

**THE MESA AND THE MOON:
O'KEEFFE, LANDSCAPE, AND GENDER**

BY

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DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

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@ 2006, Jillian Patricia Cowley

DEDICATION

For the memory of my father, who gave me a love of landscape; and for my mother, who gives me a capacity for empathy.

For Richard and for David -- who see light in the landscape the same way I do.

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And, lastly, for providing inspiration and succor, Georgia O'Keeffe, and her beloved Ghost Ranch landscape.

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ABSTRACT

Using Georgia O'Keeffe's relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape as a case study, I explore an artist's relationship with her home landscape, how gender dynamics influenced the direct interactive experience within this relationship, and how we can best tell the story of this relationship within an on-site educational setting. Public education programs addressing artists' relationships with landscape, for example at Weir Farm National Historic Site, have only begun to incorporate contemporary scholarly understanding of the role of gender in landscape appreciation and artistic sensibility. An analysis of gender dynamics, and associating O'Keeffe's experience with ecofeminist ideas, can make a difference in how her relationship with landscape is understood and interpreted. Feminist theory applied to art appreciation and geography helps us reformulate our understanding of O'Keeffe's art and its ties to the Ghost Ranch landscape. I expand and update our understanding of this relationship by interpreting the places and O'Keeffe's response to them within the context of post 1960s gender/nature/art theory, including radical feminism and ecofeminism.

Georgia O'Keeffe lived and painted at Ghost Ranch, New Mexico for over forty years. An analysis of O'Keeffe's writings and images suggests that her relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape was gendered, and shows that three aspects of relationship with landscape deriving from ecofeminist ideas--communication with landscape, knowing landscape through the body, and intimacy with the landscape--played a role in this relationship. Between 1929 and 2004, gender was a key factor used by O'Keeffe critics and scholars in analyzing her work, and much of the criticism goes beyond sexualized interpretations. Intimacy with landscape has been addressed within a number of O'Keeffe programs; however, specifically addressing gender and the three relationship aspects has yet to be fully explored. My Ghost Ranch workshop demonstrates that communicating with landscape and knowing landscape through the body, in addition to developing intimacy, can be meaningful ways of experiencing relationship with landscape and of understanding O'Keeffe's relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape, and that these relationship aspects are often gendered.

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CHAPTER ONE

CONCEPTS AND CONTEXT

It's a beautiful day in New Mexico. Two crows fly dark across the blue sky, and the sun beats against the orange, pink, and gray cliffs. We are at Ghost Ranch, a conference center and retreat located within the Rio Chama Valley in northcentral New Mexico (fig. 1). The Ghost Ranch landscape and the surrounding mountains and river valley have a long and complex history of human occupation, including early Tewa people, Navajo, Ute, Comanche, and Jicarilla Apache people, and Spanish, Mexican and Euro-American settlers. Internationally renowned artist Georgia O'Keeffe lived seasonally at Ghost Ranch from 1937 to 1984, and her paintings of this landscape are powerful illustrations of her very personal relationship with nature in the desert Southwest. In 1955, then-owner Arthur Pack donated Ghost Ranch to the Presbyterian Church, which now runs the conference center, where artistic, theological, and agricultural creativity are fostered (Poling-Kempes 1997, 4, 11-13, 124).

We are here to learn about Georgia O'Keeffe's relationship with this landscape, and how this relationship was gendered. How can we best tell this story? How can we make this story most relevant to today? The core of this dissertation is the story of an individual artist's relationship with nature and landscape, how gender dynamics influenced and were influenced by this direct interactive experience, and how we can best enhance understanding of this story within an on-site educational setting. In the early 1990s, I participated in a National Park Service (NPS) study of O'Keeffe's relationship with this landscape. The NPS study explored possible approaches to commemorating O'Keeffe's contribution to American art through an interpretation of the northern New Mexico landscapes she lived in and painted (NPS 1992). This dissertation has grown out of my involvement in the NPS study. Local residents' relationships with this same landscape, how their relationship differs with O'Keeffe's, and what they thought of O'Keeffe, though an important part of the overall story, is beyond the scope of



Figure 1: Ghost Ranch landscape, 2004
Author photograph.

this present study.

Individuals, organizations, and institutions have developed various approaches to telling the story of O’Keeffe and Ghost Ranch, approaches that reflect their purpose and intent. First, O’Keeffe herself shared with us her direct experience with the landscape, her thought and emotion, her intense focus: “I had looked out on the hills for weeks and painted them again and again--had climbed and ridden over them--so beautifully soft, so difficult” (O’Keeffe 1976). The Ghost Ranch Conference Center (Ghost Ranch) provides general background information on O’Keeffe (Ghost Ranch n.d.) and a guided tour of the landscapes she painted (Ghost Ranch 2005). The NPS study discussed O’Keeffe within a national context, addressing artists’ roles within overall American culture, how artists are important communicators of our relationships with nature, and how artists’ work can influence cultural views on landscape perception: “The lower Rio Chama valley is considered a nationally significant landscape because of its exceptional association with the life and work of Georgia O’Keeffe . . . The relationship between O’Keeffe and the landscape was so uniquely personal and intimate that her work there became a consummate expression of them both, to the point that it changed the American public’s perception of the Southwest” (NPS 1992, 24). Art historian Jane Downer Collins wrote one of the first analyses of O’Keeffe’s work in New Mexico. Collins’ summary thoughts on O’Keeffe’s relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape focused on the evolution and distinctive characteristics of her painting style (Collins 1980). Collins offered an analysis of O’Keeffe’s language of color and shape, which enriches O’Keeffe’s accounts of her direct experiences.

The Georgia O’Keeffe Foundation and The Georgia O’Keeffe Museum are two institutions that focus specifically on O’Keeffe’s legacy. They tell the story of O’Keeffe’s relationship with the northern New Mexico landscape from the perspectives of familiarity with O’Keeffe’s character and lifestyle, and of long-term and indepth study of her work. For example, the Foundation’s tours of the Georgia O’Keeffe Abiquiu House and Studio (south of Ghost Ranch) describe how the expansive view from O’Keeffe’s studio windows helped maintain her sense of connection with the landscape (O’Keeffe Foundation n.d.). The Museum’s outdoor “Walks in the American West”

programs offer direct experience of activities characteristic of O’Keeffe, such as taking long contemplative walks.

Participants in these interpretive programs and in painting workshops held at Ghost Ranch are some of the many people interested in relating O’Keeffe’s life and work to their own life. They talk about their direct experience with the northern New Mexico landscape, and Ghost Ranch in particular, in terms of sharing O’Keeffe’s sense of celebrating and communicating with the landscape. Their desire to share in O’Keeffe’s experience illustrates the need to keep O’Keeffe alive and relevant as a cultural role model, and to make sure her legacy is accurately and respectfully portrayed.

All these ways of telling the story of O’Keeffe’s relationship with the northern New Mexico landscape touch on O’Keeffe’s relationship with nature. The fact that nature in general and the Chama River valley landscape in particular were major influences on O’Keeffe’s life and work is well documented (Castro 1985; Bry and Callaway 1989; Udall 2000; Poling 1999). In addition, key sociocultural factors such as gender, class, and race that have been explored within recent scholarship help us understand how artists like O’Keeffe related to nature and landscape. In my exploration of O’Keeffe’s relationships with the Ghost Ranch landscape, I focus on the role that gender dynamics played in the construction and interpretation of this relationship. While gender, class, and race are interrelated, gender overall had more influence on O’Keeffe’s relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape, and on her Ghost Ranch images.

Gender is determined by how social and cultural roles are defined and learned; gender is related to, but not determined by, biological sex. Gender behavior is learned and performed on a daily basis (Butler 1990), and differs from culture to culture, and from historical period to historical period. While biological sex refers to variations in physical anatomy, gender refers to variations in behavior, perceptions, and power relations based on the range from femaleness to maleness. Gender relates more to femaleness and maleness than to women and men, and this is more the case with flexible gender identities than with more traditional gender identities. This is because flexible gender identities, as described by Butler (1990), recognize the possibilities of a range of genders rather than just two, and allow for women and men to have characteristics traditionally associated with the opposite gender.

More emphasis on gender can enrich public education programs that address artists' relationships with nature and landscape by relating these relationships to the evolution of thinking about gender. NPS interpretive programs have only begun to incorporate contemporary scholarly understanding of the role of gender in landscape appreciation and artistic sensibility (Cowley 2000, 2001; Miller 1992, 1996; NPS 1997). Including gender dynamics can make a difference in how artists' relationships with nature are understood and interpreted. Much of Western culture's relationship with nature is gendered--that is, aspects of this relationship are associated with maleness or femaleness--and this has implications and consequences for cultural attitudes towards and relationships with nature and landscape. For example, thinking of nature as female has been and still is pervasive within Western culture. In this association, both nature and the feminine can be considered passive and exploitable, and this has had dire consequences for many natural environments (Kolodny 1975). Images are powerful communicators, and landscape painting during the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries often reinforced the idea of nature as feminine (Belanger 1999; Schama 1995).

