Beyond Settler Consciousness:

New Geographies of Nation in Two Novels by Margaret Laurence and Fiona Kidman

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Introduction

This thesis considers the role of geography in novels by Margaret Laurence and Fiona Kidman both as a structuring principle and as a key to their mapping of private and social consciousness. The spatiality of the novels is related to the tracing of a revised awareness of colonial history in the two settler countries in which they are set. The novels reflect not only the contemporary world in which they were written but also have continued bearing upon problematic pasts and the larger histories that shaped the cultures and societies of Canada and New Zealand.

The geographical analysis will approach the novels from the immediate, physical and human geographies which provide the settings for the books as well as the characters' perception and appreciation of that spatiality. The latter approach will make use of the concept of the geographical imagination. Doreen Massey describes the geographical imagination as "producing images and creating identities which then form the basis both of the future character of those pieces of space and of the behaviour of people towards them"; this forms a part of "the calculated construction of national identity" .[1]In *Space Place and Gender* Massey observes that "a concern for spatial differentiation could indeed be seen as geography's particular slant on the emerging interest in 'difference' at this period more widely within the social sciences".[2] This geographical dimension to emerging identity is crucial to understanding post-settler consciousness within the novels. Massey explains geography's relevance to specific post-settler contexts: "…the associations of a sense of place with memory, stasis and nostalgia. 'Place' in this formulation was necessarily an essentialist concept which held within it the temptation of relapsing into past

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[1] Massey, *Place in the World* (2).
[2] Massey, *Space, Place and Gender* (118)

traditions, of sinking back into the comfort of being instead of forging ahead with the (assumed progressive) project of becoming"[1]. Massey establishes that there is a necessary geographical aspect to cultural identity. Geography is especially important in the discussion of settler and post-settler consciousness because of the centrality characteristically assigned to land and landscape, whether positive (embrace) or negative (confrontation, exploitation), in these contexts. The geographies present within the books acknowledge this tendency but also move beyond it to hint, through the cultural and national implications of the spatial elements of their novels, at a post-settler geographical consciousness. By looking at aspects of geography and the geographical imagination, part of what constitutes these post-settler contexts can be approached and a shift located within the two novels. This shift is influenced by the historical and cultural situations in which the novels are set as well as being reflective of the geographies of Canada and New Zealand. Geography in the novels is part of Massey's 'project of becoming' as well as an interesting portrayal of the historical and contemporary geographical realities of the two countries in terms of human settlement, colonial exploitation and urban hierarchies; all of which contribute to the cultural importance of location. The geography of both novels includes these aspects and allows such broad comparison because of the related historical and contemporary narratives that are present as well as the sheer scope of the spaces and places in which they take place.

This geographical focus within the novels has two overlapping dimensions: the physical and human geographies in which the novels are set; and the geographical imaginaries that govern the psychological and social perceptions they contain. Broadly speaking the novels are organised around different geographical spaces

[1] Massey, *Space Place and Gender* (119)

which the characters inhabit or travel through. These reflect shifting patterns of culture and nation and the particular negotiation of these shifts by the central characters through both concrete and psychological geographies. These settings influence the narratives of the novels, particularly their common debt to the Bildungsroman. The aspects of progression and movement as a character grows towards maturity typical of this genre are present through a hierarchy of region and community through which the protagonists pass. This lends the progression an integral geographical aspect in both novels. The passage of the characters through different spaces and settings provides a significant part of the narrative thrust of their journeys towards self knowledge**.** Spatiality in these novels, then, allows the exploration not only of characters moving towards a new self-knowledge and agency but also of nations at moments of cultural realignment through expansive geographies of region and community.

The comparison this thesis draws between two settler societies is structured by elements both within and outside the texts. That these authors were regarded as representative of social movements and socio-cultural phenomena necessitates a study of their popular and academic reception. The mixed geographies of the novels, with their inclusion of city and country, gender and race reflect a cultural shift during the 1970's**.** This shift was characterised in Canada and New Zealand, as settler countries, by a new sensitivity to indigenous presence and to migrant cultures, to gender and other groups and a new appreciation of land and landscape. This period saw a critical sense of history and newly recognised identity find expression in the politics, pop-culture and literary climates of the day. These emerging ideas of nation are reflected within the geographies of the novels. A new valuing of the histories, beliefs,

perspectives and identities of different groups can be seen in the way that these authors approach and complicate the geographical imagination.

There are several historical parallels that reflect this change. By way of example, the rise of popular, left-leaning nationalist politicians that engaged with questions of national identity such as Norman Kirk in New Zealand and Pierre Trudeau in Canada will be discussed in order to situate the novels historically and socially. The recognition of cultural and individual identities that were heralded by the governments of the day provides a contextualisation of the novels, especially in relation to how they track an emerging post-settler consciousness of the 1970's.

Another context that will be examined is the change in recognition of indigenous and other cultural minorities. The debates and policies around modern multiculturalism in settler countries addressed cultural identity, awareness and recognition within these societies as part of a shift towards a post-settler approach to these issues. The growing awareness and acknowledgment of these groups is reflected in the work of Laurence and Kidman. This is evident in the books' wide readership that came from a popular interest in writing that sought to address the newly expanded cultural situation in which the reading public found itself.[1]

This first section will also discuss the body of critical work on Kidman and Laurence and how this positions them in terms of this shift. This work overwhelmingly involved issues with a strong cultural dimension. Kidman has received relatively little attention and what has been produced tends to focus on her representations of history, femininity and the evolving culture and society from which she writes. This may be due to less scholarly and critical interest in national literary

[1] W. H. New in "A History of Canadian Literature and George Woodcock in "The World of Canadian Writing" provide concise overviews of Canadian Literature in the 1970's.

studies in New Zealand by comparison to that in Canada by the 1970's.[1] Similar concerns predominate in the much larger body of criticism surrounding Laurence. Studies highlight her registration of hybridised identities and her emphasis on the establishment and interpretation of an inclusive, multi-polar Canadian cultural identity. With Kidman and Laurence, the inclusive quality of their works' prevailing geographical imaginaries in terms of race, gender and cultural background has been noted and reflects their engagement with a wider cultural shift.

The final section of the first chapter will examine how each author fits into the dominant construction of national literatures during the period in which they wrote. The two authors may be considered as reflective of their respective national literatures, especially as these are seen to have strong geographic elements. In the 1970's and 1980's previously established master tropes of the two national literatures were being critically redefined. The ideas at the forefront in the critical examination of the two countries' national literatures were often predicated on notions of the physical environment and the settler situation.[2] It is possible to approach Kidman and Laurence in a similar way as the physical environment is prominent with both authors. However the physical environment is more than an entry point into these texts and far from their sole governing element. Both novels make use of it but also expand their geographical approaches to include the human environment, especially the urban, and thus elaborate different cultural perspectives. The work not only takes the physical environment as an organising principle for the narrative and structure of the texts, but also uses geographical setting as a way of accessing and presenting different cultural perspectives. The novels can be looked at as an expansion of an environmentally

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[1] New Zealand literary studies had emerged, courses were taught and significant critics had published on the topic. However it is still reasonable to say that this development was dwarfed by the wave of interest in national literature that had taken place in Canada at the time.

[2] See During 'Postmodernism or postcolonialism' *Landfall* 155 (1985) 366-80 and W.H. New, *Dreams of Speech and Violence: The Art of the Short Story in New Zealand and Canada*

deterministic approach that had characterised the study of the national literatures of the two countries towards a recognition of a new cultural awareness and dialogue that had begun to take place.

The emerging post-settler consciousness within the novels is also examined through the climate of literary criticism in the Canada and New Zealand of the period. It is more evident with Laurence as her main character's move into the boreal forest and hermetic, frontier-style existence represents a relationship with the physical world superficially in line with a strong prioritising of the natural and tends towards a critical approach to literature which focuses on responses to the physical environment. This is evidenced by her protagonist having an imaginary dialogue with famous frontierswoman Catherine Parr Trail. Parr Trail is the very embodiment of the plain, hardy settler that influenced these motifs and here Laurence has placed such an example prominently. This shows an approach to the wider world defined by a tension between her protagonist's new global and multifaceted identity in the novel and Parr Traill's more constrained and local settler approach. The exchange ends with Parr Traill being ultimately rejected as a model by Laurence's protagonist. This rejection of an explicitly settler worldview, rooted in antagonism towards the physical environment signifies movement towards a post-settler consciousness.

The second chapter will move on from the contextual to examine the place of geography more specifically within the books and explain how the geographical imagination functions specifically in the two novels. Both writers deploy a nuanced geographical viewpoint reflective of a cultural shift. The reader is not only presented with the settler-indigenous relationship, but in the work of both writers the cleavages within migrant cultures affect a newly imagined geography informed by the recognition of plurality within post-settler identity and consciousness.

One approach to the examination of the geographical settings of the two books is how local, regional and national geographies are related to each other. With both authors, a geographical hierarchy is developed that takes in a large swath of their respective countries. Harriet, Kidman's protagonist, leaves her small hometown in Northland for a regional centre in the middle of the North Island, finally ending up in bustling, cosmopolitan Wellington. Each stop along the way is characterised by a very different social climate that at times inhibits and at others enables different social, professional and cultural circumstances. In *The Diviners* we see a similar geographical organisation with a small prairie town as the starting point, Winnipeg, Manitoba, as the regional centre, and Toronto and Vancouver as culminating urban settings. The latter two provide the venues for the protagonist's ultimate success as a writer in the same way that Wellington enables Harriet's professional realisation. The Bildungsroman structure of both novels is characterised by this movement through different geographical settings. It is through relationships to community and place that the protagonists ultimately move towards self knowledge.

The third and fourth chapters will discuss how these geographical configurations relate to individual groups within the novels. The third focuses on the geographical aspects of the various settler narratives within the work. Part of the examination of these narratives will be an analysis of the authors' use of historical and contemporary events and geographies specific to them. Both Kidman and Laurence structure their use of historical and contemporary events and narratives through geography. This extends into the geographical imaginaries of the novels and provides a point of reference outside the texts for the particular identities that are discussed in the fourth chapter.

Within the settler narratives themselves, there are different geographical registers for settlers of different origins. For example, Laurence presents the worldview and social space that Scottish settlers experienced in Canada. In Kidman the focus is on the results of a strong retention of class pretensions, colonial culture in the family of the protagonist. Another way in which cultural geography can be tracked is through the different colonial legacies that have played out through several generations. Kidman and Laurence actively chronicle the changes that are occurring within the settler communities using a genealogically detailed approach.[1] Both authors use multi-generational awareness in their work and this allows for a historically informed representation of different kinds of post-settler identity. In *The Diviners* the reader encounters a very colonial, very British, Indian-born husband who stands in opposition to the recognition of the new pluralistic forms of identity that figure in the novel. Laurence also uses pilgrimages to local and overseas ancestral homes as well as the return from them to flesh out the intermingling of influence within the identities of her characters. In *The Divin*ers this is shown through an acknowledgement of the growing importance of language and ethnicity and the introduction of contemporary realities through the geographies of towns and cities. This mapping of consciousness and place results in a complex interpretation of cultural myth and meaning through the development of the characters, their relationships, their socio-political situation and their cultural heritage. All of these have geographical elements.

Kidman uses a multi-generational narrative to represent similar circumstances. We see the struggle and frustration of Harriet's parents as they try to wrest a living from the land, taking as a starting point a pastoral, rural and culturally insular view of

[1] The use of a genealogical structure forms the basis of D'Cruz's article.

New Zealand. For Harriet's parents' generation, New Zealand is a land to be tamed, endured and defended from the intrusion, real or imagined, of differing worldviews. With the daughter's generation, such a worldview is challenged and forcefully expanded through romance, writing, a life in the city and a significantly re-imagined geography

Another dimension of the settler narratives that will be examined is the treatment of earlier history. Laurence revisits well-known historical events such as the Riel rebellion and Canadian battles in the World Wars. In line with a broadened cultural recognition within the novel, this history is presented from multiple viewpoints which include both the accounts of the Scots mercenaries who were brought in to quell the Riel rebellion and those of the Métis. This historical element provides a background to the dissonance her characters experience, growing up hearing one-sided accounts only to encounter a very different version later in life. This is often achieved through the perception of place and both protagonists ultimately include these narratives within post-settler consciousness.

The novels also register cultural shifts through the experience of their protagonists as writers, not merely in their role as direct reporters but in the way they function within the cultural institutions of which they are a part. The representation of these institutions is another element of how these novels reflect the changing nature of the cultures in which they are situated and point towards a new post-settler consciousness.

In *The Diviners,* a domineering, arrogant and aristocratic husband functions as a cultural gatekeeper as he works to undermine his wife both professionally and personally. In *A Breed of Women* Harriet has an affair, both professional and romantic, with a young Englishman who has come to New Zealand to establish a

women's magazine on the model of one that has already been established in England. Through these relationships and others the perceptions of geographical origin and ranking of culture and worldview within the books expand the geographical imagination far beyond the local. This expansion is a part of a worldly, outward looking consciousness and has relevance in terms of the new geographies of post-settler nations within the novels.

The fourth chapter will examine the individual geographies of gender and race as they are linked to both preceding settler narratives and modern, pluralistic notions of identity. It will look at how the authors register the shift away from purely settler-derived notions of culture towards more plural, nuanced and complicated versions of personal and cultural identity. How these are represented spatially through the examination of unique cultural geographies of two specific groups is taken as an example of how the novels present the geographical imagination of groups and individuals within the emergence of a post-settler appreciation of space.

Through the examples following from these strands it is determined that the novels engage with issues of identity, consciousness and place within a post-settler context. An integral part of how this functions is geographical. This geography registers an approach to identity and place and through this reflects a shift towards a distinctly post-settler geographical consciousness. The conclusion of the thesis will summarize the registration of this shift away from purely settler based notions of culture through their spatial representation. It is this multi-angled method of examining and representing history, culture and identity that makes the study of these texts worthwhile and geography a useful way of examining them. This approach engages with all of these elements and is therefore where my primary focus lies. The parallels and divergences that exist between the devices used by the authors point to

distinct geographical elements within their fictional worlds and allow an insight into shifts within a cultural evolution.

Chapter One: A Particular Time and Place

In his 1980 survey of Canadian writing, George Woodcock speaks of 1970's Canada as "a nation and a literature that are more or less in the process of simultaneously emerging into self-consciousness".[1] This historical period, its perceptions and its influences provide context as to how the novels function as expressions of a post-settler culture and its geography. This chapter will examine this context and draw conclusions that will be referred to in subsequent chapters.

There was a reassessment of cultural identity occurring in both Canada and New Zealand during the period. This process took place at different times and at different paces in both countries. However, the 1970's was a time when it was consolidated in both. The geographies of *The Diviners* and *A Breed of Women* both address these circumstances and to a certain extent express them.

National Identities

In Canada and New Zealand notions of national identity and how these were expressed were changing. An immediate effect of this change was found in the colour, style and the cultural and political orientation of the leaders, political parties and movements that were present in both countries. In New Zealand the Labour government of Norman Kirk (1972-1974) offered a distinct break from the National Party administration that had preceded it and Pierre Trudeau represented a distinct change in the Canadian cultural identity.

