland's 1964 film, *Patriotism Part I*. Parpart argues that the film depicts a passive, rather than traditionally aggressive, male body taken advantage of by animated hot dogs, wearing American flags, who march over and under a sleeping male body. Parpart suggests that the hot dogs are symbolic of American machismo masculinity, and that they anticipate Wieland's later visual constructions of the Canadian nation as feminine.¹⁶⁴

Longfellow's and Parpart's essays suggest the continued relevance of Wieland's films to a contemporary audience and reposition understandings of her work in relation to

¹⁶² Ibid., 174.

¹⁶³ Brenda Longfellow, "Gender, Landscape, and Colonial Allegories in *The Far Shore*, *Loyalties*, and *Mouvements du désir*," in *Gendering the Nation: Canadian Women's Cinema*, ed. Kay Armatage, Kass Banning, Brenda Longfellow and Janine Marchessault (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 168-69.

¹⁶⁴ Parpart in Armatage, *Gendering the Nation*, 258.

recent critical examinations of nationalism and nationalist processes as inherently patriarchal projects. Longfellow in particular engages in discussion of the ways in which cultural policy in Canada informed national imaginaries that, in turn, Wieland artistically explored in her films. However, the analyses employed by Longfellow and Parpart remain primarily textual. While the essays that comprise *Gendering the Nation* engage in recent feminist critiques of nationalism, they do not situate films, such as Wieland's, within their particular historical context.¹⁶⁵

By traversing terrains of art history, film studies, and feminism, it is evident that an extremely diverse, rich, and complicated body of literature exists on Wieland's film and non-film work. While the film literature reveals a more consistent willingness to shift and reflect current critical trends, most significantly feminist theory, this is less the case in art history. The lack of critical writing on the visual arts in Canada as a whole makes it difficult to understand the work of an artist such as Wieland in ways that pay attention to her feminist politics. As a result, I have attempted to position the literature within larger discussions of the limitations of the nation-building narrative so integral to the dominant narrative of Canadian art, as well as the problems that the structural film label has created for female art producers, and the shifting nature of female subjectivity within feminist theory.

Perhaps the most important observation resulting from my survey of the literature is that the overriding method of analysis employed in examinations of both Wieland's film and non-film work is formalist and textual. The emphases on formal and visual

¹⁶⁵ Blaine Allan has made a similar critique of the text, *The Films of Joyce Wieland*, edited by Kathryn Elder. He argues that while Elder's forward and Zryd's essay are important and useful, the essays that comprise the anthology pose "few questions about the historical contexts of those theoretical and political sources [of Wieland's films]." Blaine Allan, "Book review of *The Films of Joyce Wieland*," *Canadian Journal of Film Studies* 9, no. 2 (Fall 2000): 83.

analyses, with their affiliated stress on iconography and medium, has suggested to scholars that Wieland herself, and subsequently her work, are anti-intellectual and untheoretical. Examining the historical, political and cultural contexts of production reveals the degree to which Wieland was, in fact, highly intellectual and theoretical; consequently, this is the goal of the following chapters.

Chapter III

Negotiating Citizenship: *Reason Over Passion* and “Reason Over Passion”

As Liberals, we rely on that most unlikely bulwark, the individual citizen, you and me, the young and the old, the famous and the unknown, the Arctic nomad and the suburbanite. It was this confidence in the individual which set me on the road which has led me to my present quest. For many years, I have been fighting for the triumph of reason over passion in politics, for the protection of the individual freedoms against the tyranny of the group, and for a just distribution of our national wealth. It was my concern with these values which led me to the Liberal party.

Pierre Trudeau¹

At the Liberal party convention in April 1968, Pierre Trudeau articulated the motto that has come to characterize his governing philosophy, and which Joyce Wieland later emblazoned on two quilts (figs. 1 and 2) and titled her 1969 film (fig. 3) –reason over passion. Reason over passion premised Trudeau’s Enlightenment-like valuation of reason and the classic liberal values of equality and freedom of the individual over those of passion and emotion. In his speech, Trudeau suggests that, despite age, station in life, and geographical location, everyone is an individual entitled to the same freedoms and equality of opportunity. Such a notion admittedly plays into the deepest myths of Canada as a peaceful, tolerant and equal society, where identity –be it gendered, classed, or raced– is effaced in favour of good government based in a politics of rights.² A politics of sameness, however, during an era of unprecedented and radical demand for gender, class, and racial equality, was bound to have difficulty accounting for the disparate,

¹ Pierre Elliott Trudeau, “Transcript of Remarks of the Honourable Pierre E. Trudeau at the Liberal Leadership Convention, 5 April 1968,” quoted in *The Sixties in Canada*, Denise Leclerc and Pierre Dessureault (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada/Canadian Museum of Contemporary Photography, 2005), 43-46.

² A critical discussion of these myth complexes can be found in Mackey, *The House of Difference*, and Daniel Francis, *National Dreams: Myth, Memory, and Canadian History* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1997).

multiple and collective identities that were gaining recognition in Canada during the late 1960s and early 1970s.

In this chapter, I explore Wieland's artistic engagement with and feminist critique of Trudeauvian liberalism and, specifically, the political ideology, "reason over passion." Several of her film and non-film works from the late 1960s and early 1970s use craft, feminine and nationalistic signifiers, and forms of filmic experimentalism in order to destabilize the construction of the reasoned liberal individual as a homogenous and patriarchal category, and as the basis for citizenship within the liberal nation-state. Consequently, Wieland's work aesthetically and symbolically questions whether reason over passion –as the guiding political vision of the Trudeau administration– affords agency to women as citizens.

I argue that the late 1960s and early 1970s in Canada can be understood as a period when the achievement of gender equality was promoted by the federal government as something that could be attained only within a unified nation-state. Federal government initiatives that assessed perceived barriers to equality for women, such the 1971 Royal Commission on the Status of Women (RCSW), gave the impression that second-wave feminist concerns were taken seriously by the Trudeau administration and seen as integral to the development of the modern Canadian nation. Constructing women as citizens within the Just Society was dependent on constructing them as liberal, rights-bearing individuals, and as equal members of the modern Canadian nation-state. The effort to re-conceptualize women as citizens might help to explain why the concept of the

Canadian nation became so important to Wieland's work from the late 1960s and early 1970s and what led her to famously proclaim, "I think of Canada as female."³

Recognition of Wieland's artistic engagement with a particular nexus of nationalist ideologies within a moment of developing second-wave feminism in North America is integral to understanding the ways in which she symbolically negotiated the construction of the modern Canadian nation, contemporaneous notions of citizenship, and sexual difference. For this reason, I argue that Wieland's art production results from the practice of citizenship, or that it operates in the realm of cultural citizenship.⁴ While citizenship is normally seen as a social, legal and political category, recent critical discussions of citizenship, influenced by cultural and globalization studies, suggest that it is a notion that expands beyond the borders of the nation-state with which it has so often been aligned, and into areas such as culture.⁵ The cultural-capitalist state, argues Toby Miller,

needs to produce a sense of oneness among increasingly heterogeneous populations at a time when political systems are under question by new social movements and the internationalization of cultures and economies. It works to forge a loyalty to market economies and parliamentary democracy, as well as a sustainable society through the formation of cultural citizens, docile but efficient participants in that economy-society mix.⁶

³ Armatage, "Kay Armatage Interviews Joyce Wieland," 24.

⁴ On cultural citizenship see Toby Miller, *The Well-Tempered Self: Citizenship, Culture, and the Postmodern Subject* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins UP, 1993); Engin Isin and Patricia Wood, *Citizenship and Identity* (London: Sage, 1999); Nick Stevenson, ed., *Culture and Citizenship* (London: Sage, 2001); Seyla Benhabib, *The Claims of Culture: Equality and Diversity in the Global Era* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2002); Engin Isin and Bryan Turner, *Handbook of Citizenship Studies* (London: Sage, 2002), and Toby Miller, *Cultural Citizenship: Cosmopolitanism, Consumerism, and Television in a Neoliberal Age* (Philadelphia: Temple UP, 2007).

⁵ For the classic definition of citizenship see T.H. Marshall, *Citizenship and Social Class* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1950).

⁶ Miller, *The Well-Tempered Self*, xii.

One of the primary intentions of cultural policy is to foster this “sense of oneness” and it subsequently creates, and requires, cultural citizens. Miller argues that at the most basic level “citizens are public” and, as such, their subjectivity is defined by, and they act within, the logic of cultural-capitalist state.⁷

But, as Miller goes on to ask, what about those who do not act within this logic, those who lie outside the notion of the public citizen? It is from this position of inquiry, I argue, that Wieland was operating. Female subjectivity has historically been formed within the private sphere. As feminist theorists have long argued, the private sphere is organized through divisions of labour and value that are defined by capitalist patriarchy and its liberal states. Feminist theory is thus concerned with the spaces between the formal public sphere or civil society and the private sphere. As I discuss in greater detail later in this chapter, while feminist scholars such as Carole Pateman, Anne Phillips, and Chantal Mouffe present ideologically varied arguments about the limits and possibilities of the female subject as citizen, they all suggest that the public/private split, which is integral to liberalism and liberal hegemony, fundamentally questions the ability of women to participate within such nationalist/capitalist processes and identitarian categories as citizenship.

Through aesthetic means, Wieland suggests that citizenship for women, herself included, exists outside of the contemporary Trudeauvian re-conceptualization of women as citizens and, as such, her work can be understood as a form of cultural resistance. Wieland’s work from the late 1960s and early 1970s questions the goals of the cultural-capitalist state that Miller outlines, among them the cultural citizen’s docility and loyalty to capitalism and parliamentary democracy as the only avenues for citizen participation.

⁷ Ibid., 220.

“Reason over passion,” as Trudeau’s governing philosophy, is questioned in Wieland’s art production in ways that suggest both the importance and limitations of citizenship for women and the development of female subjectivity.

Reason Over Passion and “Reason Over Passion”

In the autumn of 1962, Wieland and Snow moved to New York City. As Wieland recounts of the move, “Mike and I were making a lot of trips there.... He just felt that’s where he should be, and I certainly felt that what was going on there was incredible – things were really happening.”⁸ Wieland, however, enjoyed little commercial success in New York and exhibited, with few exceptions, only in Toronto, and primarily at the gallery of her dealer, Avrom Isaacs. She attributed this largely to the difficulty she faced as a woman trying to compete in the male-dominated art scene of 1960s New York City. As she puts it,

I felt that there was something inferior –as many, many women artists will say– or missing in me so that I could never be taken seriously or equally. I felt that they were together, all the men, and I could be a part only by being this eccentric or nice little person or something like that.⁹

Wieland’s statement suggests her awareness of her position outside the parameters of modernist avant-gardism. As a result, it is not surprising that she made a conscious move to shift from large painted canvases and mixed-media works to quilting, embroidery and knitting, as well as to experimental film. “Getting into the making of quilts as woman’s work was a conscious move on my part,” Wieland explains. “There was a highly competitive scene with men artists going on there [in New York]. It polarized my view of life; it made me go right into the whole feminine thing.”¹⁰

⁸ Rabinovitz, “An Interview with Joyce Wieland,” 8.

⁹ Ibid., 11.

¹⁰ Wieland quoted in Fleming, *Joyce Wieland*, 68-69.

Concurrent with Wieland's turn to craft and "feminine" media was her "discovery" of Pierre Trudeau, who was then running for leader of the Liberal Party. In April 1968, Wieland attended the Liberal Party convention at the Civic Centre in Ottawa. It was here that Trudeau claimed victory as the party's new leader and, in the subsequent election, became the prime minister of Canada. On the way back from the convention Wieland notes,

my friend Mary [Mitchell] and I had been reading about Trudeau; the *New York Times*, the Canadian papers, everybody was talking about him...I got the idea for the quilts and what the film would be on the way back reading Trudeau being quoted in the paper: "Reason over passion, that is the theme of all my writings." I made the film *Reason Over Passion* and the two quilts...from that.¹¹

Wieland began filming *Reason Over Passion* in 1967 and completed the work in 1969. The eighty-minute film is a cross-Canada journey recorded almost entirely through the windows of a train and a car. Wieland begins in Cape Breton Island in the spring, with the waves of the Atlantic Ocean, and ends in the snow-capped Rocky Mountains. Where Ontario should appear in the film, the narrative is interrupted by a recording of an elementary-school French lesson, followed by fifteen minutes of grainy footage of Trudeau filmed by Wieland at the Liberal convention. During the film, 537 permutations of the letters in "reason over passion" flash across the bottom of the screen, accompanied by an electronic beeping sound. At the beginning, a Canadian flag flashes intermittently on the screen, followed by the words of the national anthem, *O Canada*; a close-up shot of Wieland's lips silently mouthing the words to *O Canada* (fig. 5), and Trudeau's phrase, "La Raison Avant La Passion...c'est le theme de tous mes écrits" in both French and English.

¹¹ Rabinovitz, "An Interview with Joyce Wieland," 10.

Reason Over Passion is a long film, and viewers become acutely aware of its length as the seemingly endless sequences of vast, empty amounts of land evoke the feeling one might have on such a cross-Canada journey. Wieland alludes to this feeling in a letter in which she writes that “it is permissible and advisable to daydream; to not think of the film...”¹² While the narrative of the journey is important, it is not advanced at the expense of the film’s structural characteristics. Wieland’s concern with filmic effects, textuality, and the manipulation of the celluloid is evident in the way she distorts and blurs certain images, such as the footage of Trudeau; in her use of repetitive sounds and text, and her juxtaposition of “real” with computer-generated footage. For example, Wieland re-shot the original footage of the Liberal convention and used different lenses – tinted the celluloid– and played with the camera speed, focus and iris. The resulting footage has then been contrasted with the computer-generated letters comprising the phrase “reason over passion.”

In addition to her filmic response to “reason over passion,” Wieland also created two quilted works entitled *Reason Over Passion* and *La Raison avant la passion*. They are both massive, brightly coloured, quilted works scattered with stuffed hearts and large letters spelling out Trudeau’s political philosophy. On 21 May 1968, Wieland hosted a “quilt-in” at her New York City loft and invited female Canadian expatriates to help sew a quilt as a gift for Trudeau; that quilt was *La raison avant la passion*, and its English counterpart was subsequently purchased by the National Gallery of Canada in 1970. An unidentified newspaper reported shortly afterward,

An event billed as the world’s first political quilt-in was held last evening in the third-floor walkup apartment-art studio of Mr. and Mrs. Michael Snow in Lower Manhattan. Canadian-born women, and even one or two

¹² Joyce Wieland fonds, CTASC, 1999-044/001, File 35.

men among the hundred or so persons present, sewed busily on an art quilt which will be sent to Canada's bachelor Prime Minister.¹³

On 8 November 1969, Wieland and Snow hosted a party in their New York City loft, attended by Canadian expatriates and various New York artists and writers, as well as by guest of honour, Trudeau himself. Afterwards, Trudeau sent Wieland and Snow a letter thanking them for the party and stating, "Thank you as well for the magnificent quilt which, if I estimate correctly, must have taken almost as much work as the organization of the party. It is a very sensitive and thoughtful gift and I am honoured to receive it."¹⁴ In his own handwriting Trudeau concludes, "and in the hope of seeing you again, with some films!"¹⁵ The fate of the quilt has been noted by Margaret Trudeau in her autobiography, *Beyond Reason*:

One day I did what in Pierre's eyes was the unforgivable. We were having a frosty argument about clothes, and suddenly I flew into the most frenzied temper. I tore off up the stairs to the landing where a Canadian quilt, designed by Joyce Wieland and lovingly embroidered in a New York loft with Pierre's motto "*La raison avant la passion*," was hanging. (Its bilingual pair was in the National Gallery.) Shaking with rage at my inability to counter his logical, reasoned arguments, I grabbed at the quilt, wrenched off the letters and hurled them down the stairs at him one by one, in an insane desire to reverse the process, to put passion before reason just this once.¹⁶

It is evident that, throughout the late 1960s, Wieland had both an artistic and personal relationship with Trudeau. This relationship is unusual because very few artists, if any, had such a close relationship with the prime minister, and because what appears to be Wieland's fascination with Trudeau is, I would argue in contrast, complex in its expression. I would suggest that Wieland had initially been both fascinated by Trudeau-

¹³ "Political Quilt-In Held by N.Y. Trudeau Fans," undated and un-authored newspaper clipping found in Joyce Wieland fonds, CTASC, 1991-014/VIII, File 73.

¹⁴ Joyce Wieland fonds, CTASC, 1992-018/003, File 42.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Margaret Trudeau, *Beyond Reason* (New York: Paddington Press, 1979), 240-41.

the-person and supportive of his campaign for Liberal leader. For example, she formed a group in New York City called Canadians Abroad for Trudeau and, in a 1986 interview, she told Barbara Stevenson that she had initially supported his leadership campaign.¹⁷ She goes on to tell Stevenson that while the group was “largely bogus,” they were also “playing at very deep levels....”¹⁸ Trudeau had, in fact, responded to the group via film, as Wieland recalls:

He thanked us on film. Screen Gems International, which was a big film conglomerate.... So we would make up these film messages or Trudeau would send one down. We would all come and look at it. It would say, “Thank you, Mary [Mitchell] and Joyce.” He wanted to be creative and catch up with what was happening in New York.¹⁹

However, in several interviews from the early 1970s through to the mid-1980s, Wieland’s fascination shifts and becomes increasingly critical of the Trudeau administration and of Trudeau himself.

In undated notes, for example, which appear to have been made to accompany a screening of *Reason Over Passion*, Wieland writes,

Then came the fantasies of being a government propagandist. When you are editing a film for three months you may have fantasies. 12 hrs. a day. I thought I was Leni Riefenstahl [Adolf Hitler’s filmmaker]. It was due perhaps to editing Trudeau would he be a good leader? Or just a politician? Irony came wandering in...in the form of applause (in the introduction) for his statement “reason over passion...that is the theme of all my writing”.... French lesson is a direct reference to Trudeau’s idea of bilingualism...we must all speak French so that the French Canadian will feel at home in his own country (I like the idea).... The film is sewn together with flags 10 different kinds....²⁰

¹⁷ David Stein, “Trudeau’s Got Friends in New York,” *Toronto Daily Star*, undated found in Joyce Wieland fonds, CTASC, 2001-058/003, File 8, and Joyce Wieland fonds, CTASC, 1999-003/005, File 5, 10.

¹⁸ Joyce Wieland fonds, CTASC, 1999-003/005, File 5, 10.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Joyce Wieland fonds, CTASC, 1993-009/010, File 120.

Wieland clearly identifies herself in this statement as a “government propagandist,” and yet her increasing critical attitude towards Trudeau and his governing philosophy is suggested in her questioning of his effectiveness as a leader and of his motto, reason over passion. In unpublished parts of an interview with Pierre Théberge, then curator of contemporary Canadian art at the National Gallery of Canada, Wieland states that she imagined she was working for the government when she made the film *Reason Over Passion* and felt that at the time Trudeau was “an interesting man...and maybe a creative man.”²¹ In a 1971 interview with Wieland, Kay Armatage asked about her use of Trudeau in *Reason Over Passion*, “Do you think of it as a process of objectification of Trudeau, in the way that women have always been objectified in movies?” Wieland responded,

No, I guess what I’m doing to Trudeau is putting him on for his statement “Reason over passion –that is the theme of all my writings.” Taking the words Reason Over Passion in the beginning of the film, treating them as a propaganda slogan, and through permutation, turning them into visual poetry, into a new language.²²

In 1986, Stevenson asked Wieland, “I’m wondering about your attitude about Trudeau...what message about Trudeau were you conveying in those works?” to which Wieland replied, “I was just saying that he had this reason above everything. And it really should be reason *and* passion in a person. But this man is only reason over passion, and ultimately, he’s a psychopath.” Stevenson: “You’d go that far?” Wieland: “Oh, yes....”²³ Wieland goes on to tell Stevenson that her support of Trudeau waned after he implemented the War Measures Act, stating, “what do you do after that when

²¹ National Gallery of Canada Archives, National Gallery of Canada fonds, “True Patriot Love/Véritable amour patriotique.”

²² Armatage, “Kay Armatage Interviews Joyce Wieland,” 25.

²³ Joyce Wieland fonds, CTASC, 1999-003/005, File 05. Wieland’s italics.

you find out that the person's heart is closed and that the War Measures Act could take place."²⁴ In an undated interview with Wieland, Ardele Lister asked, "What influenced you to make work about Canada?" Wieland responded,

I didn't fit in there [New York]....I was engaged in a lot of reading about Canada at that time, and a lot of people here were writing things that were very important. Some of the really interesting writing on economics and independence and stuff were being written at that time. That made me think that there should be an artistic response to this kind of new philosophy, this new thinking in nationalism. I got interested in propaganda, about the Trudeau campaign and so on that I conceived the idea –being in Ottawa with Mary Mitchell who's a Canadian playwright– of the quilts and the film combined, *Reason Over Passion*. To me those aren't really political films, but it was like tasting the idea of responding to the culture, or even having dialogue with the political body, as it were, of the country.²⁵

Wieland goes on to say, "I felt a sense of responsibility which I'd never felt before, about what I could do about the situation in this country...."²⁶

Wieland's statements suggest that she took her role as an artist seriously, and that she saw it as one going beyond the conventional modernist notion of an artist who is concerned primarily with form and aesthetics. She says that she felt a "responsibility," even an obligation, to respond to the contemporary political and cultural milieu of Canada. It is evident that the support and fascination Wieland might have once had for Trudeau himself or the ideals he was seen as embodying shifted to a critique of the implications that "reason over passion" held for the development of the modern Canadian nation-state and, as I will argue, the role that women could play within it. The parallel Wieland draws between Leni Riefenstahl and herself and the way she identifies herself as a "propagandist" suggest an understanding of her art production as a politicized practice

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ardele Lister, interview from *Criteria*, special issue, "The Politics of Film in Canada," (c. 1975) found in Joyce Wieland fonds, CTASC, 1991-014/005, File 73.

²⁶ Ibid.

of citizenship. Unlike historical instances of propaganda, where film and visual imagery were often explicitly used for nationalist purposes, Wieland draws from already existing nationalist propaganda in order to shift embedded notions of what such a discourse implies, thus contaminating its usefulness as reasoned, political discourse.²⁷ As such, Wieland's *Reason Over Passion* works can be seen as an intervention into the public realm of politics, culture, citizenship, and the avant-garde, and as a form of cultural resistance to the contemporary re-conceptualization of citizenship as exclusively defined by "reason/public" over that of "passion/private."

The *Reason Over Passion* quilts and film interfere in the realm of the *techne* – reason, rationality and technology– because Wieland alters Trudeau's motto by rendering it in the quilted medium and by re-ordering the letters in "reason over passion" as nonsensical words in the film.²⁸ In both the quilts and film the *techne* of language is rendered useless and void of the knowledge and power it once signified. The *Reason Over Passion* quilts recall the traditional association of craft with the feminine domestic "private" realm. The juxtaposition of Trudeau's motto, as a signifier of public/reason, with the quilted medium, as a signifier of private/passion, humourously suggests that Wieland remained unconvinced by such a method of governance. In an interview with Stevenson, Wieland notes that the quilts were meant to be humorous political satire:

But the basic thing behind saying "Reason over Passion" was that it was strictly a send-up. He was into the mood of that. He could get into the mood of the thing. Trudeau never saw this as a joke on him, though. The English quilt –he just took it straight, as a compliment.²⁹

²⁷ For example, the National Film Board of Canada used film for nationalistic purposes. See Gary Evans, *John Grierson and the National Film Board: The Politics of Wartime Propaganda* (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1984).

²⁸ "Techne" is a term that refers to the concept of technology, rationality and culture. It does not refer to actual technology but the philosophical differences between culture/*techne* and nature/*poesis*.

²⁹ Joyce Wieland fonds, CTASC, 1999-003/005, File 5, 10.

For Wieland, Trudeau's inability to see the quilt as a critique of his governing philosophy no doubt made the work even funnier. While the quilts employ humour in order to critique the notion of reason over passion, this does not mean they are any less politically significant or less of a feminist intervention. Wieland's combination of humour with the quilted medium was not only intentional, but also a strategic method of addressing contentious issues in an alternative way. As Wieland states in an interview,

In my own work, for example *Reason Over Passion*, which is passionate, tragic, and funny, some people say I am not serious. They want one thing at a time. However, if you are trying to express something which hasn't been said before, it might require finding other ways –a new form of expression.³⁰

Wieland was also aware that using the quilted medium had implications, not always positive, for her reputation as an artist:

First of all, who could take a quilt seriously in the art world? It invigorated a lot of people to start quilting –and that was the best thing. The quilt form reaches people: they can relate to it. That's why I wanted a common basis. ...I'm interested in working on basic symbols that we know, creatures, trees, and we recognize these instantly. It is what you do with them once you get them into the work. You work on your own myth from the very basic things you have around here.³¹

The *Reason Over Passion* quilts draw on the stereotypical characterization of craft as both feminine and non-threatening. More than this, however, the form of humour that Wieland employs is one of nonsense. That Wieland depicted the letters in "reason over passion" as unreadable in the film and undermined the power the motto held by using the quilted medium to convey it renders the phrase non-sensical. Nonsense, absurdity, and the illogical were common artistic tropes within the North American avant-garde during

³⁰ Magidson and Wright, "Interviews with Canadian Artists," 63.

³¹ Wieland quoted in Robert H. Stacey, ed., *Lives and Works of the Canadian Artists* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1977), unpaginated.

the 1960s.³² The engagement with nonsense transforms political rationality by emptying it of the significance it once held. Wieland's decision to link notions of nonsense and absurdity with Trudeau's motto renders her work both humorous and discerning in its ability to refute the power that "reason over passion" evokes.

Wieland's depiction of Trudeau in *Reason Over Passion* is integral to the film's narrative, and it also reiterates both her ambivalence towards him as a leader and her critique of his governing philosophy. Trudeau is the only person in the film, aside from Wieland herself, and her experimentation with his image, embodied in the distorted, manipulated footage of the Liberal convention, reinforces its representational nature (fig. 4). The original image of Trudeau is only an illusion and the viewer can access him – rather, an image of him – only through Wieland's distortions. Wieland's experimentation with Trudeau's image is not just an exercise in structural film techniques; the purposeful slowing down of the camera speed, dyed celluloid, grainy colour, and play with the focus and iris, transform Trudeau-the-person into Trudeau-the-text. By drawing attention to textuality (further emphasized in the non-sensical ordering of the letters in "reason over passion"), this scene suggests the falseness and absurdity of reason over passion as the basis for belonging, participating, and defining one's self within the nation-state.

Negotiating Feminism and Citizenship

The personal and artistic shift in Wieland's fascination with Trudeau and his administration from adoration to criticism raises the question why such a shift might have

³² The most evident use of nonsense and absurdity is the work of American artists Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg who have been positioned as leaders of the Neo-Dada movement in New York City from the early 1950s to the mid-1960s. In their use of found objects and collage techniques, which critiqued and satirized modern culture and politics, they were seen as emulating the European avant-garde Dada movement of the early twentieth century. It is also interesting to point out that Wieland's work from the early 1960s is often termed Neo-Dada and it was included in the important group show, "Dada: Dennis Burton, Arthur Coughtry, Greg Curnoe, Richard Gorman, Gordon Rayner, Michael Snow, Joyce Wieland" at the Isaacs Gallery in Toronto in 1961-62.

occurred. Why, for example, did Wieland feel the need to transform both the image of Trudeau and the motto “reason over passion”? The *Reason Over Passion* works suggest an alternative vision of nation that is governed not by reasoned political discourse, but rather by both passion and reason. Conventionally, Trudeau has been characterized as anti-nationalist because he sees nationalism as a collective emotion or passion that has the potential to threaten a unified nation-state.³³ Reg Whitaker, however, has argued that there is only some truth to such a claim.³⁴ In “New Treason of the Intellectuals,” Trudeau argues that nationalism tends to be produced by the dominant ethnic group (white English Canadians in the case of Canada), which establishes a nationalism based solely on the interests of this group. Trudeau writes that nationalist governments are thus ultimately “intolerant, discriminatory, and, when all is said and done, totalitarian.”³⁵ “A truly democratic government,” argues Trudeau, “cannot be ‘nationalist,’ because it must pursue the good of all its citizens, without prejudice to ethnic origin. The democratic government, then, stands for and encourages good citizenship, never nationalism.”³⁶

Trudeau was evidently suspicious of nationalism and nationalist governments, but he was also acutely aware of how his federalism could potentially alienate certain groups within the nation-state. An effective government, according to Trudeau, cannot govern exclusively through reason alone, and it must consistently convince its citizens of its need to exist, and that individual needs, regardless of gender, race, class or language, could be

³³ Such a characterization of Trudeau and the Trudeau administration is most evident in McRoberts, *Misconceiving Canada*. See also Claude Couture, *La loyauté d’un laïc. Pierre Trudeau et le libéralisme canadien* (Montréal and Paris: L’Harmattan, 1996).

³⁴ Reg Whitaker, “Reason, Passion, and Interest: Pierre Trudeau’s Eternal Liberal Triangle,” in *A Sovereign Idea: Essays on Canada as a Democratic Community* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s UP, 1992), 153.

³⁵ Trudeau, *Federalism and the French Canadians*, 169.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

met only within the framework of the nation-state. This leads Trudeau to state when nationalism is beneficial:

[The state] must continually persuade the generality of the people that it is in their best interest to continue as a state. And since it is physically and intellectually difficult to persuade continually through reason alone, the state is tempted to reach out for whatever emotional support it can find. Ever since history fell under the ideological shadow of the nation-state, the most convenient support has obviously been the idea of nationalism.³⁷

Trudeau goes on to state how his plan for national unity, based on this type of nationalism, might work to create a national consensus, or common denominator, amongst all people:

A national image must be created that will have such an appeal as to make any image of a separatist group unattractive. Resources must be diverted into such things as national flags, anthems, education, arts councils, broadcasting corporations, film boards; the territory must be bound together by a network of railways, highways, airlines; the national culture and the national economy must be protected by taxes and tariffs; ownership of resources and industry by nationals must be made a matter of policy. In short, the whole of the citizenry must be made to feel that it is only within the framework of the federal state that their language, culture, institutions, sacred traditions, and standard of living can be protected from external attack and internal strife.³⁸

This statement suggests the importance of culture and cultural policy in fostering a nationalism that would create citizens, or more specifically cultural citizens, rather than individuals with divergent racial, language, gender, and class differences. Fundamental rights and equality of opportunity are positioned as attainable only within the framework of the nation-state. The maintenance of this national consensus, however, is difficult, as Trudeau states,

It is, of course, obvious that a national consensus will be developed in this way only if the nationalism is emotionally acceptable to all important groups with the nation. ...so federalism is ultimately bound to fail if the

³⁷ Ibid., 189.