Gender dynamics played a major role in O'Keeffe's life and art, and focusing on gender can help ensure that O'Keeffe's contributions are more fully understood. Throughout her life, O'Keeffe never completely fit into gender roles and behaviors that were socially normative and approved at the time. She became an icon for feminism, and was in many ways a feminist, although at times she expressed that she did not want herself or her art identified as feminist (Lynes 1992). Her involvement with the Stieglitz circle during her formative years in New York, her role as Stieglitz's wife, muse, and model, his role as her mentor, and her ambivalence towards male critics' sexual interpretations of her flower paintings and abstractions have been well documented and discussed (Lynes 1989; Brennan 2001; Peters 2001). Feminist artists in the 1970s and 1980s added to early sexual interpretations of O'Keeffe's work by characterizing her as an "earth goddess," her art as precursory to art that openly celebrated female sexuality, and as an artist whose work evoked the regenerative possibilities of an erotic life force (Raven et al. 1988; Dijkstra 1998; Duvert 1987). O'Keeffe's life as an independent woman out west in New Mexico has inspired interpretations of her as a feminist icon

(Merrill and Bradbury 1992). Less in-depth study has been devoted to the role gender dynamics played in her later life and the paintings she completed in New Mexico.

Within public education programs, it is important to move beyond women's history to the analysis of gender dynamics. Gender dynamics open up consideration of how gender plays a role within culturally normative concepts, social institutions, power relationships, and identity formation (Scott 1988, 43-44), and how these factors have affected women's options and choices. For example, in relation to O'Keeffe, including gender dynamics can change the focus from ensuring that her work is included within discussions of major twentieth century art, to asking questions such as: How did established gender associations with southwestern landscapes influence O'Keeffe's approach to painting the west, especially in New Mexico? How in turn has O'Keeffe's work influenced the gendered nature of our relationships to southwestern landscapes?

Two hypotheses guide this dissertation. First, I propose that focusing on gender dynamics, within a direct experience of the landscape, makes a difference in how O'Keeffe's relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape is understood and interpreted. Second, O'Keeffe's relationship with Ghost Ranch, and her Ghost Ranch paintings, can be understood more broadly by exploring associations with ecofeminist ideas. These two ideas weave through the four following chapters. In Chapter Two I present my interpretation of O'Keeffe's relationship with Ghost Ranch, and I compare this interpretation with my own experience with and analysis of this landscape. In Chapter Three I describe and analyze O'Keeffe criticism and scholarship from 1929 to 2004, focusing on how this criticism addressed gender and O'Keeffe's relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape. This chapter addresses how feminist theory in art history and geography can help us reformulate and update our understanding of O'Keeffe's art and its ties to this landscape by interpreting the landscape and her responses to the landscape within the context of post-1960s gender/nature/art theory, including radical feminism and ecofeminism. In Chapter Four, I describe and analyze various existing educational programs that focus on or refer to O'Keeffe, or address other artists' relationships with landscape. In Chapter Five I apply this research to the development and implementation of an on-site workshop. This workshop was a semi-structured encounter with the Ghost Ranch landscape that encouraged participants to consider the critical role of gender in

O’Keeffe’s life and art, and encouraged awareness of their own relationship with nature and landscape, using O’Keeffe’s experience and legacy as a guide.

Terminology

In this dissertation, “landscape” refers to a specific tangible outdoor geographic area, and its less tangible historic and imaginative associations. Rather than using this term to refer to a vast natural scene viewed from a specific vantage point, my use of “landscape” encompasses outdoor places of all scales experienced from many socio-cultural viewpoints. In contrast, “nature” refers to the broader ecological context and perceptual sense of our surroundings, to the overall web of life, and to the animating presence that emanates from the natural world. “Heritage landscape” refers to a geographic area that is valued in connection with a community’s past, an outdoor place that at least a section of a community wants to preserve in order to celebrate or commemorate their history. The concept of heritage is based on a community’s connection with the past and how community members want to collectively carry that connection into the future. I use the term “place” to broaden the sense of tangible location to include interiors, and, in line with certain feminist definitions of this term, to put more emphasis on the network of social relationships associated with the location (Massey 1994; Rose 1993).

“Gender/nature/art” refers to the intersection of ideas and expressions related to gender, relationships with nature, and visual art that have developed from the 1960s to 2004, primarily within feminist scholarship. I use “gender/nature/art” rather than “feminism/nature/art” to include ideas and expressions that are not identified as feminist but that relate to gender and nature. Whether ideas and artistic expressions are developed by women or by men, and how cultural concepts of gender (primarily Anglo-American culture) influence perceptions of, and experiences with, nature, are both included within a focus on gender. An example of gender/nature/art ideas and expressions that I consider are ecofeminist redefinitions of and alternatives to the traditional conflation of nature and femaleness.

The term “interpretation” has a specific meaning within federal land management, which is my professional context and part of the frame for this study. Rather than

referring to the translation of one language to another, “interpretation” refers to how the story of a person’s or community’s association with place is conveyed within public education programs. In this dissertation, “interpretive programs” refers to educational programs and experiences that can be offered within heritage landscapes; for example, art workshops.

Literature Review and Analysis

My role in the 1992 NPS *Study of Alternatives: Georgia O’Keeffe* (NPS 1992) project was as consulting landscape architect. The purpose of the NPS study was to develop options for commemorating O’Keeffe’s nationally significant contributions to art using the landscapes that inspired her life and art rather than her Ghost Ranch and Abiquiu houses (NPS 1992). I studied the landscapes included in the project, especially the Ghost Ranch area, and participated in developing options for locations, and sequences of locations, for educational and inspirational experiences that would enhance visitors’ understanding of O’Keeffe’s relationship with these landscapes. I grew to know and love some of the landscapes associated with O’Keeffe before I got to know specific paintings and her personal history. Involvement in the NPS Study increased my interest in the core of the interactive experience--an individual’s direct, “face-to-face” experience of and relationship with a landscape (Cowley 1994). This dissertation grew out of my experience on the NPS study and subsequent visits to the Ghost Ranch area.

Scholarly conversations in the fields of gender, nature, and art are my primary conceptual frameworks. Within these fields, I consider conversations about the role gender plays within individual aesthetic/kinesthetic relationships with nature, and the mutual influences between gendered societal attitudes, myths, and psychological notions about nature and artists’ expressions of their relationship with nature. Included in these conversations are concepts from feminist geography and ecofeminism that introduce alternative ways of approaching relationships with nature. Scholarly and federal lands management literature on the documentation, management, and interpretation of heritage landscapes and the role art can play in interpretation efforts is relevant to my analysis of existing interpretive programs on O’Keeffe and to my development of an on-site interpretive workshop. Notions of gender prevalent during O’Keeffe’s life, and the

specific social and geographic contexts of her life in New Mexico, are important background context. In addition to ecofeminist ideas, recent concepts in race/ethnicity, class, and gender theory are important to include, not to retroactively impose intentions on O’Keeffe and her work, but to use contemporary insights to help us understand the importance of her legacy to our time. My specific research questions flow from this analysis of background and context.

Gender, Nature, Art.

Notions related to gender, nature, and art varied substantially during O’Keeffe’s lifetime (1887-1986), and since her death, as her legacy continues to be interpreted. For example, early twentieth century patriarchal notions of strict heterosexual gender dualities in social relations, art, and nature so prevalent within the Stieglitz circle contrast with late twentieth century ecofeminist concepts that deconstruct traditional nature-equals-female notions and that explore alternatives to applying a strict gender duality to relationships with nature. Varying notions about whether nature is gendered, and about whether individuals’ relationships with nature are gendered, have influenced and have been influenced by O’Keeffe and her art, and by the cultural and artistic contexts within which she lived. These notions about gender and nature have influenced how critics have interpreted her work, and they influence how her legacy is understood today. The following discussion and analysis of concepts and conversations on gender, nature, and art relevant to the study of O’Keeffe’s relationship with landscape serves as a broad introduction; key concepts are examined in more detail in later chapters.

The 1920s and 1930s was a period of intense scrutiny of O’Keeffe’s work by primarily male art critics in the New York art circles (Lynes 1989), and the 1970s and 1980s was a period of resurgent interest in O’Keeffe, especially by feminists. Some feminists during this time used O’Keeffe’s abstracts and flower paintings to promote her as a foremother to their efforts to restore pride and strength in female sexuality (e.g. Chicago and Schapiro 1973). A strong emphasis on gender dualities was a common element between the 1920s New York art critics and 1970s and 1980s feminists--both groups were concerned with maintaining clear differences between maleness and femaleness. In contrast to both these groups, 1990s feminism and gender studies

developed more flexible concepts of gender. They explored a range of genders and gender fluidity, the notion of gender as socially constructed rather than biologically determined, and androgyny and pre- and post-gender states as alternatives to gender duality thinking (e.g. Haraway 1991; Butler 1990; Berger et al. 1995). In this dissertation, I argue that using more recent concepts of gender fluidity lead to a broader and more accurate understanding of O’Keeffe.

A pervasive notion in Western culture concerning gender and nature is the conflation between nature and women, between nature and femaleness. Having developed within Western culture for many centuries, this notion was pervasive in cultural thought at the turn of the twentieth century when O’Keeffe was growing up in Sun Prairie, Wisconsin. This notion has deep and abiding mythological, religious, and psychological roots that in turn have influenced large-scale actions on the landscape such as the European settlement of the American West (Merchant 1996; Kolodny 1975). The nature-female conflation, and how this conflation influences art, is still very alive today, along with feminist deconstructions of this notion and artistic expressions of alternate notions of gender and nature. Overall, while individual active elements within nature (sun, wind, specific animals) are sometimes characterized as male, the characterization of the earth as a whole and the land itself as female has been consistent over the centuries. Nature in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was characterized as female, even for those who follow the theory of an original, pre-gendered nature, or a nature where the feminine and masculine were harmoniously united (Dijkstra 1998, 54-56).