With the political shift that occurred in 1972, New Zealand was introduced to a mainstream political party with projects and an orientation that openly encouraged new forms of identity and prioritized social change. Political projects such as the Ohu

[1] George Woodcock, *The World of Canadian Writing* (33)

scheme, which saw collective land holding encouraged, were significant in that they were a government endorsed and encouraged yet openly counter-cultural model and reflected a change in the geographical imagination by placing an importance on the rural and agrarian while including urban, indigenous and artistic perspectives. The Ohu represented a new—post-settler—relation between nature and culture in the geographic imaginary. With a broader 'back to the land' ethic that consciously tried to redefine the cultural relationship with landscape and the inclusion of multiple viewpoints, the Ohu were an important contextual demonstration of the importance of geography. In both novels there are important renewals of the value of land and landscape that reverse the colonial downgrading of reverent and broad relations to the land in favour of economic ones that are comparable to this type of reassertion of place.

The period also saw the rise of the Values Party which coalesced around a strong set of environmental and new-left politics. Many of the concerns of the Values Party, as well as those of Kirk's Labour government, would lead to an increased emphasis on identity politics, and as the name of the former would suggest, an emphasis on 'values' that would lead away from the pragmatism and realpolitik that had dominated the politics of the preceding decades. They provide an impetus for expanding notions of a New Zealand that had begun to distance itself from simplistic ideals of 'Better Britain'[1] to hint at other reference points.

The world in which Canada and New Zealand were experiencing this shift was changing significantly. The consolidation of the European Economic Community meant that New Zealand was less economically interlocked with its former colonial ruler and a strengthening of cultural and economic ties with America and Australia

[1] Alan McRobie, 'The Politics of Volatility' Ch15 *Oxford History of New Zealand* 2nd Edition describes the development of a multi-party political scene.

was being actively sought.[1] Partly as a consequence of these shifting allegiances, New Zealand's presence in the Vietnam War was a focus for the growing discussion and debate about the country's role in the wider world and the assertion of national identity that it engendered. The presence of the conflict in Vietnam is significant in *A Breed of Women* and functions within the urban hierarchy and the increasingly global consciousness that are discussed in subsequent chapters.

A useful illustration of the centrality of the conflict to the cultural climate of the period is that most of the street demonstrations in New Zealand between 1967 and 1970 had to do with New Zealand's involvement in the war.[2] Vietnam politically galvanized a generation and can be seen as a precursor to the emergence of the various counter-cultural political movements that grew towards maturity and achieved a degree of mainstream support in the early 1970's. This shift in foreign policy was beginning to articulate a profound cultural shift in New Zealand. This was seen in other events that had focused attention on New Zealand's place in the world. Kirk sent two Royal New Zealand Navy ships to protest French nuclear tests on Mururoa atoll and stood firm in his decision not to allow sporting contacts with apartheid South Africa. The cultural shift that these events reflect is definitive of the period in which Laurence and Kidman are writing and forms parameters around how the significance of the novels may be approached. This kind of national assertion is a key factor in what Belich identifies as the most important decolonialising shift in the country's history; a shift which he places in the early 1970's.[3]

Something comparable to the Kirk administration occurred in Canada under the government of Pierre Elliott Trudeau. Like Kirk, Trudeau represented a significant

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[1] James Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, (391-393) for a description of how this shift occurred.
[2] Belich 515.
[3] Belich devotes an entire chapter to the idea that 1973 was the defining year in the decolonising of modern New Zealand (425-460). Patrick Evans emphasises the importance of this period as well (*The Long Forgetting* (15-43).

shift away from his predecessor. The period saw the creation of a cultural model that, though similar to the one which was beginning to take form in New Zealand, would be crucially different in terms of the societies and histories of the two countries. The type of post-settler voice that developed in the writing that they produced reflects this.

Like New Zealand under the Kirk government, Canada engaged with questions of culture and cultural recognition during the 1960's and 1970's. As in New Zealand this can be partly contextualised through controversial international policies. The Trudeau administration maintained close relations with Cuba and publicly refused to break them off in the face of U.S. pressure. Trudeau was flippant with the Queen on his occasional visits to the UK and attempts were made to move away from the old colonial power similar to those that had been prompted by Britain's joining the EEC had had in New Zealand. With the repatriation of the Canadian constitution in 1982 and its attendant 'Bill of Rights' that protected and recognized a cultural shift that, through its formalising of multiculturalism, a cultural and political shift occurred that is important when looking at Laurence's work of the period.

Throughout the 1970's and 1980's the concept of biculturalism took firm root in New Zealand and *A Breed of Women* reflects this cultural development. The Canadian adoption of a cultural model happened, through decades of development and influence, largely through a formal political process which occurred in the 1950's 1960's and 1970's, whereas in New Zealand, the cultural shift was one which could draw from a single pre-existing cultural model established with the treaty of Waitangi.[1]

Perhaps the most significant development during the Trudeau period was the repatriation of the constitution. This binding conversion from 'Biculturalism' to

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[1] The fact that Canada, as a federation, had a different political structure in place to enable such negotiation should not be overlooked.

‘Multiculturalism’ carried with it an expansion of recognition from the traditional European migrant groups to encompass not only the importance and centrality of Canada’s indigenous cultures but also the imported, and demographically significant cultures of new immigrants who had arrived more recently from South Asia, Africa and the Caribbean. Political, social and cultural obligations towards all groups present in the country were recognised.

In New Zealand the notion of Biculturalism was already present but was becoming more strongly asserted. The debates were not limited to a Pakeha/Maori binary, other cultural recognitions were being made as well such as can be seen in a growing feminist movement that had emerged in concert with those engaging with indigenous issues. The lack of a multicultural discourse is a strong theme in both Kidman and Laurence’s writing and how this marginalization occurs in terms of a multiculture, ‘official’ or not, is evident in fiction of the period that reflected and gave rise to this national sensibility towards cultural identity.

The period saw significant change in approaches to indigenous peoples. In New Zealand the Waitangi Tribunal was established to deal with Maori land claims. Canada saw the publication of the Liberals’ unfortunately titled “White Paper” which, though extremely unpopular with many Canadians, did offer a specific strategy and mechanism with which to negotiate a new relationship with indigenous groups for the first time since confederation. The period also saw the founding of the Assembly of First Nations, a pan-tribal group that mirrored the shift in Maori political organisation that had occurred in New Zealand.[1]

Partly as a result of this, there developed a more broad-ranging definition of and sensitivity towards culture. These different starting points during the 1970’s are

[1] King p. 473.

echoed in the different cultural complexities of the novels as Laurence presents more hybridised cultural affiliations through the Métis, Scottish as well as other cultural viewpoints and histories while Kidman's engagement with different cultural groups is less complex as the developed characters are either Maori or Pakeha.

In both countries there was a strong emphasis on issues of cultural rights and cultural identity. The heavily nuanced cultural landscape and historical awareness that these changes produced in Canada and New Zealand are reflected in the diversity of voices and the multi-polar techniques Laurence and Kidman use in *The Diviners* and *A Breed of Women.* They are especially evident in their geographical expression.

A Changing Landscape

Both Kidman and Laurence use the physical environment and its role in reflecting and creating certain cultural phenomena in their writing. In Kidman's New Zealand the suburban is contrasted with the urban and both are positioned alongside the agrarian rural. Laurence traces the formation of a distinctively Canadian sense of space by way of a small prairie town. Its relationship to regional and urban centres and various wilderness settings allows a distinctive Canadian geography takes form. Both novels use geography to register changing settlement patterns and economic realities.

The role played by the expanding cities was central to the socio-cultural change that was taking place in the two countries. The rapidly increasing rate of urbanisation, beginning in the post-war period meant new strands of cultural identity were increasing in profile and importance. Protest marches and the kinds of political, social and cultural awareness that had grown out of them simply could not have taken place outside of an urban context and indeed they do not within the novels.

Consequently, both authors present, and make use of, both rural and urban settings. An appreciation of the difference between the two is crucial to my reading of the novels.

An example of the influence of urbanisation on culture is to be found in the 'Maori Renaissance' that was occurring in New Zealand at the time. Urbanisation of Maori in the post-war period brought Maori and Pakeha physically and socially closer to each other and offered the possibility of a new intimacy, familiarity and antagonism developing between the groups.[1] The social pattern that emerged paid attention to aspects of gender and race that had been emphasized by an urban environment. The kinds of post-settler voices that were heard in Canada and New Zealand would have been inconceivable without the opportunities for social mobility, political organization and the proximity to others that the geographic intimacy of the city provided. [2] This would result in more open ideas of sexuality, gender and family which are present in both novels and enabled by urban settings as the characters pass through them.

One of Kidman's settings for these kinds of re-evaluations is the suburb. What Belich calls "Nappy Valley" in 1950's and 1960's in New Zealand is a prominent setting within *A Breed of Women*. It is hard to overstate the importance of this geographic phenomenon in terms of the Twentieth Century. "They were the crucible of modern NZ social history, producing several new types of New Zealander".[3] These "new types of New Zealander" produced by notions of family formed by the baby boom and a relation to the land based on self-contained suburban utopia and mid-twentieth-century consumerism, are very present in Kidman's work. Urbanisation also

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[1] King describes the importance of the urbanisation of the Maori population in the 1970's on (473) of *The Penguin History of New Zealand*. See also Belich (475).
[2] Graeme Dunstall, 'The Social Pattern' Ch. 17, *The Oxford History of New Zealand,*, (451-482) discusses the importance of the counsciousness of race, sex and age in an urbanising New Zealand.
[3] Belich 489.

offered a degree of national economic clout that made home-grown cultural production and awareness, through such things as local publishing industries, feasible.

Striking a Chord: the Popular Reception

"*The reviews from Canada are the ones that I really care about most because it's only your own people that really know whether you've got the voices right*"[1].

As Laurence states here, she is interested in playing a part in her country's culture and accurately capturing its voices. Laurence looks to and writes for a national audience before an international one**.** In interviews she speaks of such a role and the obligations that fall on Canadian writers[2]. Kidman is also aware of this role and is sensitive to home-grown criticism. This is evident in her indignation when a 2002 review in *The Listener* accused her of being beholden to "quaint feminist principles".[3] A charge of this sort could probably be levelled at both Kidman and Laurence as both novels are preoccupied by the presentation of various minorities though they fall short of being beholden to a political agenda. Instead this emphasis can be viewed as an element of cultural and historical reportage. This presence in each book, both in terms of subject and technique, are given attention in the reviews of their work in the popular press of the time.

Kidman draws more readily from contemporary events and phenomena such as the Vietnam War and at times takes a documentary approach to twentieth-century New Zealand. Laurence's use of events is strictly historical. The tone and scope of

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[1] Margaret Laurence cited in**…**Bernice Lever, 'Literature and Canadian Culture: An interview with Margaret Laurence', in *Margaret Laurence: The Writer and her Critics*, p.19.

[2] William New, Ed., *Margaret Laurence: The Writer and her Critics* There are numerous interviews collected here with the author in which she discusses her role as a writer and the role of a 'national literature'.

[3] *New Zealand Listener,* October 26 2002. The Letters to the Editor page of the *Listener* of the 2nd Nov publishes two letters refuting this stance. *Sunday Star Times* A: 6; 17 Nov 2002 reports the story of Kidman's response to the review and her demands for a formal apology, which was eventually granted.

both the formal and popular criticism surrounding the authors reflects this. There was an immediate recognition of this element in *A Breed of Women*. Sue McCauley, writing in *The Listener,* introduces her review with:

> Essentially, *A Breed of Women* is concerned with what it is (and was) to be a female New Zealander born around the beginning of the 1940s: and I belong to that sex, that country, that era – a captive audience from the outset. And the sense of recognition, of recollected familiarity, was sharp if not always pleasurable.[1]

Such resonance is characteristic of the responses to the book and locates its value in its representative status as a novel of its time and place.

The reviews of *A Breed of Women* pick up on the issues that arise from changes in the period in which it is set and in which it was written. Indeed it would be hard to miss these as Kidman deploys a very direct and straightforward style which is in line with the documentary element within the work. Cathie Dunsford, writing in *Landfall*, takes this perception of reportage further through actually naming the various comparisons and entry points that Kidman makes use of in the novel:

> The themes of corruption, inner emptiness, apathy and mass-produced attitudes are developed from their statements in poems to produce a world based upon ignorance or inertia in the novel, yet a world where the inhabitants deny that such corruption exists, except among outsiders. And Harriet, the most Kiwi

[1] *The Listener* (NZ) Nov. 2, 1979.

> of all, is definitely an outsider to them. Through her growth Kidman presents us with an alienated and entirely credible ordinary New Zealand woman who is made to feel eccentric by the bland sameness of the society around her, whether rural or town, young or old, Maori or Pakeha. With confidence and skill, Kidman explores attitudes which have bothered New Zealand writers for over a century.[1]

Dunsford and McCauley both go on to identify the specifics of the situation that Kidman has presented. They mention her protagonist's parents' attachment to England and prejudiced ideas about New Zealand and present racial division and conflict within the evolving nature of the society in which these are set. Fleur Adcock, in her review in *The Times Literary Supplement,* goes further to include the treatment of the protests around the Vietnam War.[2]

Margaret Laurence has a somewhat different relationship with her country's criticism, both popular and academic. Laurence had long been established as a part of her nation's literary canon in a way that Kidman had, and has, not been. This being the case, *The Diviners* was approached with an emphasis on its national cultural significance in different ways than *A Breed of Women*.

Sheldon Frank begins his review of *The Diviners* by admitting his ignorance:

> Alberta. Saskatchewan. Manitoba. What happens in these huge areas that dwarf our largest states? Who lives there? What kinds of lives do they lead? It has become almost commonplace to remark that for most

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[1] *Landfall 34,* December 1980

[2] *Times Literary Supplement*, March 13, 1981

> Americans, Canada is still an unknown country filled with Mounties and a few huskies. But what do we know about the western provinces? What is life like in Winnipeg or Calgary or Saskatoon?[1]

Frank places an importance in *The Diviners* as an entry point into a particular place. He goes on to specifically mention ethnicities and various geographical locations in his description. We are left with an appraisal of *The Diviners* as a representative geographical guide.

Peter Straub, writing for a British publication, approaches *The Diviners* more in terms of what it may offer as a cultural artefact as opposed to the more casual tone of Frank's piece:

> The setting is chiefly Canada, not the tropics and *nous* lies mainly in the past: in stories of the Scots settlers and Indians. Power, magic, enchantment, these are the properties of legend, and now survive in reduced and embattled form. Art –Morag's novels and the songs of her Woody Guthrieish half-breed lover –and folktale, important to only a few, are the techniques of the present for encapsulating the mythic past.[2]

In Marigold Johnson's review we see Laurence addressed in terms of a national chronicler, and her work in terms of its cultural significance, more directly: "Perhaps the debt acknowledged to the Canada Council for the Senior Arts Award was tactfully paid in looking back to that pioneer lifestyle."[3]

[1]*The New Republic* July 27, 1974.
[2]*New Statesman* January 10, 1975.
[3]*Times Literary Supplement* January 10, 1975.

This also mirrors some of the more dismissive appraisals of Kidman's work. That both novels have been received as both representative and overly simplistic relates to their engagement with issues that were of prime concern in their countries.

Theories of the Nation

There is much that unites the literatures of Canada and New Zealand. "Indian vs. Maori, Maple vs. Pohutakawa, Moose vs. Kiwi, Trapline vs. Sheep station, Bush vs. Backwoods".[1] As William New points out with the above list, both countries' literatures often involve a focus on the physical environment and the socio-cultural constructs that flow from such an orientation. New goes on to point out that both nations were founded on notions of "peace, order and good government" and much of their writing reflects the shared colonial heritage that shaped both literature and criticism. This naturalistic, elemental tradition would come to the fore in the theorising about Canadian literature in the 1970's and give rise to 'The Garrison Mentality' and its derivative 'Survival'.