³⁸ Ibid., 193.

nationalism it cultivates is unable to generate a national image which has immensely more appeal than the regional ones.³⁹

Trudeau sees nationalism as ultimately unable to sustain the national consensus, and, as he concludes, if a nation reaches the point of separating no amount of nationalism can save it: “Thus the great moment of truth arrives when it is realized that *in the last resort* the mainspring of federalism cannot be emotion but must be reason.”⁴⁰

The *Reason Over Passion* quilts and film engage in a dialogue with the importance of reason to the Trudeau government –and to the project of national unity or process of “Canadianization” that Trudeau outlines– in ways that question both liberal hegemony and capitalism. I would argue that part of the reason the subject matter of the Canadian nation became an important aspect of Wieland’s work is because the late 1960s can be seen as a moment when second-wave feminism was being negotiated by the federal government.⁴¹ An integral aspect of the process of “Canadianization” was to re-conceptualize those groups who were perceived as the most disadvantaged within its liberal capitalist structure, among them, women. Trudeauvian liberalism sought to have women identify the attainment of gender equality within the framework of the nation-state by re-conceptualizing them as liberal individuals and, consequently, as citizens. As Jill Vickers has argued, the Trudeau (and Pearson) administrations “co-opt[ed] the

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 194. Trudeau’s italics.

⁴¹ For further discussion of the development of second-wave feminism in Canada see Cerise Morris, “‘Determination and Thoroughness’: The Movement for a Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada,” *Atlantis* 5, no. 2 (Spring 1980): 1-21; Sandra Burt, “Women’s Issues and the Women’s Movement in Canada Since 1970,” in *The Politics of Gender, Ethnicity and Language in Canada*, ed. Alan Cairns and Cynthia Williams, 111-69 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986); The Clio Collective, *Quebec Women: A History* (Toronto: Women’s Press, 1987); Constance Backhouse and David H. Flaherty, ed., *Challenging Times: The Women’s Movement in Canada and the United States* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s UP, 1992); Ruth Roach Pierson, Marjorie Griffin Cohen, Paula Bourne and Philinda Masters, ed., *Canadian Women’s Issues: Strong Voices*, vol. 1 (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1993); Roberta Hamilton, *Gendering the Vertical Mosaic: Feminist Perspectives on Canadian Society* (Mississauga: Copp Clark Ltd., 1996), and Judy Rebick, *Ten Thousand Roses: The Making of a Feminist Revolution* (Toronto: Penguin, 2005).

women's movement into their Canadian national-unity project by funding many women's organisations, mainly because they hoped undifferentiated 'feminism' would cut across the divisiveness of Québécois nationalism."⁴² In the *Reason Over Passion* works, Wieland engages in the potential equality and power that citizenship appeared to offer for women, while also remaining critically hesitant of it.

Given the relationship Trudeau established between women and the nation-state, it is not surprising that much of the literature dealing with the second-wave women's movement in Canada alludes to the close relationship it had with the Canadian state, namely, the idea that federal legislative changes and federal funding were characterized as the primary ways through which the demands of feminists would be met. Sue Findlay has argued that Canada, like many Western liberal democratic nation-states in the 1960s, was searching for "solutions [to the demands of the women's movement] that would demonstrate the commitment of liberal democracies to equality without compromising their reliance on capitalism."⁴³ In other words, in order to maintain the division of the public and private spheres, so integral to the maintenance of the liberal capitalist nation-state, the federal government had to give the impression that social and economic advancements for women in Canada could be adequately addressed within a liberal capitalist framework.⁴⁴ Introducing measures to curtail discriminatory practices within

⁴² Jill Vickers, "Feminisms and Nationalisms in English Canada," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 35, no. 2 (Summer 2000): 138.

⁴³ Sue Findlay, "Facing the State: The Politics of the Women's Movement Reconsidered," in *Feminism and Political Economy: Women's Work, Women's Struggles*, ed. Heather Jon Maroney and Meg Luxton. (Toronto: Methuen, 1987), 34.

⁴⁴ For feminist critiques of the public/private division in relation to liberalism and citizenship see Zillah Eisenstein, "Patriarchy, Motherhood, and Public Life," in *The Radical Future of Liberal Feminism*, 14-30 (Boston: Northeastern UP, 1986); Carole Pateman, "Feminist Critiques of the Public/Private Dichotomy," in *Feminism and Equality*, ed. Anne Phillips, 103-26 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987); Anne Phillips, "Public Spaces, Private Lives," in *Engendering Democracy*, 92-119 (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991); Mary Dietz, "Context is All: Feminism and Theories of Citizenship," in *Dimensions of Radical Democracy*:

the public sphere, (such as gender-based wage inequality), within a Bill of Rights entrenched, in turn, within the constitution were Trudeauvian strategies that appeared to offer equality of opportunity and guarantee rights to women so that they could actively participate as equal members of the nation-state. They could, theoretically, be citizens.

The federally sponsored Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada (RCSW, 1967-1971) serves as an exemplary instance of the way in which the federal government managed demands for equality generated by the second-wave women's movement within the framework of the liberal capitalist nation-state. The impact and success of the RCSW continues to be debated, and divergent assessments have been made. Leslie Pal, for example, states that the RCSW "helped set the decade's agenda for mainstream Canadian feminism," and Marjorie Griffin Cohen argues that "the most significant single event in establishing a sense of a women's movement in Canada was the Royal Commission on the Status of Women," while Ian McKay argues that "it bore the contradictory marks of an attempt to forestall feminism's more revolutionary articulation."⁴⁵ Taking a stance similar to McKay, Findlay warns that while the RCSW was certainly important for the development of second-wave feminism in Canada, "it would be a mistake to characterize the Royal Commission as a victory for the women's movement."⁴⁶ Findlay argues that Canadian women in the 1960s had not yet formed new ways to collectively fight for equality outside of existing structures such as the family,

Pluralism, Citizenship, Community, ed. Chantal Mouffe, 63-85 (London: Verso, 1992), and for an updated version of this essay, "Context is All: Reconsidering Feminism and Citizenship," in *Turning Operations: Feminism, Arendt, and Politics*, 21-42 (New York and London: Routledge, 2002).

⁴⁵ Leslie A. Pal, *Interests of State: The Politics of Language, Multiculturalism, and Feminism in Canada* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's UP, 1993), 113; Cohen, *Canadian Women's Issues*, 4, and McKay, *Rebels, Reds, Radicals*, 199. For a discussion of the contemporary relevance of the RCSW see Jane Arscott, "Twenty-Five Years and Sixty-Five Minutes After the Royal Commission on the Status of Women," *International Journal of Canadian Studies* 11 (Spring 1995): 33-58.

⁴⁶ Sue Findlay, "Feminist Struggles with the Canadian State: 1966-1988," *RFR/DRF Resources for Feminist Research* 17, no. 3 (September 1988): 5.

political parties and social agencies.⁴⁷ Despite its perceived success or failure, the RCSW warrants critical attention.

The RCSW was a response by the government of Lester Pearson (1963-1968) to the demands made by both the newly formed Committee on Equality for Women (CEW) and the Fédération des femmes du Québec (FFQ) for a royal commission on the current status of women in Canada.⁴⁸ Not only was the RCSW a response to the women's movement, but it was also a response to the 1948 United Nations resolution on Human Rights, which states that "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights."⁴⁹ As the preamble to the Commission states, "Canada is, therefore, committed to a principle that permits no distinction in rights and freedoms between women and men.... We have interpreted this to mean that equality of opportunity for everyone should be the goal of Canadian society."⁵⁰ In this sense, the RCSW can be seen as the federal government's response to the global (or, more specifically, Western) emergence of women as a "new" collective subjectivity within the public sphere and, specifically, to the mass entry of women into capitalist labour markets.

The RCSW, established in 1967 and presented to the Trudeau administration in 1970, involved largely white, middle-class women throughout Canada who came to public hearings (lasting two and a half years), which were set up in hotels, church basements, community halls and shopping malls, to voice their opinions and discuss their

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ The Committee on Equality for Women, founded in 1966, was lead by Laura Sabia and was an amalgam of 32 women's organizations. The Fédération des femmes du Québec was also founded in 1966 by Thérèse Casgrain (who had also founded the Québec chapter of the women's peace group Voice of Women) and Monique Bégin. See Pal, *Interests of State*, 113.

⁴⁹ *Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada* (Ottawa, 1971), xi.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

experiences as women.⁵¹ As Monique Bégin, former Executive Secretary of the Commission, notes, “The public’s involvement through public hearings, briefs, and recommendations...distinguishes royal commissions from ‘expert’ studies and research.”⁵² Bégin argues that the idea of a Royal Commission came largely from English Canada and that it was seen as the result of “a long-standing commitment by women’s associations to reforms needed to obtain more simple justice for women, as well as a call for new social adjustments required by the buoyant 1960s.”⁵³ The final report makes 167 recommendations to the federal government, 122 of which were deemed as federal responsibility, covering areas ranging from labour laws, divorce and marriage laws to immigration and citizenship and participation in public life.⁵⁴ Findlay has suggested that the importance of the RCSW is mainly symbolic, as she notes that the events leading up to and during the establishment of the Commission suggest that the Canadian state was prepared to offer a formal response to women’s increasing demands for equality while establishing that response as decidedly liberal.⁵⁵ In other words, despite the fact that only 43 of the 167 reforms were ever implemented, the fact that the federal government was prepared to formally respond to women’s demands was significant in itself. Cerise Morris has also argued that the symbolic importance of the RCSW lies in the notion that, for the first time, the status of women constituted a new

⁵¹ For a discussion of the media coverage of the RCSW hearings see Barbara M. Freeman, “Framing Feminine/Feminist: English-language Press Coverage of the Hearings of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada, 1968” *International Journal of Canadian Studies* 11 (Spring 1995): 11-31.

⁵² Bégin in Backhouse and Flaherty, *Challenging Times*, 33.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁵⁴ The areas covered by the RCSW include: Canadian Women and Society, Women in the Canadian Economy, Education, Women and the Family, Taxation and Child-Care Allowances, Poverty, Participation of Women in Public Life, Immigration and Citizenship, Criminal Law and Women Offenders, and Plan for Action.

⁵⁵ Findlay, “Facing the State,” 31.

social category that demanded treatment.⁵⁶ It is also significant that the RCSW addressed the status of women in both the public sphere (wage equality, education, participation in politics, poverty) and the private sphere (childcare, marriage and divorce laws), promising to honour the second-wave feminist claim that the personal is political. Crucial to a critical understanding of the liberal foundation of the RCSW is the question of belonging; racial inequality, experienced by aboriginal women, for example, was never considered by the RCSW as an issue worth investigating. This raises questions of whose women's movement this was and what group of women would best be served by the Commission's recommendations.

In 1972, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) was formed in order to maintain pressure on the federal government to implement the RCSW's recommendations. NAC, ranging in membership from the National Council of Jewish Women of Canada to the YWCA, was one of the many voluntary groups to receive financial support from the federal government's Women's Program (founded in 1974), a section of the Citizenship Branch of the Department of the Secretary of State. The objective of the Women's Program was to "encourage the development of a society in which the full potential of women as citizens is recognized and utilized," although, as Findlay argues, it "was in no position to influence the policy-making process."⁵⁷

Leslie Pal has persuasively argued that the global 1960s social and civil rights movements were addressed in Canada at the federal level by couching equality—for women, ethnic minorities, and French Canadians—in terms of national unity and citizen

⁵⁶ Morris, "Determination and Thoroughness," 1.

⁵⁷ Pal, *Interests of State*, 216, and Findlay, "Feminist Struggles with the Canadian State," 6.

participation.⁵⁸ Pal examines the Citizenship Branch of the Department of the Secretary of State in order to explore the ways in which this branch of the federal government funded, among other things, voluntary women's groups such as NAC through the Women's Program. Such programs were designed and funded to encourage active citizen participation in voluntary organizations that were meant to alleviate social injustice.⁵⁹ Pal notes that this branch went through massive restructuring under the Trudeau government and, as she argues, while national unity through citizen participation became the primary mandate of the branch, this was also dependent upon "a redefinition of the meaning of citizenship and a new articulation of the proper role and relationship of government to voluntary organizations."⁶⁰ Pal suggests that, while it may seem ironic that the state appeared to fund the very organizations that threatened its unity, active citizen participation was seen "to foster greater allegiance to national institutions through a feeling that those institutions were open to popular forces."⁶¹

In many ways, the *Reason Over Passion* works, as well as Wieland's other craft works from the late 1960s and early 1970s, can be seen as engaging in this new imaginary of citizenship for women. Through her use of female bodily imagery in relation to nationalist discourses, Wieland's art production employs a feminist critique of the discourse of citizenship circulating during this time. Wieland evidently disagreed that reason should be the means by which a nation-state is governed, and her work suggests that such a dichotomous philosophy is unable to account for citizens, such as women,

⁵⁸ Pal, *Interests of State*, 251.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 109.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 105.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 251.

whose subjectivity has been formed outside of liberal concepts such as the individual and citizen.

In the opening sequence of *Reason Over Passion*, Wieland's authorship is made transparent when the words to the national anthem, *O Canada*, immediately cut away to a close-up shot of her lips silently mouthing them (fig. 5). This firmly establishes Wieland as author and as national subject –dutifully singing the national anthem– while associating this subject position with the female body –specifically, lips, a highly sexualized signifier of woman. In her notes, Wieland writes about this particular scene that her fantasy of being a “government propagandist” “came...in my soundless singing of O Canada (dutiful but I mean it too)...”⁶² As with the quilts, Wieland again questions the use of language, signifying *techne*/reason, and establishes her own version of the anthem as intimately bound to the bodily or corporeal, rather than to the rational word. This is emphasized further in the silence of this scene, as viewers are forced to focus intently on Wieland's lips in order to understand what she is mouthing.

Several of Wieland's craft works of the late 1960s and early 1970s feature lips mouthing the words to the national anthem and other nationalist songs, providing a sense of the living and corporeal, while also signifying and complicating the relationship between women and their contemporaneous re-conceptualization as citizens.⁶³ Images of lips are the focus, for example, of Wieland's 1969 lithograph, *O Canada* (fig. 6), for which she pressed her lipsticked lips against the stone used to make the print, while forming the words to the Canadian national anthem. By using her own body to create the

⁶² Joyce Wieland fonds, CTASC, 1993-009/010, File 120.

⁶³ For another discussion of Wieland's works featuring lips see John O'Brian, “Anthem Lip-Sync,” *Journal of Canadian Art History* 21, no. 1-2 (2000): 140-49.

image in an intimate and performative way, Wieland fuses her corporeal presence with a signifier of the nation, the national anthem. A similar concept is evident in several of her works from the early 1970s, including the 1970 embroidered work, *O Canada Animation* (fig. 7), in which bright red lips mouthing the words to the national anthem have been stitched onto white cloth. The 1974 embroidered work, *Squid Jiggin' Grounds* (fig. 8), and the 1972 quilted work, *The Maple Leaf Forever II* (fig. 9), also depict lips that mouth the words to popular nationalist songs, so that viewers find themselves participating, mouthing along with the image. Wieland's lips are active, speaking lips; they have something to say. They suggest a feminine corporeality, but are dislocated from the body, which exists outside the frame. The invocation of a feminine corporeality is also suggested in the *Reason Over Passion* quilts where, despite the fact that they do not literally depict a female body, their traditional association with the bed, home, and domestic female labour and art forms suggests the presence of a female body that exists outside of the quilts' borders.

Such palpable imagery suggests the importance of the corporeal, or more specifically, a feminine corporeality, in interfering in the realm of the *techne*. By displacing the written version of the anthem in favour of filmed, embroidered, and quilted lips, Wieland brings together both a real female body and female bodily imagery with distinctly nationalist subject matter. Her depiction of herself mouthing the words to the national anthem and the sexual and intimate nature of her lip-themed craft works place an embodied female self within the abstract category of citizen. Her insertion of her real body into the film *Reason Over Passion*, together with her use of lip imagery, evokes an

emotional, rather than rational, response to the concept of the nation. This suggests that recognition of sexual difference was integral to Wieland's conceptualization of citizenship, and that it must account for an embodied female self and the subsequent reprioritization of "reason over passion." The insertion of the private female body into the public notion of citizenship is, I would argue, a radical feminist practice of citizenship.

In the introduction to *Culture and Citizenship*, Nick Stevenson outlines the many theories and debates that have been generated by the notion of cultural citizenship.⁶⁴ He suggests that one of the key aspects of cultural citizenship is the deconstruction of the notion of the citizen traditionally associated with liberalism's civil society. "Questions of 'cultural' citizenship," Stevenson argues, "therefore seek to rework images, assumptions and representations that are seen to be exclusive as well as marginalizing."⁶⁵ While much scholarship on cultural citizenship has focused on the impact and meanings of the re-conceptualization of the citizen in relation to the mass media on a global scale (television and the Internet, for example), I want to suggest that Wieland's art production can be seen as visually reworking and re-imagining citizenship in ways that consider the emotional and intimate nature of national belonging. Inherent in such a re-conceptualization is a critique of the divisions of public/private, individual/non-individual, and citizen/non-citizen.

Recent feminist critiques of liberalism have challenged the gendering of the individual/citizen as male and have offered alternative possibilities for thinking through a

⁶⁴ Stevenson, *Culture and Citizenship*, 2-4.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.

feminist politics that includes a concept of citizenship.⁶⁶ At the root of liberalism's conceptualization of citizenship is the individual, and it sees the individual as a natural, free, rational being that exists prior to society.⁶⁷ Accordingly, civil society is governed in ways that ensure liberty, or the right to pursue goals and the "good life" without hindrance, and equality, or the right to equal opportunity.⁶⁸ As liberalism was a political ideology that developed concurrently with capitalism, liberty and equality also have socio-economic significance. Thus, the liberal individual should also have the right to equal and fair access to the market system; as Mary Dietz explains, "The liberal individual might be understood as the competitive entrepreneur, his civil society as an economic marketplace, and his ideal as the equal opportunity to engage, to paraphrase Smith, in 'the race for wealth, and honors, and preferments.'"⁶⁹ When the individual is the bearer of these rights, which have been guaranteed by the state (in a Bill of Rights or Constitution, for example) the individual takes on its political form as a citizen. Within liberal theory, the individual/citizen occupies the public realm –that of culture, politics, civil society– while the non-individual/non-citizen occupies the private realm –that of nature, home, family. These realms have been gendered as male and female respectively; while the public and private have been ascribed differing attributes, they are mutually dependent on the division of labour and prescribed social and political roles that each

⁶⁶ For discussion of some of the major feminist critiques of liberalism see Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Public Man, Private Woman* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1981); Eisenstein, *The Radical Future of Liberal Feminism*; Iris Marion Young, "Polity and Group Difference: A Critique of the Ideal of Universal Citizenship," *Ethics* 99 (January 1989): 250-74; Parveen Adams and Elizabeth Cowie, ed., *The Woman in Question* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1990); Sara Ruddick, *Maternal Thinking: Towards a Politics of Peace* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995); Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), and Anne Phillips, ed., *Feminism and Politics* (Oxford and New York: Oxford UP, 1998).

⁶⁷ Dietz, "Context is All: Reconsidering Feminism and Citizenship," 23.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 23-24.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 26.

possess. Feminist critics, for example, see both the public and private as structured and affected by patriarchy, hence the second-wave feminist notion that the personal is political.

One of the most critical assessments of the gendered concept of the liberal individual, and liberalism in general, can be found in the work of Carole Pateman. In her highly influential text, *The Sexual Contract*, she argues that liberalism fundamentally denies women the ability to fully participate in civil society because the category, individual, exists within the public realm, and is thus a patriarchal category that can never be occupied by women:

The denial of civil equality to women means that the feminist aspiration must be to win acknowledgement for women as “individuals.” Such an aspiration can never be fulfilled. The “individual” is a patriarchal category. The individual is masculine and his sexuality is understood accordingly....⁷⁰

Pateman argues that the shaping of the individual in liberal theory as masculine means that women can never be citizens as women:

There is no set of clothes available for a citizen who is a woman, no vision available within political theory of the new democratic woman...All that is clear is that if women are to be citizens as *women*, as autonomous, equal, yet sexually different beings from men, democratic theory and practice has to undergo a radical transformation.⁷¹

In order for women to become citizens, they are forced to deny their “womanness” to fit a universal homogenous notion of the individual; it is, as Pateman argues, to “play the modern patriarchal game....”⁷² Rather than “play” within the constraints of patriarchy, Pateman suggests that the category, individual, should be abandoned altogether:

⁷⁰ Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1988), 184-85.

⁷¹ Carole Pateman, *The Disorder of Women: Democracy, Feminism and Political Theory* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989), 14. Pateman’s italics.

⁷² Pateman, *The Sexual Contract*, 226.

Women can attain the formal standing of civil individuals but as embodied feminine beings we can never be “individuals” in the same sense as men. To take embodied identity seriously demands the abandonment of the masculine, unitary individual to open up space for two figures; one masculine, one feminine.⁷³

For Pateman, it is crucial to recognize the importance of sexual difference within abstract universal concepts such as individual and citizen. To do so is to afford political agency to “private” things such as pregnancy, childbirth, and motherhood. This is why recognition of the real female body is so integral for Pateman. The larger issue that she is engaging with here is the universalizing tendency of such categories as the liberal individual, which erases other identities such as class, race, and sexuality in favour of equality, democracy and individuality, which are seen as the ideal subject positions. The questions for feminism are, how can equality, democracy and individuality have political significance for women, and how can difference (class, racial, sexual) be recognized and not, as Anne Phillips states, “declin[e] into an individualist politics of self-interest; of reinforcing a patchwork of local identities from which people can speak only to their immediate group; or of forgetting the continued salience of class?”⁷⁴

Political theorist Chantal Mouffe has written extensively about this dilemma and has posed an alternative feminist conceptualization of citizenship.⁷⁵ While Mouffe agrees with Pateman’s criticism of the gendering of the liberal individual/citizen as masculine, she argues that Pateman’s insistence on the importance of sexual difference renders an essentialist understanding of women, while maintaining the dichotomy of man/public and

⁷³ Ibid., 224.

⁷⁴ Anne Phillips, *Democracy and Difference* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993), 5.

⁷⁵ See Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London: Verso, 1985), and Mouffe, ed., *Dimensions of Radical Democracy*.

woman/private.⁷⁶ Mouffe argues that sexual difference, while not entirely ineffectual, should not form the basis of a feminist concept of citizenship. Mouffe's larger agenda aims to re-politicize, hence radicalize, democracy and, in order to do so, re-conceptualize citizenship in a way that recognizes difference in non-essentialist ways. In her collection of essays, *The Return of the Political*, Mouffe denounces any liberal universal, homogenous subjectivity/identity in favour of a "social agent," which is "the articulation of an ensemble of subject positions, corresponding to the multiplicity of social relations in which it is inscribed."⁷⁷ Mouffe's concept of citizenship is therefore not necessarily gendered, but she acknowledges gender as one of many different subject positions conditioning social agency. What is important for Mouffe is to consistently strive towards the "ethico-political" principles of modern democracy –equality and freedom for all. It is this overarching desire that should form the basis for citizenship, and it is one that includes, but is not limited to, feminism. Mouffe's analysis suggests that citizenship is still a viable category for feminists to occupy and one that does not necessarily need to encompass a public/private dichotomy or a reductive essentialist notion of "woman." These two positions stake out two different approaches to feminist conceptions and critiques of citizenship.

In many ways, Wieland's art production anticipates these critical feminist discussions in the way it complicates an understanding of the development of female subjectivity within Western liberal democratic nation-states. Like Pateman, Wieland found biological difference important to her concept of citizenship, and her insertion and manipulation of the female body and female bodily imagery in relation to Trudeau's

⁷⁶ Chantal Mouffe, "Feminism, Citizenship and Radical Democratic Politics," in *The Return of the Political* (London and New York: Verso, 1993), 81-82.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 82.

governing philosophy questions whether women can be citizens as women, as embodied feminine beings. Consideration of Wieland's work in relation to the second-wave women's movement in Canada and the re-conceptualization of women as citizens under the Trudeau government is integral to understanding her art production as a practice of citizenship. The RCSW, funding of women's organizations, and the establishment of the Women's Program are rooted in the federal government's belief that re-defining women as rights-bearing individuals, or citizens, would assuage social, political, and economic injustices as well as *séparatiste* sentiments.⁷⁸ In this sense, the federal government negotiated feminism by presenting the framework of the nation-state as necessary to the attainment of equality. The *Reason Over Passion* works, as well as Wieland's other lip-themed craft works, suggest the limitations that such a framework poses to women. In the following chapters I examine ways in which Wieland negotiates other emerging collective identities in the late 1960s in Canada that were being re-conceptualized as citizens by the federal government, including the working classes, French Canadians and aboriginal peoples. It is important to note, however, that her artistic exploration of these identities was never disassociated from her feminist point of view.

⁷⁸ This was especially true in terms of quelling the demands of radical Québécois feminist groups. The formation in 1970 of the radical feminist group, *Front de libération des femme du Québec* (FLF) was based on the belief that Québec women would only achieve true equality when Québec had achieved national liberation. The FLF's slogan was "Pas de Québec libre sans libération des femmes! Pas de femmes libres sans libération du Québec!" (No Free Quebec without Freedom for Women! No Free Women without Freedom for Quebec!). See The Clío Collective, *Quebec Women*, 360.

Chapter IV

Negotiating the New Left: Wafflers and *Souverainistes*

The major threat to Canadian survival today is American control of the Canadian economy. The major issue of our times is not national unity but national survival and the fundamental threat is external, not internal.

Waffle Manifesto, 1969¹

For ten years now the liberation of the people of Quebec has been forcefully and dynamically asserted, but with no gains yet because collectively we do not possess the control or the means or the political, social, cultural or economic instruments we need to develop normally as an autonomous people. And we must win this victory. We must win it together; therefore it is urgent that we unite so as no longer to be at the mercy of events defined, provoked and organized by a power outside our own. We must create in Quebec, on national, regional and local levels, a true independent peoples' power. Such is my task here in Mont-Laurier, and it should also be the priority of the P.Q. [Parti Québécois] for all Quebec.

Pierre Vallières, 1972²

Ian McKay has argued that the development of the New Left in Canada during the late 1960s and early 1970s “reshaped the entire field of Canadian politics...because New Leftism and left nationalism coincided to contribute to a profound crisis of Canada itself.”³ This “crisis of Canada” can be understood, as the quotations above indicate, as a struggle for sovereignty by two very different Leftist projects –one manifesting the desire of the New Democratic Party splinter group, Waffle, for Canadian cultural, political and economic autonomy, and the other the *souverainiste* desire for Québécois autonomy. “Both ‘Canada’ and ‘Quebec’ as projects,” argues McKay, “seek to mobilize concepts of

¹ New Democratic Party, *For An Independent Socialist Canada: Waffle Manifesto and Some Supporting Resolutions* [hereafter *Waffle Manifesto*] (Kingston: Queen's University, photocopy in W.D. Jordan Special Collections, Lorne Pierce, c. 1969), 1.

² Pierre Vallières quoted in Joyce Wieland, *Pierre Vallières*, 1972.

³ Ian McKay, “For a New Kind of History: A Reconnaissance of 100 Years of Canadian Socialism,” *Labour/Le Travail* 46 (Fall 2000): 111.

sovereignty and citizenship in a northern North America vacated by an active and effective imperial presence.”⁴

In the long decade of the 1960s a shift occurred between “old” left political views and “new” left views. The New Left was predominately a youth movement and, as McKay suggests, it

proposed more participatory, consensual, and anti-hierarchical forms of democracy. The goal was a fully transformed society, the antithesis of the bourgeois liberal order, a future in which men and women had overcome their alienation and achieved a realm of freedom.⁵

New Leftism in North America looked to various international instances of revolution and resistance (such as those that had most recently occurred in Cuba and Algeria) as successful examples of anti-colonial and anti-capitalist struggles. This is why New Leftism expanded beyond the more traditional left (which had been predominately concerned with addressing the exploitation of the working classes in terms of labour) toward an understanding of the ways in which power –colonialism, capitalism, and patriarchy– had created inequalities based on race, gender, sexuality and class. In other words, the New Left in Canada can be seen as espousing a socialism that was concerned with the worker while at the same time embracing a broader goal of liberating, in an economic, political, social, and cultural sense, various marginalized groups within Canadian society. It was, as McKay notes, a socialism of “humanism and national liberation.”⁶

⁴ McKay, “After Canada,” 87.

⁵ McKay, *Rebels, Reds, Radicals*, 184.

⁶ McKay, “For a New Kind of History,” 109. For further discussion of the New Left in Canada see Ian Lumsden, ed., *Close the 49th Parallel etc: The Americanization of Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970); Dimitrios Roussopoulos, ed., *The New Left in Canada* (Montréal: Our Generation Press, 1970); Dimitrios Roussopoulos, ed., *Canada and Radical Social Change* (Montréal: Black Rose Books, 1973); Sheilagh Hodgins Milner and Henry Milner, *The Decolonization of Quebec: An Analysis of Left-Wing Nationalism* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1973); Norman Penner, “New Socialist Themes

In this chapter, I examine the development of the New Left in English and French Canada and, in particular, the ways in which concepts of sovereignty, nationhood, and citizenship were envisioned by each of these projects and negotiated within Wieland's art production. I argue that, in several of Wieland's films, namely her 1968 film, *Rat Life and Diet in North America*, and her 1972 film, *Pierre Vallières*, as well as in her craft-based works of art, Waffle political leanings are evident in both the way she critiques American capitalism and imperialism and in her sympathetic construction of Québécois nationalism.