How we characterize nature--what human qualities we ascribe to nature--has gendered implications and is influenced by the degree to which we believe humans to be part of, or separate from, nature. Throughout the history of relationships with nature in Western culture, considering nature as benign or threatening, as domestic or wild, and as passive or active, has been closely related to considering nature as a nurturing “mother/virgin” female entity or a threatening “whore” female entity. Over the centuries, depictions of landscapes in Western art have vacillated between characterizing nature as benign and passive (as in pastoral images) or threatening and active (as in portrayals of dark, mysterious, wild landscapes) (Schama 1995, 517-578). Conservation minded ecofeminists believe that humans are an integral part of nature. Many ecofeminist writers

maintain that our relationship with an active nature can be harmonious, even if nature is not always benign (Merchant 1996, 156-59; Solnit 2001); others maintain that, by virtue of their femaleness, women in particular can exist more harmoniously with nature (Daly 1990). Wild nature can be domesticated through the use of metaphors; Rebecca Solnit likens natural cave formations to food or parts of the human body (Solnit 2001, 177-78). Metaphors can enhance our understanding of or bring us closer to nature by making it seem less threatening--with the potential negative side effect of diminishing a healthy respect for nature's potential dangers--or of making the special more ordinary, of participating in "the conquest of the sublime" (Solnit 2001, 178). In traditional uses of the metaphor of nature as female, women and nature have been ascribed similar qualities (both wild, active and threatening, and benign, passive and domestic), with emphasis on the need to control nature's active and wild side when landscape modification and development are the goals (Kolodny 1975).

Nature as female has primarily been considered from a masculinist point of view, within the context of idealized masculinity and femininity. Western notions of nature as female during and following the Euro-American settlement of the western U.S. during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was informed by patriarchal and gendered notions within religion, spirituality, morality, politics, and psychology. According to Carolyn Merchant (1996, 132-33), within European biblical tradition, women brought about the transformation of the garden (Eden) into a desert, and men were the agents of recovery from the desert back to the garden by means of control over (female) nature, for example, through agriculture. According to Annette Kolodny (1975), many male explorers and settlers in the western U.S. felt very ambivalent about nature and women, and this ambivalence is illustrated in the kinds of metaphors used. Depending on their fortunes, these men related to female nature as bountiful or harsh, as virginal undisturbed female nature or as wild, unruly, and barren female nature. At the same time, women were thought of as a civilizing force, civilizing raw nature (Merchant 1994). Within the imperialistic "heroic male narrative" (Merchant 1994, 133) as expressed in westward exploration and settlement, ideal masculinity was associated with exploring, adventuring, and conquering nature and making her productive. Kolodny uses the term "pastoral impulse" to describe men's yearning for an abundant, comforting, gratifying, and

pleasurable female nature (Kolodny 1975, 4-8, 137). She maintains that within the masculine pastoral fantasy, the state of pastoral stasis--a harmonious relationship with nature, which includes a physical, bodily, and potentially erotic relationship--cannot last, and inevitably results in male domination over nature (Kolodny 1975, 24, 28).

Pastoral, or arcadia, best reflects the combination of these feelings: a desire to live in harmony with nature; a fear of nature that leads to the desire to control and modify nature; and a desire to modify and improve upon nature. As Kolodny discusses, the pastoral is often imagined and interpreted from a male viewpoint. Originating in the image of shepherds tending their flocks within benign rural settings (Schama 1995, 527), "pastoral" is used variously to refer to a condition of harmony between people and nature, and often relates to escaping the urban environment for the countryside. Different kinds of pastoral landscapes have been, and still are, gendered. The small-scale pastoral of gardens and domestic environments has and still is often associated with women and femaleness, and larger scale agrarian and industrial landscapes associated with men and maleness. This gendering has often been expressed in literature, art, and landscape architecture (Schenker and Ouellete 2000; Norwood 1993; Andrews 1999). As Malcolm Andrews states, "Women were credited with an aptitude for sensitive miniaturist portraits of cottages, village scenes, flowers, but were held to lack the intellectual virility to be able to organize a spacious, multifarious landscape" (Andrews 1999, 157).

Varying characterizations and uses of pastoral can also illustrate the difference between using nature as an escape, and living within nature or thinking of a landscape as one's home. Examples of using nature as an escape include nineteenth century urban upper class men retreating to the countryside, to their androcentric male preserve, for hunting forays (Buell 1995, 33-36), the popularity of mountaineering holidays for some early twentieth century middle and upper class women (Kaufman 1996, 3-26), and artists visiting New Mexico to be inspired by its cultural landscapes (Coke 1974). These experiences contrast with long-term residence within a landscape. Unlike some well-known artists and writers such as Marsden Hartley, Ansel Adams, and D.H. Lawrence who visited or lived in New Mexico for only a short time, some, like Georgia O'Keeffe, Gustav Baumann, Mabel Dodge Luhan, and Mary Austin (Coke 1974; Rudnick 1984),

decided to make the region their long-term home, and their writing and art reflect a long-term familiarity with the landscape (Cowley 1994; Coke 1974). Contrary to beliefs that Anglo-American women did not relate to and enjoy the open spaces of the western U.S., many women who came west with their families or who decided to come west on their own were inspired by and celebrated Southwestern landscapes and felt comfortable making their homes there (Norwood 1988). Vera Norwood cites O’Keeffe as an example: “While O’Keeffe defined herself through the freedoms found in the ‘naked’ landscape of northern New Mexico, she also seems to have had a strong feeling of responsibility to the meaning of that place as ‘home’” (Norwood 1988,174-75). Krista Comer maintains that, even in the late twentieth century, there was no room for women within masculinized western landscapes and that women related more to urban environments (Comer 1999, 19-60). In contrast, other feminist writers and artists such as Page Allen claim or reclaim expansive western landscapes as their home (Udall 1996, 141-50).

Nature as a source of artists’ inspiration, a choice of subject matter in art, and a focus for aesthetic experiences is well documented (Schama 1995; Gussow 1971; Trenton ed. 1995; Gablik 1995). An aesthetic experience of nature focuses on the perception of beauty in certain combinations of form, shape, color, and texture in nature, and how these combinations can connect with feelings of awe at the sublime within us. Artists bring their own associations with and experiences of nature to their aesthetic interpretations of landscape. Through the use of different painting styles, some artists simplify into expressive or abstracted forms (e.g. abstract expressionists), some express mood through artistic effect (e.g. tonalists, impressionists), and some use painting style to convey an idea, for instance, the romantic image of the Western U.S. portrayed by Albert Bierstadt, Thomas Cole, and others (Sweeney 1999; Crow 1996; Gussow 1971; Parmesani 2000).

The post-Victorian, early twentieth century emphasis on ideal masculinity as bold, dynamic, and aggressive was directly associated with the Modernist and Industrial movements, and was evident within the ideas and artistic expressions of the Stieglitz circle. When O’Keeffe moved to New York and was taken under Stieglitz’s wing, she moved into this conceptual context. This group supported a strong sexualized gender

duality within art that addressed relationships with nature, with gender differentiations made on the basis of degree of vitality and sexual identity more than type of subject matter. For instance, Arthur Dove's and Georgia O'Keeffe's paintings of natural elements were paired as "his and hers" expressions of relationships with nature. According to the gendered interpretations of the time, both artists had a Modernist vitality, O'Keeffe's coming from within herself, as befits the feminine, and Dove's coming from outside himself, as befits the masculine (Brennan 2001, 98, 100). Brennan compares Dove's *Waterfall* (1925, fig. 2) with O'Keeffe's *From the Lake* (1924, fig. 3). While, according to Brennan, "neither work contains conventional signs to indicate a 'male' or 'female' presence," critics in the 1920s saw penetration in Dove's image and transparency in O'Keeffe's (Brennan 2001, 121). While O'Keeffe was revered within the Stieglitz circle as a strong woman, and her art considered significant due to its sensual femininity, the gendered judgements and interpretations of her art were made from a male (primarily Stieglitz's) perspective. Nature was still female, with specific expressions of nature masculinized or feminized through gendered interpretation.

While O'Keeffe was learning the skills of her trade, becoming part of the New York art scene, and starting to feel constricted and misunderstood by Stieglitz as well as the critics, other women were living out in the western U.S. and exploring ways of being in nature that had less to do with gender dualities. In 1929, O'Keeffe joined them in New Mexico. One of these women was Mary Austin, whose *Land of Little Rain* was published in 1903. Austin has been characterized as a feminist and early ecofeminist (Lanigan 1996, 11). While her writing is characteristic of nature writers of her time in that she romanticizes U.S. Southwest landscapes and their original inhabitants, her voice also has many characteristics today considered feminist, ecofeminist, or even androgynous (Lanigan 1996). Her voice and the way she relates to nature is intimate, familiar, addressing nature on both small and large scales, and valuing the ordinary in nature in addition to grand vistas (Austin 1974, 79-88). Austin thought ecologically, at times hinting that the earth has its own voice and desires (Austin 1974, 83, 88), and held up Native American women as examples of healthy relationships with nature (Lanigan 1996, 239). Austin's characterization of the desert as ". . . deep-breasted, broad in the hips, tawny, with tawny hair . . . eyes sane and steady . . . passionate . . . and you could



Figure 2: Arthur G. Dove, *Waterfall*, 1925
Dove, Arthur G. *Waterfall*. 1925. Oil on hardboard. 10 x 8 in.; 25.4 x 20.32 cm.
Acquired 1926. Courtesy of The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.