Despite a similar literary history, partly based on both countries coming into being as far-flung outposts of empire, there was an important divergence in the kind of literary environments that contextualise the two authors. As the quotation from Woodcock that began this chapter alluded to, and as would be expected, this was an important time for literature in the two countries. They were beginning to theorize their literatures as reflecting themselves and there was an engagement with the general shift in cultural understanding that was occurring. In Canada a significant increase in critical writing had occurred owing largely to the work of Northrop Frye. It was a time in which sweeping ideas about Canada's literature were coming to the forefront. As part of this process of cultural exploration, there were various attempts

[1] W.H. New, *Dreams of Speech and Violence: The Art of the Short Story in New Zealand and Canada*.

at establishing theory which would encompass the emergence of a modern national literature. The "Colossal verbal explosion that had taken place in Canada since 1960".[1] that produced this growth in the volume of criticism, was seen as having post-colonial resonance. Woodcock describes its importance thus:

> …certainly the most exciting period in the literary culture of Canada. I participated in the creation for the first time in Canada of a genuine world of writing resembling those of London and Paris and New York, in which periodicals and publishing houses provided the kind of infrastructure that in older cultures had encouraged the emergence of a rich diversity of writing in all the genres, in criticism and biography and history as in fiction and poetry and drama[2]

This growth in criticism led to the theorizing of the intellectual climate. Frye contributed "The Garrison Mentality"; Margaret Atwood: "Survival". The former held that Canadian literature was characterised by a siege mentality and the latter placed an emphasis on notions of survival against natural and human forces as a definitive. Both of these theories took the relationship to the natural world as the defining quality of the national literature. Criticism had a high profile and a 'Canlit' that gathered both creative and critical streams of writing was established.

That the same degree of theoretical momentum had not developed in New Zealand as in Canada was a product of more than simply the size of the audience. Though there were similar cultural debates, discussions and interests, a case could be made that there was a stronger element of cultural vibrancy as expressed in sheer

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[1] Northrop Frye from the introduction to *A History of Canadian Literature,*

[2] Woodcock ix

output in the Canada of the period. This divergence could also be looked at, in more theoretical terms, as a result of unique aspects of New Zealand's decolonisation process. Roger Horrocks points to this involving an antipathy to theory as it was seen as a form of "imported culture" that would have to build on outside theory out of necessity[1]. He identifies, less negatively than Allen Curnow and Vincent O'Sullivan, the adoption of 'foreign' notions of theorizing as antithetical to the hard social realism that had been definitive of most New Zealand writing up to that point and were therefore duly opposed[2]. The general anti-intellectualism this describes would have prevented a positive response to the kinds of theory which had begun to be so influential in terms of Canadian literature[3].

Indeed the theory that would eventually penetrate New Zealand literary studies is of a distinctly post-modern variety that would largely question the validity of the very idea of a "national literature" or such a generalised, universal approach to it as that which was in vogue in Canada in the 1960's and 1970's. This relativist theory became prominent in New Zealand, as it did in the rest of the world, in the early and mid 1980's but by its nature and its historical moment would have been incapable of supplying a theoretical atmosphere in which an 'NZlit' could thrive along the same lines 'Canlit' had in the preceding decades.

This situation may explain why there is such a difference in volume, tone and approach in the academic criticism surrounding the two authors. The criticism surrounding Kidman is thin, comprising less than half a dozen articles and theses, and focuses almost entirely on gender. Absent from the body of work are discussions of

[1] Roger Horrocks 'No Theory Allowed', *AND*, #2, 1984.
[2] Vincent O'Sullivan from the introduction to *NZ writing since 1945* Allen Curnow from the introduction to *A Book of New Zealand Verse,*
[3] It is hard to overstate how attractive this grand theorizing was and remains. To this day it is difficult to find a survey course that does not make use of Atwood's attempt at characterising the national literature

how Kidman fits into the picture of a national literature and a national culture. While it is true that a large portion of the work around Laurence deals with identity-centred analyses such as those of gender, race or language, there is equal, if not more, attention paid to her significance in terms of her nation's literature and culture.

One important aspect of the theoretical climate that Kidman and Laurence existed within was the growing prominence of indigenous and gender politics and activism. Patrick Evans uses the magazine *broadsheet* to demonstrate how these two strands worked together and cross-pollinated theoretically:

> Its pages still retain something of the white heat of a female anger that paralleled and often expressed the growing rage of Maori radicalism. They retain, too, the sheer intensity of lesbian grievance, by the strength of which even comfortable middle-class Pakeha women felt they had been oppressed and exploited[1].

The vigour of the debates around feminism and the indigenous rights movements are demonstrated in the books. Indigenous concerns dovetail with gender concerns, especially through the presentation of community and romantic relationships, both of which will be discussed in chapter four.

Consciously or not, the authors represent both the contemporary historical moment in their countries and make use of their history. Where these uses overlap and how they differ is an important point of comparison. Certain socio-cultural as well as historical and geographic phenomena can be observed in both novels and the relationship of these phenomena to the methods that underlie them are important in

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[1] Patrick Evans ,*The Long Forgetting: Post-Colonial literary culture in New Zealand* (22).

assessing the relation of form to function in how the novels act as repositories of historical and contemporary events.

The influences of different cultural models are significant when looking at the work. The prefixes put in front of these models matter a great deal in the two countries as demonstrated by the ongoing debates around the use of bicultural and multicultural and other related terms in literary criticism as well as in greater society. The origins and outcomes of this debate both relate to my study. Through the geographies of the novels both authors reflect a cultural shift.

Both countries have traditionally placed a value on the physical landscape and the wilderness. How this geographical aspect comes through in literature is therefore crucial to the understanding of the novels in spatial terms. A further influence of a post-settler cultural shift is how indigenous and gender concerns are interlinked. These two facets: geography having primary importance in notions of the countries' national literatures and the shifting identities and considerations of the period are a key part of this project and a necessary contextualisation.

Chapter Two: The Possibilities of Place

The cultural geography within the two novels both reflects the historical period that informs them and represents an attempt at a re-evaluation and re-assertion of place as part of a movement towards a post-settler imaginary. This geography of place as it is presented in the novels contains several dimensions. Firstly what may be called the foundational settings of Canadian and New Zealand cultural geographies, being that they reflect the historical and contemporary influences elaborated in Chapter 1, are presented through such typical elements as the rural agrarian, provincial town and large cosmopolitan centre settings. However, there is another level at which these settings can be perceived. It is at this level that the complications in post-settler identity are located within the novels. Both Kidman and Laurence express this through the different engagements with these places through cultural geographies that can be taken as representational on a national, broadly post-settler cultural scale, but also through the differences in the approach to place that can be identified by various constituents of that wider culture. This chapter will introduce the broad outlines of cultural geography that are to be found in the books while subsequent chapters will examine their complication in relation to individual perspectives and narratives in the texts. Through the cultural geography in the novels we see a challenge to cultural-geographic conventions and worldviews. Each novel functions on a base level as a conventional expression of geography but also reconciles this with a final return to a relationship to place that, though informed by this overarching sense of geography, has incorporated it into the complexities inherent within post-settler contexts.

Both Canada and New Zealand are seen as strongly connected to their physical environments. The prominence of the surrounding physical world in the mythologies

and literatures of the two countries owes much to their respective locations as global hinterlands and the legacy of a colonial "frontier" focused on agriculture and other extractive industries. In both *The Diviners* and *A Breed of Women* farming is emphasised as defining the initial settler relationship to the land that is subsequently challenged. It is this relationship, focused on primary production and a hinterland worldview, which first introduces the reader to the geographical imaginations within the novels.

The strength and prominence of ideas of land and wilderness have nourished many of the major attempts at mythologizing the two countries and theorizing their literatures. Both *A Breed of Women* and *The Diviners* are open to this interpretation. However the engagement with the physical environment is of a different sort than that which nourished the theories surrounding the national literatures of the two countries from the mid-to-late twentieth century. These theories often emphasised the oppositional presence of the natural world. Both authors extend and challenge this portrayal of the environment as a hardship to be endured by expanding notions of place to include urban environments that were rapidly gaining prominence in the 1970's as well as re-imagining the rural as an environment to embrace instead of oppose and as a touchstone to which they might ultimately return.

This approach to real and imagined geography is rooted in the period in which the two authors were writing. A reflection is especially present in the way that the rural and the urban environments are presented as both distinct and convergent. Both authors reflect these emerging plural identities by setting up an immediate comparison between preceding settler worldviews and the new, though historically informed, identities that were appearing in Canada and New Zealand in the 1970's.

In both novels, the initial settler geographical imagination is presented through the illustration of preceding generations' worldviews which are primarily rural. This is contrasted with the contemporary geography of the protagonists through both the divisions inherent within and the limitations of the cities in both novels. The post-settler relationship with the physical world that emerges is in opposition to, though still informed by, this preceding imaginative apprehension of place**.** The emergence of a new post-settler geographical viewpoint in the novels is illustrated through the responses of the two protagonists as well as their increasingly critical movement through a geographical hierarchy of rural areas and cities of varying size and prestige, as well as the different landscapes, social structures and opportunities they present. This movement through, and criticism of, a limited geographical imagination embodies a shift away from a settler worldview to a historically informed post-settler view of Canada and New Zealand in which the landscape, both human and natural, is no longer one to be either moulded and manipulated towards a recreation of the Old World or a strictly interpreted hierarchy of place and region, but a home to be lived in, explored and engaged with on both a collective and individual level reflecting contemporary pluralistic and individualist trends of the 1970's. This geographical imagination expands to include both city and country in Kidman and Laurence as well as exhibiting the influence of different markers of identity such as gender and race which will be examined in chapter four. Through this, a problematic history is renegotiated as a condition of postcolonial habitation of the land. The attempt at establishing this habitation forms the cultural geography of the novels.

The physical and human setting is present throughout both novels. The settings and surroundings of *A Breed of Women* and *The Diviners* infiltrate deeply into characters and plotlines. This extends to the individual and collective

psychologies within the novels and thus goes beyond the amount of direct attention that the physical environment receives. Nevertheless, they should not be seen as entirely distinct. The representation of physical and human environments is a defining feature in the works as the conception of surroundings and the characters' relationship with them forms a key part in the themes and reflections of a certain particular cultural and historical moment.

Both authors make extensive use of settler worldviews as illustrated by individual characters as well as by the introduction of direct cultural contexts through the use of historical vignettes and the introduction of current events. Laurence tends towards the former with her use of songs, poems, historical documents, lengthy historical narratives and other records of how the ancestors of the principal characters approached Canadian geography. Kidman makes use of reportorial technique with her introduction of current events in New Zealand and abroad such as the protest movement in Wellington and the assassination of John F. Kennedy to present the growing importance of urban culture and present a wider post-settler view of New Zealand geography. The use of this wider historical and contemporary context both informs and provides a point of contrast with an emerging post-settler geographical imagination evident in the main characters, one that is both deeply tied into settler views of landscape and environment and moves beyond them. This generational contrast is one of the key points in which the geographical imagination can be seen to evolve in the texts.

Geography is also used as a form of social critique and commentary. The layout of towns and farms in the books demonstrates how communities have reflected settler worldviews and how these communities mirror their parent cultures. Through the change in their characters' perceptions of these places based on race, generation,

socio-economic status and cultures of origin, there is a resemblance between Laurence and Kidman. This changing geography takes the form of a sharp cultural registration and critique within the work and is a key part of the emerging post-settler identity that both novels capture. During the emergence of this post-settler worldview, the physical landscape is often referred to and functions as a template on which a new post-settler identity, focused on the importance of a geographical imagination, is forged.

A parallel example of this is found in the treatment of geographical hierarchies in the two novels. The rural and the urban are contrasted in similar ways and both authors make use of a hierarchical progression from single family homestead to large urban centre. This can be seen as more than a simple portrayal of the on-the-ground reality of the two countries, though it is informed by them. It also functions as a critique of how the basic organizational mythology and prioritizing of the two countries' settlement patterns and regions is rooted in geographical perception. The use of this hierarchical progression reflects the historical development of the two countries and the economic, political and cultural forces at work in the 1970's by actively responding to them. This period saw the role of the city in cultural and therefore mythological and psychological life increase. Urban environments are held up against their rural predecessors and their preceding national mythologies. The historical and the contemporary trends that produced this hierarchy are registered in the work but are also transcended. By approaching them critically and recognising their fallibility, the novels provide a response that goes beyond reporting and provides an area in which both authors move towards a post-settler reflection of the geography of nation.

The Settler Geographical Imaginary

A Breed of Women

Within *A Breed of Women* a strong critique of a distinctly colonial geographical imagining can be observed. Harriet's parents and their imported colonial geography are presented as flawed. Perhaps the strongest instance of this is the Wallaces' imported and rigidly adhered to Christmas celebrations that completely fail to take into account the geography surrounding them.

> Christmas was always celebrated by her parents in a particularly traditional English manner, neither of them ever having accepted the notion of a colonial Christmas Day. On Christmas Eve, a fire was lit, regardless of the summer heat, and the three of them sat in front of it to sing Christmas carols (ABOW 14).

Later on we see the importance of this ritual in terms of the battle in which their new life in New Zealand has been characterised. " 'No, If we can't put ourselves out for Christmas, I don't reckon life's worth living. You shall have your Christmas, my girl' he said magnanimously" (ABOW 12). Here we see the inapplicability of the old world relationship to the land and a dogged affinity for colonial cultural practice. It is also evident that this sort of relationship with the physical and cultural world will be problematic. In order to get the Christmas fire lit in the middle of summer, it is necessary to oppose nature in the form of a bird's nest that has been established in the chimney. Later on we see Harriet begin to recognize that her parents' geographical imagination needs reconsideration. "Why were they sitting here in this house singing about the snow?" (ABOW 15).

Another aspect of how the inapplicability of old world ideals and imported values is evident is Harriet's approach to religion. After being forced into a narrow Anglicanism, the staunch belief in which was imported with her parents, she comes to believe in her geographical surroundings as a firmer, more beneficial source of spiritual energy. She therefore offers a settler indigenous geographical imaginary as a substitute for imported colonial religion which has proven inadequate: 'in the tree is like god.' (ABOW 29).

This sense of the geographical imagination as a substitute for religion is strengthened as Harriet grows older:

> 'Since her experience of God on the riverbank during the summer, years before, she had sought some sort of recognition of God within herself. He seemed to have cheated her, having brought her this far, and then having tantalisingly let her go" (ABOW 35).

Harriet recognizes the inapplicability of the religious beliefs of her parents and looks for their replacement to the physical environment, thus highlighting its importance in a very different way than her parents who have looked upon it as something to be tamed and exploited and not with which to spiritually commune. In so doing she has begun a critique that will continue through the novel but also hints at a post-settler change in geographical imagination.

Her parents, in their determination to make themselves 'landowners' had maintained a very different perception of their adopted geography: "What was it all about, what was the whole purpose of their lives that they went on enduring and suffering and losing and were finally left alone on the arid farm? None of it made sense" (ABOW 63).

On another level, Kidman uses characters' relationship to the physical landscape to characterise and contextualise them via their outward actions and inner psychologies. Upon her arrival in Weyville, a small provincial town to which she has moved from the family farm, one of the first descriptions Harriet provides revolves around her cousin Alice's garden. The comparison that Harriet makes with the gardens she has known in Northland is an early sign of an evolving post-settler worldview linked to the physical environment:

> It was more colourful than any garden Harriet had ever been in; farmers' gardens, if they existed, were almost invariably a wild tangle of free-standing self-sown seeds sprung from long ago attempts at establishment when the farms had been opened up; that's how it was up north at any rate. At the same time there was something formidable about the regularity of this one. (ABOW62).