In a recent essay, art historian Johanne Sloan explored the ways in which New Left articulations of nationalism in Canada, specifically critiques of American economic and foreign policy, informed Wieland's work of the late 1960s and early 1970s.⁷ Sloan and I share a desire to situate Wieland's work within the networks of visual and political culture in this period, and we have both pointed out that the cultural and political ideology of the Waffle is essential to understanding her artistic negotiation of New Leftism in Canada.⁸ The New Left, like any political ideology or movement, was never a monolithic entity, and to be "of the left" in the 1960s was to be concerned with a multitude of power relations, rooted in colonialism, capitalism, and patriarchy, that were seen as oppressive. Wieland's negotiation of New Leftism, however, was never solely about Waffle or *souverainiste* politics, and she often drew on various New Left notions by engaging in subject matter that involved an implicit anti-capitalist critique of patriarchy, colonialism, and technological rationalism.

in the Sixties and Seventies," in *The Canadian Left: A Critical Analysis*, 218-49 (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall of Canada Ltd., 1977), and William Coleman, *The Independent Movement in Quebec 1945-1980* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984).

⁷ Sloan, "Joyce Wieland at the Border."

⁸ See Holmes-Moss, "Negotiating the Nation."

Building on Sloan's argument that Wieland's work from this period can be seen as a new type of political and nationalist art, I want to suggest further that her use of ecological and environmental subject matter in her film and visual art can be seen as an example of this anti-capitalist critique. In her art production, Wieland often expressed and explored her New Leftism by highlighting the exploitation of Canada's natural resources and the destruction of the environment as political issues that, at that point, had not been so publicly and politically linked. Wieland's use of ecological and environmental subject matter in her film and visual art could also be seen as indicative of the broader 1960s countercultural environmental movement, but what is different about Wieland's work is that she explicitly fuses ecological subject matter with a certain conceptualization of the Canadian nation.⁹ Wieland never aligned herself with a particular political party or brand of feminism, and her art production is as informed by the Waffle critique of American imperialism as it is by a feminist critique of organized political parties and capitalist labour markets.

In the final section of this chapter I examine the ways in which Wieland explored Québécois nationalism and *souverainiste* sentiments as articulated by the *Front de Libération du Québec* (FLQ) and, in particular, by FLQ member Pierre Vallières. Despite the public perception of the FLQ as radical and violent, Wieland's artistic engagement is sympathetic to its belief that Canada was engaged in the capitalist and colonialist exploitation of Québec's economy and culture.

⁹ Important texts published in the 1960s pointed to the dangers of newly developed pesticides and chemicals that were used in food and farming. Responding to this, the environmental movement promoted organic farming, organic food, alternative forms of energy and sustainable living. See Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1962), and Robert Gottlieb, *Forcing the Spring: The Transformation of the American Environmental Movement* (Washington: Island Press, 2005).

Negotiating Waffle

In a 1973 interview, Anne Wordsworth asked Wieland if she had been keeping up with books and newspapers coming out of Canada while she was living in New York City. Wieland replied,

Yes, I used to get all kinds of publications from here [Canada]. One of the first things that really got me going were the things in The Forum [*Canadian Forum*]. I guess when Abe Rotstein took over the Forum, very deep, really searching things about the economics, I started to wake up then –Mike [Snow] started to read them too. Of course, that is still the most serious journal in the country, in just going through the material, really good minds working on material about Canada –economics and politics.¹⁰

Abe Rotstein was the managing editor of *Canadian Forum*, one of most significant left-wing publications then being published in Canada, and he was one of the founders of the Committee for an Independent Canada, a political group that promoted Canadian economic and cultural independence.¹¹ In an interview with Barbara Stevenson, Wieland also mentions the importance of reading critical Leftist material from Canada:

I also had been reading what the nationalist writers had been writing and I had been reading my own history again and had been very much involved with American history and various demonstrations and all kinds of political work there [New York City]. Finally, when I took all this into consideration, I realized that the statistics looked terrible in terms of Canada surviving as a nation. I began to absorb that into my work and I did *Rat Life and Diet in North America* and then started the quilted works.¹²

Wieland elaborates on the effect these writings had on her art practice in an interview with Ardele Lister:

¹⁰ Anne Wordsworth, "An Interview with Joyce Wieland," *Descant*, no. 8-9 (Spring/Summer 1974): 110.

¹¹ The Committee for an Independent Canada (CIC) was founded in 1970 by Rotstein, Walter Gordon and Peter Newman. A copy of the CIC newsletter dated September 1972 was found in Wieland's personal papers. See Joyce Wieland fonds, CTASC, 1993-037/001, File 5. Rotstein also owned a Wieland drawing entitled *The Life and Death of the American City*, 1967, which was exhibited at her 1971 retrospective at the National Gallery of Canada.

¹² Joyce Wieland fonds, CTASC, 1999-003/005, File 5, 5.

I felt a sense of responsibility which I'd never felt before, about what I could do about the situation in this country, because I'd read about the American ownership and how plans were being drafted in Washington for the Arctic, and how this grid had been made for resources. ... These kinds of things are the things that really got me insane, and made me feel that I should use all my resources for Canadian independence.¹³

Wieland's comments suggest her interest in New Left journals and books published in Canada during the late 1960s and early 1970s, as well as the importance that this thinking had on her art practice. Perhaps more importantly, she also suggests that she perceived American cultural, political and economic imperialism as the primary threat to Canadian national autonomy – a notion that was at the root of Waffle ideology.

However, Wieland's work is not a straightforward representation of Waffle political beliefs; rather it constitutes a nuanced exploration of various threads of New Leftism, of which Waffle was a part, that critiqued forms of capitalist exploitation. I would argue that Waffle ideology is important to Wieland's political beliefs, as well as to her artistic conceptualization and negotiation of New Leftism. Given Wieland's interest in New Left writings, it is important to have an understanding of Waffle ideology.

The founding of the New Democratic Party (NDP) in 1961 promised to continue the legacy of the left-wing political parties that had been active in Canada in the first half of the twentieth century.¹⁴ By 1969, however, the NDP could not contain the concerns of a sect of the English New Left. Under the leadership of Mel Watkins and James Laxer, the more radical English New Leftists within the NDP became increasingly concerned with the economic and political control of Canada by the United States and branched off

¹³ Joyce Wieland fonds, CTASC, 1991-014/005, File 75.

¹⁴ These include the Canadian Socialist League, 1901; the Socialist Party of Canada, 1905; the Social Democratic Party, 1911; the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation, 1932; and the Communist Party of Canada, 1921, which went above ground in 1922 as the Worker's Party and in 1943 as the Labour Progressive Party.

to form the Waffle. Varda Burstyn argues that the Waffle “was the culmination of the politicization of the 1960s, Canadian style,” while Gregory Albo notes that the Waffle “challenged the dominant ways of thinking about Canada and critically engaged what it meant culturally to be ‘Canadian.’”¹⁵ Part of the reason the Waffle is seen as a more radical political group is that its membership was one-third women, and it supported many feminist causes, among them women’s demands for equality and rights, including childcare, abortion, and equal pay.¹⁶ “The most important impact the Waffle had with respect to feminism,” Burstyn goes on to argue, “was in laying the ground work for what was to become a socialist-feminist current within Canadian feminism as a whole.”¹⁷

The Waffle were part of a much larger thread of New Leftism in Canada that was concerned with the survival of the Canadian nation in the face of rising American capitalism and imperialism. Waffle leaders Laxer and Watkins were two of many like-minded left-wing scholars who published material on the effects of American imperialism on areas as varied as the student movement, the environment, sports, universities, natural resources and the economy.¹⁸ Concern about American imperialism was ignited after the federal government’s 1968 report, *Foreign Ownership and the Structure of Canadian*

¹⁵ Varda Burstyn, “The Waffle and the Women’s Movement,” *Studies in Political Economy* 33 (Autumn 1990): 175, and Gregory Albo, “Canada, Left-Nationalism, and Younger Voices,” *Studies in Political Economy* 33 (Autumn 1990): 163.

¹⁶ Vickers, “Feminisms and Nationalisms,” 139, and Burstyn, “The Waffle and the Women’s Movement,” 177.

¹⁷ Burstyn, “The Waffle and the Women’s Movement,” 177. Socialist-feminism has always existed in Canada to varying degrees. For discussion of this see Joan Sangster, *Dreams of Equality: Women on the Canadian Left, 1920-1950* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Ltd., 1989); Janice Newton, *The Feminist Challenge to the Canadian Left 1900-1918* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s UP, 1995), and Linda Kealey, *Enlisting Women for the Cause: Women, Labour, and the Left in Canada, 1890-1920* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998).

¹⁸ Two excellent examples of this are Lumsden, *Close the 49th Parallel*, 1970, and Robert Laxer, ed., *(Canada) Ltd.: The Political Economy of Dependency* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1973).

Industry, which is more commonly known as the Watkins Report, after Watkins, who headed the task force that produced it.¹⁹ As John Bullen notes, the report concluded that “although Canada had received some benefits from American investment, foreign control of the economy locked the country into a position of dependency, underdevelopment, and vulnerability.”²⁰ The sense of urgency that these concerns created is evident in the foreword to Laxer’s 1973 book, *(Canada) Ltd.* “As later chapters prove,” he argues,

Canada is in the grip of the economics and politics of dependency.
...Many Canadians feel loss of control over their futures. They are
uneasy about the squandering of non-renewable resources to corporations
south of the border when hundreds of thousands of Canadians search
vainly for rewarding jobs.²¹

Not surprisingly, Laxer and Watkins spearheaded the Waffle in the hopes that a radical leftist political party might provide a solution for dealing with such concerns where the more mainstream NDP could not.

In 1969, the Waffle published a manifesto entitled *For An Independent Socialist Canada*, which outlined, among other things, its stance on Québec and national unity and the threat of American imperialism. The manifesto’s overriding concern was with what it called the “survival of Canada,” and it argued that Canada needed both to become economically independent and to replace capitalism with socialism. The first page of the manifesto made it clear that the major threats to Canada’s economic independence were American control of the Canadian economy and the growth and development of American

¹⁹ See *Foreign Ownership and the Structure of Canadian Industry: Report of the Task Force on the Structure of Canadian Industry* (Ottawa 1968).

²⁰ John Bullen, “The Ontario Waffle and the Struggle for an Independent Socialist Canada: Conflict Within the NDP,” *Canadian Historical Review* 64, no. 2 (June 1983): 191.

²¹ Laxer, *(Canada) Ltd.*, 11.

multi-national corporations.²² The manifesto criticized the United States as racist and militaristic, condemning the war in Vietnam and Canada's role in supporting the "American military industrial complex" by selling arms and what it described as "strategic resources" to the United States.²³ Laxer, the manifesto's principle author, recalls,

The manifesto argued that Canadian independence could be achieved only through a socialist strategy. Public ownership of large-scale corporate entities, particularly in the resource sector, would be needed to assure Canadian independence and to reverse the growing problem of foreign ownership of the Canadian economy. ...For a youthful left, in the era of the Vietnam War, reversing the American ownership of key sectors of the Canadian economy took on an aura of immense moral urgency.²⁴

This urgency is evident in a statement—later reprinted in the *Canadian Forum*—that Watkins made to the press just after the manifesto's release:

This is a critical period in the history of this country. Americanization is proceeding at a tremendous pace at the same time as America becomes an increasingly less credible society. We believe passionately in the survival of this country. We ask the New Democratic Party and Canadians generally to recognize the fundamental threat that exists and to act now.²⁵

The other major issue that the manifesto addressed was federal unity in Canada and Québécois nationalism. Initially, the Waffle, like the NDP, was willing to recognize Québec as a nation in cultural terms, but the extent to which it supported Québec's right to separate remains unclear. The manifesto states, for example, that "there is no denying the existence of two nations within Canada, each with its own language, culture and

²² English Canadian intellectual concern with American economic control of Canada also stems from a long lineage of historians and economists writing from the early to mid-twentieth century on this subject. See Harold Innis, *Essays in Canadian Economic History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1956), and George Grant, *Lament for a Nation: The Defeat of Canadian Nationalism* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1965).

²³ *Waffle Manifesto*, 1.

²⁴ James Laxer, *In Search of a New Left: Canadian Politics After the Neoconservative Assault* (Toronto: Viking, 1996), 150-51.

²⁵ Mel Watkins, "Statement," *Canadian Forum* (October 1969): 149.

aspirations. This reality must be incorporated into the strategy of the New Democratic Party.”²⁶ While the Waffle acknowledged Québec as culturally distinct, it also notes the importance of Québec and Canadian federal unity to the struggle against American imperialism:

A united Canada is of critical importance in pursuing a successful strategy against the reality of American imperialism. Quebec’s history and aspirations must be allowed full expression and implementation in the conviction that new ties will emerge from the common perception of “two nations, one struggle.”²⁷

The Waffle saw French Canadians as exploited by both the United States and English Canada, and its members were evidently sympathetic and supportive of Québec’s struggle for cultural self-determination. While sympathetic to the *souverainiste* cause, the manifesto suggested that it would be ideal to have French Canada as an ally in what it presented as the more crucial fight against American imperialism. As Bullen has noted, however, by 1971 the Waffle had shifted its position on Canadian federal unity and supported Québec’s right to self-determination, including separation.²⁸ By 1972, under the threat that unions would withdraw their support from the NDP unless the Waffle was expelled, the Waffle was voted out of the party.²⁹ The Waffle remained active as a separate political entity until 1975, after which date it eventually dissolved.

One of the ways Wieland negotiated both her Waffle political leanings and her artistic practice involved exposing the ecological and environmental consequences of

²⁶ *Waffle Manifesto*, 3.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Bullen, “The Ontario Waffle,” 202.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 209-11. For a more thorough discussion of the union/labour movement and the Waffle see Gilbert Levine, “The Waffle and the Labour Movement,” *Studies in Political Economy* 33 (Autumn 1990): 185-92.

capitalism, namely, the American exploitation of Canada's natural resources. The importance of ecological subject matter to her art production would explain her concern over the absence of discussion of ecology in relation to her work in the essay Marie Fleming contributed to the catalogue to Wieland's retrospective at the AGO in 1987. "There are three issues that have been central to all the work I've done," Wieland wrote at the time, "ecology, women's issues (women's craft as a political platform), sexuality – these central issues barely come through, let alone clearly. These," she added, "are *pioneering* efforts."³⁰ Wieland also noted that ecological concerns had been important to her work as early as 1957, and that she been influenced by the work of both Adelle Davis, a pioneer of the natural food movement who published several books in the 1950s and early 1960s on nutrition and healthy living, and Louis Bromfield, who published work dealing with organic farming.³¹

Wieland's artistic exploration of New Leftism, Waffle ideology, and ecology is evident in the 1970-71 work, *The Water Quilt* (fig. 10). In this piece, sixty-four small pillows are joined together with rope, and each has been adorned with a wildflower native to the Canadian Arctic embroidered onto its front panel. Each panel can be rolled up to reveal an excerpt from James Laxer's book, *The Energy Poker Game* (fig. 11). This book, published in 1970, tells of the power and politics involved in controlling and exploiting Canada's energy resources, including an American plot to steal Canadian water from the Arctic region. The introduction, written by Watkins, contains the same sense of urgency as that found in the Waffle manifesto:

³⁰ Joyce Wieland fonds, CTASC, 1988-003/002, File 31. Wieland's italics.

³¹ Ibid.

No issue is today more central to the meaningful survival of Canada as a separate nation on this continent than who shall own and control our energy resources. ...[NDP leader] Tommy Douglas has called for a full debate in Parliament before a further step is taken down this disastrous course. It is uncertain as I write that Trudeau will see fit to accord us even this. What the Waffle Movement of the NDP is calling for, are demonstrations, rallies and marches across Canada that will force the Government to cease and desist. We will be armed with this book. Read it and join us.³²

Laxer's text outlines the Continental Resources Deal, an agreement that would establish a free North American market for all energy resources and which would effectively surrender the opportunity for Canada to develop energy resources on a national level and outside of "American corporate and military interests."³³ Laxer goes on to discuss the importance of Canada's water as an energy resource and the supposed American plan to build large dams in Alaska and the Yukon to trap Arctic water and send it down manmade canals as far as Lake Superior and the Mississippi and Missouri rivers.³⁴ Laxer argues that such a plan would have devastating consequences not only for the Canadian economy, but also for the environment and various ecological systems, especially within the Canadian Arctic.

The Water Quilt can be seen as directly engaging with these contemporaneous discussions. In her notes, for example, Wieland wrote of *The Water Quilt*, "Greed and Flowers," "Another American crime against nature," "Powerful greed and powerful flowers," and "Canadian [which is crossed out and "American" written above it]

³² James Laxer, *The Energy Poker Game: The Politics of the Continental Resources Deal* (Toronto: New Press, 1970), i-ii.

³³ *Ibid.*, 1.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 35.

Arctic.”³⁵ *The Water Quilt* constructs American greed as a desire to control and exploit Canada’s natural resources, made visually evident by the inclusion of excerpts from Laxer’s text. One of the pillows, for example, reads, “The impending energy deal forces the Canadian people to face up to fundamentals in contemplating their future course. It will mark a genuine parting of the ways for Canada” (fig. 11). Laxer’s text, juxtaposed with Wieland’s intricately embroidered “powerful flowers,” not only highlights the devastating effects that forms of capitalist exploitation could have on the natural environment, but also acknowledges the Waffle belief in the importance of a unified and economically independent Canada in the face of rising American imperialism.

Wieland’s use of embroidery in particular is, I would argue, purposeful. The use of pale pastel colours in addition to the precision involved in creating each panel draws viewers’ attention to the delicacy of the work and, symbolically, the vulnerability of the Arctic. The panels work to cover and obscure the reality of Laxer’s text, which is exposed only once viewers look further, or literally look underneath. Wieland’s use of embroidery and quilting in *The Water Quilt* recalls the traditional association of craft with the feminine realm but does so in order to lend political agency to an issue, such as ecological destruction, which at that point was just beginning to inform the platforms of political parties such as the Waffle. It is also significant that in order to access Laxer’s text viewers must first roll up Wieland’s embroidered panels. The way that Wieland uses her work to cover the reality of Laxer’s text suggests that she also wanted to highlight the

³⁵ Joyce Wieland fonds, CTASC, 1988-003/003, File 48.

act of exposure. What is most shocking about the work is the way it exposes the political, economic and environmental realities of a seemingly innocuous landscape.

Stevenson's interview with Wieland also highlights another important aspect of her use of Laxer's text:

BS: You've said you're not a follower of a particular ideology or theory or party line....

JW: I can't –I don't like it.

BS: ...but you did use excerpts from James Laxer's book in *The Water Quilt*. Does that imply any sort of sympathy for the Waffle movement?

JW: No. I thought it was a brilliant book because it dealt with all the facts. The hard theories were that they had planned since 1953 to re-route all the major waterways south. Mad fantasies like that. It infuriated me to think that someone outside could be drawing plans for stuff like that. And that's what inspired *The Water Quilt* –the stuff that he dug up.³⁶

It is important to point out that while Wieland evidently allied herself with such Waffle causes as opposition to American control of Canada's energy resources, she is quick to deny any association with the party itself. As Sloan has suggested, while Wieland was evidently familiar with Waffle ideology and contemporaneous discussions of left-nationalism, "her particular concern as an artist was to investigate how this radical nationalism could be transformed into visual, material, and symbolic forms."³⁷ Wieland goes on to tell Stevenson,

Women's work [referring to her quilted works] was used as a way of announcing and speaking out against what was being done to the ecology and then eventually embroidery and all these things speaking out, referring to our history, referring to nature, referring to women's issues. There was a great urgency, I felt, basically in the terms: "Is there going to be a country left?"³⁸

³⁶ Joyce Wieland fonds, CTASC, 1999-003/005, File 5, 12.

³⁷ Sloan, "Joyce Wieland at the Border," 90.

³⁸ Joyce Wieland fonds, CTASC, 1999-003/005, File 5.

The Water Quilt can thus be understood as a transformation of Waffle ideology; Wieland chose to highlight the “natural” damage that would be incurred by the Continental Resources Deal, rather than just economic damage. Wieland’s New Left political leanings borrow from Waffle disillusionment with American imperialism and capitalism, but they are also never divorced from a feminist politics—a politics that consistently remained critical throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s of representational government and organized political parties that upheld a concept of the Canadian nation grounded in capitalist political, economic and social relations, and which foregrounded individualism and technology. In this sense, Wieland’s feminism can be seen as further radicalizing her New Leftism.

Wieland explores these ideas further in her film work. In 1968, Wieland shot *Rat Life and Diet in North America* in her New York City apartment using her pet gerbils and cat (figs. 12 and 13). In her notes on the film Wieland writes,

I shot the gerbils for six months putting different things in their cages...foods...flowers, cherries, grass etc. ...Put them in the sink in an inch of water when I began to see what the film was about...a story of revolution and escape.³⁹

In *Rat Life*, rats (really gerbils) signifying American draft dodgers escape past their cat guard to Canada where they learn organic gardening, raise “more grass than they can possibly use”—all of it free of D.D.T.—and partake in a “flower ceremony,” while listening to the Beach Boys’ 1967 song, “Vegetables.”⁴⁰ Through a series of intertitles, sometimes typed or stitched onto cloth or paper, Wieland tells a story (see Appendix 1).

³⁹ Joyce Wieland fonds, CTASC, 1993-009/010, File 120.

⁴⁰ Thanks to Blaine Allan for identifying this song.

In her notes, Wieland wrote about the film's theme,

I decided to shoot extra material –of a political nature because I could see a story film coming. What results is an idealization of Canada and the possibility that thousands of people may have to leave US suddenly within the next 5 years due to certain political changes in its social structure.⁴¹

The film symbolically depicts Canada as a place of freedom, healthy living, and unspoiled nature, while the United States is constructed as militaristic, oppressive and violent. For example, the film opens with an intertitle that reads, “This film is against the corporate military industrial structure of the global village,” and a subsequent intertitle informs viewers that Canada is “72 percent owned by the US industrial complex.” When the rats escape to Canada viewers hear birds chirping and dogs barking, the word “Canada” flashes on the screen and is set against a background of trees, a lake and grass. The intertitles tell viewers that, in Canada, there is “grass growing,” there is “no D.D.T. used” and there is “organic gardening,” as the soundtrack of birds chirping, frogs croaking, and the munching of grass continues. As the rats enjoy eating cherries at the “cherry festival,” Wieland includes a rapid montage of shots from the beginning of the film when the rats were in “political prison” (really a water pitcher), reminding viewers of just how diametrically opposed the two countries are.

This is pronounced during the earlier scene of the rats' escape when the phrase, “Some of the bravest are lost forever,” flashes on the screen, followed by a shot of a photograph of Che Guevara's dead body (fig. 14).⁴² Wieland's use of the now-famous

⁴¹ Joyce Wieland fonds, CTASC, 1993-009/010, File 118.

⁴² Thanks to Blaine Allan for identifying this image as Che Guevara.

photo of Guevara's body, which first appeared on 11 October 1967 in the *New York Times*, warns viewers that Canada may also "lose their bravest" if not vigilant in the fight against American imperialism. The image of Guevara's body in *Rat Life* is also used to equate the fight for Canada's independence with other, international anti-colonial and anti-capitalist acts of resistance. Once the rats reach Canada, Wieland includes an intertitle to inform viewers that the rats decide to work with their leader, "Monsieur Waterhole," to buy Canada back from the Americans.⁴³ After this hopeful notion is suggested, the last intertitle reads ominously, "They invade Canada."

The link to Waffle political ideology, and specifically the threat of American imperialism, is evident in *Rat Life*. Wieland opens the film by stating that it is "against the corporate military industrial structure," and her visual depiction of the United States is of a violent and oppressive society—a portrayal that culminates in the American invasion of Canada. *Rat Life* is also about the idealization of Canada, and Wieland achieves this through images of nature, references to organic, chemical-free gardening and food, and sounds of various animals. These environmental conditions are integral to Wieland's construction of Canada as an idyllic utopic country. The title of the film may also be a pun, in that Wieland may have used "diet" in the literal sense of food, as well as in the governmental sense of a legislative assembly. The film is, after all, as much about the rats' life as it is about their diet—both their healthy eating/living and the impact of governmental processes on their lives.

⁴³ This is a humorous pun on Wieland's part as she literally translates Trudeau into English: trou=hole d'eau=water, hence "waterhole." Thanks to Blaine Allan for suggesting this.

Like *The Water Quilt*, *Rat Life* uses ecology and a healthy environment to construct a version of Canada that is diametrically opposed to the characterization of the United States as militaristic and capitalist. Both works also highlight ecological destruction as the result of capitalist exploitation and technology –the use of pesticides and the re-routing of Arctic water, for example. Lianne McLarty has suggested that the ecological and natural references in *Rat Life* are Wieland’s way of constructing Canada as female. She argues that

the Canada which provides a haven for the oppressed rats is portrayed in panning shots of the forest and rich earth over which are printed the titles “organic gardening” and “grass growing.” Wieland thus associates Canada with life forces, images of fertility; in this ability to give life, Canada is female.⁴⁴

Equating Wieland’s use of ecological and environmental subject matter in *Rat Life* with fertility and birth compromises her less essentialist, and more radical, New Left-feminist critique. *Rat Life*, like *The Water Quilt*, is really a warning. It warns of the dangers of unchecked capitalism by emphasizing that environmental and ecological damage is as important to the survival of the Canadian nation as economic damage.

Negotiating *Souverainistes*

Sloan’s essay on Wieland’s work in relation to New Left politics in Canada surprisingly omits discussion of the ways in which Wieland’s art production also engages in contemporaneous articulations of New Leftism in French Canada. An important aspect of the New Left in Canada is that it developed simultaneously with one of the most powerful instances of Québécois nationalism and desire for sovereignty. While

⁴⁴ McLarty in Elder, *The Films of Joyce Wieland*, 102.

Wieland's work engages with aspects of English Canadian New Leftism, such as Waffle ideology, it also explores Québécois nationalism and the *souverainiste* sentiments articulated by such radical New Left political groups as the *Front de Libération du Québec* (FLQ). This is not to suggest that Wieland's work can be understood as supportive of the FLQ's *souverainiste* beliefs, but rather, as I argue, that it is symbolically sympathetic to their anti-capitalist and anti-colonialist causes.

This is evident in Wieland's 1970 quilted assemblage, *I Love Canada – J'aime Canada* (fig. 15). Two white quilts, each emblazoned with stuffed letters spelling out Wieland's love for Canada in English and French, are dotted with quilted hearts and joined together with a chain. On each quilt, directly underneath "I Love" and "J'aime," Wieland has placed a small quilted panel onto which is embroidered: "Death to U.S. Technological Imperialism" and "A Bas L'impérialisme Technologicque [*sic*] des E-U," respectively.⁴⁵ The quilts symbolically represent "Québec" and "the rest of Canada," and her use of the chain suggests that, despite cultural differences (language for example), the two are joined in a mutual "love" for a unified Canadian nation. The subscript to this utopic ideal, however, is indicated in the embroidered warning that the success of a bilingual, bicultural, unified Canada must be at the cost of the "death" of American technology and imperialism. Not only is anti-American, pro-bicultural rhetoric of the work in line with the Waffle political position, but Wieland's use of the quilted medium also suggests that American capitalist labour markets and Québécois nationalism are concerns that could

⁴⁵ Thanks to Timothy Long, Head Curator at the MacKenzie Art Gallery in Regina, Saskatchewan for taking this quilt out of storage and carefully going over the text for me.

perhaps be more radicalized through a feminist critique. *I Love Canada – J'aime Canada*, like the *Reason Over Passion* quilts, uses the association of the feminine, private realm with craft/quilting in order to address issues of the public realm, such as the impact of multinational corporations on the Canadian economy and the importance that Québec occupies within such a resistance.

I Love Canada – J'Aime Canada suggests that Québec, bilingualism, and biculturalism are important to Wieland's conceptualization of Canadian identity. This is also evident in the 1971 embroidered work, *Montcalm's Last Letter/Wolfe's Last Letter* (fig. 16). The work depicts two photographic reproductions of the last letters written by the French and British commanders, Marquis de Montcalm and James Wolfe, which have been embroidered in red. The letters signify the moment when the British captured the fortress of Québec during the battle on the Plains of Abraham in 1759. Although both commanders died in the battle, it is perceived as both the moment when the British claimed Canada as their colony and a pivotal event in the colony-to-nation narrative so integral to mainstream Canadian history and art history. When asked whether her 1971 retrospective at the National Gallery of Canada could be seen as "saving" Canada in the event that Québec separated, Wieland stated in a 1986 interview,

I can't even remember if I said anything like that, but certainly I did have the death of Wolfe and Montcalm –*Last Letters*– and in a way it's meant to be an embrace whether it's the embrace of the whole country. I *feel* that way but not in the way that Trudeau would feel it or the way those people there were acting about it –the government, I mean. But I felt for no intellectual reason at all that it [Canada] should have remained all one.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Joyce Wieland fonds, CTASC, 1999-003/005, File 5, 8.

Wieland's statement suggests that *Montcalm's Last Letter/Wolfe's Last Letter* can be understood as "embracing" a nation that includes Québec. Wieland's work juxtaposes the last thoughts of each commander in intricate embroidery. Such detailed work draws attention to the script itself, and subsequently to the idea that these letters signify real people with beliefs, hopes and fears. In this sense, Wieland's work highlights an intimate emotional connection to an idea of the nation –one that also suggests the importance of Québec in this connection.

Wieland further explores these issues in her film work. In unpublished notes she wrote that she "felt like using the lens for a political report."⁴⁷ This "political report" is Wieland's 1972 film, *Pierre Vallières* (fig. 17). It is perhaps in this film that Wieland's aesthetic, cultural, and political interests come together in a way that clearly articulates a particular conceptualization of Québécois nationalism and *souverainiste* sentiments informed by both her feminism and Leftism. This forty-minute film features Pierre Vallières, a member of the FLQ and author of the controversial book, *Nègres blancs d'Amérique: Autobiographie précoce d'un "terroriste" québécois/White Niggers of America*, which was published in 1968.⁴⁸ The film focuses exclusively on Vallières's lips as he reads essays about the working classes of the Mont-Laurier region in Québec; about history, race and separatism in Québec; and about women's liberation. Vallières speaks in French, and an English translation appears in subtitles at the bottom of the screen (see Appendix 2). In undated notes on the film Wieland writes,

⁴⁷ Joyce Wieland fonds, CTASC, 1994-004/003, File 3.