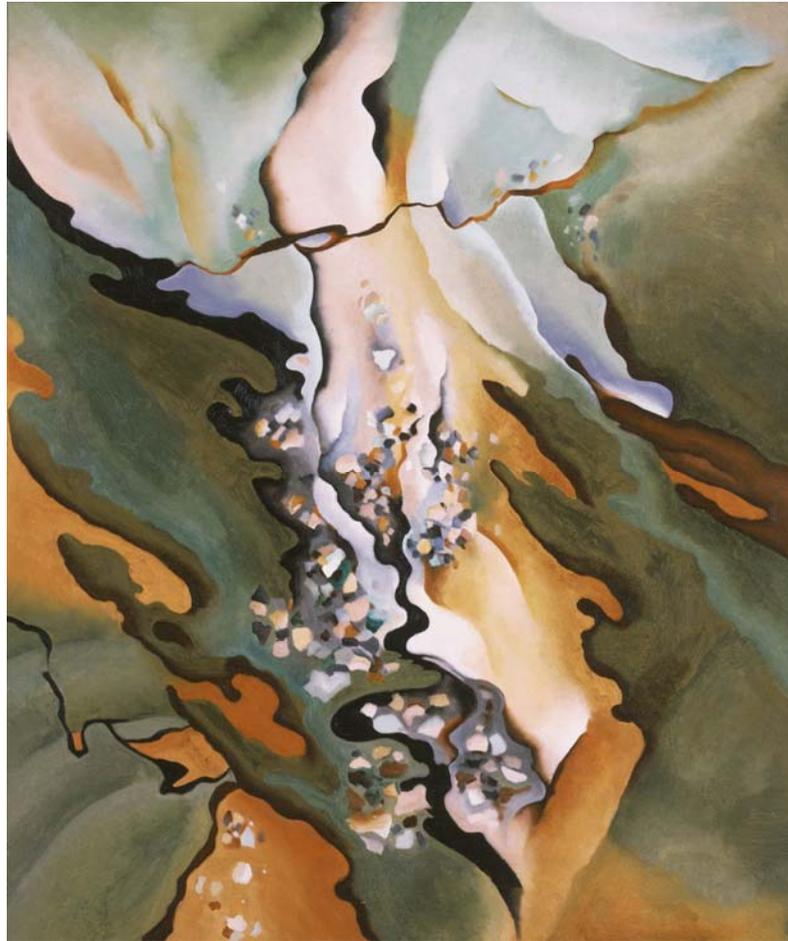


Figure 3: Georgia O'Keeffe, *From the Lake No. 3*, 1924.
Georgia O'Keeffe, American, 1887-1986. Oil on canvas. 36 x 30 inches (91.4 x 76.2 cm). Philadelphia Museum of Art: Bequest of Georgia O'Keeffe for the Alfred Stieglitz Collection, 1987. Courtesy of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and The Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation.

not move her . . .” (Austin quoted Rudnick 1987, 18) is a precursor to characterizations of female nature as strong and independent developed by ecofeminists later in the century.

Within much post-1960s feminist literature and art, the nature-as-female association was redefined, and nature, the earth, and landscape became an active, independent female character with voice. The virgin/whore duality slipped into the background, and was substituted by a range of strong female types. For example, Pat Mora illustrates this new characterization of female nature in her poem, *Unrefined*: “The desert is no lady. She screams at the spring sky, dances with her skirts high, kicks sand, flings tumbleweeds, digs her nails into all flesh. Her unveiled lust fascinates the sun” (Mora quoted in Rebolledo 1987, 117). Feminisms and feminist art of the 1970s and 1980s asserted a strong and positive image of female nature, reclaiming women’s bodies as beautiful and sensual (e.g. Chicago and Schapiro 1973) and claiming women’s strength, positive identity, and valid place in the U.S. Southwest (Norwood and Monk eds. 1987). This thinking contrasts with the environmental movement of the 1960s, whose proponents spoke of Mother Earth with reverence but often discounted the rights and voice of real women (Norwood 1993, 146-147). A feminist version of the “pastoral impulse” could be described as a yearning for strength, voice, equality, and reverence for self and women’s bodies through identification with nature. Unlike the male explorers and settlers that Kolodny writes about, however, the feminist version can lead to lasting harmony with nature (Merchant 1996, 158). Ecofeminist thought, which is based on the association between degradation of the earth and discrimination against women, is a major source of literary and artistic expressions of the possibilities for, and the need for, alternate and more ecologically healthy ways of relating to nature based on a redefinition of female nature.

Ecofeminist themes expressed by Mary Austin earlier in the twentieth century were carried forward and reinterpreted later in the century by women writers and artists from a variety of cultural backgrounds, including Native Americans Joy Harjo and Leslie Marmon Silko, and Anglo-Americans Ursula Le Guin, Michelle Stuart, and Maggie Remington. Especially important in these more recent expressions of female nature is the belief that nature, or elements within nature, are independent beings in their own right, with volition, voice, and desires of their own. This is not the vague and rarified

Mother Earth of the environmental movement of the 1960s. Also important within these expressions is a sense of gender fluidity; for example, in exploring heterosexual intimate relationships with nature or elements within nature, nature is characterized as male if the protagonist is female, and female if the protagonist is male (Silko 1977; Graulich ed. 1993, 57).

Developing the Three Relationships Aspects.

To explore O’Keeffe’s relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape in a way that connects more with alternative ways of relating to nature and moves away from dualistic interpretations of gender, I use ecofeminist principles to develop three relationship aspects with which to structure my analysis. The major scholarly influence for the development of these relationship aspects is Gretchen Legler’s list of “emancipatory strategies” (Legler 1997, quoting Patrick Murphy) used by ecofeminist writers (Legler 1997, 230-231). Legler’s list is well-articulated, inclusive, and cogent, and relates to ecofeminist art as well as ecofeminist literature.

Legler promotes further development of a “postmodern pastoral,” a post-humanist and ecofeminist redefinition of traditional pastoral that envisions human-nature relationships as “ ‘conversations’ between knowing subjects” (Legler 1997, 229)--that is, between entities that are valuable in their own right. In contrast with eighteenth and nineteenth century visions of harmonious rural life attained through human modification of nature, Legler’s postmodern pastoral has the potential to lead towards a more ecologically healthy human-nature relationship. The following strategies, according to Legler, can help “reimagine nature and human relationships with the natural world:

1. ‘Re-mything’ nature as a speaking, ‘bodied’ subject.
2. Erasing or blurring of boundaries between inner (emotional, psychological, personal) and outer (geographic) landscapes, or the erasing or blurring of self-other (human/nonhuman, I/Thou) distinctions.
3. Re-eroticizing human relationships with a ‘bodied’ landscape, or the introduction in Euro-American texts and the reconfiguration in some Native American texts of ritual sexual intercourse as a means of speaking with the land.
4. Historicizing and politicizing nature and the author as a participant in nature.
5. Expressing an ethic of caring friendship, or ‘a loving eye,’ as a principle for relationships with nature.

6. Attempting to unseat vision, or ‘mind’ knowledge, from a privileged position as a way of knowing, or positing the notion that ‘bodies’ know.
7. Affirming the value of partial views and perspectives, the importance of ‘bioregions,’ and the locatedness of human subjects.” (Legler 1997, 230-31)

I use these concepts from Legler to develop three relationship aspects--aspects of how both women and men can relate to nature and landscape. These aspects are used to analyze O’Keeffe’s relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape. The three relationship aspects are: 1) Communicating with nature and landscape--whether nature and elements within nature are considered as beings in their own right, with voice and volition, and the possibility of two-way communication with nature; 2) Knowing the landscape through the body, and landscape as body--whether we relate to, and perhaps communicate with, nature primarily through the body or through the mind, and whether we interpret the landscape as the human body; and 3) Intimacy--the type and degree of intimacy we have with nature and landscape, that is, the degree of closeness with the landscape. Within the three aspects, I focus on the nature, type, and style of communication between self and nature, which can relate closely to gender. While in the following section I address each of these aspects and relevant literature individually, there is considerable overlap and interplay among them.

Communicating with Nature/Landscape. Believing that natural elements are independent entities with whom we can communicate is different than ascribing human qualities to natural elements; that is, the former goes beyond anthropomorphizing natural elements to giving them value in their own right. Several variations of these concepts relate to a comparison between O’Keeffe and ecofeminism. Some ecofeminists believe that nature has voice, volition, agency, desire, consciousness, and its own spirit and purpose, and that they can imagine animals’ and plants’ points of view (e.g. Le Guin 1990). Others maintain that nature has agency, but not consciousness (Mellor 1997, 13). In another variation, nature is not an independent being or independent spirit, but material upon which human characteristics can be associated, and which can act as a symbol of human emotions. Alfred Stieglitz’ “equivalents” photographs, where clouds represent emotions, are examples (Brennan 2001, 69-71). For others, nature has its own spirit, but

its purpose is determined by humans (Emerson 2000). In the following chapters I explore where O’Keeffe was located within these variations during her life in New Mexico.