Harriet starts to compare different ways of looking at the land and the worldviews, psychologies and social structures that have produced them. These examples, provided by her experience of her parents' and Alice's adversarial relationships with landscape, are noted and gauge how the physical environment, and the approach to it, are crucial to her emerging identity in the novel.

A further example of how Harriet appreciates landscape and the physical environment is in her acknowledgment of their psychological importance through her self-characterisation. Upon reflecting on the rapid changes that she has undergone through her departure from Weyville and arrival for a visit in Wellington, she recognizes the kind of psychology she is trying to escape from which she perceives as being rooted in the land: 'It was hard to recall that she had a husband and three little

children and a quarter acre in Weyville' (ABOW 273). Her identity is being forged largely by where she is in terms of her physical environment, in this case through ownership and a prescribed cultural role that comes with her residence in the Weyville suburb of Camelot.

Harriet also shows a strong pull towards the physical landscape where she feels her link to it is hereditary as with her notions of ancestral English culture through her parents or her affinity with the place where she has grown up, a place by which she has felt both suffocated and energised. This is demonstrated upon her return to Ohaka, the small town next to her family's farm, with her childhood companion Francis where she realizes that she has carried her hometown, and the geographical imagination it had forged within her, throughout her adult life and returned to it with both a new appreciation and a new critical vantage point.

The Diviners

Laurence's protagonist also feels a pull towards the physical world and both registers and criticises a preceding settler view. Morag is one step removed from Harriet in terms of the way she draws on the immediate settler narratives of her youth. Morag is an orphan and her childhood touchstones of settler geographical imaginaries are derived from her unreliable memories of her parents and the tales of her adopted father Christie, who flamboyantly provides fictionalized accounts of her settler ancestry and the worldview from which her parents and the larger settler culture operate.

She acknowledges this approach to the land not through directly observing her parents, as does Harriet, but through the stories that Christie relates. These are uniformly about the struggle between the Scots settlers and the wilderness. In the

most powerful example, Christie tells the story of the Scots' "march west" to southern Manitoba from Hudson Bay. Here, as for Harriet's parents, the engagement with the natural world is primarily one of struggle: '*If we must live here in this almighty godforsaken land, dreadful with all manner of beasts and ice and rocks harsher then them we left, says Gunn's woman, at least let's be piped on to it* (Diviners 95). The enlisting of culture in an attempt at overcoming the physical environment is telling and demonstrates a similar kind of culturally justified settler relationship with the land as that which is established in *A Breed of Women.*[1]

Morag imagines her Scots ancestors as noble and tough tillers of soil and hewers of wood, eternally warring with their environment. Ultimately, Morag comes to see Christie's job as the local garbage collector similarly. They are both struggles to maintain a sense of order, organisation and appearance in the face of inhospitable environments: physical, political and social. Her appraisal and appreciation of Christie's work serve as a further indicator of the kind of interwoven post-settler geographical imaginary that develops from the spatial aspects of culture.

Morag also begins to look to the natural world as a way of opposing rigid, deterministic viewpoints in her movement towards establishing a post-settler worldview more attuned to it. When she is informed of her parents' deaths she immediately relates them to nature, demonstrating her early engagement with that world and how distinct it is from her inherited mythology. On that night she compares sounds to coyotes, thinks of dead gophers and compares herself to a cockroach. Later, in adulthood and after having established herself in McConnell's landing, she acknowledges her attraction to the landscape to the point where it becomes a member of a newly extended family. "The tall solid maples were like ancestors…" (Diviners

[1] This also relates to Goldie's theories of indigenisation, examined in Ch. 4, as it is not only the settler culture that is enlisted, it is also the indigenous.

307). As for Harriet, a reconnection with and a new prioritization of the natural world will form an important part of her growing post-settler consciousness. For Harriet this is initially necessary as a response to an inadequate religion. With Morag, it is a way of dealing with the death of her parents.

Settlement as Possibility: the Urban Hierarchy

Both books make use of geographic hierarchies - real and imagined - to present characters' and cultures' relationship to physical and human geographies. The protagonists move through these hierarchies in pursuit of career, romantic, and educational opportunities. However, they do so critically. Through their questioning of the assumptions that underpin hierarchies of settlement, as well as their actual on-the-ground reporting, they indicate and challenge the urban/rural and small/medium/big city divides. They also provide a registration of the cultural and economic realities of the two countries both in terms of what the hierarchies in the novels share and how they differ. By complicating what is seen as a straightforward and rather obvious hierarchical relationship, they form post-settler worldviews that challenge a simplistic appraisal of settlement.

In a different approach to the colonial emphasis placed on land, both mythologically and pragmatically, they suggest a conception of urban and physical geography that moves beyond the duplication of an Old World to provide a post-settler re-imagining. A post-colonial return to a colonial importance placed on the physical environment has occurred, though it is of a very different character. The terms of the engagement with the land has shifted from one of exploitation to one of appreciation.

A Breed Of Women

In *A Breed of Women* the passage through this geographical hierarchy is more straightforward than it is in Laurence's novel**.** Harriet becomes aware that "in order to escape the farm, it was necessary to pass School Certificate" (ABOW33). She sets her sights on Weyville and her cousin Alice who offers to help set her up with employment and lodging. She initially identifies very positively with the place, "a prosperous and growing town south of Ohaka" (ABOW 53). The idea that Harriet will improve her position by aligning herself with Alice is made obvious in her parents' approach to Weyville as well as in the way Alice's name is usually introduced into conversation with reference to 'home'. "There was no longer any point in going 'home', and there was no longer any point in going anywhere, it seemed, just staying on in Ohaka" (ABOW 56). Harriet's parents remove Alice and Weyville from Ohaka, thereby reinforcing the rigidity of the geographical hierarchy. The association of home with Alice and with Weyville goes beyond frustrated hopes and indicates the strictness that characterises the boundaries of this hierarchy.

Harriet's trip south to Weyville further reinforces the way that she imagines her environment and its opportunities. She stops in Auckland and is suitably, if briefly, dazzled. She is so taken that she misses her bus to Weyville and is forced to chase it down in a taxi. This intrusion of reality into her rapture hints at more serious intrusions into her naïve ranking of city and place. When she does arrive in Weyville and realises the extent of her cousin and the community's narrow and repressive mindset, she decides to flee to Auckland. "I'll find a room in Weyville for the night and leave for Auckland in the morning. There should be work for me. After all what's the difference between a factory in Weyville and a factory in Auckland?" (ABOW 66). While regarding Auckland as a sort of saviour may indicate that her recognition

of the hierarchy may function along traditional lines, Harriet is coming to an awareness of how artificial and simplistic a straight division between the centres is. Her mention of the factory indicates an awareness of socio-cultural issues that go beyond a simple view of linear progression through different communities.

> Weyville had its own problems. While the surrounding forests were beginning to provide some employment, particularly for young men, it was limited. Most young people who displayed any ability at all had been smartly shipped off to Auckland or Wellington to find better jobs, or to go teaching, particularly if they were girls. Harriet quickly realised that her fury about Ohaka's policy of doing exactly the same thing was rather futile: Weyville simply did it on a much larger scale. What was worse, she also realised that Alice knew this and that she held very little hope for her prospects, long or short term. Alice might be curious about, perhaps even bewildered, by some conflicting aspects of Harriet's personality, but basically she still saw her as an indifferent scholar from a whistle-stop North Auckland farming village, whom she has taken off Mary's hands out of the goodness of her heart, so that she could find some employment however material (ABOW 68).

With this recognition of Weyville as being just as constricting as Ohaka, Harriet has subverted the conventional wisdom that brought her there and has realised that the idea of a simple geographical hierarchy may be false.

Weyville mirrors an old world that had been riven with class division and aristocracy. This is partly why Harriet's parents have felt themselves to be excluded from it in the same way that they had felt excluded when they were 'at home' in England. This mindset of her parents is exposed when Harriet confronts her mother's assertion that, being landowners, they were subject to different rules and expectations when she asks "would you have been landowners if you had stayed in England?" (ABOW23). Harriet's parents had maintained a rigid view from which they attempted to escape by emigrating to New Zealand and had still clung to it in colonial terms by seeing Alice's 'success' one step up the social and geographical hierarchy as being inaccessible to them. They had fled such a hierarchy only to play a part in perpetuating it in their new home.

Alice has a somewhat different approach to Weyville. She is also looking to move up the hierarchy, but through her children instead of through the exploitation of the land, showing a similar mindset to Harriet's parents but defining it in strict social terms. She has used her position in the community and her significant wealth to send her children overseas. She does this in a community dominated by a series of networks and influence peddling:

> … Alice and Ted, her late husband, had sunk appropriate amounts of money into seeing that they were justly rewarded with a place in the academic sun. Alice thanked her God (a very important figure in her life) that she'd never been placed in the

> position of some parents, and felt that it would break her up if she'd ever had to try and place a child of hers in Weyville (ABOW 34).

Weyville is a place where one is 'placed'. Harriet resents this from the start, and realises its hypocrisy. She defies Weyville, quits the job in which she has been 'placed' and sets out determined to actively forge her own identity. However she still subscribes to a hierarchical view of the opportunities that different centres present and sees this as necessarily pragmatic: "Yet a small warning bell sounded inside her head, telling her that if she were to go back to Ohaka now she might never return to Weyville- and Weyville, limited though it was, still held vague promise of things to come" (ABOW 81). These pragmatic considerations are expanded into an attachment to the town coupled with a feeling of need for a redefinition of place. After leaving her assigned job in a haberdashery shop, Harriet begins to train as a librarian. She soon comes to the realisation that

> She could never return to Ohaka and she was not a part of Weyville that made any kind of sense. She would never belong to the boarding school set, or to this crowd, who, with equal assurance, ran their own secret society. There was no half way house and she was alone (ABOW 82).

Her desired trajectory is complicated when she is kicked out of Alice's house because of her relationship with a Maori. She becomes pregnant and the couple head north to his hometown of Kaikohe. In a further re-imagining of the land, she becomes acquainted with another sort of geography which subverts the settler worldview of her parents and the citizens of Ohaka and Weyville: "These were happy times for them

all, and Harriet could feel the glow of the north creeping back into her body, as well as her remembered love for Denny" (ABOW 162). The couple had found Auckland rife with racism and had been able to find only menial work in the least desirable neighbourhood. The trip up to Kaikohe, provided a geographical antidote to the limiting hierarchy and the social worlds she had encountered within it in Ohaka, Weyville and Auckland. Her acknowledgment here of place functions in the same way that her alternate take on religion did: it complicates and challenges the dominant, colonial view of the natural world and subverts the hierarchical ordering of geography.

Harriet conceives a child while she is in Kaikohe and relates it to this naturalistic worldview "She knew her body had been open to receive. Sand and sea and sun, a child, they went together" (ABOW 162). Her impulse is to retreat from Auckland, where the couple had moved to take jobs, and head back to Northland after the baby arrives. This plan is mooted after a miscarriage and the dissolution of the marriage. She returns to Ohaka where "the river banks had never been so beautiful" (ABOW 184). Ohaka and Northland have become a touchstone, a potent counterweight to the disappointment she has experienced as she progressed through the geographical hierarchy. In a complete reversal, the rural has returned to challenge the urban.

Harriet returns to Weyville to work in the library and begins to plan for her next step up the hierarchy, which will be a move to Wellington to complete her library training. Harriet has not been able to return to Northland in some time and this has left her unequivocal about her proposed move to Wellington: "Wellington began to seem like the promised land" (ABOW 203). Wellington provides a different view of this urban/rural division: instead of being largely

repressive, though offering certain opportunities, Wellington is seen as uncomplicatedly positive[1]. At times the upward progression can be just as liberating as it is stifling and does not function here as simply a clear cut escape from the colonial constraints and prejudices of small town settler society.

> The city enchanted her, with its houses seeming to cling to the hills in a primitive effort to survive. It wasn't lush like Auckland, or as sprawling or crowded. There was a vigour in the air, a purpose to the place. Others on the course asked her whether the public service atmosphere of the city irritated her, and she could only look at them. To her it was the loveliest place she had ever seen (ABOW 203).

Wellington will provide her with an escape of sorts in a more significant way than she had perceived in Auckland when she first arrived. Harriet returns to Weyville, and the different part of it which she now occupies with her family, having met her new husband during her first visit to Wellington. This new suburban Weyville is as stifling as the old to Harriet and her spirits are continually bolstered by thoughts of escape to Wellington: "These secret things kept her going" (ABOW 254).

Eventually she suffers a breakdown brought on by the stifling conditions of her suburban life so she heads to Wellington on a visit. Here we see an important episode in that Harriet's visit is inspired by a strong desire for change. This time Wellington offers a very different experience compared to the one that Harriet had experienced when she last spent time in the city to complete the final segment of her library course. The different social, cultural and historical moment in which this

[1] This can be taken to result from Kidman's registration of established geographical norms as well as the challenge *A Breed Of Women* presents to them.

occurs is introduced right from the beginning as she discovers that her friend Helen lives communally with other young people. She is immediately aware of her difference: "What sort of people were they, and what sort of an effort would she have to make?" (ABOW 261). Harriet's reaction shows that she sees social acceptance as work. This is not only a product of her exclusion of social and geographical hierarchies but a clinging subscription to them. The visit to Wellington firmly reveals a different set of standards that before had only been hinted at through the social structures and acceptance she had encountered in Kaikohe.

Harriet is brought into a group which represents a departure from the accepted norms in Weyville, a rung below Wellington in the geographical hierarchy: "She wondered what Helen and her friends were involved in, and how profound a change was implied in Helen's words" (ABOW 261). Confirming the sense of geographical hierarchy being far from clear cut whether it is seen as conservatively colonial or progressively liberating, upon her introduction to the Wellington counterculture, Harriet challenged by one of its members:

> *How can you be so sure you know so much about me?*
> Because I've been there, that's why. God, take
> Hamilton, where I come from, you wouldn't read
> about it. I was brought up there, my mother *my*
> *mother*, for God's sake, wears twinsets like yours.
> And she says what war, too (ABOW 262).

The lower levels of the hierarchy are identified as synonymous with ignorance and apathy. Harriet is quickly absorbed into the rising counterculture, symbolically sheds her twinset and marches on the American embassy. Wellington here is not merely a larger more prosperous version of Weyville, but has become a crucible for

the emerging identities of the 1970's. These pluralistic identities challenge a strict geographically defined hierarchy.

Wellington is important to Harriet: "She was talking again. They had released the springs inside her that had slowly been drying up in Weyville" (ABOW 265). Her experience of Weyville is summed up as she tries to explain the impact that it had had upon her:

> how she'd made herself stop caring and hidden her poetry and the story of her marriage to Denny – shameful secrets, yet they were so much a part of her that they made her what she was. She had been hiding them because people were afraid of being told things that might disturb the image of where they lived, of what they were building for themselves. (ABOW 265).

This demonstrates how committed the residents of suburban Weyville are to this geographical ranking. The importance attached to land in the suburban order of value is of a very different nature than that which is established by Harriet and Morag. In Camelot, the suburb in which Harriet and her family live in Weyville, that importance is proprietary and with Harriet and Morag's post-settler prioritising of the land at Kaikohe, Galloping Mountain, Ohaka and McConnell's Landing, it is interpretive. Land is now approached in terms of forging an identity, not merely acquiring and manipulating the landscape. Suburban New Zealand, insofar as it relates to the physical environment, is seen as having more in common with original settler approaches to the physical environment than the post-settler view outlined by Laurence and Kidman in which land shapes consciousness rather than submits to it.