⁴⁸ Pierre Vallières, *White Niggers of America*, trans. Joan Pinkham (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Ltd., 1971), and Pierre Vallières, *Nègres blancs d'Amérique: Autobiographie précoce d'un "terroriste" québécois* (Montréal: Editions Parti pris, 1968).

We [Wieland and Judy Steed, who worked with Wieland on the film] were aware of the general indifference to Quebec which exists here, how extreme radicals considered him a decadent cop out to Parti Québécois etc. We were interested in his writings and struggles to find himself. Here was a man who tried to do something about his society and spent three years in jail without trial...and who had been born into the extreme position of French Canadian poverty.⁴⁹

What is striking about Wieland's statement is her interest in "his writings and struggles to find himself," rather than the more public persona of Vallières as a radical terrorist. To make a film in 1972 involving Vallières at all was extreme, given that the FLQ represented the most radical sect of *souverainiste* sentiment within Canada.

The FLQ, founded in 1963, was a left-wing splinter group of the *souverainiste* party, *Rassemblement pour l'indépendance nationale* (RIN).⁵⁰ In 1960, the Liberal government of Jean Lesage was elected in Québec, and it pursued the federal government to recognize the distinct cultural status of Québec and worked to modernize and liberalize aspects of Québec society, including education and electoral practices.⁵¹ These policy changes, in addition to a rapidly expanding middle-class and organized labour movement, have been characterized as the primary factors contributing toward the more fundamental shift within Québec society known as the Quiet Revolution.⁵² Intimately tied to the Quiet

⁴⁹ Joyce Wieland fonds, CTASC, 1994-004/003, File 3.

⁵⁰ For further discussion of the FLQ see Marcel Rioux, *La Question du Québec* (Paris: Seghers, 1971), and the English translation, *Quebec in Question* (Toronto: J. Lewis and Samuel, 1971); Robert Comeau, *FLQ: un projet révolutionnaire: lettres et écrits felquistes, 1963-1982* (Outremont, Québec: VLB, 1990); Louis Fournier, *FLQ: Histoire d'un mouvement clandestin* (Outremont, Québec: Lantôt, 1998), and the English translation, *FLQ: The Anatomy of an Underground Movement* (Toronto: NC Press, 1974).

⁵¹ McRoberts, *Misconceiving Canada*, 32-33.

⁵² For further discussion of the Quiet Revolution see Gilles Bourque, *Jean Lesage et l'éveil d'une nation: les débuts de la révolution tranquille* (Sillery, Québec: Presses de l'Université du Québec, 1989); Dale C. Thomson, *Jean Lesage and the Quiet Revolution* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1984), and Kenneth McRoberts, *Quebec: Social Change and Political Crisis*, 3rd ed. (Toronto: Oxford UP, 1999). For an excellent discussion of the major scholarly debates circulating in French Canada on the issue of Québec nationalism and sovereignty in the early 1970s see Dimitrios Roussopoulos, "Social Classes and Nationalism in Québec," in *Dissidence: Essays Against the Mainstream*, 50-72 (Montréal: Black Rose Books, 1992).

Revolution was the development of Québécois nationalism and the increasing belief that the federal government should recognize the importance of Québec as a nation –not necessarily a sovereign nation, but a restructured form of federalism that would acknowledge the specificity, or distinctness, of Québec in a new way (in language rights and increased Francophone federal representation, for example). The nationalism of the Quiet Revolution was pushed to its extreme within more radical sects of New Leftism in Québec, such as the FLQ, which saw the sovereignty of Québec as the only way to achieve a truly egalitarian society, free from the fetters of Canadian (and American) capitalism and colonialism.

The FLQ achieved its greatest profile in the public mind in October 1970, now referred to as the October Crisis. Members of the FLQ kidnapped British diplomat James Cross, and shortly after, Pierre Laporte a member of the Québec Liberal cabinet.⁵³ One of the FLQ's demands was that it be allowed to read one of its manifestos on Radio-Canada. On 8 October 1970, the manifesto was broadcast:

The people in the Front de Libération du Québec are neither Messiahs nor modern-day Robin Hoods. They are a group of Québec workers who have decided to do everything they can to assure that the people of Québec take their destiny into their own hands, once and for all. The Front de Libération du Québec wants total independence for Quebeckers; it wants to see them united in a free society, a society purged for good of its gang of rapacious sharks, the big bosses who dish out patronage and their henchmen, who have turned Québec into a private preserve of cheap labour and unscrupulous exploitation.⁵⁴

Its other demands included, in addition to money, the release of several members of the FLQ from prison. On 16 October 1970, Trudeau announced that the federal government

⁵³ For further discussion of the October Crisis see Dan Daniels, *Quebec, Canada and the October Crisis* (Montréal: Black Rose Books, 1973); Germaine Dion, *Tornade de 60 jours: la crise d'Octobre 1970 à la chambre des communes* (Hull, Québec: Éditions Asticou, 1985), and Manon Leroux, *Les silences d'Octobre: le discours des acteurs de la crise de 1970* (Montréal: VLB, 2002).

⁵⁴ <http://www.marxists.org/history/canada/quebec/flq/1970/manifesto.html> (accessed December 7, 2006).

had decided to invoke the War Measures Act, which briefly suspended all civil liberties.⁵⁵ The following day, the body of Laporte was found in the trunk of a car. The October Crisis, though an extreme example of New Leftism in Québec, made *souverainiste* sentiments a very real issue.

Although he was not directly involved in the October Crisis, Vallières was an active member of the FLQ. In order to bring attention to the imprisonment of its members in 1966 Vallières and Charles Gagnon embarked on a thirty-day hunger strike at the United Nations in New York City. They were subsequently arrested in September 1966 and held in prison for four months. Upon their release, American immigration officials illegally took Vallières and Gagnon to Canada, where they were arrested by the RCMP and imprisoned for nearly three years until their acquittal in 1973. It was during his four-month imprisonment at the Manhattan House of Detention for Men in New York City that Vallières wrote *White Niggers of America*, which, according to McKay, is “perhaps the most internationally acclaimed book ever written by a socialist active on Canadian territory....”⁵⁶ Examining *White Niggers of America* is important because the story that Vallières outlines is intimate and personal on the one hand, and political on the other. In short, it establishes sympathy in the reader for Vallières himself—a sympathy that Wieland translates into film.

White Niggers of America is partly autobiographical, and in the first part of the book, Vallières discusses his parents’ marriage, growing up working class in Montréal, his

⁵⁵ See <http://www.collectionscanada.ca/primeministers/h4-4065-e.html> for a transcript of Trudeau’s broadcast to the nation (accessed July 6, 2006).

⁵⁶ McKay, “For a New Kind of History,” 115.

sexual relationships, and his shifting political views. The other half of the text, although it continues to chronicle Vallières's developing leftist politics and involvement in the FLQ, outlines the working-class revolution that he sees as necessary in order for Québec to become an autonomous, egalitarian nation. Vallières wrote that the FLQ was founded in order to highlight the fact that independence for Québec was contingent on the abolition of capitalism:

One of the objectives of the FLQ was and still is to accelerate this process of becoming conscious, to make men aware of the necessity of fighting *to the death* against the despotism of the capitalist system, and despotism experienced daily in the factories, the offices, the mines, forests, farms, schools, and universities of Quebec. The sooner the Québécois unite to sweep away the rottenness that poisons their existence, the sooner they will be able, in solidarity with the exploited, the niggers of all the other countries, to build a new society for a new man, a society that is human for all men, just for all men, in the service of all men. A fraternal society.⁵⁷

Vallières makes it clear that such a society can be achieved only through revolution:

I am not against the independence of Quebec but against the *illusory* independence of Quebec which, dressed up in various guises (from an Associated State to a Republic), is now being proposed to us by the parasitic petty bourgeoisie of French Canada. And that is why I am for revolution, because only a revolution in depth can make us independent.⁵⁸

McKay has suggested that the significance of *White Niggers of America* lies in the way Vallières connects a "local" struggle (Québécois desire for independence) with more "international" anti-colonial, anti-capitalist movements happening during the late 1960s.⁵⁹ In the foreword, for example, Vallières writes that, while he conceived the book for the "workers, students, and young revolutionaries of Quebec," he also hopes that "it may

⁵⁷ Vallières, *White Niggers of America*, 214. Vallières's italics.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 235. Vallières's italics.

⁵⁹ McKay, "For a New Kind of History," 116.

have something to say to the men and revolutionaries of other countries, colonized or even imperialist.”⁶⁰ McKay argues that what is in fact most Québécois about the text is

its first-person memoir of growing up in a downtrodden working-class suburb of Montréal. ...The “Pierre Vallières” we meet in *Nègres blanc* – tortured by a sense of inferiority, twice on the brink of suicide, without secure anchorage in the world which seems “beestranged” and hostile, his words coming to us from the Manhattan House of Detention for Men– is a tragic figure drawn from Dostoyevsky’s *Notes From the Underground*.⁶¹

Vallières portrays himself as someone who has always lived at the margins of society, and who has felt victimized throughout his life as a result of American and Canadian capitalism and colonialism. The way that Vallières draws on his own experiences growing up working class allows his reader to sympathize and identify with his subject position. This personal experience then shifts towards a justification of revolutionary action. For example, he writes,

My itinerary from working-class slums to the FLQ was long and tortuous. For a workingman’s son, nothing in life is laid out in advance. He has to forge ahead, to fight against others and against himself, against his own ignorance and all the frustrations accumulated from father to son, he has to surmount both the oppression laid upon his class by others and his own congenital pessimism, to give his spontaneous revolt a consciousness, a reason and precise objectives. Otherwise he remains a nigger, he turns into a delinquent or a criminal, he consents to becoming at the age of thirty the ruin of a man...a bitter and disenchanted slave.⁶²

Positioning *White Niggers of America* in this way helps to explain why Wieland might have found Vallières a provocative filmic subject, and why her artistic exploration of Vallières and Québécois nationalism are treated in a sympathetic manner. In an

⁶⁰ Vallières, *White Niggers of America*, 15.

⁶¹ McKay, “For a New Kind of History,” 118.

⁶² Vallières, *White Niggers of America*, 62.

interview, Wieland noted that “I feel mixed about some of the things he said [in the film], but I think that he’s an interesting man and I think *The White Niggers of America* was a very important book.”⁶³ Wieland goes on to say that *Pierre Vallières* was about “dealing with the mouth of a person that was put in jail without trial for three years.”⁶⁴ Her statement suggests that, despite her apprehension, she nonetheless felt it was important to allow him a platform from which to speak. While Vallières makes it clear in *White Niggers of America* that he supports Québec separatism, this is not necessarily the focus of *Pierre Vallières*, nor what I would argue the film is really about.⁶⁵

The essays Vallières reads in the film address issues regarding the working classes, women, French Canadians, Acadians and aboriginal peoples as oppressed groups within Canadian society –concerns to which Vallières both figuratively and literally gives a voice in the film. For example, Vallières says,

I feel that women should unite and assert themselves with aggressiveness to help everybody free themselves from domination and repression. Just as colonized people, women need to use violence –often called aggressiveness in women. ...I hope in my next book to be able to tell from a male point of view the effects on men of women’s efforts at liberation, just as we Quebec people are working together to gain independence and build socialism. I hope that before long enough taboos will be abolished to permit men and women everywhere to begin to live on an equal footing, in complete freedom and with an equal measure of creativity.

Vallières links second-wave feminist concerns regarding the desire for equality with Quebecois left-nationalism –both are constructed as struggling towards the ultimate goal of a more socialist, egalitarian society. Vallières also compares the experience of the

⁶³ Joyce Wieland fonds, CTASC, 1999-003/005, File 5, 13.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Vallières writes that “Quebec separatism in itself is an excellent thing, and I support it 100 percent.” Vallières, *White Niggers of America*, 226.

Québécois to that of African-Canadians, Acadians, and aboriginal peoples, suggesting that these are all colonized nations within a nation struggling against capitalist and colonialist oppression. He says,

Like the black Americans, the Quebec people form a colony within the North American imperialist fortress dominated by the white bourgeoisie of the U.S. It may sound curious to people in Europe or other continents to hear that in North America there are colonized nations; not only Quebec, but also the Black nation and the Acadian nation, and above all the Indian nation, which exists, surviving with great difficulty the genocide which was committed by the whites since the 15th and 16th centuries.

Like the lips in Wieland's other works, Vallières's are speaking, active lips that fuse the sensorial with the subject of the nation, in this case the idea that there are multiple nations within Canada that are marginalized. Vallières's lips are at once sensual and slightly repugnant –his teeth are yellowed and stained, and as viewers are forced to watch only the mouth, they become increasingly aware of his saliva, the thick moustache hairs, the redness of his lips, and even his breath (which I imagine smelling of stale cigarette smoke), rendering the image more and more grotesque over the course of the film. While the film evokes a sensory reaction in the viewer –repulsion, disgust– it also prompts a contemplative or meditative response. As Wieland writes, “Here is a close-up hold of his mouth on and through which you can meditate. Meditate on the qualities of voice, the French language, revolution, French revolution, Gericault's colour etc.”⁶⁶

In her notes, Wieland alluded to the difficulty she encountered making *Pierre Vallières*, in wanting to make a political statement while paying attention to her artistic

⁶⁶ Joyce Wieland fonds, CTASC, 1994-004/003, File 3. Wieland is referring to the eighteenth century French artist Theodore Gericault when she mentions viewers' increasing awareness of colour.

practice:

In making SOLIDARITY as well as PIERRE VALLIERES I had the problem of wanting to be outspoken and clear about Canadian problems, while still remaining an artist. That means ART AND POLITICS. There is an intimacy and passion in PIERRE VALLIERES that doesn't exist in SOLIDARITY. In "Vallières" the subject and myself are affecting the image as well as the light.⁶⁷

In an interview, Wieland also discusses the idea of "intimacy and passion" in the film by suggesting that there is a strong emotional element to the film:

With *Vallières* you could feel it on the film. I think the film is very emotional. He did something to it. We connected in a very strong way. It was just like a seance. He was there, I was there, there was sound, and there was the other person doing the translation...something happened. You could feel yourself click into a field.⁶⁸

The film juxtaposes a public body, the depiction of a well-known political radical, and a private body, an intimate portrait of a particular person. This juxtaposition, along with the essays that Vallières reads, elicits a sympathetic response in viewers by constructing Québec, and Vallières himself, as marginalized within Canada in the same way that women, aboriginal peoples and African-Canadians are. The focus on Vallières's mouth, rather than his whole head or body, was important to Wieland, and, I would argue, to the intimate and emotional nature of the film. As she writes,

Also, the teeth and the particular lower-class kind of accent or [are] imbued with a kind of working-class speech. The teeth of a poor man. And the rolling of the tongue and lips –the whole thing about what is a mouth. And what is this man, because he is an orator, and very good at it.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Joyce Wieland fonds, CTASC, 1994-004/003, File 2. Wieland's caps. Wieland's 1973 film, *Solidarity*, was shot in Kitchener, Ontario, at the Dare Cookie factory. The factory workers were on strike, and she filmed only their feet as they picketed outside.

⁶⁸ Magidson and Wright, "Interviews with Canadian Artists," 63.

⁶⁹ Joyce Wieland fonds, CTASC, 1999-003/005, File 5, 13.

For Wieland, focussing on the lips helps to signify that he is working class –his accent, his bad teeth– which works to humanize him as a member of an oppressed group. In other words, stripping Vallières of his FLQ association, his *souverainiste-ness*, and focussing on his words –which tell of the multitude of anti-capitalist and anti-colonialist struggles occurring in Canada– and his lips –which evoke a sense of realness and humanness– make the film less about the radical Québécois nationalism associated with Vallières, and more about the effects of capitalism and colonialism on those groups who have suffered most because of it. The grotesqueness also works to shift the public persona of Vallières from a radical separatist to a “real” human being, much as McKay suggests that *White Niggers of America* does; Vallières is someone who lives, breathes, smokes, speaks, has feelings, hopes and beliefs.

Exploring Wieland’s negotiation of New Leftism situates her art production within the networks of visual and political culture of the late 1960s and early 1970s. While Sloan and I have both suggested that part of this negotiation includes consideration of English Canada’s more radical embodiment of New Leftism, the Waffle, I have also argued that Wieland artistically explored French Canada’s New Leftism in her negotiation of Québécois nationalism and *souverainiste* sentiments. Wieland’s use of ecological and environmental subject matter in her visual art and film is intimately informed both by the Waffle critique of American capitalism and imperialism, and by a feminist critique of power relations that produced inequalities based on class and gender. Despite the contemporary association of Québécois nationalism and *souverainiste* sentiments with violence and terrorism, Wieland’s film and visual art are rendered in ways that are

sympathetic to the *souverainiste* belief in the capitalist and colonialist exploitation of Québec's economy and culture. This, I have argued, suggests that Wieland's New Leftism was never about any one particular political belief or ideology, but was rather an engagement with subject matter that involved an implicit anti-capitalist critique of patriarchy, colonialism, and technology.

Chapter V

Negotiating Race: Representing and Imagining Aboriginality

Wrong use of technology has destroyed native peoples. First the crossbow overtook the club and stick. Today a country is taken over through a business deal at [a] conference table. Powerful Canadians sell out the land without thought of its people.

Joyce Wieland¹

The fact is that native imagery and art is already deeply entrenched in the public arena and in institutional collections as a symbol for a national heritage, a signifier for Canadian roots, a container for the Canadian imagination and a metaphor for the abstract ideals of Western ideology.

Marcia Crosby²

In her essay, “Construction of the Imaginary Indian,” Haida/Tsimpsian scholar Marcia Crosby argues that, during her formal education in the visual arts, she noticed a particular generic construction of “Indianness” permeated the visual imagery of aboriginal peoples and culture in Canadian art.³ Such a construction, she goes on to argue, is rooted in a narrative of victimization that stresses the idea that aboriginal peoples need to be saved through “colonization and civilization.”⁴ Aboriginal peoples are thus no longer “real,” but rather “imagined” as a “composite...wh[ich] function[s] as a peripheral but necessary component of Europe’s history in North America –the negative space of the ‘positive’ force of colonialist hegemony.”⁵ In other words, and as Bruce Braun has suggested, art created by the dominant culture using aboriginal subject matter “can be [seen as] complicit with colonial power.”⁶ As Crosby indicates in the

¹ Joyce Wieland fonds, CTASC, 1999-003/005, File 10.

² Marcia Crosby, “Construction of the Imaginary Indian,” in *Vancouver Anthology: The Institutional Politics of Art*, ed. Stan Douglas (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1991), 287.

³ Ibid., 269.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid. Daniel Francis has also written on the notion of the Imaginary Indian. See Daniel Francis, *The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1992).

⁶ Bruce Braun, “BC Seeing/Seeing BC,” in *The Intemperate Rainforest: Nature, Culture and Power on Canada’s West Coast* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), 156.

introductory quotation, the construction of this “imaginary Indian” can be understood as a way for dominant culture to deal with, and ultimately whitewash, the history of colonialism in Canada. Read in conjunction with Crosby’s comment, Wieland’s statement suggests that she was sympathetic to the effects that such a history had on aboriginal peoples. This sympathy was translated artistically when she engaged with aspects of aboriginal culture, including Native imagery, songs, poems, and language, and established them as an integral part of her construction of Canadian identity. While Wieland may have been sympathetic about the historical and contemporary realities of aboriginal peoples in Canada, as Crosby and Braun suggest, this does not mean that her art production is free of the expression of colonialist power relations.

In this chapter, I argue that Wieland engages artistically with aspects of aboriginal culture and constructs an “imaginary” concept of aboriginality that ignores the contemporaneous political and social resistances being leveled by aboriginal peoples in response to the federal government’s 1969 White Paper on Indian Policy. This policy, presented in the form of a publicly accessible “white paper,” aroused a fierce and unprecedented response from aboriginal peoples across Canada.⁷ Ideologically couched within the rhetoric of the Just Society, the White Paper was the federal government’s way of re-conceptualizing aboriginal peoples as rights-bearing citizens with the same freedoms and equalities as non-aboriginal Canadians. Beginning with the attainment of the right to vote in 1960, and continuing in the very public debates surrounding the White

⁷ Although it might appear to have racist connotations, the term “white paper” is the name given to a policy in its preliminary stages before it officially becomes legislation. White papers were also meant to be a way for the general public to easily access government policy –part of the federal government’s desire for participatory democracy.

Paper, the late 1960s and early 1970s in Canada witnessed the establishment of aboriginality as both an identity and, for a majority of Canadians, “a problem.”

This context provides a framework for discussion of several of Wieland’s works from the early 1970s that depict traditional Inuit stories, songs and language, and the flora and fauna of the Canadian Arctic, as well as her 1976 film, *The Far Shore*, in which the “imaginary Indian” is an important aspect. Wieland’s construction of aboriginality is never about depicting “real” aboriginal peoples, but rather is evoked through the use of stereotypical and romanticized signifiers, which are dependent on a conceptualization of aboriginal peoples as existing outside capitalist modernity. I argue that Wieland incorporates this romantic conceptualization of aboriginality into her work in order to politicize her art, as well as her position as an artist. While Wieland may have been genuinely sympathetic toward the numerous injustices and inequalities suffered by aboriginal peoples in Canada, this gives rise not to explicit support of contemporary aboriginal resistances, but to a paternalistic attitude that replicates colonialist ideas.

Wieland, for example, collects aboriginal songs, poems, stories, and imagery, which she perceives as remnants of a culture threatened by extinction due to American and Canadian capitalist exploitation. This act of salvaging can be seen, James Clifford has suggested, as “reflect[ing] a desire to rescue ‘authenticity’ out of destructive historical change....”⁸ Although the idea of rescuing, saving or salvaging remnants of a culture that appears to be fading or dying out may seem well intentioned, as Virginia Dominguez argues, even the “best liberal intentions do little other than patronize those

⁸ James Clifford, “Of Other Peoples: Beyond the Salvage Paradigm,” in *Discussions in Contemporary Culture*, ed. Hal Foster (Seattle: Bay Press, 1987), 121.

slated for cultural salvage.”⁹ Wieland’s artistic engagement with aboriginal identity and imagery consequently suppresses racial and political difference in favour of a cultural understanding of aboriginality that reaffirms the dominant culture’s hegemonic position; in other words, her artistic construction of aboriginality is ultimately about rationalizing and reinforcing her own subject position, her own whiteness.

Representing and Imagining Aboriginality

In what appear to be notes for a speech Wieland made at some point during the early 1970s, she writes,

Wrong use of technology has destroyed native peoples. First the crossbow overtook the club and stick. Today a country is taken over through a business deal at [a] conference table. Powerful Canadians sell out the land without thought of its people. An area the size of France in Quebec is given by Bourassa to ITT [International Telephone and Telegraph] (one of the most lethal U.S. based multi national corporations). ITT owns this very hotel and paid a million dollars to overthrow Allende’s government in Chile. In the face of this we go on as artists creating an indigenous culture. As colonials we are forced to work twice as hard to make the culture. Politically and artistically. We fight for the autonomy of nature, and spiritual and economic independence. The Native Peoples only crime was practicing their culture. Until they were destroyed by consumerism. Pipe lines and clearcutting of our once mighty forests. Pulp mills are killing them. Native peoples job is clearly defined. They must support the junk food monopolies and the standard domestic hardware of technology. They are an ancient people. We sophisticated ones have learned to live on arsenic.¹⁰

This is one of the few documents to reveal Wieland’s view of aboriginal cultures and some of the contemporary realities facing them. She references, for example, the controversial James Bay hydroelectric and the Mackenzie Valley pipeline projects, both

⁹ Ibid., 131.

¹⁰ Joyce Wieland fonds, CTASC, 1999-003/005, File 10. During the 1960s, under Harold Geneen, ITT (International Telephone and Telegraph) expanded from a telephone/media company to a huge conglomerate corporation. During this period, ITT purchased three hundred companies, including the Sheraton hotel chain, which may explain why Wieland refers to ITT owning “this very hotel.” See Anthony Sampson, *The Sovereign State: The Secret History of ITT* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1973), and Robert Sobel, *ITT: The Management of Opportunity* (New York: Times Books, 1982).

of which threatened to displace tens of thousands of aboriginal peoples in northern Québec and the southern Yukon, and promised to wreak devastating effects on the environment.¹¹ In a later interview with Wieland, Barbara Stevenson comments, “You certainly had concerns over the James Bay hydroelectric project when that was in the works.” And Wieland responds, “Did we ever.”¹² Wieland goes on to explain that, while she never referred to the project in her art, she was active in helping raise money for the ensuing court case involving land claims:

We had that night at the St. Lawrence Centre where we all made prints – many artists– and we tried to sell them to pay for the native people’s case against you-know-what. No, it was more organizing and trying to support these people [aboriginal peoples].¹³

While Wieland alludes to contemporaneous issues involving various aboriginal communities across Canada, and the impending displacement of aboriginal peoples generally as a result of capitalist exploitation, she simultaneously evokes a romanticized and idealized concept of what it means to be aboriginal. Part of this idealization stems from the way that she envisions aboriginal peoples as existing outside capitalist modernity, seeing them as passive victims of technology and modernization whose only “crime” was “practicing their culture.” Her words also suggest that a true, “authentic” aboriginal culture had been destroyed, implying the existence of one, monolithic

¹¹ In 1970, Liberal candidate Robert Bourassa was elected premier of Québec and ran on the platform that 100 000 jobs would be created by building one of the largest hydroelectric dams in Canada in the James Bay region of Québec, subsequently displacing 10 000 Inuit and Cree. The Mackenzie Valley pipeline project proposed the installation of a pipeline that would run from Alaska down the Mackenzie Valley and into the Yukon. This project would have devastating consequences on the environment and the land that was largely inhabited by aboriginal peoples. In both cases, various aboriginal groups took the federal government to court regarding their legal claim to the land. In 1975, in what was seen as a landmark victory for aboriginal land claims, the Inuit and Cree in northern Québec surrendered their rights to the land in return for 150 million dollars to be paid out over fifty years. The Mackenzie Valley pipeline project was also never realized. See J.R. Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens: A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada*, rev. ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 252-56.

¹² Joyce Wieland fonds, CTASC, 1999-003/005, File 5.

¹³ Ibid.

“aboriginal culture,” and an adherence to the idea that aboriginal peoples exist outside historical time as remnants of the past in the present day. While Wieland was sympathetic toward the aboriginal communities that would be affected by the James Bay and Mackenzie Valley projects, her statement positions aboriginal peoples as victims and legitimizes paternalism.

Interestingly, Wieland’s statement not only evokes a desire to save aboriginal cultures; she also identifies herself as “aboriginal-like,” stating that, as an artist, she is responsible for “creating an indigenous culture,” and that she is fighting for the “autonomy of nature, and spiritual and economic independence” in the face of both American and Canadian capitalism. In another part of her notes for her speech, Wieland develops her conceptualization of the artist, writing, “The artists conception through art changes society’s way of seeing. Therefore the artist is very powerful.”¹⁴ As I argued in chapter three, Wieland saw her role as an artist as one that expanded beyond the modern conceptualization of the artist as concerned primarily with form and aesthetics. Her statement suggests that she saw both herself and her art production as contributing to a larger debate over the role that culture could play within the Canadian political imaginary.

In the same way that Wieland sympathized with the situation of women, the working classes, and the Québécoise, she also sympathized with the ways in which colonialism and capitalism had affected aboriginal peoples. In notes dated 15 October 1972, Wieland writes,

Since 1967 all of my work has been about Canada, a country which has been largely sold out to the U.S. multi national corporations, by visible and invisible Canadians, the American power structure determines the

¹⁴ Ibid.

future of this country, by exploitation of our minds and resources. They have eternal plans (more damaging than beneficial for us) for power dams, oil, gas, mineral deposits, Indians, Eskimos, redirecting the flow of mighty rivers, the media, and cultural and educational institutions. They would even like to melt the Arctic.¹⁵

Wieland constructs aboriginal peoples within this context as part of the natural environment –as a natural resource– suggesting that they, along with oil, gas, and minerals, will ultimately suffer the most as a result of American exploitation of the land. In this sense, her use of the words “Indian” and “Eskimo” do not refer to real people, but rather signify a concept of aboriginality as an identity intimately linked to the natural environment. This linkage also suggests that Wieland’s construction of aboriginality is deeply connected to her New Leftism because she perceives the capitalist exploitation of the land as having equally devastating consequences on both the environment and aboriginal peoples. In her art production, Wieland extends this understanding of aboriginal cultures and identities in order to draw attention to the consequences of exploiting the land for capitalist gain, an act that constructs aboriginal peoples as both intimately connected to the natural environment and as victims of capitalist modernity.

Wieland’s co-optation of aboriginal cultures and identities to politicize her work is evident in her 1976 feature-length film, *The Far Shore*. Wieland imbues one of the main characters, Tom McLeod, with romantic, imagined notions of aboriginality in order to warn viewers of ecological damages to the land caused by capitalist exploitation. Within film studies scholarship, discussion of *The Far Shore* has focussed on the way Wieland feminizes melodrama as a filmic form.¹⁶ While this is important, *The Far Shore* can also be seen, I would argue, as a warning in the same way that *Rat Life and Diet*, *The*

¹⁵ Joyce Wieland fonds, CTASC, 1992-018/007, File 115.

¹⁶ See Lauren Rabinovitz, “*The Far Shore*: Feminist Family Melodrama,” *Jump Cut* 32 (1987): 29-31.

Water Quilt, and *I Love Canada – J'aime Canada* visually caution viewers about the ecological damage threatened by American exploitation of Canada's natural resources.

The Far Shore makes evident Wieland's feminist politics, not just to destabilize the genre of melodrama, but because her feminism and New Leftism critique the notion that capitalist accumulation is the foundation and goal of the modern nation-state.