With the belief that nature is its own being, two-way communication arises as a possibility. Even though transcendentalists like Thoreau and Emerson and O’Keeffe contemporaries like Mabel Dodge Luhan give the reader the sense of nature as very alive, they don’t give a sense of the hope or expectation of two-way communication (Luhan 2000, 31-35, 71, 99; Thoreau 1995; Emerson 2000). J. Sweeney’s discussion of artists describing landscapes as having moods and thoughts (Sweeney 1999, 11), Mary Austin’s rapport with Southwestern deserts (Austin 1974), and Annie Dillard’s experiences of ecstatic immersion with nature (Dillard 1990), lean more towards a belief in two-way communication, but still do not give the sense of expecting a response. We can experience nature having a voice--of feeling the landscape “talk” to us--through our feelings and thoughts (Field 2000, 47-48; Jackie M. 2002, pers. comm.), as it certainly did for O’Keeffe (O’Keeffe 1976). The belief in communication with nature, and the sense of nature or landscape speaking for itself, is very strong in much ecofeminist writing and art. Ecofeminist stories and images are often told from what the authors imagine to be nature’s point of view, and animals and elements of nature such as the wind are incorporated as active characters with voice and volition.

Landscape as body, and knowing landscape through the body. The ability to relate to, understand, and feel nature through one’s body is associated with women rather than men within feminist thought (e.g. Daly 1978; Lippard 2002, pers. comm.), and is often associated with an ecofeminist approach to nature (Legler 1997). Both O’Keeffe’s writing and critics’ interpretations of her writings indicate that her strong connection with the New Mexico landscape was in part experienced through her body, through feeling (O’Keeffe 1976; Raven 1988, 228). There is a substantial scholarly tradition of associating primarily female bodies with nature and landscape, and of using body and landscape as visual and geographic metaphors for each other (Merchant 1996; Kolodny 1975; Schama 1995). From the era of European exploration of the U.S. west up until the present, landscape has been imagined within Anglo-American culture as a female body, as virgin or mother (Kolodny 1975, 1984), and as an unknown expanse to explore, geographically, spiritually, and artistically (Merchant 1996; Sweeney 1999; Belanger

1999; Kay 1997). The term “Mother Earth” is ubiquitous, and associating the landscape with a female body is a tradition in Western culture (WGS 1997, 169), as illustrated in the many interpretations of O’Keeffe’s hills as female bodies. Other cultures within the southwestern U.S. have different gender constructs; for example, within Southwest Puebloan culture, the central village plaza is considered female, distant mountains are considered male, and the natural world overall is considered female (Swentzell 1990, 1998).

Feminist literature explores the ramifications of interpreting landscape as the body of a woman (Nash 1996; Solnit 2001, 45, 174; Rose 1993; Raven et al. 1988, 67). Ramifications include the objectification of the female body, and the tendency to think of both women and nature as passive. Exploring the characterization of landscape as the body of a man (Nash 1996) deconstructs this association between landscape and the female body, and opens up new possibilities for land/body metaphors. Landscape/body associations and metaphors serve to connect us with, and help us to feel landscape, but do not necessarily imply a belief in communication with nature or landscape.

Within art, representations of nature are often associated with female bodies. According to Lippard (1995, 113), the motive for the surge in feminist art and feminist body art of the 1970s and 1980s was to transform the female body from threatening (Solnit 2001, 174) to positive, strong, beautiful, and natural. As documented in Lucie-Smith (2000) and Wylder and Lippard (1999), a primary example is renowned feminist artist Judy Chicago’s celebration of, and development of her own version of, O’Keeffe’s purported use of natural images, especially flowers, to redefine and celebrate the female body, female genitalia in particular. While O’Keeffe denied the association of her flower paintings with female bodies, many interpreters of O’Keeffe’s flower paintings, including many recent feminists, insist on this association. Early twentieth century primarily male art critics promoted this association to further a masculinist gender duality, and some feminists in the 1970s and 1980s insisted on this association to emphasize the value and beauty of the female body (Lynes 1989; WGS 1997, 176-79; Raven et al. 1988, 193-95). More recently, writers like Rebecca Solnit have expressed their concern about a current trend in re-separation of nature and the body, and the need to reemphasize this connection to support ecofeminist and ecological agendas (Solnit 2001, 161).

In addition to the metaphorical connection between body and nature/landscape in writing and visual images, this second relationship aspect includes whether or not we feel and understand nature through the body more than through the mind, and whether this personal and internal connection is experienced as communication with nature. Felt connections with nature are sometimes characterized as sensuous and erotic, and sometimes as sensory (a sense of knowing through the body, without erotic connotations). Variations of a sensuous or erotic knowing relationship with nature include a Whitmanesque sensuous merging with nature (Whitman 1958), an association between landscape and female desire (Paton 1998; Comer 1999, 155-98), and recent feminist and Native American women writers' emphasis on relating to nature through sensuality (Silko 1993; Smith and Allen 1987; Norwood 1993, 6; LeGuin 1990; Ehrlich 1991). Variations of non-eroticized, knowing-through-the-body relationships with nature include Lippard's discussion of knowing nature from the inside (more through the body) or from the outside (more through the mind) (Lippard 2002, pers. comm.), Trinh's sense of writing through the body (Trinh 1989, 36-39) and Peggy Hackney's discussion of how body movement can help unify our bodies beyond polarities (Hackney 1998).

Some expressions of knowing-through-the-body relationships with nature imply or overtly explore direct, two-way communication with nature. Silko's stories include conversations and relationships between humans and animals or natural elements like the wind (Silko 1993), and Ursula LeGuin's *Buffalo Gals* story has the female protagonist living among animals and learning their language (LeGuin 1990). Variations of an ecofeminist sense of two-way communication with nature as equals include a sense of body-sharing, a sense of being able to understand nature's language, and a sense of sharing a common language (LeGuin 1990; Legler 1997; Haraway 1988; Walker cited in Legler 1997).

Intimacy. The degree of closeness in our relationships with nature, or intimacy, is the third relationship aspect. This closeness relates to whether we perceive nature as a concept or something we feel (Dewey 1934, 48, 99, 104, 139, 151), whether we focus on distant or near views, how and how much we interact with nature, and how we identify with nature. Relating to nature as a concept can foster a more distant relationship than relating to nature through our senses and through a heartfelt connection. However, it is

not that simple (Dewey 1934); thought and feeling are connected. For example, Simon Schama maintains that material nature and human perception of nature are indivisible (Schama 1995, 6); that is, that material nature is made real through human ideas and memory. Imagining himself as a “transparent eyeball” helped Emerson feel a certain type of union with nature (Emerson 2000, 6; Sweeney 1999, 152). And, plastering our bodies with mud during a pagan celebration can be more about making a social statement than feeling communion with nature. Another example of the close connection between concept and feeling is the relationship between metaphorical and material places discussed by feminist geographers (Aiken et al. 1998). While thinking about natural places metaphorically relates closely with perceiving nature conceptually (Pratt 1998; Aiken et al. 1998), one of the purposes of metaphor is to bridge between the familiar and the unfamiliar (Solnit 2001, 178). Understanding how certain flowers are used as cultural metaphors--the rose for civilization and Christianity for example--can influence our relationship with the natural world (Swentzell 1998; Rubio-Goldsmith 1998, 274).

Being physically closer to the landscape can help us feel more intimate with that landscape. When closer, we see more detail, and can touch, feel, and smell the landscape. Relying on vision alone can distance us from the landscape and encourage a more intellectual relationship. Interacting with the landscape through direct connection with our bodies, as illustrated in the sensory and kinetic interaction of Andy Goldsworthy’s earth sculptures (Goldsworthy 1993, 2000), can be considered more intimate and more conducive to two-way communication than observing landscape and interpreting it visually, as in the photographs of Laura Gilpin (Sandweiss 1987). However, some of Gilpin’s photographs, for example those of Navajo shepherders (Sandweiss 1987), can be described as intimate. Manipulation of the landscape is one kind of interaction. Small or large-scale earth sculpture is thought by some to reflect a masculine desire to manipulate and control the landscape. Manipulation is an intimacy of intervention (Andrews 1999, 205). Malcolm Andrews characterizes the way many 1960s male earth artists penetrated the landscape intellectually by studying the science of the underlying patterns of nature (Andrews 1999, 195). This is an intimacy of the mind rather than an emotional intimacy. A desire to foster emotional intimacy through nature

observation and painting landscapes can be thought of as reflecting a feminine desire to respect and understand nature.

And lastly, we can identify with nature in different ways. By seeing ourselves in animals and landforms, and by anthropomorphizing natural elements, we can feel a certain bond of familiarity and empathy, but this may not equate to mutual intimacy with nature. Ecofeminists warn of the dangers of anthropomorphizing nature and landscape (Field 2000), because this can lead to using nature for our own purposes rather than understanding nature's inherent values. For example, Steiglitz' *Equivalents* photographs, where he used different shapes and forms of clouds to illustrate his own personal moods and emotions (Richter 2001, 67-77), ascribe human qualities to clouds and use natural forms to illustrate human qualities more than they illustrate the character of the natural elements--the clouds--themselves.

In summary, believing humans to be an integral part of nature--physically and psychologically--is a key influence on how we relate to nature and landscape. This perspective influences our ability to feel akin to and believe in the possibility of communicating with nature. It influences our sense of nature as a being with voice and volition, our sense of relating to nature through our bodies, and our sense of intimacy with nature.

Heritage Landscapes, Art, and Interpretation

Heritage landscapes are geographic areas valued in connection with a community's past. These landscapes can include areas considered natural and cultural, and do not need to show evidence of human manipulation (Melnick 2000; Schama 1995). I use "heritage landscape" rather than "cultural landscape" in this dissertation to encourage thinking of all landscapes, whether identified as cultural or natural, as integrated systems that illustrate varying degrees of human interaction. Heritage landscapes associated with artists and their work may or may not be considered scenic; heritage landscapes focus more on aesthetic meaning than aesthetic quality.