Harriet returns to Weyville but has been completely changed by Wellington to the point that she decides that she can no longer remain: “There was no other place that Harriet could conceive of going” (ABOW 296). From then on she makes her way in Wellington where she establishes a career in the journalistic and artistic scenes of the city. Harriet has moved through the geographical hierarchy of twentieth century New Zealand both criticising it and complicating it, but also being powerfully enabled by it. She leaves Weyville with her husband and children with the triumphant thought: ‘They were heading for Wellington and the 1970’s. Their life was about to begin again” (ABOW 297). The hierarchy is intact but has been shown to be complicated and problematic, though not without its benefits.

The Diviners

Morag has many similar perceptions in Manawaka, a small town on the Canadian prairies, to Harriet growing up in Ohaka. Morag’s parents die when she is very young so her recollections of them are further removed from those of Harriet, but her appreciation and awareness of their relationship to the land parallels hers. However Laurence utilizes the acknowledged point that the portrayal of Morag’s parents comes from an unreliable narrator, in this case their daughter, to add an additional complication through the acknowledgement of her unreliability: “I don’t know how much I embroidered later on” (Diviners 26). This is related to her youth at the time but also to the importance of the conception of her parents to her overall identity. There is a simple imagining of her parents as people who “eat at their dining room every single Sunday, without fail” (Diviners 16) and the suspect reminiscence that her father “never stinks of horseshit even though he’s a farmer” (Diviners 16). This could be seen as a stronger, though more complicated in its presentation,

detachment from physical reality than that which is presented by Kidman in regards to Harriet's parents. By admitting that these perceptions may be flawed, Laurence allows for a more open-ended appraisal of the settler generation than does Kidman.

An undermining of the geographical hierarchy upon which Manawaka settler society is portrayed is conveyed by the character of Morag's adoptive father, Christie. Christie uses his position as the garbage collector for the town and guardian of its 'nuisance grounds' to criticize the inability to acknowledge or manage the community's complications and the tendency to hide these behind a rigid social façade**.** The presence of the 'nuisance grounds' themselves is used by Laurence to provide a physical counterpoint to this community façade. The complications set up by the geographical division of Manawaka, from socio-economically demarcated neighbourhoods to the town's relation to its garbage, demonstrate a separation from the wider physical world that, though different in emphasis, mirrors that of Harriet's family and of Ohaka.

As with the position along the geographical hierarchy assigned to Weyville and Ohaka, Manawaka is strictly socially divided. Boundaries are firmly established and ethnically delineated

> Hill Street was the Scots-English equivalent of The Other Side of the Tracks, the shacks and shanties at the north end of Manawaka, where the Ukrainian section hands on the CPR lived; it was inhabited by those who had not and would never make good. Remittance men and their bedraggled families. Drunks. People perpetually on relief" (Diviners 37).

Her disgust with her hometown and the limited opportunities it presents result in a determination to advance along the geographic hierarchy equivalent to Harriet's: 'I've never been anywhere except Manawaka. This will change, though. By God and the Apostles and all the Saints, it will (Diviners 165).

Her opportunity presents itself upon admittance to college in Winnipeg. Her first impressions of the city can be seen as a complication of the strictly positive nature of the hierarchy she has believed in thus far. She laments the hardness of the sidewalks in her new home and attributes her disappointment to not being able to walk along the grass, as would be done in Manawaka (Diviners 190). Escape from Manawaka has meant the opening up of opportunity but it has also meant the loss of something else, as it ultimately does for Harriet in her departure from Ohaka[1].

She also encounters a similar geographical division to the one that she had left behind in Manawaka as she settles in the city's poor north end. By demonstrating this side of Winnipeg, *The Diviners* complicates the notion of the geographical hierarchy. Harriet realizes that there is little difference between a factory job in Auckland and one in Weyville and Morag comes to realise that the same parallels exist between Manawaka and Winnipeg through her recognition that each has its wrong side of the tracks.

She discovers that the employment and social possibilities in Winnipeg are not necessarily more open than those in Manawaka as the student newspaper looks down on her experience writing for the Manawaka Banner. She soon decides that another jump up the hierarchy will be desirable. This possibility presents itself in the form of a relationship with Brooke Skelton, one of her lecturers. When he is offered a job in Toronto**,** she responds with unreflective agreement in line with an immediately

[1] For both Morag and Harriet this is somewhat resolved in their eventual return to rural environments.

accessible geographical hierarchy: "Would she like Toronto? Would she like paradise? With Brooke, and away from the prairies entirely. (Diviners 219).

However her escape to Toronto is socially circumscribed by her husband instead of an Alice figure. Brooke does not want her to continue with her studies there and she is expected to be a housewife. Morag does not make her break from the social constriction and the geographical hierarchy inherited from a settler worldview in Toronto but in Vancouver. Toronto is therefore not as fleshed out in its physical description as are Winnipeg and Manawaka. In this way Toronto is less like Wellington for Morag than it is like Weyville for Harriet and she suffers from a similar kind of domestic dullness to that which affects Harriet. Again the hierarchy to which both had subscribed has failed to deliver what they had anticipated. A critique of this kind of uncomplicated faith in progression along a geographical hierarchy is evident. Smaller communities in the novels, though often more bound up in imported, stifling colonial considerations, ultimately come to represent valuable pieces to be assembled in the construction of a mature post-settler geographical imagination. It becomes important for Harriet and Morag to acknowledge this.

Morag leaves Brooke, whose authoritarian streak has become unbearable along with Toronto's anonymity and the stultifying life that she leads within it. The promise of Toronto has faded into a repetition of the characteristics she had fled from in Manawaka and Winnipeg: "Now and somewhat oddly, considering the awfulness of the house on Hill Street, the apartment in Toronto seems more than ever like a desert island, or perhaps a cave, a well-lighted and beautifully decorated cave, but a cave just the same" (Diviners 275). There is a hint here at the final return that Morag will eventually make as part of her renunciation of the geographic hierarchy. From

this point onward the city becomes progressively more despised. Vancouver is ‘not to be her final settling place, obviously’ (Diviners 312).

Once settled in Vancouver, Morag arrives at an understanding of this through meeting another Manawakan. She realises that Vancouver functions as a magnet for small-town prairie people as one would expect with places occupying higher positions along a hierarchical geography:

> We all head west kiddo. We troop out to the coast, and every time we meet someone from back home we fall on their necks and weep. Stupid eh?’ You have to go home again, in some way or another. This concept cannot yet be looked at (Diviners 324)

In Vancouver Morag begins to conceptualise the notion of home and the spell of the geographic hierarchy is finally broken. Up until that point her moving around has been decidedly uncritical. Though she again shows elements of subscribing to the geographic hierarchy, once she arrives in London and then starts to establish her final ‘home’ in rural Ontario, she never again makes her decisions about where to live and what constitutes home solely on an uncritical subscription to that hierarchy. This complicated, aware, notion of the city and settlement in general is a key element in the post-settler world view that Laurence presents.

Morag’s move to London can be seen as a further advancement up the hierarchy but it is more critically aware than her previous moves. The city frightens her with its anonymity but she comes to embrace it because of this (Diviners 328). She also shuns the arts scene and imagines it to be full of shallow people who can not offer her much (Diviners 410). Although it was the prospect of belonging to a community of writers and artists that had originally enticed her to London, once there

she largely ignores it outside of her relationship with the painter Dan McRaith who is of Scottish extraction and whose art is intimately linked to the sense of place that Scotland represents for him. In fact, he is unable to produce any paintings in London. McRaith's troubles can be seen as a further indictment of a simplistically held view of the superiority of the urban world and as part of Morag's growing re-prioritization of the physical landscape as part of a post-settler return to the importance of the natural world.

Complicated Community: Geographic Hierarchy in Post-Settler Consciousness

As in *A Breed of Women,* the image and perception of the city and by extension the geographical hierarchy that the characters progress along is complicated and challenged in *The Diviners*. Both characters come to value the rural hinterlands from which they emerged and from which they have fled. Problems and complications are acknowledged along the way but the existence of a rigid, inflexible and arbitrary hierarchy is no longer accepted.

The post-settler geographical imagination that has emerged is perhaps best encapsulated by the homecomings that both protagonists experience. When she returns to Ohaka, Harriet is drawn to the land as a sort of touchstone, though one that is now approached through a socially aware consciousness that has been enabled by her progression through the urban hierarchy. The same can be said for Morag and her homesteading impulse which leads her to establish herself at McConnell's Landing.

Both characters develop through criticising and embracing the urban hierarchies that they encounter but, in the end, their geographical imaginations can be seen to include their origins and the rural, physical landscape they come from as well. Kidman and Laurence acknowledge conventional geographical imaginations.

However while they acknowledge them, they also complicate and challenge them without their being entirely discarded.

The locations of these ultimate returns to the land are similar in both novels. In defiance of a hierarchy that moves from rural to urban , from simple to sophisticated, both Ohaka and McConnell's landing embody a rural, pastoral idyll and through Harriet's approach to her parents and Morag's recognition of Catherine Parr Traill and the pioneers who originally inhabited her farmhouse a different geographical imagination is presented. The other locations of this return to the land are presented as inherently indigenous. Kaikohe and Galloping Mountain are seen as having this quality and are essential to the recapturing of place that occurs in a post-settler return to the land.

Chapter Three: Settler Narrative and its Geographical Legacy

Laurence and Kidman use both old and new settler narratives to present a post-settler evolution of the geographical imagination. Each complicates her use of old and new narratives and extends both towards a post-settler consciousness through bridging narratives that join the two. In this way the emergence of the local place is interpreted by new connections with the world beyond in the narratives that involve foreign travel and foreigners. These foreign aspects are one side of the narratives that I will consider. The narrative most important to this study is rooted in the local landscape and a post-settler approach to it. I will also discuss narratives that are 'old' and narratives that I consider 'new'. Generally, 'old' will refer to those narratives that can be considered colonial and 'new' to those narratives that have post-colonial aspects to them. There are many forms that these categories take such as those that impact upon art, literature and the media as well as those that deal with history and travel. There are aspects of both old and new narratives in most of these and ultimately the narratives that are finally adopted by the protagonists in the novels come as a direct result of this recombination.

The new narratives reflect and explore post-settler cultural identities that were emerging in the two countries in the 1970's while the old narratives can be seen as an important reference point for the first. These two categories often intersect in the geographical imaginations of the characters including those that they ultimately adopt. Within a geographical context the old narratives are not merely a starting point that informs the new group of narratives. They function as touchstones to be revisited and critically analysed; as such they are an important influence on the modern geographical imaginaries and post-settler narratives that emerge from the novels to

form post-settler, historically contextualised geographies that find expression in the texts through distinct places such as Ohaka and McConnell's Landing.

In both books these two strands of settler narrative continually circle back to each other. This sense of muddied identity is especially noticeable in the characters who are closely linked to the protagonists through a blend of romance and career such as Michael, an English magazine publisher, who becomes Harriet's lover, or Brooke Skelton, an India-raised English professor and Dan McRaith, a Scottish artist, both of whom have relationships with Morag. These figures occupy both romantic and professional roles in Harriet and Morag's lives**.** Thus they play an important role in settler narratives, both old and new and can be seen to embody the kind of multifaceted identities that come to inform the work. These hybrid relationships are where this blending can be seen most obviously. However, the coexistence of historical and contemporary narratives is not limited to these. In *A Breed of Women* one such example is present in the presentation of Harriet's friend Leonie's internationalized family life. What had begun with Harriet and Lottie's childhood dreams of things overseas and foreign, changes from being simple and straightforward to being complicated as they grow up and become aware of more realistic and plural views in the outside world. When the two meet later in life the result of Leonie's jet setting is held up to scrutiny.

The interplay of these two kinds of settler narrative not only occurs within characters but between them. There are characters in each book that can be seen as predominantly representing a category of narrative. This allows for comparison between Michael, Alice and Harriet's parents as examples of similar settler narratives that value international experience and are largely focused on goals and priorities outside New Zealand.

The critical tones that are taken when dealing with different contemporary narratives are often influenced by historical settler narratives but they are also the product of their place and time. It is the unique cultural moment of the 1970's that has given Harriet and Morag the confidence and awareness to root their identities in a new cultural place, aware of both historical and contemporary narratives but bound by neither.

The emergence of such worldviews and their geographical imaginaries is produced by the juxtaposition and comparison between settler and post-settler myths and narratives. The categories of new and old could be seen in these terms. The English magazine for which Michael works and its imported cultural model can be held up against Harriet's more locally defined sense of culture and her experience in the media and creative arts; the initial settler narratives of her parents are presented in contrast with Michael's narrative and Harriet's approach to Ohaka later in the novel; the drive towards travel and overseas experience shown by Alice and Leonie is countered by Leonie's recognition that perhaps she can only be culturally literate in New Zealand and by Harriet's defence of and contentment with having never travelled outside the country. These positions are in contrast to Alice's dissatisfaction with and eventual questioning of her worldview. This is evident in her regret at having only minimal contact with her children who have gone overseas. Harriet ultimately adopts the view of an adult aware of the complicated nature of what her parents' and others' worldviews had presented as simple and straightforward. Both Harriet and Leonie ultimately come to fashion post-settler geographical imaginaries that represent modern pluralistic, self confident identities of the kind that were emerging in the period that are firmly rooted in a sense of place and ancestral settler narratives.

This relationship between historical and contemporary narratives is also present in *The Diviners*. The interplay is more complicated here but the same general pattern is present. The tales of deprivation and the immigration of Morag's forbears as told by the unreliable voice of Christie Logan are contrasted by Morag's trip to Scotland and her relationship with a Scottish painter. The interplay of the historical and contemporary is evident in how Morag orders and constructs her life in McConnell's landing. In perhaps the most explicit example of this intermingling of settler narratives, Morag has an imaginary dialogue with the famous Canadian pioneer Catherine Parr Traill. The interaction with Parr Traill can be seen as an account of the emergent qualities of a post-settler geographical imagination.

Also significant is the way that different generations communicate with each other within the text. Jules comes to perceive his world in part through his daughter and his father. The returns to the land and to a new sort of settler narrative extend beyond Morag and Jules to include a new geographical imaginary that is developed among the Métis characters. This kind of relationship is also more extensive in Laurence in that it works within both historical and contemporary narratives. Christie's tales of Piper Gunn are contrasted with Lazarus's tales of Louis Riel, adding further layers of complication between settler narratives than merely the historical/contemporary dichotomy that can be taken as a starting point in both books. How this dichotomy is broken down and reassembled is at the core of how settler narratives function within the two novels and what pushes the central characters towards the realisation of a post-settler consciousness.

A Breed of Women

The settler narratives present in *A Breed of Women* can be placed in two rough categories: The old narratives are the intact settler narratives; the new narratives take the form of a neo-colonial globalized settler worldview. The first category will be used to refer to those narratives that draw primarily on an adversarial relationship to their surrounding geography and society and contain an explicit reference to the settler culture of origin. The second category will refer to narratives that return to exploitative, insecure first category narratives that are present throughout the generations in the novel. This primarily involves the change that occurs with the children of settlers and their post-settler duplication and expansion of the characteristics of old narratives to point towards a third category of post-settler geographical consciousness.