With a budget of \$435 000, and financed by the Canadian Film Development Corporation, Famous Players, and Astral Films, *The Far Shore* was by far Wieland's most ambitious filmic undertaking and, financially and critically, her least successful. Wieland had originally titled the project *True Patriot Love: A Canadian Love, Technology, Leadership and Art Story* and had conceptualized it as early as 1968 as the third part of a trilogy of films dealing with issues of Canadian identity (the other two being *Rat Life and Diet in North America* and *Reason Over Passion*).¹⁷ Wieland had, in fact, published parts of the original story outline in *Film Culture* in 1971, and fragments of the original script appear collaged throughout the bookwork she created for her 1971 retrospective at the National Gallery of Canada.¹⁸ In many ways, *The Far Shore* can be seen as a culmination of Wieland's aesthetic, political, social and cultural concerns of the late 1960s and early 1970s. As she recalled in a 1981 interview,

I felt *The Far Shore* was pulling together everything I knew so far in life. Really it was what I knew so far about art, but that was what I knew about life –the artist struggling and the life of the artist.¹⁹

¹⁷ Wieland states this in an interview from the early 1970s: "So when *Rat Life and Diet* was made and *Reason Over Passion* I can see those as the first two of a trilogy, the third one being *True Patriot Love*, which eventually got made but it was under a different title." Joyce Wieland fonds, CTASC, 1991-014/005, VIII, file 75.

¹⁸ Joyce Wieland, "True Patriot Love (A Canadian Love, Technology, Leadership and Art Story): A Movie by Joyce Wieland," *Film Culture* 52 (Spring 1971): 64-73.

¹⁹ Rabinovitz, "An Interview with Joyce Wieland," 12.

Set in Canada in 1919, the film begins with the marriage of the main characters, French Canadian pianist Eulalie de Chicoutimi and English Canadian engineer Ross Turner. After they marry, Eulalie moves from the Québec countryside to Ross's home in Toronto, as his kept wife, where she becomes increasingly unhappy until she meets the artist, Tom McLeod, who resides on the estate. Eulalie and Tom share an unspoken affection for each other, and after Tom refuses to serve as Ross's guide for a silver mining expedition in northern Ontario, Tom leaves the estate, much to Eulalie's disappointment. During the mining expedition, Eulalie sees Tom and decides that her loveless, dispassionate marriage to Ross pales in comparison to her feelings for Tom. After taking an axe to Ross's canoe so that he cannot follow her, Eulalie jumps into the lake and swims to meet Tom at his campsite. Ross and his friend and business associate, Cluny (this is the only name he is given), search for the pair and, after spotting them, Cluny fires two shots, killing both Eulalie and Tom.

In a recent essay, Brenda Longfellow argues that Wieland's construction of Tom "position[s] him as a surrogate Native, a character who signifies the profoundly romanticized qualities of nativeness: . . . pacifism, wisdom, and deep ecological and spiritual knowledge of the land."²⁰ Not only is Tom positioned as a "surrogate" aboriginal but, as Longfellow points out, he is also "the perfect embodiment of melodrama's (and feminism's) recurring fantasy of the feminized man."²¹ Longfellow's reference to this construction of Tom warrants further investigation into the ways in which Wieland extended her conceptualization of aboriginality into her film work and, perhaps more importantly, why she did this. Wieland constructs aboriginality in *The Far*

²⁰ Longfellow in Armatage, *Gendering the Nation*, 169.

²¹ Ibid.

Shore by suppressing racial and political difference and extolling perceived cultural differences, among them the idea that aboriginal peoples are close to nature, are pacifists, and exist outside capitalist modernity.

One of the ways that Wieland conceptualizes the character of Tom as aboriginal-like is by making him an artist and, in particular, by basing his character on the well-known Canadian artist Tom Thomson (fig. 18). In the film, Tom is often shown painting or sketching, and, significantly, he leaves the estate in order to paint outdoors full time in northern Ontario. In an interview with Ardele Lister, Wieland noted that the film had “originally sparked from the idea of Tom Thomson.”²² She “researched his life for a couple of years,” but in the end “had to change his name, and make him just that essence, and call him Tom McLeod.”²³ There is, I would suggest, a connection between the way that Wieland imbues Tom with creativity, femininity, pacifism, and respect for the land, and her own political agenda as an artist. Wieland draws on the popular notion of Thomson as an avant-garde artist who travelled to northern Ontario to sketch and paint outdoors in order to capture the essence of Canadian identity on canvas.

This notion of the Canadian artist, argues Lynda Jessup, positions the artist outside the “constraints of civilization” in the “guise of the prospector, bushwhacker, or woodsman.”²⁴ Wieland alluded to this anti-modern construction of the artist in an interview with Kay Armatage in which she stated that the character of Tom is “a totally

²² Joyce Wieland fonds, CTASC, 1991-014/005, VIII, 75.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Lynda Jessup, “Bushwhackers in the Gallery: Antimodernism and the Group of Seven,” in *Antimodernism and the Artistic Experience*, ed. Lynda Jessup (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 133. For discussion of the anti-modern construction of the artist in relation to Tom Thomson in particular, see Ross Cameron, “Tom Thomson: Antimodernism and the Ideal of Manhood” *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 10 (1999): 185-208.

introverted Canadian artist –not completely introverted but you know that kind of loner that goes to the woods.”²⁵ She goes on to say that she did not want to “make people escape into bourgeois artists’ lives or anything,” but was “telling the truth about what went on here [in Canada].”²⁶ The character of Tom is based on this popular conceptualization of the Canadian artist as bushwhacker or woodsman not, as Wieland says, to fetishize the “bourgeois artist,” but, I would argue, because its anti-modern association extols ideas that both Wieland and the character of Tom believe in, among them a society free from the excesses of modernity –urbanization, industrialization, and capitalism. As I will argue, Tom’s character becomes a signifier that Wieland uses to warn viewers that these modern excesses will ultimately destroy the nation.

Wieland’s construction of Tom as Thomson-like is also connected to the way she imagines the character as aboriginal. She highlights Tom’s creativity, respect for the land and anti-capitalism not only to depict him as an artist, but also to stress these values as those threatened by modernity –values which Wieland perceived as inherent to aboriginal identity and cultures.²⁷ Wieland explores these ideas by having each of the main characters in the film symbolically represent an identitarian group within Canada – Eulalie represents French Canadians, women and the working classes, Tom represents aboriginal peoples, and Ross represents English Canadians and, generally, dominant culture. Through the relationships Tom has with other characters in the film, namely Ross and Eulalie, it is evident that he symbolizes the “Indian” and that Wieland uses his

²⁵ Kay Armatage, “Interview with Joyce Wieland,” in *Women and Cinema: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Karyn Kay and Gerald Peary (New York: Dutton, 1977), 258.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 260-61.

²⁷ It is also possible that Wieland was drawing on the popular myth of Tom Thomson circulating at the time that he may have been aboriginal. The publication of William Little’s 1970 book, *The Tom Thomson Mystery* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 1970) recounts the true story of a group of artists who thought they had found Thomson’s grave in Algonquin Park. Coroner reports noted that the remains the group found were “either Indian or nearly full breed Indian,” 139.

character, as well as his relationship with Eulalie, to draw attention to the exploitation of the land for capitalist gain, and to warn of the dangers of the hegemonic culture Ross represents.

The opening scene of the film introduces the two main characters, Ross and Eulalie, and establishes them as signifiers of English Canadianness and French Canadianness, respectively. Eulalie, wearing a peasant-style dress and hat, and singing a song in French, walks through a field of tall grasses and flowers towards Ross, who is wearing a formal suit and surveying the land. Ross gestures to the landscape in the distance and tells Eulalie that soon the land will be greatly improved with the building of a railway and the introduction of other technological advancements, to which Eulalie responds by expressing her love for the landscape and its beauty. Ross proposes to Eulalie during this scene, signifying the impending union of the two in marriage and, with it, the union of English and French Canada. Scenes of Ross and Eulalie's marriage occur during the opening credits, and the film begins when Eulalie arrives in Toronto looking noticeably uncomfortable in her new surroundings. Within the first few scenes of the film, Wieland clearly establishes Ross as Anglophone, capitalist and masculine, and Eulalie as Francophone, respectful of nature and feminine.

The characteristics ascribed to Ross and Eulalie are explored further by Wieland in the context of the relationships each have with Tom. The way Wieland introduces Tom into the narrative is important because it establishes a pattern throughout the film that symbolically and ideologically aligns Tom and Eulalie. This pattern is evident in a scene from the beginning of the film when, after Ross gives a speech to his engineering firm, Eulalie suggests that it was perhaps too long, to which Ross angrily snaps, "Just

remember one thing my dear, it may seem to you that you're in with a bunch of foreigners, but really you are the foreigner." Wieland then immediately cuts to a close-up shot of Tom's hand drawing a landscape scene and then pans the camera out to reveal a table with vases of flowers and Tom's rustic cabin. Answering a knock on his door, Tom welcomes Ross and Eulalie into his cabin and offers them tea. Ross declines, saying, "Not the kind you drink," adding to Eulalie, "You won't care for it either...filthy stuff." When Tom tells Eulalie it is "Indian bark tea," she accepts. Wieland then cuts to an aerial shot of two teacups and Tom's hands slowly pouring the tea—a gesture not integral to the narrative of the film but significant to the feminization of Tom, in that it associates him with the domestic realm. It is also significant that the tea is "Indian bark"; it is the first allusion Wieland makes to Tom's aboriginality.

This first scene with Tom is important for several reasons: his character enters the film at a moment when the viewer feels sympathy for Eulalie; feeling threatened by Eulalie's criticism of his speech, Ross yells at her and reminds her that, as a French Canadian, she is a "foreigner"; and, as viewers begin to feel sympathy for Eulalie, Wieland introduces the character of Tom. In addition, Eulalie's acceptance of his "Indian tea," despite Ross's suggestion that she would not like it and his refusal to drink it, is a gesture that indicates to viewers that she has an ally in Tom, beginning the emotional and intimate connection the two develop throughout the film.

There are several other scenes in the film that contribute to Tom's characterization as aboriginal-like. In one scene, for example, Ross, Cluny and Eulalie head home one evening in a car that breaks down on the side of the road. They all walk to Tom's cabin for shelter, and to pass the time, Ross asks Tom to tell a story, saying

“Tell us what the Indians taught you.” To this, Cluny replies, “Here’s what the goddamn Indians taught me,” taking a large quaff of alcohol from a bottle. With this one line, Wieland effectively disassociates Tom’s aboriginality with the contemporary stereotype of the “drunken Indian” and instead reveals him as having a high standard of morality – he is not “that kind of Indian.” Tom is also portrayed in this scene as lacking the ambition characteristic, in this case, of the capitalist businessman. For example, when he declines Ross’s offer to act as a guide for the silver mining expedition, he says, “Ross, you’re rich enough, leave the land alone.” Cluny then teases him and calls him a “pacifist,” and a fight breaks out between the two, which ends when Eulalie runs out of the cabin. Throughout the film, Wieland constructs the character of Tom as close to nature and the natural world, reinforcing his aboriginality. Tom resides in a rustic log cabin on the estate with his dog whom he treats as though it were human –eating dinner and dancing with it, for example. Ross asks Tom to lead his silver-mining expedition because he perceives him as having intrinsic knowledge of the land and of where silver could be found.

It is significant that Wieland vilifies Ross and idealizes the relationship between Eulalie and Tom. Ross points out to Eulalie at the beginning of the film that she is a “foreigner” and, throughout the film, Wieland depicts Ross (hegemonic Canadian culture) as always struggling to assert authority over Eulalie (French Canada/women/the working classes). Ross’s struggle to control Eulalie culminates when he grabs her, tears her clothes off and rapes her. Symbolically, the rape not only suggests English Canada’s desire to control those whom it has marginalized, but it also alludes to the way that Ross, as an engineer, rapes the land of its natural resources and beauty. After this scene,

Wieland includes a sequence of scenes that feature Eulalie withdrawing from Ross and developing a close relationship with Tom. Tom and Eulalie's union thus symbolically parallels the oppression of women, aboriginal peoples, and the Québécois by English Canada, technology, capitalism and patriarchy.

In the first of the scenes focusing on the development of Tom and Eulalie's relationship, Tom makes Eulalie dinner, which again associates him with the domestic realm and sets him in direct opposition to Ross, who relies on female domestic labour to run his household. Tom and Eulalie are also aligned in their passion for the arts, which is also set in contrast to Ross's profession as an engineer. Tom, for example, enthusiastically listens to Eulalie play the piano and compliments her on her ability, while Ross tells her that the music is distracting him from his work (fig. 19). Another scene features Tom and Eulalie silently mouthing words to each other through a magnifying glass (fig. 20), Wieland focusing the camera on their mouths (as she did in *Pierre Vallières* and *O Canada Animation*). In an interview with Armatage, Wieland states that the reason she made this scene silent was

Because it's not for the audience, it's for those two people in the film. But it doesn't matter that we don't know what they say because it's their unspoken love. And I feel that the film has a lot of mystery in it.... That's what cinema once was: it was concerned with magic and shamanism and the evocation of spirits, you know?²⁸

Through gestures, rather than spoken language, Wieland connects Tom and Eulalie in an emotional and intimate way.

Throughout the film, viewers feel sympathy for both Tom and Eulalie. Eulalie is emotionally stifled by her abusive and domineering husband, and viewers sympathize with her desire to escape the relationship. Ross similarly bullies Tom as he attempts to

²⁸ Ibid., 257.

force him to use his supposed knowledge of the land and natural environment for capitalist gain and, as a result, like Eulalie, Tom ultimately leaves the estate as well. When Eulalie and Tom are finally reunited and after they have consummated their union, they are both killed. In this sense, Tom and Eulalie are seemingly punished for their union, and, with this, the victimization and martyrdom of women, aboriginal peoples and French Canadians in the hands of English Canadian capitalism, colonialism and patriarchy is complete.

The union and deaths of Eulalie and Tom serve as a warning to viewers of what might happen if capitalist exploitation goes unchecked. In the same way that *Rat Life and Diet* includes an image of Che Guevara's dead body to warn viewers of the possible consequences of American imperialism, the deaths of Eulalie and Tom warn viewers of the consequences of English Canada's capitalist desires. Ross's desire to build on the land, and strip it of its natural resources, ultimately comes at the cost of Tom's and Eulalie's lives. It also, and perhaps not coincidentally, metaphorically emphasizes passion over reason. Tom and Eulalie's passionate relationship (made overt in the graphic and lengthy love scene) is set in contrast to Eulalie's dispassionate, loveless and abusive relationship with Ross. It is also significant that Wieland imagines the character of Tom as aboriginal in order to convey these messages; she highlights New Left ideas of respect for the land and women, pacifism, and anti-capitalism as qualities she perceives as inherent to aboriginal identity and of value to Canadians. Tom consequently becomes a signifier of New Left values in his guise as an "imaginary Indian."

Wieland's portrayal of aboriginal peoples as part of the natural environment, and her subsequent co-optation of this idea as an expression of her New Leftism is explored further in her non-film work and, in particular, in the artist-book she created for her 1971 retrospective at the National Gallery of Canada. Opening on Dominion Day (now Canada Day) in 1971, the exhibition, "True Patriot Love/Véritable amour patriotique," like *The Far Shore*, is arguably the culminating expression of the artistic, political, social, and cultural concerns regarding Canada that Wieland had been cultivating since the mid-1960s. Wieland later told Stevenson in an interview that the exhibition was her response to her fear that Canada was not going to survive as a nation.²⁹ "There was a great urgency," she says, "basically in terms: 'Is there going to be a country left?'"³⁰ One of the most important aspects of the exhibition, according to Wieland, was that it highlighted the centrality of the land and its preservation to the nation's survival. As she told exhibition curator Pierre Théberge in an interview conducted on the occasion, "We have to get to the very essential thing now, the land, and how we feel about it."³¹ These concerns, I would argue, are mirrored in the book Wieland created in lieu of the standard exhibition catalogue.

Using *Bulletin No. 146, Illustrated Flora of the Canadian Arctic Archipelago*, which was originally published by the National Museums of Canada in 1964, Wieland transformed an official government document about the flora of the Canadian Arctic by placing images of her works of art, film scripts, dried flowers, photographs of nature, reproductions of Tom Thomson and Group of Seven paintings, and handwritten and

²⁹ Joyce Wieland fonds, CTASC, 1999-003/005, File 5.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Pierre Théberge, "Interview with Joyce Wieland," *True Patriot Love/Véritable amour patriotique* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1971), unpaginated.

typed poems and songs over the actual text of the bulletin, which she then photographed to create the pages of her book. The result is that the pages are photographic reproductions of the collages she created. Wieland literally “cut and pasted” her own narrative over the *techne* or logos of an official government document. She describes this process in an interview in similar terms: “I found the book and it had all the flora of the Arctic and I chose that as my platform from which to build another work. So that the floor or the earth was the book and then I built up things over it and into it” (fig. 21).³² In its entirety, the book visually symbolizes Wieland’s version of the Canadian nation. As a result, her conceptualization of aboriginality within the work is significant.

While scholars have discussed Wieland’s book, little attention has been paid to the ways in which her artistic interventions into the document’s *techne* form alternative visual narratives involving marginalized groups within Canada.³³ While the book as a whole plays with national culture, images, and myths by transforming signifiers of national identity –the Canadian flag and the words of the national anthem, the work of the Group of Seven, and images of the land– the first nineteen pages of the book in particular visually re-conceptualize the Canadian Arctic and Inuit culture. The first page of the book features a short passage in Inuktitut collaged over top of a page of the government bulletin (fig. 22). On the following two pages Wieland typed the words to the Inuit song, “The Great Sea,” in French and English, and set these on a page of the bulletin (figs. 23 and 24). On pages 4 and 5, Wieland typed the story of the Great Sea on a piece of paper, which she then placed on a page of the bulletin, juxtaposing it with close-up shots of the 1970-71 wool-hooked work, *Eskimo Song – The Great Sea* (fig. 25), and a newspaper

³² Joyce Wieland fonds, CTASC, 1999-003/005, File 5.

³³ See Conley, “True Patriot Love.”

clipping reporting the visit to Sachs Harbour in the Northwest Territories by Jean Chrétien, then Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (figs. 26 and 27).

Viewers/readers learn the story of the Great Sea from a passage taken from a book by early-twentieth century Danish explorer Knud Rasmussen.³⁴ “The Great Sea,” as told to Rasmussen by Aua of Igloodik, is about Avavnuuk who, after becoming filled with a spirit while urinating outside, becomes a shaman and sings a song called “The Great Sea.” Wieland includes the words to the song in both Inuktitut and English:

The Great Sea
Has sent me adrift
It moves me as a weed in a great River
Earth and the great weather
Move me
Have carried me away
And move my inward parts with joy.³⁵

This typed version of the story has been placed on a page of the bulletin and a photographic reproduction of three pieces of thread extend from the image to the next page, which features a handwritten French translation of the story and a photograph of Wieland’s Inuktitut version of her wool-hooked work, *Eskimo Song – The Great Sea*. The same technique is used in the treatment of the newspaper clipping about Chrétien’s visit to Sachs Harbour. Wieland has drawn an arrow from a handwritten, French translation of the clipping to the English newspaper version. In this way, she draws the viewer’s/reader’s attention to the ways in which she has translated all the written components of her collages into the official languages of Canada, as well as into Inuktitut. Below the typed story of “The Great Sea,” Wieland has placed details of the

³⁴ Knud Rasmussen embarked upon a series of expeditions throughout the early-twentieth century to the Canadian Arctic, and he wrote and published several books about his travels in addition to translating many Inuit poems, songs, and stories. For example, see Knud Rasmussen, *Eskimo Poems from Canada and Greenland* (London: Allison and Busby, 1973).

³⁵ Quoted in Joyce Wieland, *True Patriot Love*, 3.

English version of her wool-hooked work, *Eskimo Song – The Great Sea*, which was also featured in the “True Patriot Love” exhibition.

Wieland’s focus on “The Great Sea” is important because she uses the story to politicize her art practice and to construct a concept of herself as aboriginal-like. The story of “The Great Sea” is about an aboriginal woman who becomes a shaman and “reveals all the offences committed by those around her [so] she could purify them.”³⁶

Recalling the importance Wieland placed on the artist’s ability to change society’s way of seeing, I would suggest that she identified with the role of the shaman as one that would allow her to “purify” the “offences” of those she perceived as threatening the Arctic and, consequently, its inhabitants. In a 1976 interview Armatage asked Wieland, “What’s all this about shamans? Have you done a lot of work on that?” to which Wieland responds,

In another interview I told the story of an Eskimo woman who happened to go out one night to urinate and as she pulled down her drawers, at that moment a meteor came from the sky and entered into her and from that moment on she was given her song. She was given the power to tell the truth to her people and I made a great quilt from that song. It’s called The Great Sea... I mean if we’re not concerned with that, then screw it. It’s a religious practice. And I don’t even know what I mean by religion even, but I know that there were men and women shamans, and especially in the Arctic, who spoke in tongues and who were in touch with something that we’re no longer in touch with.³⁷

In the interview conducted by Théberge, and in response to a question as to whether “Eskimos” had particular significance for Wieland, she responds, “Yeah, because I envy some of the things they had in their past, their ingenuity, creativity, courage and innocence, and no corporate structure.”³⁸ Wieland imagines aboriginality in these statements in a way that romanticizes Inuit society and culture as pre-contact, and which

³⁶ Ibid., 4.

³⁷ Armatage, “Interview with Joyce Wieland,” 261.

³⁸ Théberge, “Interview with Joyce Wieland,” unpaginated.

draws on such anti-modern imaginings to politicize herself, and consequently her art practice, as anti-capitalist. Wieland suggests that it is through the production of her artist-book and her works of art that certain “truths” are revealed –that she engages in an activity she associates with both the shaman and the artist. In other words, this romanticized notion of Inuit culture as existing outside capitalist modernity is co-opted by Wieland in order to express her New Leftism.

Wieland’s imagining of Inuit culture as existing outside capitalist modernity is explored throughout the next several pages of the book. Pages 6 and 7 feature photographs of details of Wieland’s large 1970-71 quilted work, *Arctic Day* (fig. 28), which was also created for the exhibition (figs. 29 and 30). The work consists of several small circular cushions, each adorned with an image of flora or fauna native to the Canadian Arctic hand-drawn with coloured pencils. Juxtaposed with the close-up images of the quilt are several landscape photographs, pictures of Wieland’s hands stitching the quilt, maps of Québec, and photographs of Wieland herself with exhibition curator Pierre Théberge. Pages 8 and 9 feature a photograph of Wieland’s hands stitching *Arctic Day*, which she juxtaposed with a landscape photograph (figs. 31 and 32). The situation of her quilted version of the Canadian Arctic, *Arctic Day*, together with images of her own hands stitching the quilt, on an official government document dealing with Arctic flora acts to convert a seemingly reasoned categorization of knowledge about Canada’s Arctic into an aesthetic and intimate experience. The original text of the document reads, “The present work is intended as a guide or manual to the 340 species and major geographical races of flowering plants and ferns that comprise the vascular flora as it is known at

present of the Canadian Arctic Archipelago.”³⁹ The ambitious, comprehensive treatment of the original text, now obscured by Wieland’s aesthetic interventions, challenges the idea that the nation, as documented by the government, is capable of being depicted and experienced by reason and rationality alone. These pages suggest that Wieland created an alternative Arctic to the reasoned and rational one, one that consists of flora, fauna and the Inuit. In this way, the Inuit are not real people, but part of the natural environment of Arctic in the same way the flora and fauna are.

The inclusion of the newspaper clipping on page 5 of the book suggests that the construction of the Arctic Wieland has presented to viewers/readers was also one that was threatened by capitalist exploitation (fig. 27). The newspaper clipping discusses the imminent ecological destruction threatening Sachs Harbour; “Mr. Chrétien tried,” it reports, “to reassure the Eskimos, not very successfully, and replied, when one Eskimo woman asked him, ‘What will be left of this island?,’ ‘We don’t know.’”⁴⁰ Wieland conveys to viewers/readers the potential harm that will befall the Inuit of this particular community by drawing attention to the destruction of both Arctic land and the Inuit by technology and capitalism. This provokes a sympathetic response and positions Inuit culture as part of the natural world and as a victim of capitalist modernity. Wieland’s quilted, typed, and handwritten versions of “The Great Sea” and her quilted rendering of the Arctic, juxtaposed with the official government survey, co-opt aboriginal culture as a form of resistance to capitalist exploitation. In this way, she attempted to salvage a culture that she saw as threatened by capitalist exploitation, co-opting that identity in order to politicize both herself and her art production.

³⁹ Wieland, *True Patriot Love*, 1.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.

As I have argued in chapters 3 and 4, throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s, Wieland was actively engaged in feminist, political and economic discussions stemming from Trudeauvian liberalism, the second-wave women's movement, Waffle ideology, and Québécoise *souverainiste* sentiments. In her art production, she consistently engaged with, and synthesized, these discussions by drawing on both her feminism and New Leftism in order to critique the hegemonic constructions of citizenship and national identity that these discussions engendered. What is different about the way that Wieland artistically engages with aboriginal identity is that she takes a decidedly liberal, rather than New Left, position. This is despite her intentions to use aboriginality as a way of highlighting New Left values such as pacifism, respect for nature and the natural environment, and anti-capitalism.

The "imaginary Indians" that Wieland constructs in her art production are not only romanticized, but represent aboriginal identity in cultural terms by focussing on stories, poems, songs and language. Although she was evidently sympathetic to the injustices suffered by aboriginal peoples, Wieland's attitude was also paternalistic towards aboriginal peoples, which in turn denied them political agency. In short, she was sympathetic only insofar as it allowed her to make her political position apparent. What is most notable about Wieland's engagement with aboriginal identity is what it does not do; it does not break from the contemporaneous hegemonic liberal construction of aboriginal peoples as articulated in the federal government's 1969 White Paper on Indian Policy. For this reason it is important to understand the ways in which the identity "Indian" was being defined at this moment and how Wieland negotiated this identity in her art production.

The Liberal Imagining of Aboriginality

The White Paper on Indian Policy was introduced in the House of Commons in June 1969, and it was the result of a year of consultation meetings between the federal government and various aboriginal communities across Canada. These meetings were intended to establish an open dialogue between aboriginal peoples and the government about the best way to revise the Indian Act. The Indian Act, at its most basic level, outlined what could best be described as the shifting and evolving policies of assimilation that the federal government had established since the early nineteenth century. The Indian Act also dictated the relationship between aboriginal peoples and the federal government and included such things as the system of residential schooling, the reserve system, and the terms by which one could define oneself as Indian.⁴¹

Throughout the 1960s, the federal government became increasingly aware that the Indian Act was ineffectual. In many ways, the White Paper can be seen as the culminating result of a decade of federally-sponsored investigations into aboriginal standards of living. Under the Liberal government of Lester Pearson, the two-volume Hawthorn Report (1966-67) was the result of the first such investigation.⁴² The Hawthorn Report drew attention to the extreme poverty, underemployment, unemployment, and high welfare, death, and school dropout rates of aboriginal peoples across Canada.⁴³ The report not only highlighted these abysmal standards of living, but also the paternalistic and fiduciary relationship between the federal government,

⁴¹ For further discussion of the early development of the Indian Act see Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens*, 99-115.

⁴² See H.B. Hawthorn, *A Survey of the Contemporary Indians of Canada: Economic, Political, Educational Needs and Policies*, vol. 1-2 (Ottawa: Queen's Printer, 1966-67).

⁴³ Sally M. Weaver, *Making Canadian Indian Policy: The Hidden Agenda 1968-70* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981), 20-27.

particularly the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND), and aboriginal peoples. DIAND spent a large percentage of its budget on welfare (39.5% by 1968-69), and initiatives began under Pearson that sought to reduce the dependence of aboriginal peoples on the department's social welfare programs.⁴⁴ By 1967, under increasing criticism from the public regarding the inefficiency of the government to deal with what it saw as "the Indian problem," the government decided to revise the Indian Act.⁴⁵ When Trudeau was elected in 1968, aboriginal policy was given high priority, and the federal government continued with Pearson's plan to revise the Indian Act, albeit in a profoundly more dramatic and ambitious way.⁴⁶

The White Paper argued that in order to reduce the economic gap between aboriginal peoples and the rest of the Canadian population, and for aboriginal peoples to subsequently play an active role as citizens in the Just Society, it was necessary for the federal government to take the following steps: to repeal the Indian Act in its entirety, to transfer the control of reserve land to aboriginal peoples, to dissolve DIAND within five years, to transfer all remaining aboriginal issues to the provinces, and to hire a commissioner to help resolve all land claims and treaties.⁴⁷ The policy was couched in classic liberal ideology and argued that repealing the Indian Act was necessary in order to remove the legislative and constitutional basis of discrimination that it was seen to cause. By abolishing a piece of legislation that identified aboriginal peoples as special or distinct, the Trudeau government sought to re-conceptualize aboriginal peoples as liberal

⁴⁴ Ibid., 25. See Weaver's discussion of these initiatives such as relocation programs, Indian advisory boards, and Indian claims commissions, 24-43.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 18-20. The Indian Act defined being an Indian in certain discriminatory ways, if, for example, an aboriginal woman married a non-aboriginal man she lost her Indian status and consequently her right to live on a reserve and be exempted from taxes.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 59.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 166-68, see also *The White Paper*.

individuals with the same freedoms, equalities, and opportunities as non-aboriginal Canadians. As the White Paper states,

The policy promises all Indian people a new opportunity to expand and develop their identity within the framework of a Canadian society which offers them the rewards and responsibilities of participation, the benefits of involvement and the pride of belonging....The policy rests upon the fundamental right of Indian people to full and equal participation in the cultural, social, economic and political life in Canada. To argue against this right is to argue *for* discrimination, isolation and separation. No Canadian should be excluded from participation in community life, and none should expect to withdraw and still enjoy the benefits that flow to those who participate.⁴⁸

The White Paper set out to level the playing field with the intent that aboriginal peoples would have a “full role in Canadian society and in the economy while retaining, strengthening and developing an Indian identity which preserves the good things of the past and helps Indian people to prosper and thrive.”⁴⁹

As historian Sally Weaver has argued, the White Paper “mirrored Trudeau’s own ahistorical approach to policy-making, and his strong views on the danger and futility of special legislation for cultural groups such as the French Canadians.”⁵⁰ One of the primary reasons the White Paper was so vehemently attacked was because it was seen as ignoring the history and impact of colonialism and the treaties that had been signed with the federal government regarding, among other things, land claims. Trudeau’s views on the role aboriginal peoples should play in his Just Society were not as theoretically defined as those concerning French Canadians, but he was nonetheless vocal on the

⁴⁸ *The White Paper*, 7-8.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 8-9.