Heritage landscapes. Institutional definitions of heritage landscapes, which derive from cultural and institutional ways of thinking about nature and history, can help us understand and communicate the range of types of heritage landscapes. Definitions can

also influence how we think about heritage landscapes. The U.S. National Park Service's Cultural Landscapes Program identifies four kinds of landscapes: designed; vernacular; ethnographic; and historic site (Page et al. 1998). Within this system, landscapes associated with artists tend to fit under "historic site," which can encourage more emphasis on the history of the artist's activities and influences and specific physical features within the landscape that relate to that history, rather than specifically addressing the nature of the artist's relationship with the landscape. In contrast, the landscape typology used by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and some national heritage management institutions (e.g. Australian Heritage Commission), uses the following landscape types: clearly defined, organically evolved, and associative cultural landscapes (UNESCO 1994, 11). Clearly defined landscapes are similar to designed landscapes, organically evolved are similar to vernacular, and associative landscapes are natural areas reflecting religious, artistic, or cultural associations (UNESCO 1994; Alanen and Melnick 2000, 8-9). Heritage landscapes associated with artists would clearly fall under "associative landscapes." In addition, the Australian Heritage Commission is exploring "inspirational landscapes" as an additional type of heritage landscape (Johnston 2002). Inspirational landscapes are ". . . those places associated with positive and inspiring aesthetic or cultural perceptions of a place and experiences derived from a place . . . Significant stories associated with this theme may include: perceiving and celebrating landscapes in art, literature, film, song, photography and other media" (Johnston 2002, 2). The concept of inspirational landscapes is particularly relevant to the study of how northern New Mexico inspired O'Keeffe and how her work, in turn, inspires others.

Literature on heritage landscapes from land management agencies and the academy has increasingly acknowledged socio/cultural factors of race, class, and gender within landscape research and evaluation processes (Groth 1997; Melnick 2000; Silko 1995; Hayden 1995; Swentzell 1998). Overall, there has been more emphasis on race and class than gender (Groth and Bressi ed. 1997; Jackson 1994; Alanen and Melnick eds. 2000). For example, within the two edited volumes (Groth and Bressi, and Alanen and Melnick) are essays specifically addressing Puerto Rican barrios, rural areas, Asian

communities, middle-class suburbs and minority ethnic cultures, but none specifically addressing gender. While there are a number of examples of major efforts to increase the number of heritage sites established due to their specific association with women's history (Miller ed. 1992, 1996; Burnham 1995), the emphasis so far has been on including women's contributions rather than addressing gender dynamics.

Heritage landscapes and art. Landscape painting has been very influential in determining how heritage landscapes are identified, which landscapes are preserved, and how preserved landscapes are characterized. Landscape painting has been influenced by, and has influenced, ideas about gender and nature. A major example is the establishment of national parks in the United States. American national parks came into being within the context of a gendered approach to nature and within the traditional landscape-painting genre, which played a major role in their protection and advertisement. Large scale, monumental visions of landscapes in the U.S. West, such as those by Albert Bierstadt, Frederick Church, Thomas Moran, and Thomas Cole, were instrumental in the establishment of large scale protected landscapes including national parks (Sweeney 1999; Belanger 1999; Novak 1997; Gussow et al. 1971; Schama 1995; Rose 1993). As Belanger discusses, establishing national parks was at times a case of art producing the place, and of the artists' vision as expressed in their well known portrayals of the landscape becoming the "correct" way to see the landscape (Belanger 1999, 26, 29, 33, 41, 54, 58, 109; Sweeney 1999, 137, 148-49). Even though women's groups played major roles in the establishment of some parks, Mesa Verde National Park being one example (Kaufman 1996, 27-30), national park establishment and development was primarily a masculine enterprise, politically and aesthetically--an enterprise with " 'great men' producing 'great pictures' for a 'great nation' " (Sweeney 1999, 152). While most women artists of this time were relegated to painting small scale nature and domestic scenes (Norwood 1993, 54-97; Chadwick 1997), it was the men's large scale landscape paintings showing a female, virginal landscape, often with a male figure viewing the vast scene and representing her protector, that were used to portray and popularize the visual grandeur of future park landscapes. As the purpose of the national parks shifted from preserving scenery to conservation and protecting ecosystems (Sellars 1997, 91-144),

some of the same early romantic landscape paintings were used to promote this new purpose (Zenzen 1997, 399-400).

From a feminist viewpoint, the establishment of national parks in the late nineteenth century was another method of taming female nature for development and consumption. The type of gaze involved in these paintings--viewing from an elevated, distant viewpoint--has been characterized as a masculine or imperial gaze (Rose 1993, 86-112). Where the scenic grandeur of park landscapes is emphasized in contemporary media, this gendered approach to park landscapes still exists. According to Rebecca Solnit, some scenic landscape calendars replace “pinup girls” with landscapes and in so doing continue a gendered and voyeuristic approach to nature by equating landscape to female bodies (Solnit 2001, 200-05). In Chapter Two, I discuss O’Keeffe’s gaze and its relationship to a male gaze.

NPS heritage landscapes, art, and artists. Existing or proposed heritage landscapes in the U.S. that specifically address nationally-significant art and artists for the most part encompass and preserve homes, studios, and museums associated with certain artists or groups of artists (Chambers 2000; Miller ed.1992). This is due to a general tendency to focus on buildings more than landscapes and due to logistical limitations of designating larger boundaries of heritage sites. Examples of preserved artists’ homes include the Mabel Dodge Luhan House, the Jackson Pollock House and Studio (Chambers 2000, 292, 339), and the Georgia O’Keeffe House and Studio. By experiencing the places where artists lived and worked, a certain understanding of their relationship with nature can be gained. However, heritage sites that also include the landscapes within which the artists painted afford the opportunity for visitors to directly experience the locations where the artists interacted with the landscape, and the opportunity for encouraging visitors to reflect on the artists’ relationship with nature and how they might have influenced conservation efforts. Examples include Weir Farm in Connecticut, Desert View Watchtower at Grand Canyon National Park, and the Chadds Ford region of Pennsylvania.

At Weir Farm, visitors can experience the landscape that inspired Weir by walking along the interpretive trail that leads to specific painting sites (NPS 2000; Cikovsky et al. 2000). Desert View Watchtower is an example of a somewhat less direct

approach. Landscape paintings by Moran and others are displayed adjacent to windows through which expansive vistas of the canyon are visible, and are displayed in proximity to outdoor viewing platforms. A combination example is the town and surrounding rural landscape of Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania (Dorst 1989). In this region, landscape paintings of Andrew Wyeth and other members of the Wyeth family are displayed in museums and at National Register sites situated within the landscape that inspired the artists. In turn, the Chadds Ford suburban landscape has taken on characteristics of the Wyeth paintings themselves, for example, placing artificial cows in yards and replicating historic barn styles and field patterns (Dorst 1989, 38,112). Here, visitors can experience remnants of the landscape that inspired Wyeth, and can experience the influence of Wyeth's popularity on the contemporary landscape.

Within these and other heritage landscapes, stories of how artists relate to nature and landscape are told in a variety of ways, some of which touch on gender dynamics, for instance, “. . . how the social construction of gender is implicated in what we find to value and preserve in nature” (Norwood 1999, 50). Some interpretive programs use combinations of viewing art and reading explanatory text (e.g. Desert View), some, including those which incorporate direct experience of associated landscapes, use more experiential approaches (e.g. Weir Farm). Appropriate for the interpretation of visual art, most programs focus on visual experiences. Incorporating experiences of sound, smell, and touch is also possible. Some maintain focus on the specific artist (e.g. the Augustus Saint-Gaudens Memorial), and others take a broader approach, telling the stories of a number of artists including the artist most closely associated with the landscape (e.g. Weir Farm). There is great potential to incorporate scholarly studies of gender dynamics within these programs to help visitors understand the artists, their times, and their relationships with nature and landscape (Norwood and Monk 1987; Monk 1992; Comer 1999). Interpretive themes can include how female and male artists gender-coded certain types of landscapes (Monk 1992), and how social gender relations might be illustrated within landscape art.

In addition to the recognitions of O’Keeffe’s legacy within art criticism and other literature, within museums, and through grants programs, a number of efforts have been made to commemorate the places and landscapes associated with O’Keeffe. In the early

1980s, the National Park Service completed a study investigating the feasibility of establishing her Abiquiu House and Studio as a National Historic Site (NPS 1983). Prior to the distribution of the study, O’Keeffe stopped the project in order to avoid intrusion on Abiquiu residents (O’Keeffe 1983). A later proposal to re-name Cerro Pedernal, one of O’Keeffe’s well known landscape subjects, after the artist, was short-lived (NPS 1992a, 45). In 1988, Congress directed the NPS to study alternative ways of interpreting O’Keeffe’s nationally significant contributions to American art and culture through landscapes associated with O’Keeffe, as an alternative to using the houses. The 1992 study was submitted to Congress; no action has so far been taken (Brown 2004, pers. comm.). This study focuses on the landscape of the Lower Rio Chama Valley, the area determined by participants of the 1991 National Park Service Painting and Sculpture Theme Study Workshop as nationally significant “. . . because of its exceptional association with the life and work of Georgia O’Keeffe” (NPS 1992a, 24). The three alternatives included in the 1992 study describe variations of facilities provided and visitor experiences afforded. A driving tour, a conventional visitor center and guided interpretive tour, and a smaller visitor facility with nearby access to “contemplative places” within the landscapes either painted by or associated with O’Keeffe, were the three alternatives developed (NPS 1992).