In *A Breed of Women*, this division can be seen to operate primarily along generational lines. The narratives and worldviews that are presented through Harriet's parents as well as her Cousin Alice are immediately rooted in the settler experience. Though contemporary and therefore 'new', the narratives that are presented through Michael and his business model and Leonie and her family can also be seen as 'old' in that they contain elements of an ancestral settler worldview illustrated in the novel through the presentation of preceding generations.

The Wallaces face an unforgiving location and their main orientation is towards domination and conquest. This extends from their struggles against a harsh physical environment to their interaction with the society that they encounter. The extension of the old settler narratives into a contemporary social world is strikingly

illustrated by Morag's father's effort to exploit the local Maori workforce in a similar way to that in which he approaches the soil on his farm.

Alice presents a different settler narrative in that her perception is largely urban. However, they have much in common. In its presentation Alice's worldview shows a concern with status, advancement and exploitation that is shared with the elder Wallace generation. Her minute attentions to the subtleties of class and ownership indicate a rigid transplantation of an Old World, colonial worldview. Her narrative is a proselytising one that is concerned with the duplication and establishment of the conditions of her culture of origin. Examples of this narrative include her focus on 'placements' and networks in the community and her judgement of Leonie and the other young people who hang around the milk bar. It can be seen to reach its peak when Harriet is forced to hide her relationship with Denny because of his race. Her settler narrative is one whose goal is to "civilize" those around her instead of exploiting the physical and human resources of the new country as with Harriet's parents.

The narratives in the novel that have to do with travel have much in common with this colonising project. The difference being that the civilisation here is to come from an individual's travel. This perception of travel is demonstrated early on when Harriet points to the outside world as the provider of just such sophistication:

> 'Why can't you? Lots of people in Europe do.
> Anybody who's talented over there gets taught to do
> what they're good at properly, and they get famous.
> Wendy's temporary interest vanished. 'This isn't
> Europe,' she said shortly. 'It's New Zealand. You do
> what you can' (ABOW 52).

This belief continues into early adulthood as Harriet and Leonie repeatedly talk of travel and make concrete plans towards it. The fixation of the Wallaces and Alice on the culture of origin has been replaced by a different frame of reference but those references remain external. They also carry with them a critique of how things are in New Zealand that is related to the growing appreciation of Maori/Pakeha identities that was gaining prominence in the 1970's and which forms an important part of the post-settler consciousness that is reflected in the novel.

Other examples of how the perception of travel functions in the novel are through Leonie's adult life as the wife of a globetrotting oil executive and Harriet's ultimate reconciliation of her desire to travel and her complete failure to do so. It is significant in that with their appraisals of Leonie's peripatetic life and Harriet's homebound existence, both Leonie and Harriet begin to move beyond the romantic tropes of travel that they had developed in their youth as an uncomplicated good and make what is perhaps a necessary step for young post-settlers. When Leonie and Harriet meet again later in their lives, their approaches to travel and things foreign have changed from a sense of reverent daydreaming to a recognition of the importance of their home country. Harriet reflects and admits with pride that "I've never made it across the Tasman; you were always the adventurer at heart". (ABOW176). Harriet has refocused her geographic imagination to be less fixated on the external. This forms a key part of the integration that is key to the emergence of a post-settler consciousness expressed through a revised geographical imagination.

In Leonie's elaboration of her travels we see that Harriet still reveres the thought of going abroad but the desire is starting to take a different shape. It will not completely fade until her return to Ohaka after the end of her relationship with Michael. In conversation with Leonie, we see this process in operation.

“Again there was a careful brittle note. ‘My husband’s work’s taken us to a great many places. He’s in Oil, you see’” (ABOW 176). In the following description of Leonie, we can see the complication and shifting appraisal of international experience which had been up until now uncomplicatedly positive: “Leonie was fragile, and much more beautiful than when she had been a girl, in a cultured international sort of way” (ABOW 176). The combination of both positive and negative associations with the changes that Leonie’s international experience has produced suggests that Harriet has incorporated her childhood fantasies of travel with her lived reality and perhaps achieved a mature balancing of the two. This valuing of experience both home and away is an important aspect in the emergence of the new post-settler worldviews in *The Diviners* and *A Breed of Women.* In a continuation of the same process that Harriet undergoes in the novel, the tropes and narratives that once oriented a life are being seen for their faults and are evolving away from absolute, simple values which are externally referenced.

The final ‘old’ settler narrative in *A Breed of Women* concerns Michael and the publishing company that he works for. Sent out from England to establish a cultural and economic beachhead for his employer, the narrative that he uses to orient himself can be seen as similar to that of Harriet’s parents: one of exploitation and wealth extraction, though in this case the wealth is cultural. The modus operandi of the magazine is to find some token New Zealand cultural output in order to sell the main bulk of its content which will come unaltered from England. This is accompanied by the snobbery and airs of an archetypal colonial character. Michael’s position is inherently based on old narratives similar to Alice’s and the Wallaces’. Where his worldview can be considered new lies primarily in his professional and personal interactions with Harriet. This portrayal of neo-colonial exploitation is in line

with Alice and the Wallaces. From this starting point, Michael's geographical imaginary can be looked at from different angles.

The two main 'new' settler narratives are those surrounding Leonie and her internationalized family and Michael and his imported magazine. Both result from the inherited prioritizing of things foreign that Harriet and Leonie share. Indeed both of the new narratives are closely tied to Harriet and the high value that she initially places on travel and foreign experience. Leonie and Michael's worldviews and experience are initially seductive to Harriet; in a similar way Dan McRaith and Brooke Skelton's are attractive to Morag, but are eventually seen for their flaws. They are seen less as something to aspire towards and more as a point of departure for the concluding geographical imaginaries in the work.

Leonie and Harriet make plans to travel in their adolescence. Both are quite dedicated to these plans but in the end only Leonie follows through in the way that they had envisioned. Leonie travels the world and experiences some of what they had daydreamt in their youth. But Leonie is not presented as having realised the youthful ideals that they had imagined would come from travel and exposure to the more important and sophisticated world outside of New Zealand. Kidman complicates this narrative as Harriet also ends up being very mobile and lives portions of her life in many locations. The difference is that Harriet has been mobile within New Zealand and Leonie has not. Leonie's account of these international adventures is superficial and comes at a cost. She is quite unhappy with her oil executive husband who has enabled her lifestyle and the sacrifices it has demanded. Harriet is initially put off by her and it is indeed this sense of her need to travel that is the cause. Leonie looks at her return to New Zealand as a way of re-establishing ties to a community and to a land that are severed when one deploys an external frame of reference that takes one

overseas either literally or figuratively. Here we see Kidman once again pointing to the importance of a return to origins, both physical and cultural, as a key part of a post-settler geographical imagination. With Leonie's return we see that it is Harriet's path which is more sympathetically presented. Harriet has found what Leonie seems to lack: a certain cultural literacy. The exploration of new post-settler narratives that occurs through Harriet's relationship with Michael is characterised by the denunciation of his sweeping, though at times accurate, generalizations:

> He couldn't have foreseen the decline in the economy and it hadn't been his idea to come out here in the first place. His bosses might have at least realized that New Zealand, behind the rest of the world in most things, had been behind other western countries in its economic recession, and must now be hit at a time when the rest of the world was starting to recover (ABOW 237).

Harriet is initially made insecure by his disparaging view of New Zealand and New Zealanders. She is concerned about the quality of her French, her dress, her accent. Though this could be read as a common self–consciousness that would occur to anyone who is in love, in this case it takes on particular cultural significance. Harriet often sees the relationship in these terms and ultimately rejects them: "Poms, bloody poms. You wondered what a crowd like that really wanted out of a country. They weren't here to put anything in it, whatever they said" (ABOW 238). The relationship between Harriet's personal experience and her wider geographical imagination is immediate.

Gradually it becomes apparent that this is the basis of the particular dynamics of their relationship. Michael begins to sadistically torment her:

> He did it superbly, by means of little things such as teasing her New Zealand schoolgirl French which had been brushed up in recent years so that she could acquit herself in restaurants. She would stumble, humiliated and everything would falter (ABOW 240).

The final new settler narrative in *A Breed of Women* turns on how Michael and Harriet interact professionally outside of their romantic relationship. In the interplay between them a new kind of settler consciousness emerges. Though influenced by the old narratives and inherently exploitative**,** the narrative that Michael represents also hints at a different kind of viewpoint in which a lack of recognition and acceptance from the outside world is not seen to be as crucial.

The business model by which Michael's company plans its development in New Zealand demonstrates this approach. The goal of the expansion of the magazine is to enter the New Zealand market with as little New Zealand input as possible. There is a strong echo here of the relationship between Harriet's parents and their adopted home. The difference is that with Harriet's parents the exploitation was physical and directed against the land, whereas with Michael it is human and seeks to exploit the country's cultural as opposed to agricultural capital**.** In this sense it can be a 'new' narrative heavily informed by the old, with which to view the post-settler consciousness that was emerging in New Zealand during the period. This is evident in Kidman's portrayal of the media and cultural industries of the era.

Michael is quite open about the approach of his employers: "We've got a good format, The idea is that we carry the best of our hardline basic formula and relevant

material through into a local New Zealand magazine, but that we cover the local scene with local material" (ABOW 185). It is interesting to note the dialogue around this passage which occurs during Harriet and Michael's first meeting. Harriet's immediate reaction is highly critical:

> He had all the hallmarks of the kind of person she has come to despise most thoroughly in recent years, dining well in New Zealand, dressed out in immaculate accent, and manners that no Antipodean could possibly hope to emulate. There was no reason to believe that he had any talent whatsoever and every reason to suspect that he had a great deal of money (ABOW 183).

The reference to landed British aristocracy continues with the tone that Harriet takes when initially describing herself to Michael:

> I'm a first generation New Zealander. My father had delusions of grandeur and the feudal estate was a small patch of barren land with only one rather excellent stand of growth beside a river where he ran the absolute minimum of cows on which to make an economic unit (ABOW 180).

The dynamics of their relationship are thus established. Through the two strands of their relationship, romantic and professional, we see the change in these dynamics in the eventual collapse of the magazine and Harriet's personal and professional success in the wake of it. Through Michael and his magazine, Harriet is able to recognize her own emerging post-settler narrative as having more value than

either that of her parents or of Michael. By counterpointing the narratives of Michael and her parents with her own non-external geographical imagination, Harriet develops a post-settler consciousness, one where the value of a multifaceted social and cultural situation are combined with a respect for physical place and the narratives of preceding generations. No longer does everything require a geographically remote reference point.

The Diviners

As in *A Breed of Women, The Diviners* contains several settler narratives that proceed along historical and colonial lines that can be seen as 'old'. These narratives also tend to be oriented on generational lines. That being said, there are crucial differences in approach. The relationship between Morag and her adoptive parents needs to be seen differently than that between Harriet and hers. Because Morag's parents are not present in the book except through unreliable memories, the settler narratives that they embody have less prominence than with Harriet's parents in *A Breed of Women.* The most powerful settler narratives come from the tales of initial migration that her adoptive father Christie tells.[1]

Laurence inserts doubt by way of the presentation of the unreliability of Morag's memories of her parents: "Colin Gunn, whose people came to this country so long ago, from Sutherland, during the Highland Clearances, maybe, and who had in them the sadness and a stern quality" (Diviners 18). This is a key difference. Both Kidman and Laurence complicate the post-settler and the settler through the use of narratives which actively blend the two, though Laurence inserts this complication more prominently and from different angles through the use of songs, historical

[1] Kidman has also taken up the retelling of initial, historical settler narratives both in Canada and New Zealand in her historical novel *A Book or Secrets.*

material, symbolic objects and finally a pilgrimage of sorts to the origin of those settler myths.

Through this we can see similar streams in the old settler narratives of the two novels. Sadness and resignation are present here in equal measure to the Wallaces. The resignation to circumstance and the battle for dominion and conquest are prioritised along with an exploitative relationship with the natural world and the indigenous populations in their new homes. The mentality that was expressed in *A Breed of Women* through Harriet's father's search for cheap indigenous labour is here presented in broader historical terms as we see the Scottish regiments in the colonial army opposed to the Métis as part of both Christie's and Jules Tonerre's accounts of Western Canadian history, the battle of Batoche and the Riel rebellion. In both *A Breed of Women* and *The Diviners* there is a strong separation in regards to indigenous groups. A key component of this otherness is its tragedy in that the old settler narratives, the English and the dispossessed Scots are both the victims and the perpetrators of colonial injustice. By intertwining narratives involving both settler and indigenous characters in the novel, Laurence registers the complexity within settler narratives much more acutely than does Kidman.

Another way in which old settler narratives echo each other in the texts is through the presence of English remittance men. Alice and her family can be seen in this light and Michael may represent a new variant of the phenomenon in *A Breed of Women*. In *The Diviners* Morag's adopted family is a product of this kind of old settler narrative:

> Prin's family was English. She has told Morag about
> it. Prin's father was a remittance man. That meant his
> family in the Old Country didn't like him so good,

> and were pretty mean and all, even though he was a
> gentleman, a real one, and so they made him come to
> this country where he didn't want to come to, and for
> a while there, they sent him money, but then they
> didn't (Diviners 43).

The presence of 'Remittance Men' in both novels is important as it complicates and extends the notion of settler narratives from simple exploitation of the land and its original inhabitants to one in which it is possible to see these narratives sympathetically. Remittance men are victimised in different ways than dispossessed crofters, but through the juxtaposition of the two it is possible to see both settler narratives as complicated and far from straightforward, defying easy categorization. Laurence continually does this through her intertwining of storylines both geographically and genealogically[1]

Both Kidman and Laurence emphasise conditions and situations within the settler communities that predate their arrival in the New World. Through the introduction of such contexts, if not always their fleshing out within individual characters, both novels succeed in presenting new narratives that take a complicated settler experience as a starting point in the establishment of post-settler identity. This is achieved by taking rigid settler worldviews, holding them up against their contemporary equivalents, and eventually extending both towards a post-settler worldview that registers a particular historical and cultural moment while recognizing the narratives that preceded it.

An example of this interplay is seen in processes of socialisation in the two novels. Alice's missionary zeal in her attempts at reforming Harriet has a parallel in

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[1] The scope of Laurence's interest in the expansion of these two elements is evident in her setting of her five novel "Manawaka Series", of which *the Diviners* is the final instalment, within the history, families and cultures of southern Manitoba.

The Diviners. This is to be found in Manawaka's schools, churches, and its legal profession through the characters of McVitie and Pearl. All of these institutions and individuals take it upon themselves to improve those they consider lower than themselves in terms of race, class or piety. An example of this is the episode in which Morag is sent to the bakery by Prin only to endure the mockery and pity of Mrs. McVitie and Mrs. Pearl. Other events include the singing of 'The Maple Leaf Forever' in Morag's class and the treatment of Christie by Mr. McVitie and Mr. Pearl as they pass him on the street.

This missionary, proselytising narrative strengthens the presence of old settler narratives that are maintained within the new narratives. As does Kidman, Laurence uses these characters and institutions to make critiques of a political as well as a cultural nature.

As in *A Breed of Women*, there is an inclination towards travel in *The Diviners.* With Alice and her children, this desire to travel and to subordinate local to colonial origins is presented as a failure to engage with the local and indigenous. The main difference here is that with *A Breed of Women*, the stages of progression between characters is more distinct. We see Alice and Harriet's parents representing the failure to move beyond the colonial, whereas we see Harriet and Lottie engaging with the imagining of a new post-settler identity. Laurence has these qualities occurring within characters as well as between them. In *A Breed of Women*, different characters tend to be more entrenched in their worldviews and suffer less internal contradiction, excepting Harriet. This is most evident in Christie as he seeks to escape from his immediate surroundings by constant referral to Scottish settler mythology, the Gaelic language which he does not speak and the credentials of his clan.