⁵⁰ Weaver, *Making Canadian Indian Policy*, 168.

issue.⁵¹ In a now well-known speech made to the Vancouver Liberal Association in defense of the White Paper, Trudeau stated,

We will recognize treaty rights –we will recognize forms of contract which have been made with the Indian people by the Crown. And we will try to bring justice in that area. And this will mean that perhaps the treaties shouldn't go on forever. It's inconceivable I think that in a given society, one section of the society have a treaty with the other section of the society. We must be all equal under the laws and we must not sign treaties amongst ourselves and many of these treaties indeed would have less and less significance in the future anyhow.⁵²

Weaver has noted that, after the White Paper was announced, the initial response from the press was generally supportive, viewing its liberal basis as a positive step forward for aboriginal policy. However, the press was also slightly critical of the methods by which the government sought to achieve equality.⁵³ Aboriginal leaders, who had flown to Ottawa for the policy's release, immediately held an emergency meeting and released a statement to the press that was highly critical of, and ultimately rejected, the new policy.⁵⁴ One of the primary reasons the White Paper was rejected was because aboriginal peoples had been under the assumption that the Indian Act was going to change rather than be eradicated all together. An examination of the resistances and contestations that developed in the late 1960s and early 1970s in response to the White Paper reveals the ways in which aboriginal peoples successfully brought issues concerning their identity, and how it was being constructed, to the attention of mainstream Canadian society.

⁵¹ For example, see "PM: No Ready Answer to Indian-Eskimo problems," *Winnipeg Tribune*, June 13, 1968; "Trudeau: Handling of Indians Blot on Record," *Ottawa Citizen*, June 13, 1968; "Let's Treat Indians More Like Canadians," *Calgary Albertan*, May 14, 1968, and "Trudeau Promises to Help Indians," *Winnipeg Free Press*, June 13, 1968.

⁵² Pierre Trudeau, "Transcript of the Prime Minister's Remarks at the Vancouver Liberal Association Dinner, Seaforth Armories, Vancouver, British Columbia," quoted in Weaver, *Making Canadian Indian Policy*, 179.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 172-73.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 173.

One of the most vehement aboriginal responses came from Harold Cardinal, a Cree from Sucker Creek Reserve and head of the Alberta Indian Association. In October 1968, Cardinal gave a speech at the Glendon Forum on Canadian Indians at Glendon College, York University, which was later published in the *Western Canadian Journal of Anthropology*.⁵⁵ In his speech, Cardinal is critical of the restructuring of DIAND and offers several alternative proposals for changing the relationship between the federal government and aboriginal peoples, including the honouring of treaties and the creation of an Aboriginal Advisory Board to the prime minister to keep him informed of aboriginal affairs.⁵⁶ It was, however, Cardinal's 1969 book, *The Unjust Society*, that firmly established him as one of the leading aboriginal activists protesting the White Paper. Weaver argues that, as early as 1969, *The Unjust Society* was seen "as the Indian manifesto of special rights and 'the Indian position' on the White Paper."⁵⁷ Dale Turner noted that "Cardinal's book represented a watershed for Aboriginal intellectuals; their political views could now be published and read within mainstream Canadian society."⁵⁸ Cardinal was unapologetically angry towards the federal government, not only for the White Paper, but for the years of "white man's disinterest, his deliberate trampling of Indian rights and his repeated betrayal of our trust."⁵⁹ Cardinal calls the White Paper a "programme of extermination through assimilation" and a form of "cultural genocide," and carefully addresses each point raised in the policy and counters it with a response.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ Harold Cardinal, "Canadian Indians and the Federal Government," *Western Canadian Journal of Anthropology* 1, no. 1 (1969): 90-97.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 95.

⁵⁷ Weaver, *Making Canadian Indian Policy*, 182.

⁵⁸ Dale Turner, *This Is Not A Peace Pipe: Towards a Critical Indigenous Philosophy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 27.

⁵⁹ Harold Cardinal, *The Unjust Society*, (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre Ltd., 1969/1999), 1.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.* See "Points One, Two and Three: Hollow Commitment," 119-27, and "Points Four, Five and Six: Guilt Waived," 128-37.

One of Cardinal's major grievances with the White Paper was that it did not honour the treaties aboriginal peoples signed with the federal government. He argues that

our treaty rights represent a sacred, honourable agreement between ourselves and the Canadian government that cannot be unilaterally abrogated by the government at the whim of one of its leaders unless that government is prepared to give us back title to our country.⁶¹

He was also angry because the White Paper was seen as a policy that was made without the consultation of aboriginal peoples. As he puts it,

It is quite obvious that during the exact period in which the government was theoretically pursuing consultation, federal officials, in isolation from the people they were supposed to be consulting, were plotting unilaterally a policy paper designed to alter the future of every Indian in Canada.⁶²

This sense that the federal government had duped aboriginal peoples under the pretence of participatory democracy was a major attack against the White Paper levelled by Cardinal and others. In response to the repeal of the Indian Act, Cardinal argues that, while the policy is dated and racist, it remains the only form of federal legislation regarding aboriginal rights, treaties, and land claims. As Cardinal writes,

We do not want the *Indian Act* retained because it is a good piece of legislation. It isn't. It is discriminatory from start to finish. But it is a lever in our hands and an embarrassment to the government, as it should be. No just society and no society with even pretensions to being just can long tolerate such a piece of legislation, but we would rather continue to live in bondage under the inequitable Indian Act than surrender our sacred rights.⁶³

In June 1970, the Indian Chiefs of Alberta drafted a response to the White Paper entitled "Citizens Plus," often referred to as the Red Paper, which was quickly endorsed by the National Indian Brotherhood (NIB), and which became the official response of the NIB to the White Paper. On 4 June 1970, in a meeting with Trudeau and his cabinet,

⁶¹ Ibid., 25.

⁶² Ibid., 108.

⁶³ Ibid., 119.

members of the Alberta Indian Association and the NIB presented the Red Paper. The Red Paper, partly authored by Cardinal, was a firm rejection of the White Paper, especially of the controversial suggestion to repeal the Indian Act. As the Red Paper reads, “We reject this policy. We say that the recognition of Indian status is essential for justice...Justice requires that the special history, rights and circumstances of Indian People be recognized.”⁶⁴ The Red Paper suggested that the Indian Act should be reviewed and amended rather than “be burned.”⁶⁵ It also laid out several suggestions for improving the relationship between the federal government and aboriginal peoples including the appointment of a full-time Minister of Indian Affairs and the acceptance of all treaties as legally binding.⁶⁶ In response to the presentation of the Red Paper, Trudeau admitted that the federal government had perhaps not been “pragmatic enough or understanding enough” in creating the new policy, adding, “We won’t force any solution on you, because we are not looking for any particular solution.”⁶⁷ Throughout the early 1970s, various provincial aboriginal groups presented formal responses to the presentation of the White Paper that condemned it, including a Brown Paper presented by the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs; “Wahbung: Our Tomorrows,” a brief submitted by the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood; and “Position Paper,” a submission undertaken by the Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ The Indian Chiefs of Alberta, “Citizens Plus,” in *The Only Good Indian: Essays by Canadian Indians*, ed. Waubageshig (Toronto and Chicago: New Press, 1970), 9.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁶⁷ Pierre Trudeau, “Statement by the Prime Minister at a Meeting with the Indian Association of Alberta and the National Indian Brotherhood, Ottawa, 4 June 1970,” quoted in Weaver, *Making Canadian Indian Policy*, 185.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 188.

The responses of various aboriginal associations across Canada to the White Paper were only part of a much larger North American movement during the late 1960s and early 1970s known as Red Power. Making direct reference to the Black Power movement in the United States in its fight for equality and rights for aboriginal peoples, Red Power can be seen as part of the larger 1960s countercultural movement. The Native Alliance for Red Power (NARP) was founded in Vancouver in 1967, and founding member Henry Jack states that the goal of the Red Power movement was “to do something about our appalling conditions instead of just sitting on our asses doing nothing.”⁶⁹ Members of NARP met every week and published and distributed a newsletter that highlighted their objectives as a movement, and which focussed, in particular, on issues of racism.⁷⁰ Jack states of Red Power that “to us Red Power meant the gathering together of Indian people to solve their problems whether political, social, or economical.... We met as well as demonstrated against anyone who held racist views or opinions against Indians.”⁷¹ Forms of aboriginal resistance throughout the late 1960s were to a large degree successful, and by 1970 the White Paper had been formally withdrawn.

The overriding criticism of the White Paper was that equality could not be attained for aboriginal peoples without federal recognition of the impact of colonialism, namely in relation to treaties and land claims. Dale Turner has argued that the idea that

⁶⁹ Jack in Waubageshig, *The Only Good Indian*, 164.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 175. The “eight-point program” lists the eight objectives of NARP, which include the right to self-determination and abolition of the Indian Act, the right to not pay taxes, revised school curricula that discusses the oppression of aboriginal peoples, the ending of unjust arrests and harassment from police, the right for aboriginal peoples to be tried by a jury of aboriginal people, compensation for those who did not sign treaties with the federal government and to honour the treaties that do exist, compensation for the companies and corporations that have stripped the land of its natural resources, and an end to the division of aboriginal people as treaty and non-treaty, status and non-status, 170-72.

⁷¹ Ibid., 164.

aboriginal peoples constituted indigenous nations was not part of the “Canadian legal and political imagination” of the late 1960s.⁷² Ronald Niezen has suggested further that the categories “indigenous,” “native,” “aboriginal,” and “First Nations” are seen as “l[ying] outside the accepted norms of nation-states and the traditions of liberal democracy.”⁷³ This is because such identitarian categories are seen as contradicting the goal of a sovereign, unified nation-state. Indigenism, as a global movement of peoples claiming descent from pre-conquest inhabitants, differs from other civil rights struggles of the 1960s because the goal was not just racial equality, but state recognition of collective rights to nationhood, including self-determination and claims to land.⁷⁴

Aboriginal peoples were seen by the federal government as a collective that was different in terms of ethnicity and culture, rather than because of claims to nationhood. Turner argues that, in treating aboriginal peoples as an ethnic collective, the White Paper avoided addressing politically controversial and contentious issues that stemmed directly from Canada’s colonial history, such as treaty obligations and “the meaning and content of indigenous nationhood within a constitutional framework.”⁷⁵ To address aboriginal peoples as indigenous nations would mean addressing them as a collective, which, in addition to the issue of French Canadians, would be seen as a threat to the success of Trudeauvian liberalism and the “Canadianization” of the nation. In his essay, “Quebec and the Constitutional Problem,” Trudeau makes it clear that he does not view aboriginal peoples as such a threat: “In terms of *realpolitik*, French and English are equal in Canada

⁷² Turner, *This Is Not a Peace Pipe*, 22.

⁷³ Ronald Niezen, *The Origins of Indigenism: Human Rights and the Politics of Identity* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press Ltd., 2003), 16.

⁷⁴ “Indigenous” remains a highly contested category to define and I borrow my definition from Ronald Niezen’s brief discussion of it, see 17-23.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 16.

because each of these linguistic groups has the power to break the country. And this power cannot yet be claimed by the Iroquois, the Eskimos, or the Ukrainians.”⁷⁶ Turner suggests that to construct aboriginal peoples as liberal individuals, rather than a nation, was essentially an easier way for the Trudeau government to deal with the situation. Not only could the federal government lessen its responsibility toward honouring treaties, through the dissolution of DIAND, but it would also be absolved of any political responsibility.⁷⁷ In addition, such a strategy would not alter the Trudeauvian vision of Canada, which opposed special or distinct recognition of group identity or multinationalism.

Shortly after the withdrawal of the White Paper, and just less than a year after the October Crisis, on 8 October 1971, Trudeau announced in the House of Commons a new policy entitled, “Multiculturalism within a Bilingual Framework.” As Himani Bannerji has stated, “Trudeau’s gift” of multiculturalism

sidelined the claims of Canada’s aboriginal population, which had displayed a propensity toward armed struggles for land claims, as exemplified by the American Indian Movement (AIM).⁷⁸

The failure of the White Paper can be seen, as Bannerji suggests, as partly responsible for the policy on multiculturalism. In his speech to the House, Trudeau stated,

It was the view of the royal commission, [the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism] shared by the government and, I am sure, by all Canadians, that there cannot be one cultural policy for Canadians of British and French origin, another for the original peoples and yet a third for all others. For although there are two official languages, there is no official culture, nor does any ethnic group take precedence over any other. No citizen or group of citizens is other than Canadian, and all should be treated fairly.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Trudeau, *Federalism and the French Canadians*, 31. Trudeau’s italics.

⁷⁷ Turner, *This Is Not a Peace Pipe*, 24.

⁷⁸ Bannerji, *The Dark Side of the Nation*, 9.

⁷⁹ <http://www.abheritage.ca/albertans/speeches/trudeau.html> (accessed December 9, 2006).

Trudeau goes on to state,

National unity if it is to mean anything in the deeply personal sense, must be founded on confidence in one's own individual identity; out of this can grow respect for that of others and a willingness to share ideas, attitudes and assumptions. A vigorous policy of multiculturalism will help create this initial confidence. It can form the base of a society which is based on fair play for all.⁸⁰

The policy on multiculturalism can be seen as an attempt to manage the diverse and increasingly radical groups within Canada who had been marginalized by the capitalism, colonialism and patriarchy integral to the liberal nation-state. By proclaiming that Canada had “no official culture” and, in theory, affording no distinct or special status to any particular group, any political agency that might have been ascribed to a group was elided. Trudeauvian multiculturalism thus admitted that difference existed within Canada, but suppressed the social and political subjectivities constituted by that difference. This has led many, among them David Bennett, to dismiss multicultural policy as one of “culturalism”:

State-managed multiculturalisms reify and exoticise alterity; addressing ethnic and racial difference as a question of “identity” rather than of history and politics, they translate alterity as cultural diversity, treating difference (a relation) as an intrinsic property of “cultures” and as a *value* (a socially “enriching” one), to be “represented” as such.⁸¹

Bannerji has leveled a similar criticism, arguing that multiculturalism, as an ideological apparatus of the state, uses cultural categories to suppress social relations, such as class, gender, race and sexuality, consequently neutralizing their political radicalness. These criticisms of multicultural policy are similar to those raised by Cardinal and others in relation to the White Paper; neither, for example, addressed the history and impact of political realities, namely, colonialism.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Bennett, *Multicultural States*, 4. Bennett’s italics.

While Wieland acknowledged aboriginality as an identity in her art production, she did so in a way that idealized and romanticized aboriginal peoples as existing outside capitalist modernity. Positioning aboriginal peoples as unaffected by the political, social and cultural effects of colonialism denies the political realities of the history of colonialism in Canada. Wieland's cultural conceptualization of aboriginality can be understood in relation to federal policy changes regarding aboriginal peoples that were implemented under the Trudeau government in the late 1960s, namely the White Paper. The ways in which the federal government constructed aboriginal identity in cultural terms is similar to the way that Wieland engaged with and visually constructed aboriginal identity. While much of Wieland's work of the late 1960s and early 1970s is concerned with negotiating and questioning notions of the Just Society, her engagement with aboriginal identity suggests a certain degree of complicity in this project. Wieland employs a concept of aboriginal identity that is based on certain imagined notions that stem from stereotypical constructions of aboriginal peoples as close to nature, passive, and existing outside contemporary capitalist society. Wieland co-opts aboriginal identity in her film and visual art as a way of critiquing capitalism, technology and patriarchy –as an extension of her New Leftism. By doing so, her artistic construction of aboriginality becomes less about racial, ethnic and political difference and more about the way that aboriginal culture is seen and understood by the dominant culture –in other words, it becomes consumed and defined by whiteness.

Chapter VI

Negotiating the Nation: By Way of Conclusion

I was a good friend of Joyce's...and certainly was trying to get her papers for the AGO Archives.

Dennis Reid¹

I had admired Joyce Wieland's work for its energy and inventiveness and I asked her to work with me on an exhibition at the National Gallery.

Pierre Théberge²

Joyce Wieland was such a delight that day. I'm sure I woke her up when I arrived (at 10 a.m.), as there was quite a delay before the door opened and she looked rather tousled and hastily put together.

Barbara Stevenson³

Several weeks into my new job at a small liberal arts university, I was rummaging through my office and came across a fourth-year undergraduate, independent study from 2004 on the work of Joyce Wieland. Curious, I read the introduction and was immediately struck by how similar in tone it was to many scholarly publications about Wieland and her work. The student noted how she had been "searching" for herself throughout her university career and that, in many ways, she saw parallels between her own experiences as a woman and artist and Wieland's so-called struggle to come to terms with her feminism, art practice and personal life.

The student's account of her "coming-of-Wieland" was similar to the way Lauren Rabinovitz personalized her relationship with Wieland in the 2003 preface to the second edition of her book, *Points of Resistance*. Rabinovitz recalls her first meeting with the artist, which involved the two of them eating the contents of Wieland's broken

¹ Dennis Reid, email message to author, July 8, 2007.

² Pierre Théberge, email message to author, March 31, 2000.

³ Barbara Stevenson, email message to author, March 6, 2006.

refrigerator after Michael Snow refused to leave his studio to come and fix it.⁴

Rabinovitz writes that she was “unnerved and awed” by Wieland who was “charming, spontaneous, unpretentious, and extremely passionate,” despite this household disaster.⁵

Both Rabinovitz and the student closely identify with Wieland and acknowledge that their interest in her art production is as much about their personal relationship to the artist as it is their scholarly agendas.

During research trips and conferences, I often spoke with scholars, curators, and graduate students who, upon hearing about my research, would immediately express their personal experiences and anecdotes about Wieland. As the opening quotations to this chapter indicate, the responses to queries I received from scholars and curators were often prefaced with an acknowledgement of their personal experience of Wieland, as though to validate the authenticity of their perspectives on the artist and her work. After my talk about Wieland’s work at the 2005 Film Studies Association of Canada conference, for example, several audience members prefaced their questions and comments with such statements as, “Joyce once told me,” or “I knew Joyce.” At other times scholars made it clear that Wieland’s work had already been critically examined and that I was engaging in material that had been sufficiently territorialized. The frequency of these sorts of remarks, which I initially dismissed as inconsequential, provoked me to think seriously about the over-identification with, and territorialization of, Wieland and her work by scholars, curators and students.

Kristen Frederickson and Sara Webb’s 2003 anthology, *Singular Women*, is devoted to discussion of these sorts of issues and what is at stake for feminist scholars

⁴ Rabinovitz, *Points of Resistance*, xiii.

⁵ Ibid., xiv.

who research and write about individual women artists.⁶ Their text attests to the continued importance of researching the work of women artists, but also of the equally important experiences that feminist art historians face in their encounters with other scholars and institutional structures such as museums and universities. Paying attention to the fascination and in some cases even the intimate identification that scholars have with Wieland is ultimately what led me to think about other ways of engaging with, and critically positioning, her art production.

Chapter 2 is consequently dedicated to fleshing out the various “Wielands” that have been produced by different discourses and assessing the ways in which understandings of Wieland’s art production are often bound up with the artist’s personality and biography. I survey the ways in which Wieland’s work has been discussed within the dominant narratives and feminist literature of Canadian art and film and argue that, within each discipline, the primary methodological approach involves formal and visual analyses. Tracing the consolidation of Canadian art as a field of study, I suggest that several surveys published in the early- to mid-twentieth century link the development of the visual arts within Canada to the Canadian colony-to-nation narrative. Subsequently, cultural production in Canada, especially the visual arts, has often been mobilized to define Canadian identity. Descriptive analyses of works of art and biographies of artists form the foundation of this narrative, which inscribes value and importance by stressing stylistic originality.

While the work of very few women artists has been discussed within surveys, Wieland’s art production figures prominently. Art historians have had difficulty

⁶ Kristen Frederickson and Sarah E. Webb, eds., *Singular Women: Writing the Artist* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).

positioning visual art from the 1960s within a nation-building narrative because this work has been seen, aesthetically, and in its subject matter, as unconcerned with issues of Canadian identity. I argue in this chapter that Wieland's work, with its overtly nationalist imagery, was afforded an important place within the dominant narrative because it was seen as embodying Canadian cultural nationalism. Although Wieland's work was discussed by art historians, their formalist analyses accounted neither for the feminist, political, economic and cultural dimensions of her work nor the historical conditions of its production.

Exhibition catalogue essays, the popular press, and feminist literature also place emphasis on the formal, visual, and textual aspects of Wieland's work. I argue that exhibition catalogue essays, in particular, often draw on misconceptions about Wieland and her work prevalent in the popular press. The notion, for example, that Wieland's art production operates outside theoretical frameworks is a claim often made by curators based on comments by critics in the press. Such a claim consequently positions her art production as untheoretical and anti-intellectual and serves to reinforce stereotypes of women artists as operating outside avant-gardism.

Within the dominant narrative of film, I argue there is a much larger and theoretically diverse body of literature that, to a greater degree than the narrative of art history, has been transformed by feminist debates. While Wieland's films have been afforded an important place within film history as exemplifying the structural film movement, this narrative is also preoccupied with the analysis of filmic form and textuality. Feminist film scholars writing from the 1970s through to the 1990s argued that the structural film label, with its emphasis on the formal properties of film itself,

could not explain how experimental film techniques could also be a way of engaging in a feminist politics. Through the use of psychoanalytic theory, feminist film scholars lent agency to Wieland's films as both structural and feminist. I argue, however, that the analyses these scholars employed, while it acknowledged the importance of female subjectivity to an examination of Wieland's work, ultimately did little to shift treatment of her work away from textuality and formalism. By focusing on the formal, visual, and textual properties of Wieland's art production, both disciplines portrayed Wieland, and subsequently her work, as untheoretical and anti-intellectual. My intention is to suggest that Wieland was, in fact, highly theoretical and intellectually driven, and that is evident if her work is examined in relation to its historical conditions of production.

In chapter 3, I focus on examining ways in which Wieland negotiated the changing conceptualization of citizenship under the Trudeau government in relation to her feminist politics and her art practice. Drawing on the 1971 Royal Commission on the Status of Women (RCSW), often considered the federal government's formal response to second-wave feminist's demands for social and economic equality, I outline the ways in which the Trudeau government, through the RCSW, sought to reconceptualize women as rights-bearing citizens by couching equality as achievable only within the framework of the liberal capitalist nation-state. Using Wieland's 1967-69 film, *Reason Over Passion*, and her 1968 quilts, *Reason Over Passion* and *La Raison avant la passion*, I argue that her use of craft, nationalistic signifiers, and forms of filmic experimentalism destabilized the construction of the liberal individual as the basis for citizenship within the liberal nation-state.

I suggest that the ways in which Wieland transformed Trudeau's governing

philosophy and motto, “reason over passion,” and her use of female bodily imagery in relation to such nationalist signifiers as the national anthem, served to question how, and if, women could be citizens and participate in the nation-state as embodied feminine beings. Drawing on the work of Anne Phillips, Carole Pateman, and Chantal Mouffe, who critique the notion of the liberal individual, and liberalism as a patriarchal category that women can ever occupy, I suggest that Wieland’s work anticipates these debates in the way that it complicates the relationship women have to citizenship in liberal capitalist nation-states.

In chapter 4, I explore the way Wieland negotiated New Leftism within her art production in the context of the development of the New Left in Canada and Québec. I argue that evident in Wieland’s 1968 film, *Rat Life and Diet in North America*, and in her 1972 film, *Pierre Vallières*, as well as in several of her craft works, are the political leanings of the New Left, and specifically the New Democratic Party splinter group, Waffle. While Wieland never fully supported any one political party or ideology, she often drew on various New Left notions in her subject matter in order to critique capitalism, patriarchy and colonialism. In particular, I focus on the ways in which Wieland dealt with ecological and environmental subject matter as a way of drawing viewers’ attention to the effects of capitalist exploitation on the land.

New Leftism in Canada and Québec concerned itself with the ways in which social relations, such as those produced by colonialism, capitalism, and patriarchy, had created inequalities based on gender, sexuality, race and class. Waffle and the *Front de libération du Québec* (FLQ), emerged as two very different Leftist projects, one concerned with Canadian cultural, political and economic autonomy, and the other with

the *souverainiste* desire for Québécois autonomy. Wieland's work, I suggest, engages in the politics of both of these New Left projects.

I argue that, despite her evident interest in the FLQ's more radical New Leftism, with its desire for Québécois sovereignty, Wieland did not embrace FLQ ideology fully; rather she was sympathetic to the ways in which colonialism and capitalism had marginalized the Québécois as a group within Canada. I examine non-filmic works that Wieland used to express her desire for Canada to remain a unified nation in order to fight what she perceived as the more important threat of American cultural, political and economic imperialism. Wieland's sympathetic portrayal of well-known FLQ member Pierre Vallières in her film *Pierre Vallières* suggests that she used his articulation of ideas regarding various groups and nations within Canada –women, the working classes, the Québécoise, Acadians and aboriginal peoples– that had been oppressed by capitalism, colonialism and patriarchy in order to politicize her art production.

In many ways, chapter 5 can be seen as an extension of some of the ideas I raise in chapter 4. Although I discuss the ways in which Wieland negotiated shifting definitions of aboriginal identity in her art production, I argue that her conceptualization of aboriginality is based on stereotypical and romanticized notions of aboriginal culture as existing close to nature and outside capitalist modernity. Using her 1976 film, *The Far Shore*, and her 1971 bookwork, *True Patriot Love*, to illustrate my point, I argue that her portrayal of aboriginal peoples positions them as intimately connected to the natural environment.

In turn, I argue that Wieland's art production incorporates this romantic conceptualization of aboriginality in order to warn viewers that the effects of capitalist

exploitation on the land not only will have devastating consequences for the environment, but will also destroy aboriginal cultures. I suggest that, while Wieland may have been sympathetic to the injustices suffered by aboriginal peoples in Canada, she translates this sympathy to legitimize what was, in reality, her own paternalistic attitude. One reason that Wieland's engagement with notions of aboriginality is so interesting is that she perceived her co-optation of aboriginal cultures as a way of expressing her New Leftism. However, I argue that her notion of aboriginality is, in fact, more in line with the contemporaneous liberal imagining of aboriginal peoples as a cultural rather than political collective—a notion expressed most explicitly in the federal government's 1969 White Paper on Indian Policy.

One of the aims of reassessing the ways in which Wieland's art production has been positioned within art historical and filmic discourses was to question why and how her work had come to occupy such a prominent place within them. The emphasis that both academic scholars and the popular press placed on formal and visual analyses of Wieland's work, with their attendant stress on medium, textuality, iconography, and craft, established understandings of the artist and her work as naïve, celebratory, apolitical and non-threatening. Wieland's critical art practice, as I have argued, reveals the degree to which she was highly aware of, and involved in, her social, political, cultural and economic environment. Her engagement with writings such as James Laxer's *The Energy Poker Game*, Pierre Vallières's *White Niggers of America*, or essays from *Canadian Forum*, for example, suggest her interest in contemporaneous politico-economic discussions in Canada.

Conveyed in these discussions is a sense of urgency and fear regarding the future

of the Canadian nation-state and the role citizens should play within it. A similar sense of urgency is often evoked as well in Wieland's statements about the situation of Canada and the role of the artist in changing it. The way that Wieland envisioned herself as a propagandist or as aboriginal-like, for example, reveals the degree to which she re-fashioned traditional conceptualizations of the artist in order to politicize both her art practice and herself. Wieland often commented that she felt it was her responsibility to artistically respond to the political, economic, social and cultural situation of Canada. One of the most striking aspects of such comments is the way she perceived herself as morally obligated to alleviate fears such as those raised in English Canada about the threat of Québec sovereignty, or to warn of the ecological consequences of American imperialism. In this way, her art production takes on a similar sense of urgency. In the way that Wieland reconceptualized her role as an artist in order to respond to contemporaneous anxieties over the future of the Canadian nation-state, I would suggest that her work reveals, not necessarily concrete solutions to Canada's political, economic or cultural problems, but rather the potential to choose the nation's future.

Wieland's work suggests that there is potential for ecological destruction, the annihilation of aboriginal peoples, and the secession of Québec, if capitalism and colonialism remain unimpeded, but her work also makes it clear that there is potential to stop this. Several of Wieland's film and non-film works can be understood as warnings in the way that they contrast two different potential futures for Canada. One is idealized, evident in *Rat Life and Diet*'s vision of Canada as healthy, natural, and organic, and the other portrays the extremes of unchecked power, evident in *The Water Quilt* or *The Far Shore*'s vision of Canada as capitalist ground to mine, build on, and exploit. Confronted

with these two potential futures, Wieland conveys to viewers that there is a choice, but one that must be made immediately.

Wieland's conceptualization of herself and her art practice as having the potential to shift viewers's thinking about deeply fundamental issues such as citizenship and national identity may reveal an overly optimistic or utopian desire. Her belief in the transformative and democratizing potential of the visual arts can be seen, however, as part of a larger dialogue occurring during the late 1960s and early 1970s regarding the importance of the artist and cultural production to understandings of individual subjectivity in a modernizing and increasingly globalized world. The writings of Marshall McLuhan and Gene Youngblood, for example, sought to explain the relationship between the individual and the development of new media –film, television, and computer technology.⁷ In many ways these discussions may suggest why Wieland believed her art production could transcend traditional artistic boundaries and why it takes on a similar utopic and optimistic hope for the future of the Canadian nation.

One of the ways in which Wieland advances her political agenda is by choosing to have her art production appear naïve, non-threatening, and playful, rather than theoretical and intellectual. In a 1973 interview, for example, Wieland stated that the “True Patriot Love” exhibition “wasn’t a very tough show” and that “if it had been real strong, it probably wouldn’t have got up.”⁸ Her use of the word “strong” clearly indicates “political,” and her statement reveals the degree to which she was aware of how, and in what ways, she could mobilize her art production for political purposes. In short,

⁷ See Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (New York: Signet Books, 1969/1962), Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, 2nd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), and Gene Youngblood, *Expanded Cinema* (New York: Dutton, 1970).

⁸ Wordsworth, “An Interview with Joyce Wieland,” 109.

Wieland, I would argue, purposefully chose craft because of its stereotypical associations with femininity and domesticity, hence its non-threatening quality. In the interview conducted on the occasion of her 1971 exhibition at the National Gallery of Canada, Wieland stated that her fusion of craft with nationalistic signifiers was a “symbolic working together,” and about making “things that we have in common.”⁹ She goes on to note the importance of reaching people with her work and having them “draw together” over the issues that she raises.¹⁰ Wieland evidently wanted her art production to have a democratizing effect, and this was contingent on finding a medium that appeared to signify apoliticality.