The one commemorative effort that has come to fruition is the designation of O’Keeffe’s Abiquiu residence as the Georgia O’Keeffe House and Studio National Historic Landmark (NHL) (Burt 1998). This effort succeeded perhaps because this designation does not require federal ownership, and is less disruptive to the Abiquiu community. The House and Studio is managed by the Georgia O’Keeffe Foundation, and guided tours are offered in the warmer months. The NHL nomination is a recent, concise statement of the significance of the relationship between one of the most important O’Keeffe heritage places and the artist herself. The early history of the site, the house reconstruction process, interior design, and grounds of the house complex are described in detail, along with a statement of the historic significance of the house. The significance section describes O’Keeffe as an iconic and mythic figure who “breached the masculine preserve of art at a time when few women could gain entrée” (Burt 1998, 20) to develop her own distinctive artistic vision, and describes how the house, and views afforded by

the house, figure in O’Keeffe’s paintings (Burt 1998). This and other information from the nomination is mentioned on tours.

Landscapes associated with the heritage of O’Keeffe are material, metaphorical, and symbolic; they are landscapes deeply imbued with meaning and story. While some gender issues are touched upon within the interpretive tour of the House and Studio (e.g. how O’Keeffe made a place for herself in a masculine art world), gender dynamics are not addressed in detail. Within the extensive literature on O’Keeffe, gender is addressed in various ways, and masculinity and femininity are sometimes mentioned in exhibit materials (O’Keeffe Museum 2002). However, I am not aware of any interpretations of O’Keeffe heritage landscapes that focus on gender.

Existing Literature on Georgia O’Keeffe

The literature on Georgia O’Keeffe is extensive and broad. Within this literature, O’Keeffe’s relationship with nature and landscape, and how the subjects and style of her paintings are gendered, are addressed briefly within various discussions. These discussions include: how the gendered relationship between modernism and socio/political trends in the early twentieth century influenced O’Keeffe and how her work has been interpreted (Dijkstra 1998; Chave 1992; Massey 1994); O’Keeffe’s associations with classical myth, nineteenth century transcendentalism, Oriental art, and gendered symbolism (Udall 2000; Udall 1996; Novak 1997); and the body and art and the sensuality of her images (Udall 2000). Works that do address the genderedness of O’Keeffe’s relationships with nature in depth, focusing on the relationship or using this theme in discussions of influences on her painting, include Udall (2000), Dijkstra (1998), and Raven et al. (1988). Udall makes a case that O’Keeffe’s relationship with nature, and how she portrayed this relationship in her painting, was highly gendered. She analyses how O’Keeffe used natural symbols like trees that have gendered associations in the symbolism of various cultures. Dijkstra proposes that O’Keeffe’s relationship with nature and its expression were ungendered or pre-gender, that is, not related to gender dualities. Some discussions of feminist art (e.g. Raven et al. 1998) refer to O’Keeffe as an earth goddess and portray O’Keeffe and her art as representing the belief that women are inherently closer to nature than men. In this dissertation I am also exploring how

O'Keeffe's relationship with nature and landscape are gendered, and these analyses provide examples. In comparison with these studies, I use O'Keeffe's writings as much as her images.

The literature on O'Keeffe's relationship with nature addresses a variety of interpretations of this relationship, including psycho-spiritual, sex/body, and direct sense-experience interpretations. Existing literature on O'Keeffe focuses on the role O'Keeffe gave to nature in her life and art, how she related to nature through her feelings and her body, and her sense of intimacy with nature, without exploring specifically whether O'Keeffe believed that communication with nature was possible. Interpretations within the existing literature at times refer to specific landscapes, but for the most part do not focus on the landscapes themselves or characterize landscapes associated with O'Keeffe as heritage landscapes. Much of this literature briefly mentions characteristics of her relationship with landscape--very personal, based on long-term familiarity, experiential, celebrating nature and her love of nature--and weaves this basic statement into discussions on painting style or biography (Merrill and Bradbury 1992; Messinger 2001; Collins 1980; Castro 1985; Poling 1999; Patten and Cardona-Hine 1992a).

Much of the existing literature on O'Keeffe focuses on her early life and formative experiences, mainly her relationship with Alfred Stieglitz and gender dynamics during the early part of the twentieth century (Hoffman 1976; Mitchell 1996; Brennan 2001; Lynes 1989, Dijkstra 1998; Peters 2001; Udall 1998; Richter 2001; Drohojowska-Philp 2004; Pollitzer 1988). Her later, more mature years in New Mexico are covered in less depth (Patten and Cardona-Hine 1992a, 1992b; Udall 2000; Poling-Kempes 1997; Merrill and Bradbury eds. 1992). I focus on O'Keeffe's New Mexico years (1929-1986) and the years following her death (1986-2004).

Works that address O'Keeffe's relationship to specific northern New Mexico landscapes identify the landscapes as painting sites (Lynes 2001; Collins 1980) or use descriptions of the landscapes to tell the story of O'Keeffe's life (Patten and Wood 1995; Loengard 1994; Poling-Kempes 1997; Russek and Scheinbaum 1997). My focus on the Ghost Ranch landscape, and direct experiences with this landscape, adds to this literature by enhancing our understanding of O'Keeffe's relationship with this landscape and by

providing analyses directly applicable to the development of on-site interpretive opportunities.

Studying O’Keeffe’s relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape within a social and cultural context is also important; Van Deren Coke’s 1963 study is an example of existing literature that addresses this context. The Taos and Santa Fe artist colonies and these artists’ responses to the northern New Mexico landscape, which included ethnocentric, romantic, documentary, and more purely aesthetic responses (Coke 1963, 1974), was part of O’Keeffe’s larger context (Traugott 1997). Many artists came to New Mexico from the eastern U.S. to escape the big cities and Modernist industrialism to try to find a simpler life, closer to nature. Because this move west was fueled to some extent by nostalgia for pre-industrial times, artists sentimentalized the landscape and culture of New Mexico, for instance by depicting Native Americans as “noble savages,” at the same time as they aestheticized the landscape by turning it into landscape images (Coke 1963, 1974; Skolnick and Campbell 1994, 21-22)

Concepts from race and class theory, for example the studies of whiteness and colonialism (Blunt and Rose 1994) are relevant here. The influx of well-off Anglo-Americans and Europeans to the U.S. Southwest in the early part of the twentieth century has been likened to a colonial invasion, where indigenous and existing residents of the area were sentimentalized and used for the artists’ own purposes and where the new residents’ efforts to represent the rights of indigenous people were sometimes appreciated, and sometimes not (Jensen 1995). As whiteness theory maintains, whiteness constitutes a specific racial identity, rather than representing a “neutral” position (Cuomo and Hall 1999). As an Anglo-American who moved to New Mexico from the eastern U.S., O’Keeffe likely shared certain ethnocentric ideas with other artists in the region, even though she did not paint portraits of Native American or Hispanic people and did not share the same tendency to sentimentalize either the people or the landscape. And, O’Keeffe was one of the privileged, financially secure newcomers to New Mexico who could afford to spend time exploring, playing, and pursuing her art rather than trying to make a living as part of the local community (Drohojowska-Philp 2004, 322-324, 328-331). While she didn’t have an arrogant or condescending attitude

towards local residents, O’Keeffe was part of the overall influx of well to do Anglo artists to the region.

O’Keeffe’s art, including her New Mexico work, is often ascribed a spiritual quality (Peck 2002; Udall 2000). This somewhat mystical and nonverbalized spiritual quality contrasts with more literal expressions of nature’s spirituality not directly associated with aesthetics, for example, Emerson’s description of landscape as the face of God (Emerson 2000, 33) and the Mormon understanding of the Utah landscape as Zion, the Promised Land of the Mormon Saints (Kay 1997, 369-70). O’Keeffe’s sense of the spiritual in nature, of nature providing her with spiritual experiences, is similar to Zen art appreciation and the Zen concept of art being a part of a spiritual relationship with nature (Okakura 1989), and similar to equating the experience of creating a work of art to a religious or spiritual experience (Truettner and Bolton-Smith 1972, 20). Literature on the Goddess worship movement and Goddess art within post-1960s feminism included associations with O’Keeffe. While both women’s and men’s earth worship and pagan ritual movements involve reverence for the earth, or Gaia, and worship activities held in natural, outdoor settings (Bonnett 1996), Goddess worship, and associated Goddess art, derive from feminism and refer to nature to deify women and the relationship between women and the earth (Bigwood 1993; Orenstein 1988). Goddess-culture art looks to nature to re-sacralize the female body and to find sources of spiritual support within nature’s female beings. Experiences of goddess energy are sought at pre-Christian sacred sites such as caves or mounds. Artistic expressions include images of female bodies merging with nature, images of female nature beings, and symbolic on-site sculptures using natural materials (Orenstein 1988). O’Keeffe has been interpreted and identified as an “earth goddess,” as an artist who painted female landscapes, and who used flowers to represent the beauty of female bodies (Holder 1988; Raven 1988). All three relationship aspects can involve a sense of spirituality. In this study, I include but do not focus on relating to landscape through the spirit.