It can also be demonstrated that Christie has taken these narratives dominated by his colonial ancestry and localized them. His tales of the Scottish regiments that fought the Métis and the establishment of the settlement in the Red River valley are integral to his narrative as are the ancestral myths he tells about burning crofts. This is something that is less observed in Alice in *A Breed of Women*. Christie is a different sort of character in that he functions as a bridge between settler origins and the post-settler worldview that Morag comes to represent, whereas Alice, by exclusively locating her value and her stories in the colonial world, functions more as a point of comparison with Harriet than as a progenitor of her ultimate post-settler identity.

For Alice, the colonial culture of origin is superior, whereas Christie is not sure as he draws from the local and contemporary in his emerging post-settler worldview while still seeming fixated on the past and the culture of origin. This is a crucial difference in the texts. With Kidman, the conscious emergence of post-settler identity is limited to Harriet. With Laurence all her main characters can be seen to consciously exhibit degrees of convergence between old and new settler narratives.

The new settler narratives in *The Diviners* can be broken up in similar ways to those in *A Breed of Women.* There are parallels throughout the book between characters that look to old world colonial models and distant shores, to those with nuanced and intertwined worldviews and relationships. Beyond these similarities in plot and character, both novels are concerned with the desire for a successful navigation between old and new settler landscapes and narratives that requires a middle ground to be occupied. This, in essence is where the shift from 'old' to 'new' narratives in the two novels is primarily located.

The wanderlust experienced by Harriet and Leonie has its parallel in Morag's desire to escape Winnipeg, first to Toronto and then to Vancouver. This trajectory is

mirrored by Harriet's escapes to Weyville and Wellington and can be considered part of a new settler narrative independent of ancestral and cultural ties to the original culture which is fundamentally about geographical place. However, both of these elements, though they are located in settler countries, can be seen to be part of an old settler narrative that looks elsewhere for sustenance and meaning through the importance that the characters place in the idea of travel, often characterized as an escape, and the central part in the plot that their travel and the aspiration towards it play. This external focus, both inside and outside the settler countries is omnipresent in the books. The extensions of this in *A Breed of Women* are Leonie and Harriet's plans for overseas travel and Leonie's globe-trotting adult life. In *The Diviners,* Morag makes what amounts to a pilgrimage to Britain in search of roots and an artistic community. This does not occur in *A Breed of Women* but the process through which the two protagonists pass is remarkably similar. It is possible to consider that the same process has come to Harriet through Michael, insofar as he represents her creative interests as a writer, as that which Morag come to through her move to Britain and relationship with McRaith. The ultimate rejection of the need for this kind of mentoring is similar.

The time when the seemingly inescapable desire to see and experience other places comes into question is when both Harriet and Morag are well established as adults in career and family. In Morag's case this is when she settles in Vancouver and develops a more nuanced view of the value of travel and of uncritically praising things elsewhere or exotic. Although her decision to settle in Vancouver is partially brought about by the birth of her daughter, Piquette, it is also partly to do with her moving away from the old settler narrative.

The final new settler narrative is that of the colonial romance. This is found in both books with minor variations. Both Michael in *A Breed of Women* and Brooke in *The Diviners* provide characters against which this view of things foreign can be set. Through their relationships with the protagonists, both men enable and inform the emergence of the post-settler consciousnesses that are present in the novels. This functions within both a romantic and personal context as well as an historical one. Brooke and Michael can be seen as cultural gatekeepers of a sort as Brooke, as literary critic, has immense influence over Morag's personal development through her writing. Michael can be approached in a similar way as he represents a colonial cultural model similar to Brooke's. Both are 'new' narratives in that they play a crucial role in the cultural and artistic development of the protagonists. These men carry with them elements of both old and new narratives. They function in the narrative present in both novels but both can be seen as colonial in their approaches to Canada and New Zealand and to their romantic engagements.

Brooke's role is more developed than Michael's. This is inevitable as he has a more substantial and lasting influence in Morag's life than does Michael with Harriet. Brooke also enters the novel at a much earlier stage. Brooke becomes Morag's way out of Winnipeg while Michael appears after Harriet has already established herself in a new environment. In this way Michael, as a complicating factor who arrives after the protagonist has essentially settled, is comparable to the presence of Catherine Parr Traill in *The Diviner*s.

Nowhere in either novel is the intertwining of old and new settler narratives as evident as it is in *The Diviners* when Morag has her interactions with the imagined ghost of Catherine Parr Traill. Through her use of Parr Traill, we can see the solidification of the type of new narrative that Morag has established. In her resistance

to the tug of old settler narratives that have pulled along Christie and the imagined ideals of her parents, we see not only how this new settler narrative has emerged but, importantly, how it is defended. This occurs when Morag refuses to compare herself unfavourably to Parr Traill and rejects her imagined intrusions by forcefully evicting Parr Traill's memory (Diviners 431).

The settler narratives as I have defined them serve to solidify the importance of a sense of space in the novels. The old narratives in both books that prioritize landscape through agriculture or through the ownership and exploitation of land or the struggle to inhabit it, strongly root these initial narratives in local and global geographies.

Narratives that concern expression and cultural institutions also carry with them a strong sense of space in what they use as reference points. The interplay between countries and cultures half a world away is inherently geographical. The characters consciously seek models and narratives that are far removed spatially from their local environments because of these adopted narratives. Countering this tendency while recognizing and integrating it are key to the post-settler geographical consciousness that the authors present.

Chapter Four: Expanding the Landscape

As would be expected from work written during a historical period in which concepts of identity were fiercely contested, the terms gender and race are registered in the shifting geographies of *The Diviners* and *A Breed of Women*. Their influence is strong enough that, as subjects of analysis in and of themselves, they demand a treatment that goes beyond the scope of this project which is limited to their influence on the geographical imagination. Gender and race take on important and unique characteristics in post-settler identities and influence the geographies that these identities can produce. The importance of these changes is rooted in the cultural moment of the 1970's and this makes their influence on the geography of the two books of particular interest.

Both Canadian and New Zealand settler societies were in the midst of re-evaluating race and gender as social determinants and aspects of identity in the 1970's and examining the political and social relationships that attended them. This re-evaluation was often centred on land and landscape, especially in relation to indigenous people. In combination and potentially in concert with these perspectives are those influenced by gender. In the 1970's, race and gender formed a nexus of a new cultural recognition and engagement in the two countries. The indigenous rights and feminist movements would largely drive the socio-cultural changes that occurred during the period. The examination of their active presence in these two novels, is crucial if they are to be taken as representative of emerging post-settler culture.

Gender is one of the few areas where both Kidman and Laurence have received critical attention. *The Book of Secrets* has been addressed by both Elizabeth Rosner and Doreen D'Cruz in gendered terms. Rosner focuses on the circularity of the

narrative and the matrilineal form of the alternative social structure she identifies within the book. Through this she pinpoints a strongly gendered approach which functions as a counter-narrative to the conventional historical narrative that the book recounts. This actively subverts the patriarchal hold on the transmission of culture and history inherent within the historical situation in which the story is set and the events that it draws from. This circular approach to narrative can be seen to be at work within the geographical imaginaries as well as in the narrative in both works. A similar analysis of a uniquely gendered perspective can be taken up in relation to both *A Breed of Women* and *The Diviners* in that a gendered geography is evident in both and functions as a contrary view to that of other characters through its circular as well as its exclusive qualities.

Race is also an important influence on the geographical imagination in these studies. For Rosner, the integration into *The Book of Secrets* of an indigenous bloodline "exemplifies an alliance with place and a departure from the archetypal colonizing hierarchy".[1] This integration occurs in both *The Diviners* and *A Breed of Women* and contributes significantly to both novels' representation of the post-settler geographical imagination. The incorporation and valorization of place through the inclusion of indigenous worldviews is evident in the perception of places such as Kaikohe and Galloping Mountain, as well as places seen as less exclusively indigenous such as Manawaka and Ohaka. The former present a type of indigenous cultural hearth to the European protagonists of the two novels and influence the geographical imaginaries they construct. These offer a means not only of comparing the different cultural systems of colonizer and colonized but also of offering an idealised mode of belonging at a moment when settler consciousness is uncertain

[1] Rosner 85

about its place in the settled countries. This can be seen in the relationship to the indigenous in the novels and will be looked at in light of Terry Goldie's theories of 'Indigenization'.

D'Cruz also centres her analysis on the counter-history that is present in *The Book of Secrets*. Seeing a powerful critique of patriarchy within the novel, D'Cruz notes:

> …the origins of female subversion must necessarily reside where this control may be under abatement. Kidman identifies these places as being also locations in which female difference can gestate towards its birth, is permitted to survive and generates its own resistant discourse. Hence specific places become associated with manifest female agency and its contestation of traditional history. In Kidman's work, these places range from caves and a house inhabited by women to the narrative structures employed, all of which provide the arenas for female subjective difference to reach articulation. [1]

D'Cruz also addresses the role of race and landscape in the post-settler, feminist response that she identifies in *The Book of Secrets.* D'Cruz points to the relationship to the natural world that exists within the novel as forming "an anxiety peculiar to the inception of any social community – an anxiety about borders, about distinguishing what is internal to the social organization from what is external and

[1] D'Cruz 64

threatening to it".[1]These kinds of borders are evident in both Ohaka and Manawaka and a similar anxiety is present in the two novels.

The second influential element in terms of geography is that of race. D'Cruz sees the racial elements of *A Book of Secrets* to be integral as she points to a 'hybridized genealogy'.[2]This kind of genealogy is present in the inter-racial relationships in the two novels. It results not only in a hybridized genealogy but a hybridized geography.

Terry Goldie's work on 'indigenization' in Canadian and New Zealand literatures addresses this influence of race and culture. In *Fear and Temptation: The Image of the Indigene in Canadian, Australian and New Zealand Literatures,* Goldie identifies indigenization as a recurring theme in the presentation of indigenous people and culture in these settler literatures. This process of claiming indigenous peoples and indigenous worldviews in an assertion of settler indigeneity is implicit in the two books. This is especially true in the approach of the indigenous characters to landscape and their sense of place. For Goldie, this naturalistic emphasis and automatic, unquestioning approach to place is symptomatic of Anglo-Saxon settler cultures and tends towards sweeping generalization and essentialism. The necessity of the settler society becoming indigenous means that the actual indigene is reduced to "representing nature in human form".[3]Other characteristics of the tendency include an anti-materialist depiction of the indigene as pure natural freedom from material concerns: "Indigenous characters are seen as more instinctual, with not even the possibility of deviating from their nature. Their sense of belonging to place is not a human choice but an animal gene-tic". [4]In the novels this kind of unconscious and

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[1] D'Cruz 70
[2] D'Cruz 76
[3] Goldie19
[4] Goldie25

unexamined allegiance is reflected in the way the indigenous characters relate to their places of origin. Though far from a clear cut example of what Goldie terms indigenization, there are significant differences in how places that are presented as exclusively indigenous are characterised in comparison with those communities that are blended or predominantly European. Both European characters see their home communities as places to escape from, both Harriet and Morag actively seek to remove themselves from Ohaka and Manawaka respectively. The indigenous characters continue to value their homes as touchstones to which they desire to remain connected.

Finally, Goldie addresses how this view often extends to other marginalized groups as well, specifically the Scots.[1] According to Goldie, Scots settlers are often presented in similar terms to indigenous cultural groups and occupy a similarly disenfranchised position in the wider culture. This is especially relevant in *The Diviners* where these two groups are juxtaposed in terms of shared history, location and relationship with place and are portrayed as having similar geographical viewpoints and appreciations.

A Gendered Perspective

The Diviners

With Laurence we see the stronger example of Rosner's circular narrative and D'Cruz's privileged spaces. The circular relationship to place and narrative is more pronounced than in *A Breed of Women* but less straightforward. Gendered spaces and perspectives can be identified throughout although they are rarely clear-cut.

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[1] Goldie26-27

The prominence of landscape and the return to one's place of ancestry determine the way the imagination fits in to the overall structure of the novels. Both Harriet and Morag progress towards self-knowledge by moving through different settings. Ultimately they come to articulate and realise the culmination of this progression when they both return to a rural environment and a new appreciation of place. With Laurence, this return to the land is complicated not only by Morag's failure to return to Manawaka, but also by her return to a similarly imagined geography in McConnell's Landing. If this circling back is gendered, these places can be considered in terms of D'Cruz's reading of female valued places being environments where patriarchal control is waning. This can be seen as gendered in that her appreciation, taken as a recognition of value that encourages her to deepen her geographical attachment to place, often depends on her coming upon such female spaces. Indeed Morag seems to derive her appreciation of geography from these places where patriarchal power is at its least powerful. The places that she fails to connect with are those where such an environment is denied her. Her time in Toronto where she finds her social space circumscribed by her husband Brooke's domineering and patriarchal control of her life is an example of this. Confined to the subservient domestic sphere under Brooke's control, Morag is denied such a female-centred space and fails to engage with the city on anything more than a superficial level during her years there.

A similar argument can be made about her time in London. As mentioned in Chapter Two, Morag goes to London in search of a community of other creative writers. She does find a community of sorts in the form of her boss at a bookstore but it is far from what she had hoped for. During her time in the UK, her only real attachment and appreciation of place comes through Dan McRaith and his strong

ancestral, personal and creative links to Scotland. In relation to this, Morag benefits from a gendered environment, although it is less evident here than in other parts of the novel. Her appreciation of Scotland and its mythology, geography and history is only solidified upon her trip to visit McRaith and his wife – a solidification that can be seen as a counterpoint or a fact-check of the stories and mythologies that she has been exposed to during her childhood. Within this encounter it is her appreciation of and identification with McRaith's wife Bridie that consolidates her view of the country. Her appreciation of Sutherland, Scotland in general and through them a part of her colonial identity are mediated by her sympathy for Bridie (Diviners 404). Though the house in Crombruach is almost the complete opposite of a feminist hearth of the sort put forward by D'Cruz, her renunciation of Scotland can be read as the result of her identification with Bridie's gendered worldview – a worldview that Morag developed through her experience in Toronto with Brooke.

A similar acknowledgement of the oppositional character of the places which D'Cruz describes occurs with Morag's acknowledgement of Métis cultural hearths. Significantly, it is in Galloping Mountain that she locates her geographical imagination of the Métis and not in the Tonerre shack on the outskirts of Manawaka. The failings of the Métis' geographical situation around Manawaka is ultimately realized through an appreciation of the torment which Piquette, Jules' sister, has endured in her oppressively patriarchal domestic and cultural space. Gender is used to measure the horror and injustice of the socio-economic and geographical situation of the Tonerres in Manawaka. Galloping Mountain is a different sort of access point for Morag's imagined Métis geography. It represents a pure unfettered naturalism that is embodied in the character of Jacques Tonerre. His portrayal as close to a figure of salvation for his family through his association with Galloping Mountain and the

work he does there which is environmental as well as socio-cultural contribute to his redeeming role in the geographical imaginations that are put forward. This is what draws his niece Pique to the area but, as it is not an exclusively gendered space, we see that the primary realm of any counter discourse that may occur in *The Diviners* is as closely linked to physical place as it is to gender.