This, of course, raises issues about the ways in which Wieland negotiates meanings of craft and craft production within Canada. Sandra Alföldy’s recent book, *Crafting Identity*, investigates the ways in which craft was professionalized in Canada during the 1960s through the establishment of such associations as the Canadian Craftsmen’s Association.¹¹ Alföldy notes that it was during the 1960s that debates regarding what constituted craft occurred, in addition to the increasing interest in craft by the artistic avant-garde. An important area for future research about Wieland’s work would be an examination of the ways in which craft was being re-conceptualized during this period as a “high” art form in relation to Wieland’s use of craft as a stereotypical and essentialized signifier of femininity and anti-modernism. Wieland’s use of craft is further complicated by the fact that she employed other women to create all of her craft works, hiring well-known crafters Valery McMillin, Joan McGregor and Mrs. Louis Phillipe

⁹ Théberge, “Interview with Joyce Wieland,” unpaginated.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Sandra Alföldy, *Crafting Identity: The Development of Professional Fine Craft in Canada* (Montréal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2005).

Aucoin from Nova Scotia.¹² There is, I would suggest, an important discussion to be had about the way in which Wieland drew on popular conceptualizations of craft/folk art as a seemingly authentic aspect of Nova Scotian regional identity, and the way she used this to denote anti-modernism within her art production.

Throughout this thesis, I have often drawn on interviews with Wieland and notes she made regarding her work. One of the difficulties I encountered with this type of research material is that Wieland often revised her statements at different times and occasionally would even contradict herself. The way I was able to trace Wieland's shifting politics and understandings of herself as an artist at various times throughout her career suggests to me that she used her art production as an archive through which to construct and, perhaps more importantly, revise her own history. This is evident, for example, in the way that Wieland at times referred to herself and her work as feminist, while at other times she rejected the label.

In an interview around 1975, for example, Ardele Lister asked Wieland,

How did you feel about working in stuff like fabric at a time before the "high art" world really acknowledged that as high art? You were way ahead of everyone saying that quilts were ok.¹³

Wieland responded,

Yeah, because the first ones were being done in '64. I thought that they wouldn't like it there, people wouldn't normally acknowledge it. But it was part of my feminist feelings too, and my own reaction to the New York art scene, that I had to be myself. ...But the first idea of using them [quilts] was that I was involved with feminine work, things that women had done, going through that idea of the roots of our own female culture.¹⁴

In contrast, in a 1981 interview with Lauren Rabinovitz, Wieland acknowledged

¹² Mrs. Louis Phillipe Aucoin's first name is never given.

¹³ Joyce Wieland fonds, CTASC, 1991-014/005 VIII, File 75.

¹⁴ Ibid.

that being a woman was important to her art practice, but stressed that this was not the defining feature of her art practice. Rabinovitz asked, “Were you conscious during the time that you lived in Manhattan of being a woman artist with the circle of New York City underground filmmakers?”¹⁵ Wieland replied,

Sure I was. It didn’t come up consciously, but even in the late 1950s I knew there was something legitimate in a female outlook, female expression. But to go further than that, the real problem was that mine was a unique expression besides being feminine. *Rat Life* is a good example. There was a tendency within the avant-garde in terms of writing and criticism to underrate my work because I wasn’t a theoretician. Many of the men were increasingly interested in films about visual theories.¹⁶

In other words, Wieland states that she was, on the one hand, conscious of being a woman artist in New York City and, on the other hand, notes that this “didn’t come up consciously” in her art production. In a 1986 interview, Barbara Stevenson and Wieland discussed the term feminist:

BS: I’d like to ask you a few questions about your quote-unquote feminism. A lot of critics have called you not only feminist, but the feminist par excellence of Canadian artists. Would you agree with that terminology or description?

JW: I don’t know.

BS: Do you have difficulty with the term: “feminist”?

JW: Well, if it were true, I’d have a hard time accepting it.

BS: In what way?

JW: I mean I want to avoid it. But it’s because I was well-known to begin with that when my involvement– it was my turn to become a feminist, in a way. ...so my works became more and more feminist and they became more known than others, maybe because I was more well-known to start with. I think my greatest feminist involvement was the creation of the women’s work, which I did long before Judy Chicago.¹⁷

Wieland’s statements about herself and her work as feminist are simultaneously ambiguous and forthright. Wieland suggests that, despite the identification of herself and

¹⁵ Rabinovitz, “An Interview with Joyce Wieland,” 10.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Joyce Wieland fonds, CTASC, 1999-003/005, File 5.

her work as feminist in the early 1970s, by 1986 she wanted to avoid categorization of her work as feminist. She concludes, however, by arguing that she contributed to the development of feminist art practices “long before Judy Chicago.” Wieland’s statements reveal the way she consistently revised understandings of her art production, altering the ways in which her work has been archived in discourse and, consequently, our understandings of it.

Thinking about the ambiguous ways that Wieland referred to her work as feminist leads to the more fundamental question that I set out to address in this thesis: how to discuss and examine feminist art practices in Canada in the absence of critical frameworks. Despite Wieland’s sometimes-rejection of the term feminist to define her art practice, I have examined her work as a complex negotiation of contemporaneous constructions of femininity, modernity and representation. I sought to remove understandings of her art production from narratives of nation-building and modernism in order to think about the ways in which her work negotiated its historical moment. To position Wieland’s work from the late 1960s and early 1970s as negotiating its moment is to pay attention to its engagement with colonialism, capitalism, liberalism and patriarchy. Canadian feminist art history must question how these discourses articulated conceptualizations of femininity and feminism in everyday life and on temporal and symbolic levels, and how this in turn was negotiated by female art producers. In this examination of the work of Joyce Wieland I have attempted to begin this inquiry.



Figure 1

Joyce Wieland, *Reason Over Passion*, 1968

Quilted cloth assemblage

256.5 x 302.3 cm

Collection of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa

Purchase 1970

Accession No. 15924



Figure 2

Joyce Wieland, *La Raison avant la passion*, 1968

Quilted cloth assemblage

244.7 x 305.5 cm

Collection of the Estate of Pierre Elliott Trudeau, Montréal

Gift of Joyce Wieland



Figure 3
Joyce Wieland, *Reason Over Passion*, 1967-69
82 minutes, colour, sound, 16mm
Film still



Figure 4
Joyce Wieland, *Reason Over Passion* (detail of Pierre Trudeau), 1967-69
82 minutes, colour, sound, 16mm
Film still

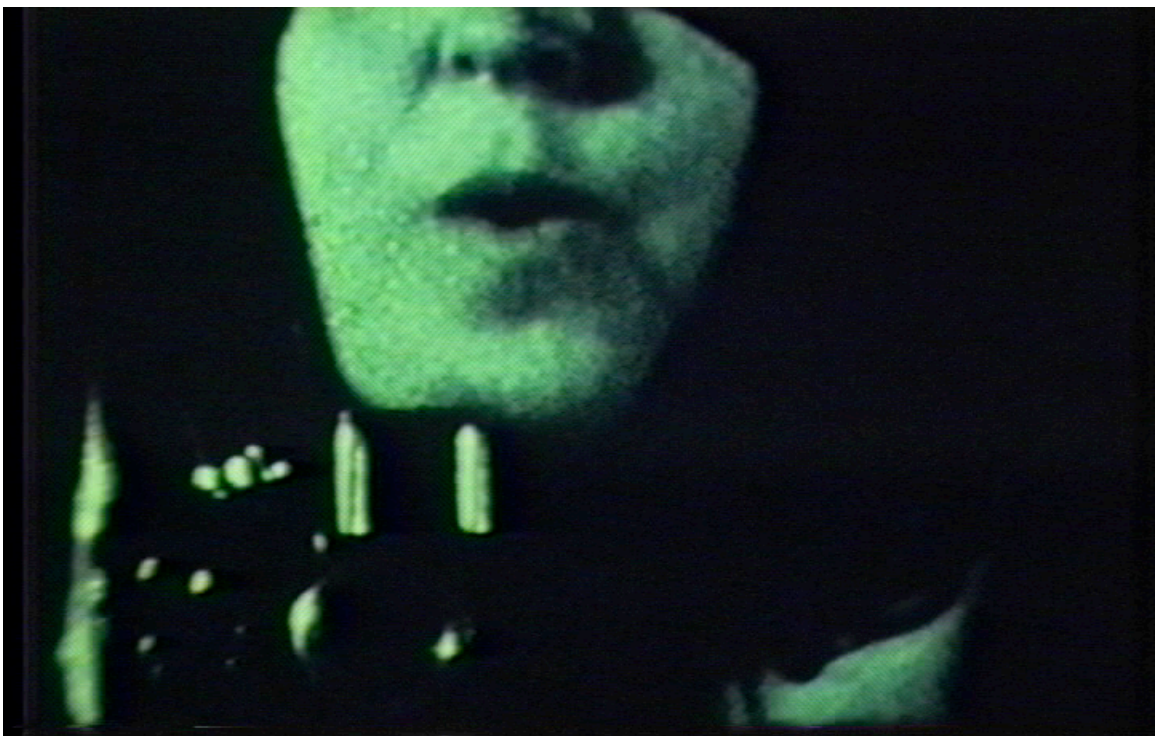


Figure 5
Joyce Wieland, *Reason Over Passion* (details of Wieland's face), 1967-69
82 minutes, colour, sound, 16mm
Film still



Figure 6

Joyce Wieland, *O Canada*, 1969

Lithograph in red on wove paper

57.4 x 76.4

Collection of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa

Purchase 1971

Accession No. 16901

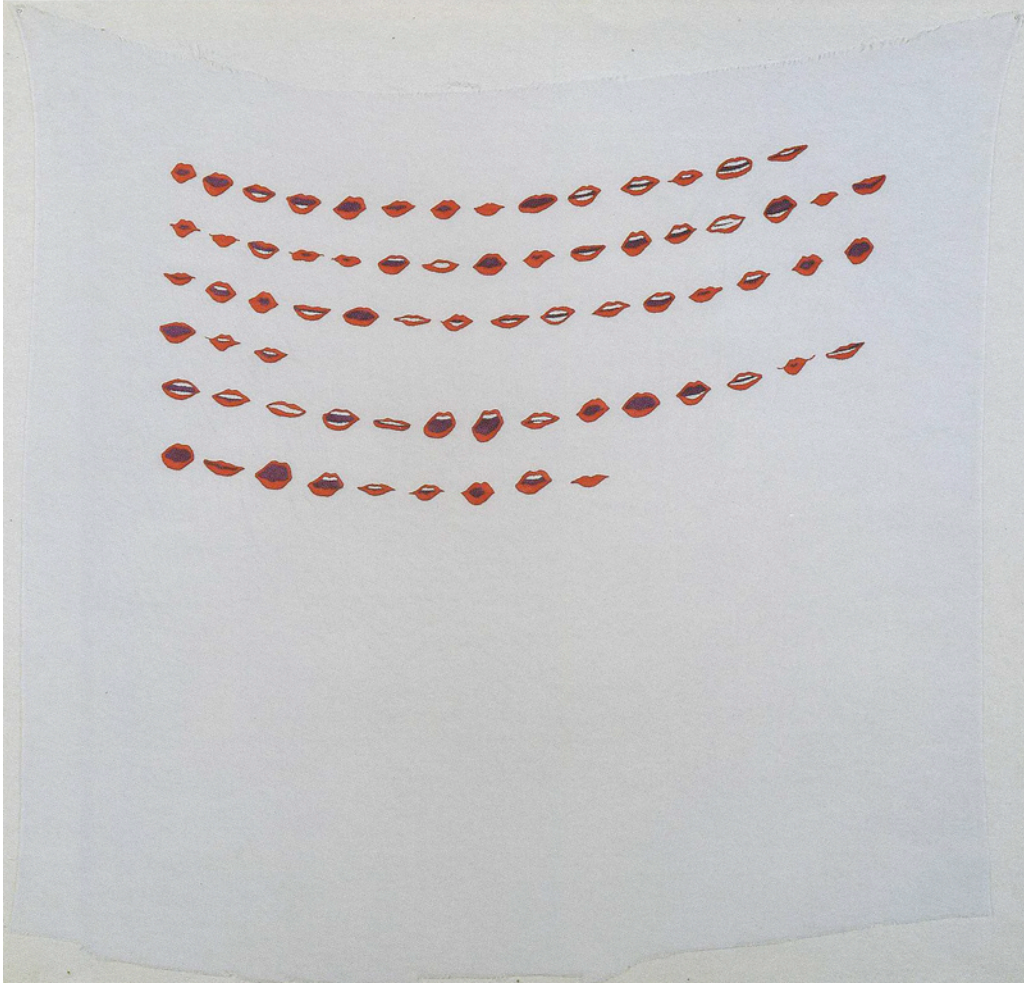


Figure 7
Joyce Wieland, *O Canada Animation*, 1970
Embroidery on cloth
107 x 114 cm
Collection of Edie and Morden Yolles, Toronto

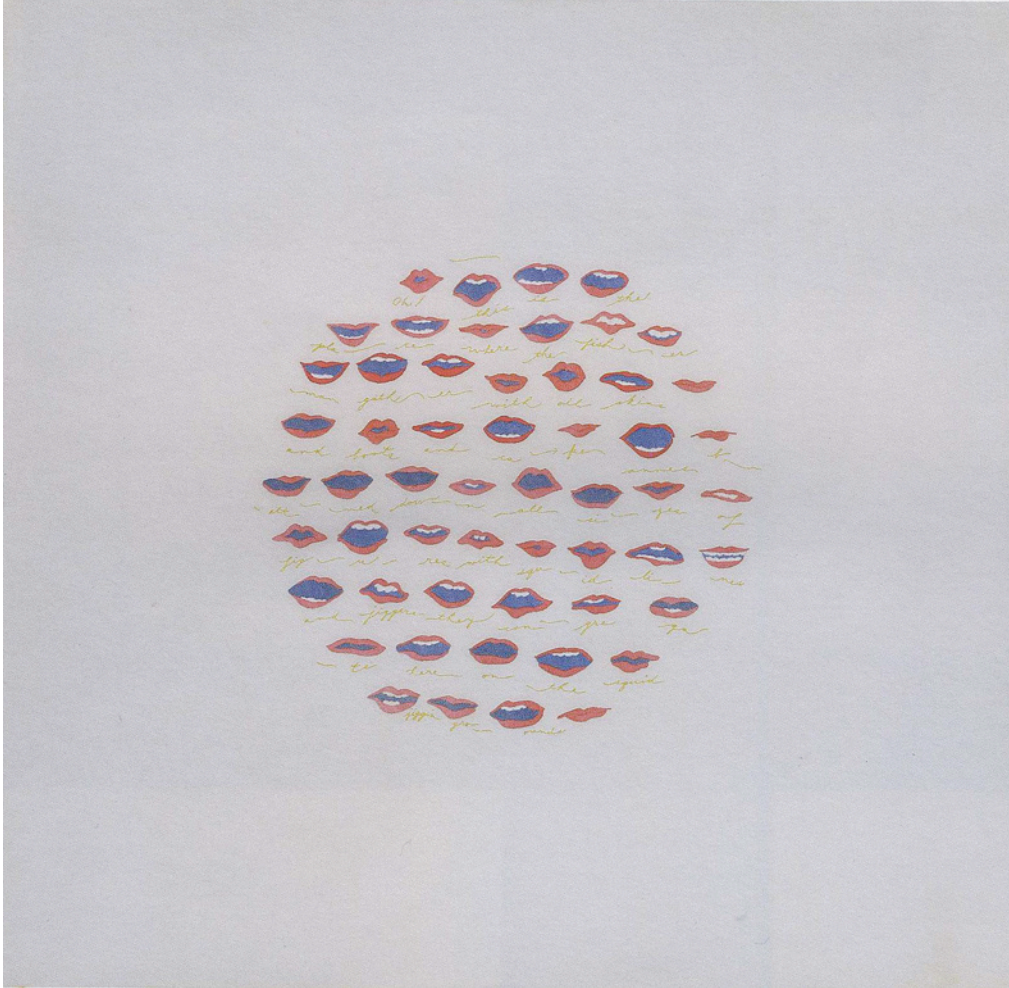


Figure 8
Joyce Wieland, *Squid Jiggin' Grounds*, 1974
Embroidery on cloth
80.5 x 80.5 cm
Collection of Avrom Isaacs, Toronto

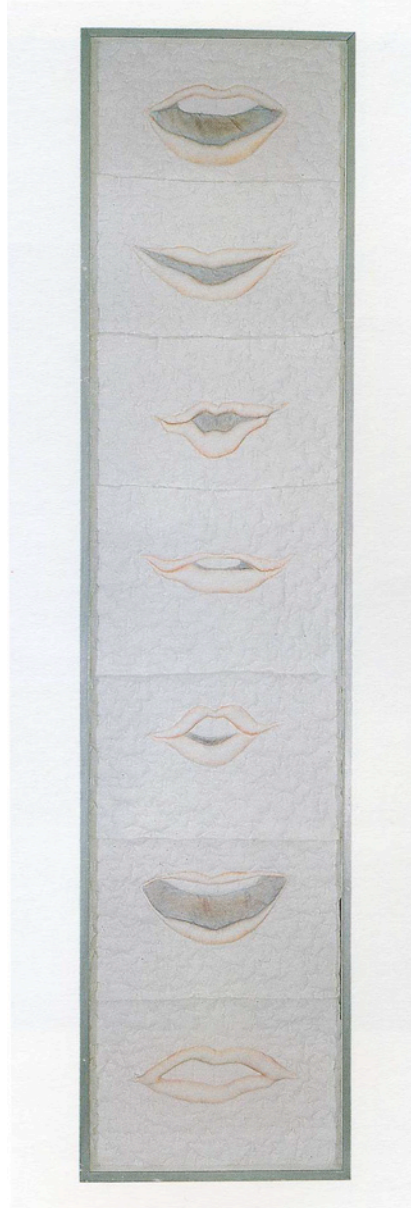


Figure 9

Joyce Wieland, *The Maple Leaf Forever II*, 1972

Coloured pencil on quilted assemblage

218.4 x 50.2 cm

Collection of the Canada Council Art Bank, Ottawa

Accession No. 72/3-1097



Figure 10

Joyce Wieland, *The Water Quilt*, 1970-71

Fabric, embroidery, thread, metal grommets, braided rope, and ink on fabric

121.9 x 121.9 cm

Collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto

Purchase 1977 with assistance from Wintario

Accession No. 76/221



Figure 11
Joyce Wieland, *The Water Quilt* (detail), 1970-71

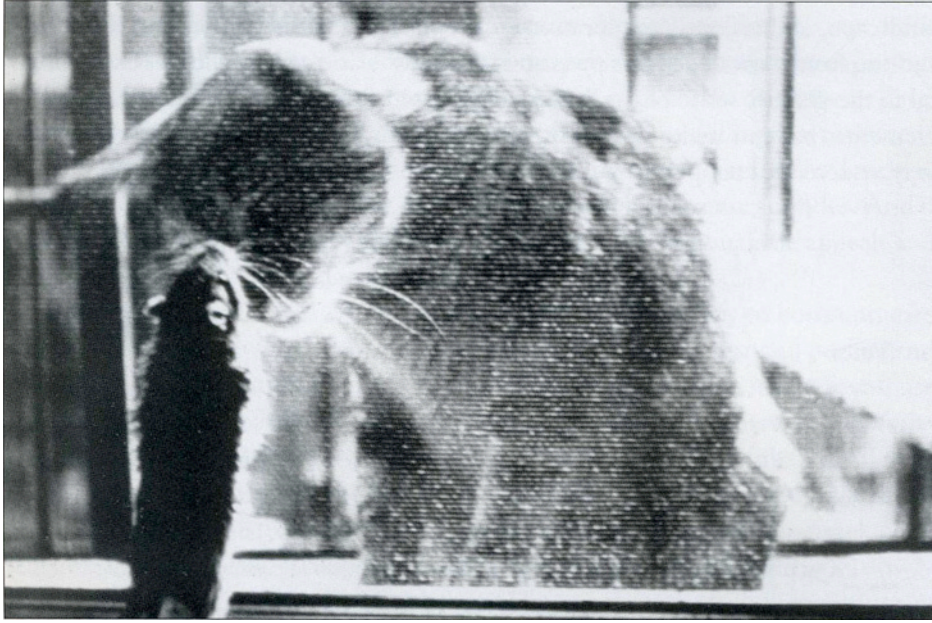


Figure 12
Joyce Wieland, *Rat Life and Diet in North America*, 1968
14 minutes, colour, sound, 16mm
Film still

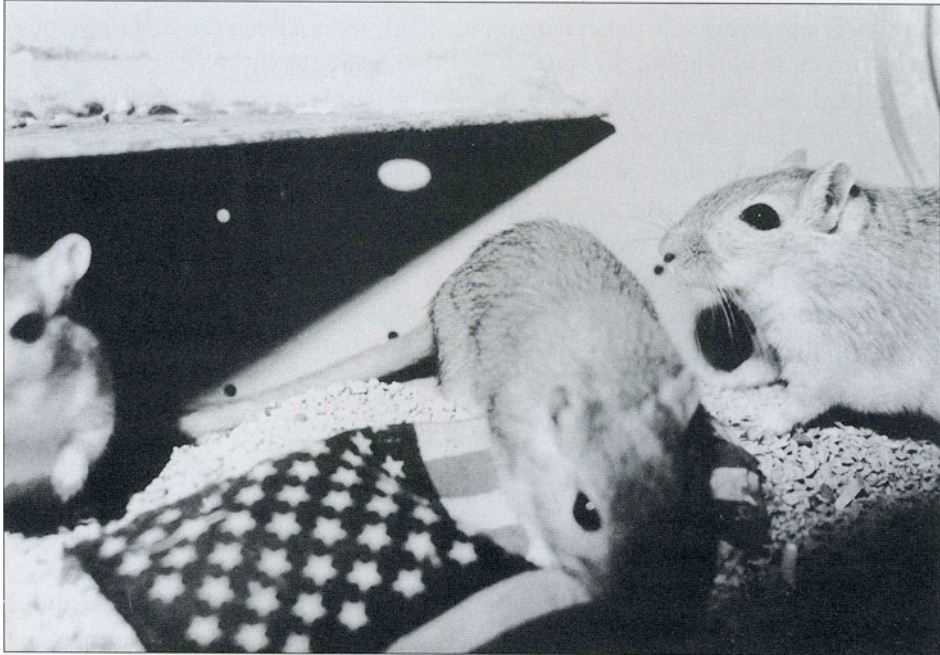


Figure 13
Joyce Wieland, *Rat Life and Diet in North America*, 1968
14 minutes, colour, sound, 16mm
Film still



Figure 14
Freddy Alborta, *Che Guevara's Dead Body*, 1967
Photograph
Originally published in the *New York Times*, 11 October 1967



Figure 15

Joyce Wieland, *I Love Canada – J'aime Canada*, 1970

Quilted cotton assemblage and metal link chain

153.1 x 304.7 cm

Collection of the Mackenzie Art Gallery, Regina

Purchase 1970

Accession No. 1970-043

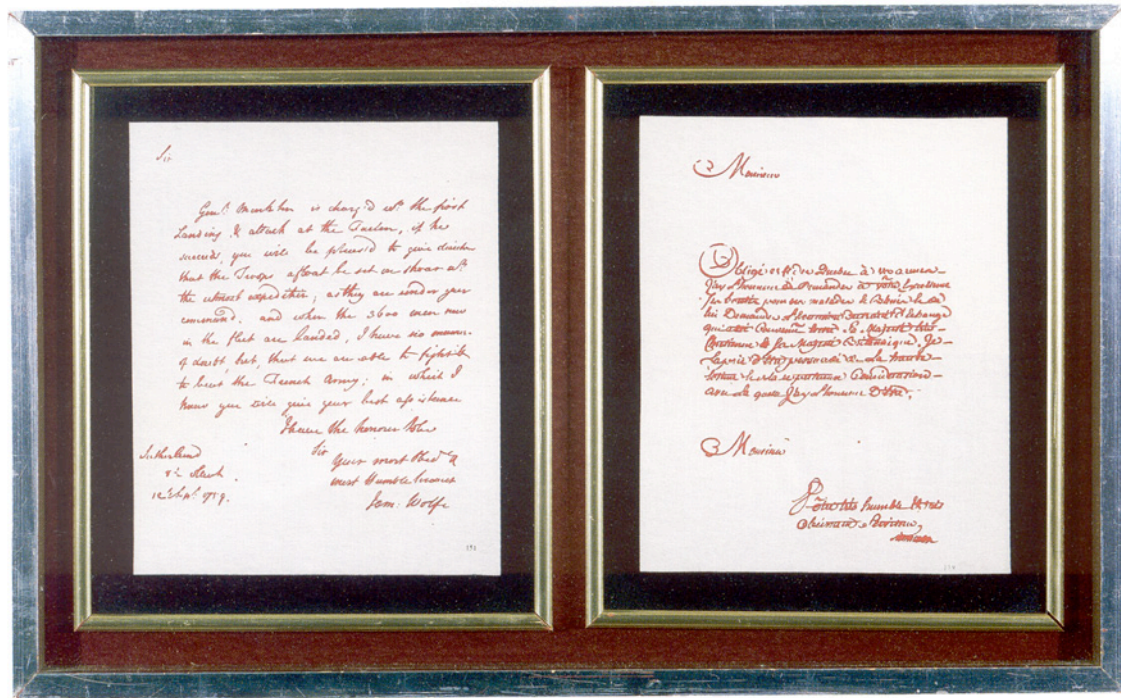


Figure 16
 Joyce Wieland, *Montcalm's Last Letter/Wolfe's Last Letter*, 1971
 Embroidery on cloth
 34.5 x 27.4 cm each
 Collection of the Hon. John Roberts, Toronto



Figure 17
Joyce Wieland, *Pierre Vallières*, 1972
40 minutes, colour, sound, 16mm
Film still



Figure 18
Joyce Wieland, *The Far Shore* (Tom McLeod), 1976
106 minutes, colour, sound, 35mm
Film still



Figure 19
Joyce Wieland, *The Far Shore* (Eulalie and Tom), 1976
106 minutes, colour, sound, 35mm
Film still

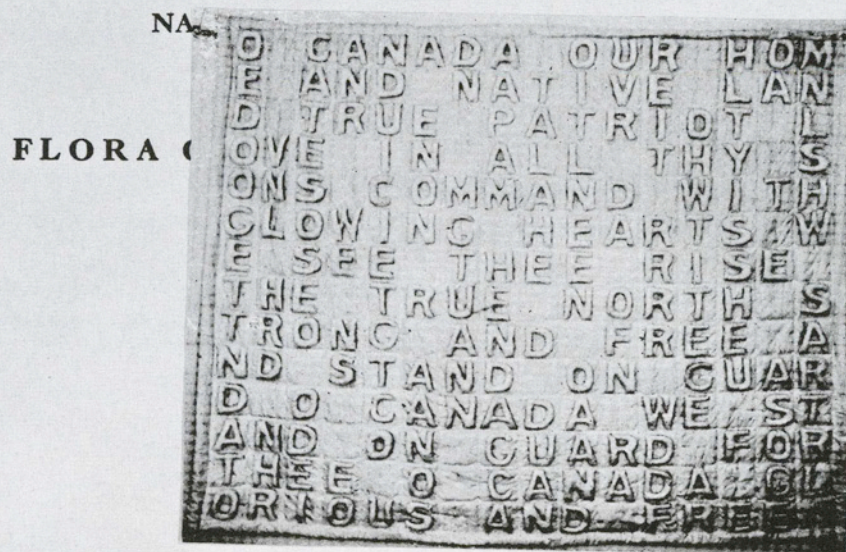


Figure 20
Joyce Wieland, *The Far Shore* (Eulalie), 1976
106 minutes, colour, sound, 35mm
Film still



CANADA

DEPARTMENT OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE



BULLETIN No. 146

BIOLOGICAL SERIES No. 50

71
1964

True Patriot Love
By Joyce Wieland
Véritable Amour Patriotique
Par Joyce Wieland

Figure 21
Joyce Wieland, *True Patriot Love/Véritable amour patriotique* (title page), 1971
Re-photographed book
17 x 25 cm

ILLUSTRATED FLORA OF THE CANADIAN ARCTIC ARCHIPELAGO

INTRODUCTION

The present work is intended as a guide or manual to the 340 species and major geographical races of flowering plants and ferns that comprise the vascular flora as it is known at present of the Canadian Arctic Archipelago¹. Besides conventional keys to families, genera, and species, it contains brief descriptions, line drawings, and maps showing the North American ranges of all species. For each species brief notes are given on local occurrence, soil preferences, economic uses, if any, and on their total or world distribution. A glossary ~~explains~~ the meaning of all special botanical symbols provided to simplify the reader's task.

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Similarly, the reader desiring more detailed information of the flora of the Eastern Canadian Arctic may refer to N. Polunin's "Botany of the Eastern Canadian Arctic", Part I of which (Nat. Mus. Canada, Bull. 92, 1940) deals with the vascular flora; Part II (Nat. Mus. Canada, Bull. 97, 1947) with mosses, lichens, and algae; and Part III (Nat. Mus. Canada, Bull. 104, 1948) with vegetation and ecology. Recent collections of plants from the eastern islands have added materially to the 246 species of vascular plants reported by Polunin from the eastern arctic islands. The more important of these recent collections are in the National Herbarium of Canada and, together with a few published additions to the flora, have been incorporated in the distribution maps at the end of the present work.

¹ Descriptions as well as range and habitat notes (in small print) have been inserted in the text for some 40-odd species that as yet have not been recorded in the flora of the Archipelago but that, for phytogeographic reasons, may be expected to turn up in parts so far incompletely explored.