There are many formative environments with which Morag benefits that do offer places that meet D'Cruz's description however. In Vancouver she is able to connect with the city and stabilize her life within it only after she establishes herself with Fan, a vaguely feminist, aging stripper in a household free of men. In fact, this exclusion of men is a determining aspect of the home and is emphasized by the instances in which men do appear within it. The status of the home as a refuge from men is emphasized by the less-than-desirable representatives of the gender that Fran occasionally entertains and the male intrusion that results in Morag's sexual assault.

Another gendered aspect of Morag's life in Vancouver is that it is through an appraisal of a perceived common plight of women that she is able to reconnect with Manawaka. Gender and geography are linked within this reestablishment of the friendship between Morag and her childhood friend Julie. Vancouver becomes a gendered space through these perceptions and linkages. Morag and Julie bond through the sharing of their common experience of having been denied power and satisfaction within their respective marriages "What d'you mean, your fault, you left him, It's a two way street, kid. Don't give me that malarkey. Anyhow, join the club. Buckle and me are getting unhitched, also" (Diviners 322). Part of her acclimatization to Vancouver is due to her reassessment of her Manawakan heritage and her growing awareness of gender as it affects her life as well as how she values place.

Another example of this kind of environment is found in Morag's final return to the land and her coming of age at McConnell's Landing. As in British Columbia, her home here is empty of male presence, apart from the occasional visit from the effeminate, non-threatening A-Okay and the equally emasculated Royland the water diviner. It is in this gendered enclave that Morag is able to reconcile both her prairie home, her travels and life experience in Canada and the UK, with the narratives in her life that have been influenced by race and gender. It is here that Morag has her crucial interactions with Catherine Parr Traill which take on an explicitly gendered quality as they often centre on the challenge to conventional gender roles and stereotypes that the Canadian frontier created for women. Within this area Morag comes to a realization of how her geographical worldview is different than those that preceded her:

> One thing I'm going to stop doing though, Catherine. I'm going to stop feeling guilty that I'll never be as hard working or knowledgeable or all-round terrific as you were. And I'll never be as willing to let the sweat of hard labour gather on my brow as A-Okay and Maudie, either. I'm not built like you St.C., or these kids either. I stand somewhere in between. And yet in my way I've worked damn hard, and I haven't done all I would have liked to , but I haven't folded up like a paper fan either. I'll never till those blasted fields, but this place is some kind of a garden, nonetheless, even though it may be only a wildflower garden, it's needed and not only by me. I'm about to

> stop worrying about being either an old or a new
> pioneer. So farewell sweet saint -henceforth I
> summon you not. At least I hope that'll be so, for
> your sake as well as mine (Diviners 430-431).

This is an important moment in Morag's post-settler geographical imagination and it has been at least partly enabled by an awareness of gender and a female-centred location. Through Morag's valuation of 'wildflowers' over the rigorous order that she imagines being prioritised by Parr Traill, there is an embrace of the land as well as a movement from the settler geographical imaginary towards a post-settler one. Through Morag's constant assessment of Parr Traill's role as a pioneer woman, her entry point to that realisation has in part to do with gender.

A Breed of Women

Although they are less in evidence, areas where patriarchal control is relaxed through a recognition of gender are present in *A Breed of Women* as well. In Ohaka, Kidman presents a gendered view of the farm as most of what we know of the landscape and the appreciation of it and the surrounding community are presented uniquely through the perceptions of Harriet and her mother. They are the only characters that actually engage with the physical environment, be it the river with Harriet or the farm itself with her mother. In contrast to this appreciation is the narrowly focussed father who sees the land, the farm and the community as something to exploit, not appreciate. The women of the family see it as something valuable in and of itself.

The male world is sometimes seen to be a threat that intrudes upon this space. This is perhaps nowhere more evident than with the relationship between Jim, the neighbouring farmer's son, and Harriet. Harriet has begun to enter into an uneasy adolescence and is coming to use nature as an orienting point through her relationship with the river that borders their property. The natural world functions here as the embodiment of a gendered space where Harriet goes to escape her father, her encroaching sexuality and the threat to that sexuality presented by Jim. Jim eventually violates this space and comes close to sexually assaulting her (A Breed of Women 27). As with *The Diviners* there is an intimate relationship within the geographical imaginary between the physical environment and gender.

Race: Issues of Indigeneity

The Diviners

Perhaps the most prominent example of Goldie's indigenization within *The Diviners* is the way that the indigenous geographical imagination is set apart from its post-settler equivalent. Laurence brings these two imaginaries together but initially they are registered as being profoundly different. The first instance of this is in the presentation of the two sides of Manawaka: the Wachatkwa valley where the Tonerres have their shack and the prim, orderly and predominantly European town to which its relationship is peripheral. The situation of the shack away from the town and its being firmly implanted in a more natural sphere lends the indigenous characters an uncomplicated and romantic association with the natural world.

Where Laurence can be seen to depart from what Goldie calls indigenization is where she ties two geographical worldviews together after acknowledging their

difference and separation. In the case of Manawaka this happens at the 'nuisance grounds' where Christie dumps the town's rubbish and the young Jules Tonerre scavenges. However, it could also be said that Laurence does differ from a straightforward indigenizing portrayal as the linking of the two strands of geographical awareness indicate that the 'indigenization' is not limited to strictly indigenous characters. This may be considered distinct from Goldie's indigenization as it shows both groups struggling to retain a sense of place as opposed to offering an uncomplicated indigenous geographical imaginary which is then adopted by the dominant group. By complicating the portrayal of Manawaka and its constituent parts *The Diviners* moves away from the simplicity that is integral to a straightforward example of indigenisation.

Perhaps a stronger example of such an uncomplicated and simplistic attachment to the natural world is the role of the other geographical touchstone for the Métis characters in the book. Galloping Mountain is a recurring orientation point for the Métis and Métis-European characters in the book and Laurence's retelling of their history. However, apart from vague descriptions, the plot never moves there. Galloping Mountain is romanticized as a space free from materialism where attachment to the land and nature are seen as properly calibrated. Here too Laurence ties-in the two cultural groups through the pilgrimage of Morag's daughter Pique but ultimately the dominant portrayal of Galloping Mountain is one of uncomplicated serenity and back-to-the-land simplicity: "The Métis graveyard up at the mountain, where the grey wooden crosses stood above the graves of Tonerres. Nearby Jacques Tonerre has his livingplace, his living place" (Diviners 472). There is an intersection between the 1970's ideas of simplicity in nature and the complications of the settler dilemma.

In analysing Galloping Mountain and its portrayal we see the presence of another of Goldie's criteria for validating a charge of indigenization, that of mixed bloodlines. This, along with geographical perceptions, is mainly how Laurence brings European and Indigenous cultures together. It is partly through Morag's mixed race daughter Pique that Laurence brings the novel's post-settler geographical worldview into focus.

An interesting parallel with Goldie's work involves the portrayal of the Scots settlers in *The Diviners.* In a similar way to the Métis the relationship of the Celtic characters and Scotland itself are seen simplistically. Dan McRaith is incapable of producing art that is not rooted in his native landscape. When Morag finally arrives in Scotland she focuses on the land in a way that not only speaks to the value that she herself places on it but also agrees with Goldie's observation of how Scots settlers are often indigenized in a similar way to the first inhabitants of settler countries.

This is all the more interesting as the presence of these two groups is often laid side by side in the narrative. Examples of this include the parallels that are highlighted with regards to the Métis uprising in Western Canada and the role of both groups at the forefront of Canadian military efforts during the world wars. This comparison and linkage is most prominent with the interlinking of the stories of Rider Tonerre and Colin Gunn and the many similarities between them as well as paralleled experiences of Christie and Morag's father in World War One with Jules experience with 'The Queen's Own Highlanders' in the Second World War.

A Breed of Women

Goldie's process of indigenisation is less evident in *A Breed of Women* but is potentially present. The first and most obvious parallel with *The Diviners* in this

regard is in the use of mixed bloodlines which are central to Goldie's idea of indigenisation. There is however a crucial difference in that the relationship does not result in an actual mixture of bloodlines but a stillborn baby and a doomed relationship. Though the corresponding relationship in *The Diviners* does not endure either, there is reconciliation between Jules and Morag. There is not between Harriet and Denny in *A Breed of Women*. The mixing of bloodlines does not result in a mixed-race child from which a significant part of the narrative depends. This is a key difference and may indicate that Laurence has actively sought a new post-settler geographical consciousness that is deliberately inclusive of indigenous worldviews. Kidman hints at the importance she places in this inclusion with her descriptions of Kaikohe but does not link the indigenous perspectives of place as strongly as Laurence. Kidman avoids the stronger assertions that Laurence makes in regards to indigenous groups and individuals. This may be because at the time there was much debate in New Zealand about whether Pakeha writers were valid in writing from a Maori perspective; Kidman herself had been subject to harsh criticism over this.[1] The Maori separatist movement influenced the writing of the period and this may have been the case with Kidman.

There is another possible example of indigenization in the way that the Maori relationship to the physical environment is presented. Kaikohe is seen as uncomplicated: "Nobody in Kaikohe seemed to need pretty clothes from the dress shops" (ABOW139). On her visit to Kaikohe her adopted family are presented as not requiring much and as immune to the failings that Harriet has come to know in Pakeha society. She feels accepted in a way that is rarely in evidence in other settings of the novel, the only other prominent example being when she returns to Ohaka with

[1] Kidman, *At the End of Darwin Road* (221)

her childhood friend Francis: “These were happy times for them all, and Harriet could feel the glow of the north creeping back into her body, as well as her remembered love for Denny” (ABOW162). Though Kaikohe is not as fleshed out as Galloping Mountain, the role it plays is similar and the geographical imaginary of the novel is linked with a certain approach to race.

With both authors, gender and race form key elements in their exploration and presentation of emerging post-settler geographies. As these are key concerns in both Canadian and New Zealand contexts it is hardly surprising that they emerge so strongly in the writing. Both authors decline to explicitly attach their work to politicised viewpoints but both can be seen to engage with these two aspects of post-settler identity.

Conclusion

Geography, though difficult to apply to textual analysis, is useful in the interpretation of *The Diviners* and *A Breed of Women* as it represents an opportunity to access the broader cultural, historical and national implications of space and landscape. It functions as a way of ordering the narratives and structures of the texts themselves. These aspects are not exclusive; taken together, they represent the two main points of comparison from which my conclusions emerge.

There are points of historical and cultural contact between Canada and New Zealand that can be identified within the work but to make national generalisations based on two texts would be to overextend my argument. What can be concluded is that there are ways in which historical and cultural parallels between the two texts can be identified through their geographies. Geography and the geographical imagination are used in both novels to demonstrate a post-settler perspective that registers a settler geography while challenging and expanding upon it. Thus history is one of the main points of comparison between the texts. The expansion of these common settler aspects takes shape through the interpretation and valuing of landscape and space from a post-settler perspective informed by the cultural viewpoint of gender and race, a new valuing of land and landscape and the registration of cultural change. A geographical reflection of this changing sense of the rural and the urban as well as the acknowledgement of culturally dependent approaches to landscape are mapped in both books. The emerging post-settler geographical imaginations resulting from these in terms of the physical reflection of such changes, shifting communities and expanded notions of place include a sensitivity to the urban and the culturally diverse as compared to the rural and culturally homogenous geographical perspectives of their forebears. In both Canada and New Zealand there are geographical patterns present

within the period in which the novels were written that are traceable through such perspectives.

Through the counterpoints of different approaches to geography and the orientation of geographical imaginations within the two texts, these particular post-settler geographical imaginaries can be described. The geographies are partly based on the acknowledgement of different kinds of cultural knowledge, chiefly those seen through the perspectives of gender and race and a particular approach to the outside world. The geographical imaginations that Harriet and Morag construct are particularly attentive to race and gender as well as to the urban, the rural and the global geographies that accompanied the growing awareness of these perspectives that had developed during the 1960's and 1970's.

The presence of geographical elements, from the direct role of cities, towns, farms and fields to the valuing and meaning of landscape, reflect not only the contexts of the novels but also function as literary devices in their own right. There are two primary ways in which this occurs: the generational structure of the novels, and the way that characters are enabled by geographical locales, either by passing through them in what I have termed a geographical hierarchy or by building new geographical imaginaries into their sense of identity.

The generational structure of the novels as well as the use and counterpoint of what I have referred to as 'old' and 'new' narratives are immediately engaged with issues of geography. These two types of narrative are tied to the physical and human landscape that surrounds them and which they interpret, perceive and imagine. The shift that occurs from the settler generation to the protagonists' is primarily one of geography.

In terms of narrative, the most immediate way in which geography enables the narrative is through the parameters it places around the structures of both books. For Morag and Harriet geographical settings form main elements of their journeys towards self knowledge. Both Manawaka and Ohaka are used as reference points throughout each novel. The other way in which location matters in the narrative is that we can determine distinct points along this trajectory that occur in similar geographical settings in each novel. Different sized communities produce different cultural and physical geographies in the work.

The similarities between these two texts are multiple and immediately evident. Whether this is because of the context that they both share or whether one was directly influenced by the other is beyond the scope of this thesis but is an interesting point to consider. The texts share much in terms of plot structure, character type and geographical world view. Where they differ markedly is in the strength of their assertions of place. As mentioned, one of these points of difference is that there is no multi-ethnic character such as Pique in *A Breed of Women.* Related to this, there is also no actual presentation of a distinct indigenous place with an accompanying indigenous worldview such as that which is found with Galloping Mountain in *The Diviners*. Kaikohe is presented in a similar way but is not addressed in the same terms. By only encountering Kaikohe through Harriet's viewpoint we have a different perspective from that which the reader encounters with Galloping Mountain through Pique. Ohaka and McConnell's Landing do mirror each other in terms of enabling the plot and providing personal geographical touchstones for the protagonists but there are crucial differences. Laurence associates authenticity and cultural settlement with knowledge and acceptance of a particular place through her imaginary dialogue with Catherine Parr Traill and her research into the original settlers of McConnell's

Landing. With Kidman there is less of this sense of authentically connecting to place. Harriet does not place as much importance on this acknowledgement but still values Ohaka as a point of reference for the rest of her life. She recognizes the worth of the geographical perspective that it offers but does not actively engage with the specific history of the place or attempt to include herself within it. Therefore Kidman's novel is not as localized in scope. It does not focus on the specificities of being in a particular place as much as Laurence.

Another notable difference is the approach to travel and foreign experience. Along with the indigenous and gender perspectives in the texts, travel forms a key element of the post-settler geographical imaginary as it is through this that a direct relationship with the place of origin can be established. Harriet's desired, though never realized, European travels mirror Morag's pilgrimage of sorts to Scotland. Kidman is more resistant to travel as a means of breaking with the limitations of culture, but in the end her novel affirms an acceptance of a new sense of nation rather than of particular place within the nation. Through its specificity, McConnell's Landing represents a more assertive and perhaps less open sensibility to place in national terms.

The narrative and cultural elements of the geography of the books originate in all of these places. Another key example of how Laurence is more assertive in her establishment of a certain geographical model is her intertwining of Scots settler and indigenous Canadian worldviews through relating them by the use of historical vignettes and the mixing of bloodlines. This makes the culminating geographical imagination more strongly inclusive than that of *A Breed of Women.* Although they function in similar ways, *The Diviners* provides a more detailed and purposeful re-evaluation of place than does *A Breed of Women*. With both, real and imagined

geographies, coupled with the narratives that they enable, allow for the presence of a unique element of post-settler culture tied to the land.

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