Figure 22
Joyce Wieland, *True Patriot Love/Véritable amour patriotique* (page 1), 1971
Re-photographed book
17 x 25 cm

The plant material upon which "Flora of the Canadian Arctic Archipelago" (as well as Bulletins 92 and 135) is based consists mainly of the collections preserved in the National Herbarium of Canada at Ottawa. In addition, the arctic collections of a number of other herbaria have been consulted. The principal ones in which are found significant material from the Canadian Arctic Archipelago are those in the herbaria of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew and the British Museum (Natural History), London, England; the Botanical Museum of the University of Copenhagen, Denmark; the Natural History Museum of Stockholm, Sweden; the Botanical Museum of the University of Oslo, Norway; the Gray Herbarium of Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.; the herbarium of the New York Botanical Garden, New York City; and the United States National Herbarium, Washington, D.C. The writer wishes to express his sincere appreciation to the directors and curators of these herbaria for making the arctic collections under their care available for study. The examination of a number of critical specimens as well as letters and unpublished records in the Penrose Fund of

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*La mer immense m'a mis en mouvement
M'emporte à la dérive
Et je flotte comme une plante dans la
rivière
La voûte du firmament
Et la puissance des tempêtes
M'enveloppe
Et je reste
Tremblant de joie.*

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Eastern Arctic: Ellesmere Island. North coast, J. P. Kelsall, Can. Wildlife Service (1948); S. D. MacDonald, National Museum (1951); P. F. Bruggemann (1951); Hattersley-Smith, Ottawa (1954); R. L. Christie, Geol. Surv. Canada (1954). West coast, J. S. Tener, Can. Wildlife Service (1951); J. C. Troelsen, Copenhagen (1952); P. F. Bruggemann, Ottawa (1953-54); S. D. MacDonald, National Museum (1955).

Baffin Island: Shores of Foxe Basin, T. H. and E. W. Manning, Ottawa (1938-40); Lake Amadjuak Region, J. Carrol, Topogr. Service (1943); Frobisher Bay Region, V. C. Wynne-Edwards, McGill University (1937 and 1953); C. Thacker, National Museum (1948). Cape Searle and head of River Clyde, V. C. Wynne-Edwards (1950), University of Aberdeen.

Western Arctic: In 1954 and again in 1955, Mrs. Paul F. Cooper of Cooperstown, N.Y., made important collections in King William Island and at Spence Bay on the west coast of Boothia Peninsula, adding no less than 24 species to those previously known from King William Island.

Figure 23

Joyce Wieland, *True Patriot Love/Véritable amour patriotique* (page 2), 1971

Re-photographed book

17 x 25 cm

In 1954 E. H. McEwen, Canadian Wildlife Service, made a small collection of plants from the vicinity of Cape Kellett on the west coast of Banks Island; one species not previously known from that island, or indeed from the western Archipelago, was added. In 1955, S. D. MacDonald, National Museum, collected a few plants on the northwest coast of Axel Heiberg Island. Since the publication of Bulletin 135, I have examined a collection of plants from Prince Patrick Island, made in 1952 by Mr. P. F. Bruggemann. This collection contains the following 11 species not recorded from that island in Bulletin 135: *Lycopodium Selago*, *Deschampsia brevifolia*, *D. pumila*, *Poa arctica* ssp. *caespitans*, *Festuca brachyphylla*, *Carex misandra*, *Stellaria humifusa*, *Sagina intermedia*, *Ranunculus Gmelini*, *Senecio congestus*, and *Crepis nana*.

The writer finally wishes to thank Mrs. Dagny T. Lid of Oslo, Norway, who has contributed all but seven of the line drawings reproduced in the test. Mrs. Lid's skill and knowledge of most of these plants is reflected in the excellence of her drawings. The remaining seven drawings: fig. 31, h, i; fig. 40, are prepared by Mr. John Crosby of t

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The Great sea has set me in motion
Set me adrift
And I move as a weed in the river
The Arch of sky
And mightiness of storms
Encompasses me
And I am left
Trembling with joy.

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square miles of land (or 2.5 million square kilometers), of which the Arctic Archipelago contributes 549,000 square miles (1.42 million square kilometers) or approximately two-thirds of the area of Greenland. From east to west the Archipelago extends from the southern tip of Baffin Island to the northwest corner of Banks Island—a distance of about 1,860 miles (3,000 km.). In a north-south direction it extends from approximate latitude 61° in Baffin Island to Cape Columbia on the north coast of Ellesmere Island, in latitude 83°39'—a distance of 1,550 miles (2,500 km.), or nearly the length of Greenland.

One of the principal topographical features of the Arctic Archipelago is the mountain range that extends in a north-south direction from Labrador across Baffin, Devon, Ellesmere, and Axel Heiberg islands. This range, which in some sections reaches elevations of 8,000 or even 10,000 feet (2,400–3,000 m.), strongly affects the climate of the rest of the Archipelago, because it acts as a mechanical barrier for the free flow of air from one side to the other. This is strikingly illustrated by the annual mean temperature, which at Bache Peninsula on the east coast of Ellesmere Island, in



Figure 24

Joyce Wieland, *True Patriot Love/Véritable amour patriotique* (page 3), 1971

Re-photographed book

17 x 25 cm

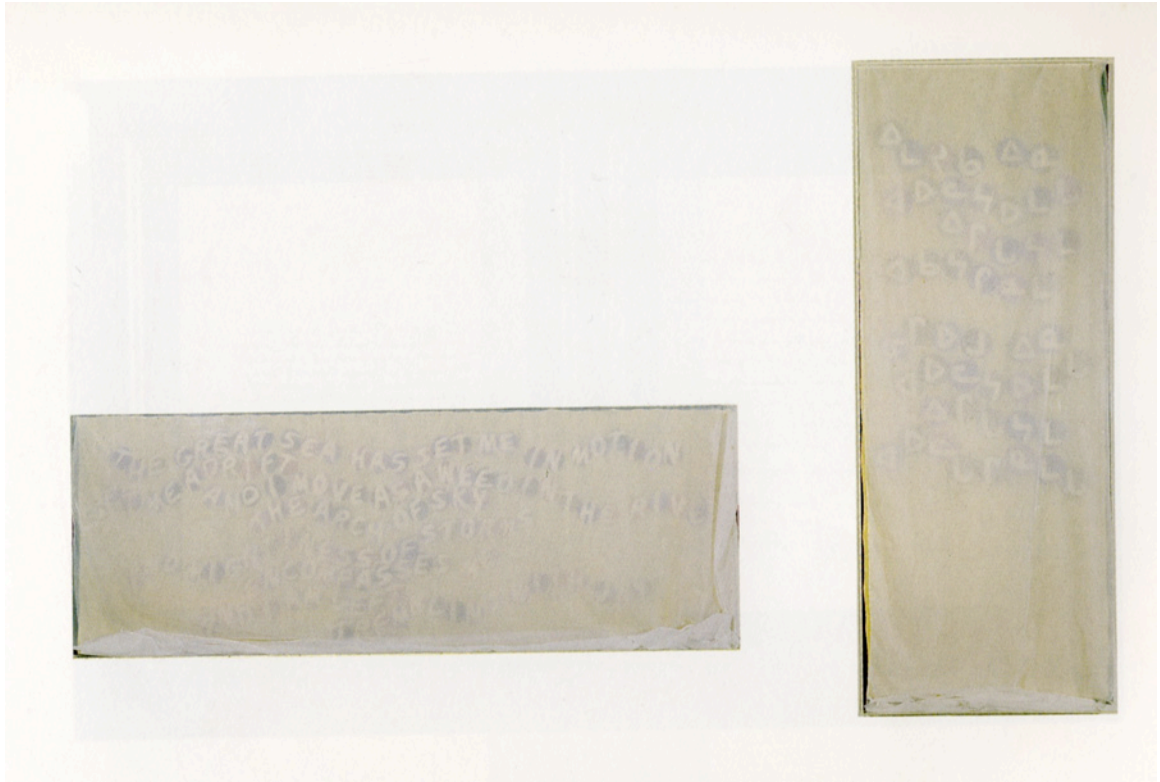


Figure 25

Joyce Wieland, *Eskimo Song – The Great Sea*, 1970-71

Wool rug-hooking and cloth assemblage

251.5 x 96.5 cm and 96.5 x 259.1 cm

Collection of the Canada Council Art Bank, Ottawa

Accession No. 77/8-0160

220

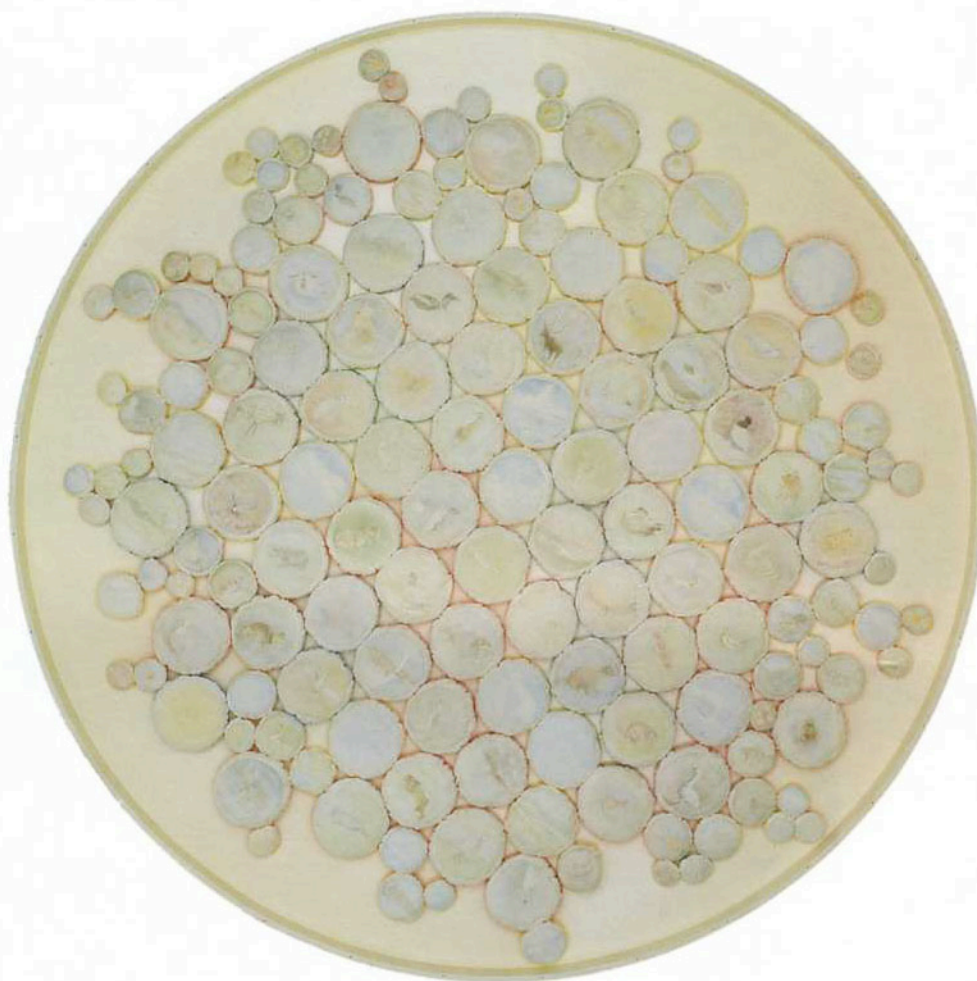


Figure 28
Joyce Wieland, *Arctic Day*, 1970-71
Coloured pencil on cloth stuffed cushions with dracon
248.6 cm in diameter
Collection of the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa
Purchase 1971
Accession No. 16893



Figure 29

Joyce Wieland, *True Patriot Love/Véritable amour patriotique* (page 6), 1971

Re-photographed book

17 x 25 cm

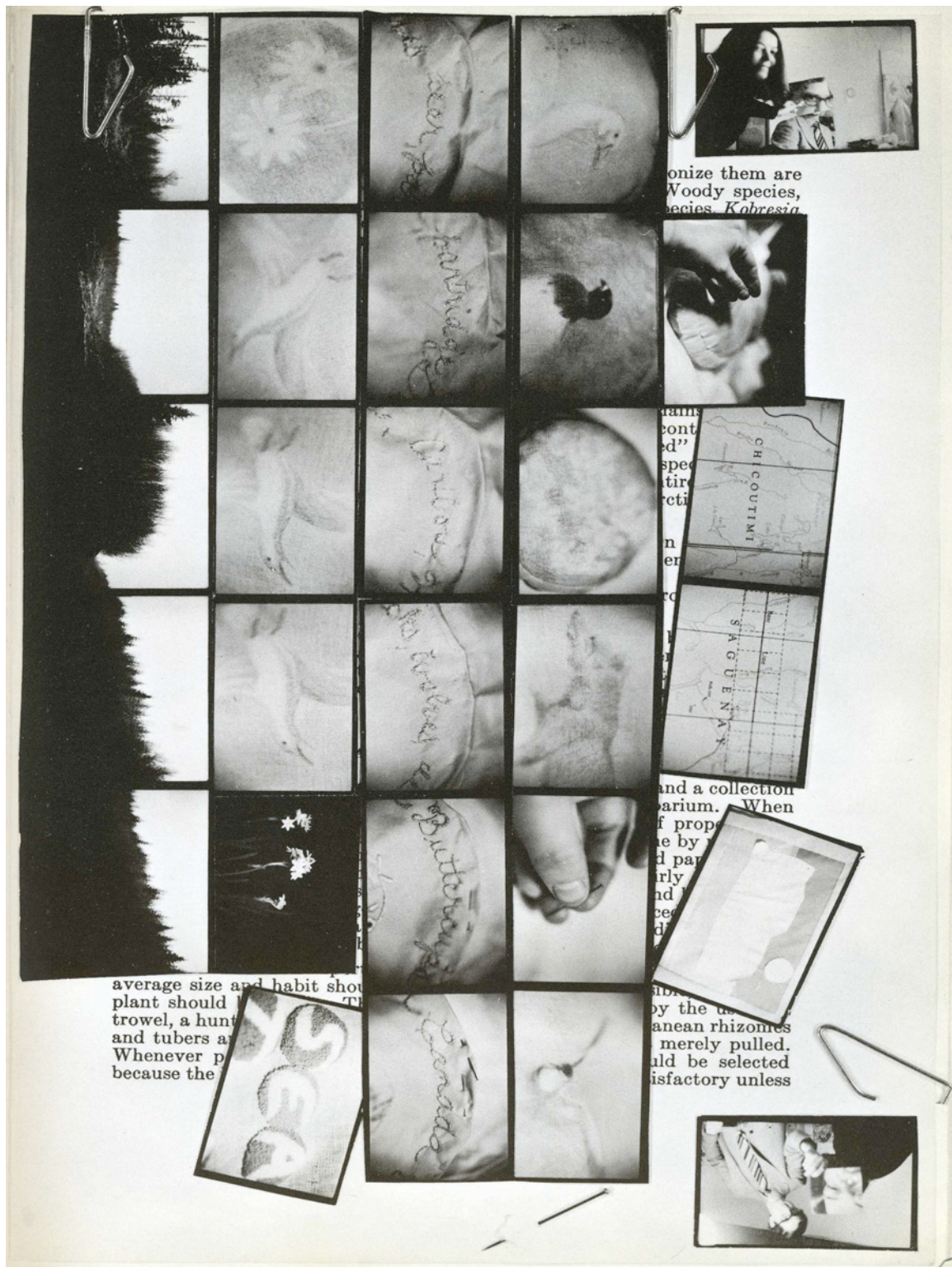


Figure 30
 Joyce Wieland, *True Patriot Love/Véritable amour patriotique* (page 7), 1971
 Re-photographed book
 17 25 cm



Figure 31
Joyce Wieland, *True Patriot Love/Véritable amour patriotique* (page 8), 1971
Re-photographed book
17 x 25 cm

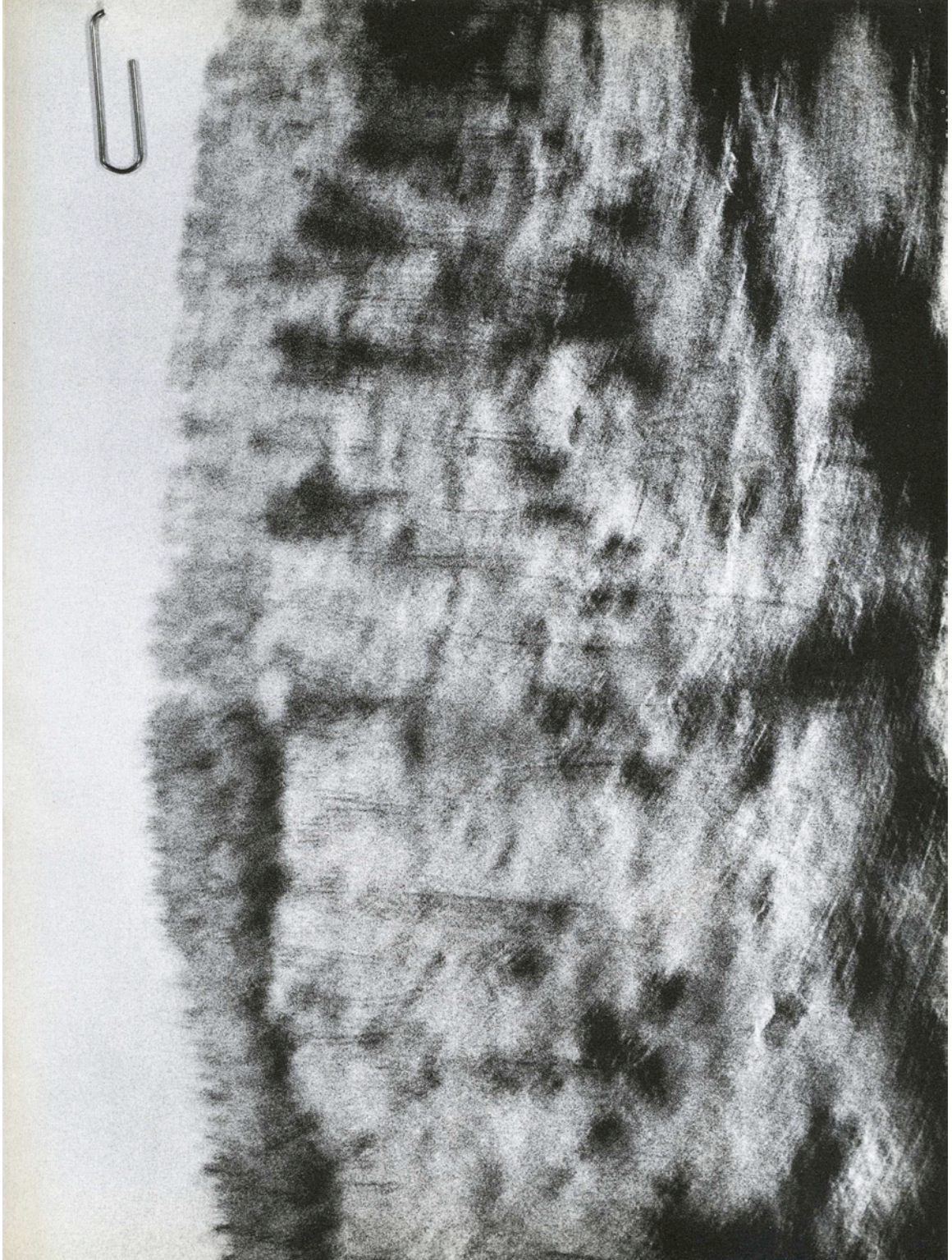


Figure 32
Joyce Wieland, *True Patriot Love/Véritable amour patriotique* (page 9), 1971
Re-photographed book
17 x 25 cm

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Appendix 1

Joyce Wieland, *Rat Life and Diet in North America*, 1968

14 minutes, colour, sound, 16mm

Transcribed by the author¹

This film is against the corporate military industrial structure of the global village

RAT LIFE AND DIET IN AMERICA [on ceramic water pitcher]

POLITICAL PRISON

[Alarm Sounding]

1968

They plead for their freedom

LISTEN [stitched onto cloth]

[Jazz Music]

After too much suffering they decide to escape

A full scale rebellion is carried out

[Sounds of shooting, machine guns and bombs]

They go to the upper Hudson region and make camp...

Some of the bravest are lost forever...

They occupy a millionaire's house and get a bite to eat

[Sounds of music and muffled conversation]

They escape to Canada and take up organic gardening

Canada...which is 72 percent owned by the US industrial complex

CANADA

[Sounds of birds, music]

¹ I would like to thank Blaine Allan for suggesting that an important contribution to scholarship on Wieland's work would be to transcribe her films.

ORGANIC GARDENING

CANADA

GRASS GROWING

[Sounds of dogs barking, frogs croaking]

CANADA

They raise more grass than they can possibly use

CANADA

NO D.D.T. USED

CANADA

CHERRY FESTIVAL

[Carnival music]

CANADA

ORGANIC GARDENING

NO D.D.T. USED

CANADA

CANADA

GRASS GROWING

ORGANIC GARDENING

NO D.D.T. USED [upside-down]

CANADA

FLOWER CEREMONY

[Music: "Vegetables" by the Beach Boys]

They learn to swing like their great leader... Monsieur Waterhole

[Sound of running water]

And worked with him to buy Canada back

[white screen, silence]

THEY INVADE CANADA

[Black screen]

Appendix 2

Joyce Wieland, *Pierre Vallières*, 1972

40 minutes, colour, sound, 16mm

Transcribed by the author

*The following transcription is of the English subtitles that appear in the film. Vallières speaks in French but his words have not been transcribed.

In the Mont-Laurier region where I now work the situation is truly catastrophic. For example, for the current March-April 1972 period about 70 to 75% of the population is on unemployment insurance, welfare, or another form of government aid. In August, 1971, about 50% of the people were unemployed or on welfare at a time when the C.I.P. and James McLaren Ltd. were operating and tourism was in full force. Now the C.I.P has closed indefinitely, McLaren hasn't resumed work since October and tourism is off. We cannot expect a recovery in the area for a few more years. The only employer is Bellerive Plywood, a family-owned Quebec enterprise which amounts to a real concentration camp, a business employing many women with a pitiful, \$1.35 per hour average wage and which forces its employees to work a 49-hour minimum week under deplorable conditions. The factory is a government-registered apprentice center, making every employee a lifetime apprentice, even with 20 years' experience.

Besides Bellerive Plywood, there is a factory owned by Sogefor, a branch of the S.G.F. It is unusual: some of the workers are on the Board –the only joint management in Quebec. This experiment is in its sixth month. The factory only employs about 100, but it allows some 500 local wood-producers to sell their product to the Sogefor factory. The Government, faced with the Sogefor co-management experiment, recently decided to sell Sogefor to a part American outfit, MacMillen Bloedel, which controls the market in western Canada for laminated wood, the product made by Sogefor. The sale is not yet

official, even the offer is not official, but there was an attempt recently to put it before the Sogefor Board. In view of the opposition of the workers who sit on the Board, the Government and the S.G.F. decided to postpone it.

Meanwhile, one of the most urgent regional problems will be to mobilize public opinion in Mont-Laurier where Sogefor is vital and throughout Quebec in order to prevent the Bourassa Government from selling it to foreign interests, thereby ending the new co-management experiment. My work in the region consists of helping to regroup the citizens of all the parishes and towns here, as well as peoples' or citizens' committees on both local and regional levels, for it is important to help the citizens of regions and throughout Quebec to become autonomous in the face of traditional government and the Messiah, all the Messiahs, which since the Confederation and earlier have tried to manipulate a population which is ill-informed and badly organized to help people to use their own resources, to be independent and act on their own. The work ties in closely with my work in the Quebec Party to depend only on itself for its full development. And the independence we demand is only the political instrument by which we will be able to collectively define our own development strategy, and which will allow us, above all, to apply this strategy ourselves according to our own needs, our own priorities, our own flagrant shortcomings, our own talents, tastes and aspirations, taking into account our potential and considering also the people surrounding us.

It is possible that when the Quebec people assert themselves the Government, with or without U.S. support, will react with force and try to take away by resorting to military strength. We must be prepared for many forms and many attempts of repression in Quebec. Both to gain independence and to resist all the counter-offensives of the

Government, from the subtlest to the most brutal, we in Quebec must unite almost totally in order to truly assert ourselves to the world as an autonomous people. The unity of action which I call for in *L'Urgence de Choisir* is not a tactical unity favoring a particular political party. I am referring to a strategic unity, a unity vital to our liberation and without which we will be mercilessly held back where we were twenty years ago; we will be mercilessly repressed and exploited as we have always been. For ten years now the liberation of the people of Quebec has been forcefully and dynamically asserted, but with no gains yet because collectively we do not possess the control or the means or the political, social, cultural or economic instruments we need to develop normally as an autonomous people. And we must win this victory. We must win it together; therefore it is urgent that we unite so as no longer to be at the mercy of events defined, provoked and organized by a power outside our own. We must create in Quebec, on national, regional and local levels, a true independent peoples' power. Such is my task here in Mont-Laurier, and it should also be the priority of the P.Q. for all Quebec. This is why in the manifesto of last November or October René Lévesque spoke of truly creating a peoples' power.

In my book *L'Urgence de choisir*, at one point I spoke of Women's Liberation. I've been told I didn't talk about it enough at the end. It's not because I underestimate it. Rather, I think that there is no free, egalitarian society where women are oppressed by the structures of the patriarchal society and its accompanying traditions. I feel that women should unite and assert themselves with aggressiveness to help everybody free themselves from domination and repression. Just as colonized people, women need to use violence –often called aggressiveness in women. I find this perfectly normal, as is

women's need to organize themselves, often against men, in order to go their chosen way and for which they can't count on the a priori support of males. I hope in my next book to be able to tell from a male point of view of the effects on men of women's efforts at liberation, just as we Quebec people are working together to gain independence and build socialism. I hope that before long enough taboos will be abolished to permit men and women everywhere to begin to live on an equal footing, in complete freedom and with an equal measure of creativity. I am anxious for women to bring the world the equivalent of what men, the males, have brought it in institutions, structures, art, music, theatre and politics. Maybe then the world will be greatly changed, as half its population, previously oppressed, will have begun to assert itself freely, to build its freedom, to share with males the construction of a society unlike the old one.

Books like Kate Millet's and Germaine Greer's are of grave importance to all militants, men or women, working towards a just society, a free society. These books, like those of other revolutionaries, should be studied by all militants along with the works of Franz [*sic*] Fanon, Lenin and Mao, so that militant men and women can learn through their struggle to establish among themselves free relationships so that, once socialism is begun, they may avoid what has often been the case: an aborted revolution because while building socialism women have been kept oppressed, their demands have been put aside to the sole advantage of an economy which ignores the deeper needs of men and women who live on the planet and for whom socialism should be conceived. The purpose of socialism and of all independence and every liberation is the unrestricted development, inasmuch as possible, of everyone, man and woman, so that each may live his life and so that we may all live as well, as fully, and as happily as possible with the maximum

enjoyment of all that makes up what we call life, life on earth. As I know of no other life, I think the reason for this struggle is to put in this life the maximum joy, and for this we'll have to work together to liberate ourselves of all forms of domination and exploitation, and I think that Women's Liberation is the movement that places the problem of liberation at its most profound and most decisive level for all mankind.

I also think that films have begun to handle the same question very successfully. *Mysteries of the Organism*, for example, should be shown in every school and to citizens of all ages and all fields, so as to serve as a tool of discussion and liberation. Too often, in political action, we put aside questions asked by men like Wilhelm Reich to the sole benefit of strictly economic questions, and these questions, far from liberating people, often alienate them because they are asked outside of man's daily routine, and outside of the relations men and women should be having in order to live liberated from all forms of what we in Quebec call "fuckage" that we encounter from childhood and with which we are often beaten down in school, in church, and in the family, instead of being given the means to develop in joy, freedom and creativity. Too many people have been killed for us to resume that, and certainly not to resume it in the name of a so called socialism, which in the U.S.S.R. serves trucks, tractors and rockets better than people, the real purpose of any political act.

I have often been asked why I called my book *White Niggers of America* –why the word "nigger." The situation of the Quebec people is similar to that of the Blacks in the United States. We are not, for the English Canadian bourgeoisie, human beings like others. We are lazy, backward, uneducated, we have no talent for economics, we have no manners. After the English Canadians conquered us, they spread the same prejudices

about us as those spread by white Americans about Blacks; their culture is poor, they don't bathe often, they hate studying, they hate working, they prefer lying in the sun and depending on others. The same thing has been said of the Quebec people. For centuries, we've been treated as the white niggers of America. Now these white niggers want to become autonomous and equal, and they are no longer ashamed of themselves. Just as the Blacks have proclaimed "Black is Beautiful," the Quebec people say Quebec is Beautiful, we are beautiful, we are happy to be beautiful and to become beautiful more and more.

Like the black Americans, the Quebec people form a colony within the North American imperialist fortress dominated by the white bourgeoisie of the U.S. It may sound curious to people in Europe or other continents to hear that in North America there are colonized nations; not only Quebec, but also the Black nation and the Acadian nation, and above all the Indian nation, which exists, surviving with great difficulty the genocide which was committed by the whites since the 15th and 16th centuries. Also participating in this genocide were white Francophones as well as white Anglophones and Spaniards. Many of our ancestors the white negroes of America have been the murderers, the slaughterers of Indians, and we find ourselves in the position of people who have been colonizers and later, after 1760, have been colonized. The Blacks have never exterminated nor conquered other people; they were brought over as slaves, they remained slaves for many years; they are now trying to shake off the yoke. We are also working at shaking it off, but in our history, there is a period called the New France, or the French Regime, during which we, as a people, shared in the massacre of another people.

For myself, I hope that the liberation of Quebec will contribute to the liberation of Acadians, of people of mixed blood, and of the Indians not only of Quebec but throughout Canada, and I hope we'll eventually grant them the rights that have always been theirs and finally allow them in America, after four centuries, to live as they wish. We will never be able to compensate for what was taken from them, we can never repay the Indians for all that we took from them, for what was killed in their society. And although we're not yet free ourselves, as people of Quebec we nevertheless bear our ancestors' guilt for having taken part in this massacre, something which, as children in history class, we learned to glorify. Heroes were made of some of our ancestors who were colonizers just as merciless as the Anglophones who came afterwards to conquer Quebec and use us to serve their own ends. We ought to demystify the history of the French Regime, of the period before 1760, and re-establish the historical truth which is that of white people many of whom did not choose freely to come here but most of whom consented to taking over America from a pacific nation. If we had let the Indians live, if we had tried to build something with them, they would certainly have given America other values than those of money, capital, and the American Way of Life. One cannot unfortunately redo history, but perhaps the lessons of the past will help us to create a future built on other bases than those of colonialism, in which we once participated as conquerors and to which we later succumbed as conquered.