O’Keeffe criticism, both popular and academic, has been studied from a number of specific viewpoints. Katherine Hoffman’s 1984 review of writings on O’Keeffe extends up to the mid 1970s, and addresses three themes: The Feminine Experience; Symbolism; and The World of Nature (Hoffman 1984, vii). Lynes’ detailed 1989 study

focuses on criticism during O'Keeffe's New York years, the period between 1916 and 1929. To track how critics addressed gender in their writing about O'Keeffe and her work, I look at criticism from 1929 (O'Keeffe's first summer in New Mexico) to 2004, with special attention to post-1960s feminist writing on O'Keeffe.

Various works interpret O'Keeffe's legacy in a contemporary context. These works discuss her legacy in terms of painting style (Castro 1985), dispel myths about her personality and describe O'Keeffe as icon or role model (Merrill and Bradbury 1992), discuss radical feminism's perceptions of O'Keeffe as "earth goddess" (Dijkstra 1998), discuss O'Keeffe's relationship to Native American culture (Duvert 1987), provide personal interpretations of O'Keeffe's experiences (Patten and Wood 1995), and offer their own personal experiences using O'Keeffe as a referent (Williams 1992). Some of the recent gender/nature/art literature specifically addresses O'Keeffe, for instance, describing her relationship with nature in some detail (Udall 2000), using interpretations of her flower paintings as examples of how artistic expressions of nature can be widely interpreted (WGSF 1997, 176-79), or associating O'Keeffe with the earth goddess of radical feminism through her flower paintings (Raven et al., 1998). I am not aware, however, of any work that specifically addresses the relationship between O'Keeffe's work and feminist art focusing on nature and landscape.

A number of works on O'Keeffe help us understand the history and implications of entrenched interpretations of O'Keeffe's art. Some authors mention the need to develop new, more accurate, interpretations (Raven 1988; Hoffman 1997; Duvert 1987). The need to develop alternate interpretations of the enlarged flower paintings given O'Keeffe's denial of sexual imagery is mentioned but not fully addressed by Arlene Raven (Raven 1988). In Katherine Hoffman's study of how music and dance inspired and influenced O'Keeffe's work, Hoffman maintains that the rhythms and harmonies of music and dance influenced and were the subjects of O'Keeffe's work as much if not more than sexual symbolism (Hoffman 1997, 57).

While the related literature is extensive, I am not aware of any in-depth research effort that addresses O'Keeffe's relationship with landscape and how this relationship might be gendered, post-1960s gender/nature/art concepts, and the role of direct experience of the landscape in understanding these relationships. This dissertation

addresses this research need, and applies the analysis to developing interpretive opportunities that focus on gender.

Research Questions

My specific research questions flow from a combination of my own interests and questions yet to be addressed within the literature on O’Keeffe:

- 1) How did O’Keeffe characterize her relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape, how do my interpretations of this relationship compare with hers and others, and how was O’Keeffe’s relationship with this landscape gendered?
- 2) How can we expand and update our understanding of this relationship by interpreting the Ghost Ranch landscape and O’Keeffe’s response to this landscape within the context of post-1960s gender/nature/art concepts and artistic expressions, including those of ecofeminism?
- 3) How do existing on-site interpretative programs within heritage landscapes tell the story of O’Keeffe’s, and other artists’, relationships with landscape, and what role does discussion of gender dynamics play within these programs? and
- 4) How can focusing on gender and concepts from ecofeminism within on-site interpretive programs enhance our understanding of O’Keeffe’s relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape?

Theoretical Approaches

Since gender/nature/art theory has been addressed above, this section focuses on relevant concepts in feminist and gender theory. I use a feminist qualitative approach, informed by theory in feminist, gender, and masculinity studies, and to a lesser degree whiteness, postcolonial, and class studies. I also incorporate approaches from a variety of disciplines that specifically address landscape, art, and heritage. My intention for this to be a feminist study provides overall structure, and influences the choice of topic and the kinds of research questions developed. This study addresses gender equity through an exploration of the contribution that post-1960s feminist approaches to art and nature can make to our relationships with nature; however, I focus on how certain experiences and landscapes are interpreted and communicated rather than on actions towards social

justice. My approach is feminist in a number of ways: I treat research “subjects” as equals and let them tell their own story; I allow for multiple stories to inhabit the same landscape and people to embody different stories at different times; I am aware that my socio/cultural/economic background may influence my questions and research methods; I incorporate an awareness of how women may be judged by masculine standards; I study not only experiences but also the conditions that influence or frame those experiences; I use my own experience as data; and I use a personal, self-reflexive writing style (Trinh 1989; Flax 1993; Haraway 1991; Mills 1994).

The feminist theoretical goal of moving beyond the female/male gender duality is key to this dissertation. Like many feminists, I am interested in destabilizing the traditional male/female duality so that gender roles and behaviors that are culturally ingrained as “appropriate” can be made more flexible (Anzaldua 1987; Massey 1994; Rose 1993; Moore 1994; Butler 1990), and also to avoid thinking in terms of center and margin, that is, of maleness as central and femaleness as marginal (Pratt 1998, 14-18). Recent feminist theory that deconstructs the male/female duality and deconstructs stereotypical male/female associations helps us go beyond entrenched gender thinking associated with O’Keeffe and helps open up possibilities of interpreting O’Keeffe’s images and relationship with Ghost Ranch in a broader way. For example, rather than assigning the image of a flower or a hill as female *or* male, the possibility of it representing both (or neither) can be explored.

Moving beyond the gender duality can take the form of developing a third or hybrid space between the two genders (Anzaldua 1987, 77), of “diving under” the duality and seeing what is beneath (Griffin 1978), of combining the two opposing elements into one being (Massey 1994), of combining the two opposing elements by making them exist in the same place simultaneously (Rose 1993, 140), and by dislodging the duality through parodical performance such as drag shows (Butler 1990, 121, 128-41). Using geometrical metaphor, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick proposes that masculinity and femininity, “instead of being at opposite poles of the same axis” are “actually in different, perpendicular dimensions, and therefore are independently variable” (Sedgwick 1995, 15-16), and therefore not necessarily defined as the lack of the other. Applying these concepts, especially that of a third space between the two gender poles, can help dislodge

entrenched interpretations of O’Keeffe and gender. According to Judith Butler, gender roles and behavior are socially and culturally determined and are maintained through daily repetitive performance of specific behaviors, for example, the way we dress and move (Butler 1990). Changes in performed behavior can, over time, change what is considered appropriately masculine or feminine. O’Keeffe is an example of someone whose lifestyle and attitudes influenced cultural gender norms.

These concepts can be applied to how we think about relationships between feminine and masculine, and about a range of ways of thinking about gender. A unified, pregender state, from which the two genders evolved, is used as a reference point and alternative to gender duality by some feminist writers and interpreters of O’Keeffe (Hendler 1976; Dijkstra 1998). This pregendered, or presexual, state is described variously, for example, in terms of the pre “big bang” unity of the universe (Hendler 1976, 6-7), and in terms of psychological unity (Dijkstra 1998, 32-45, 88). Androgyny was favored by some 1970s and 1980s feminists as a way of recombining the two genders into a harmonious balance, as in the flow of energy between yin and yang (Singer 1976; Hendler 1976). Androgyny, a state of combination and balance between male and female, is not the same as the pregender or presexual soul, which was a unified oneness prior to the development of the duality. Some writers, however, use the term to refer to both states (e.g. Poe, quoted in Dijkstra 1998, 133). In that androgyny focuses on the joining together of two opposites, it still draws our attention to the male/female duality. Butler (1990) and Sedgwick (1995), in their efforts to destabilize the duality, focus more on gender fluidity and diversity, and on male and female as gender variations rather than opposites. Still others propose a postgender state as the way forward, for example, the postgender state of Haraway’s cyborg being (Haraway 1991, 149-182). Discussion of a postgender state does not refer to a return to the pregender state, but toward a state where gender may be present but is not relevant, or at least is downplayed (Haraway 1991). Concepts such as these have been and can be used in interpretations of O’Keeffe and her art, and play a role in studying how relationships with nature may be gendered.

Masculinity, whiteness, postcolonial, and class theory also play a role. Masculinity theory maintains that, while a masculine perspective has often, in Western

culture, been used as the norm or considered to be the neutral position, a masculine perspective is actually a distinctly gendered position (Berger et al. 1995). Using theory from masculinity studies in addition to feminist theory contributes to a gender-balanced approach by including men's experiences (e.g. their interpretations of O'Keeffe's art) and by broadening the discussion of gender dynamics to include how gender norms have influenced men's lives and experiences, and notions of ideal masculinity. For example, an understanding of the influence of gender dynamics within the community of early twentieth century American Modernists including the Stieglitz circle can be gained only by considering the influence of contemporary gender norms that influenced both women and men (Massey 1994, 235). Similarly, theoretical concepts from whiteness studies maintain that whiteness is a specific racial identity rather than a neutral position (Cuomo and Hall 1999; Delgado and Stefanic 1997). Whiteness theory is closely allied to postcolonial studies, which emphasize power relationships and identity dynamics within situations of adaptation between the colonizing and the colonized (Blunt and Rose 1994). Both women and men can hold and behave according to colonial attitudes. And, concepts of division of labor and economic power relations from class theory interrelate with gender and women's experiences (Scott 1988; Davis 1981).

Applying a synthesis of theories from cultural landscape preservation studies, gender and nature, and ecofeminism is also needed to adequately relate O'Keeffe to recent gender/nature/art approaches, to destabilize long-term and engrained interpretations of O'Keeffe's relationship with nature, and to discuss the role of specific landscapes with which she is associated. Cultural landscape studies theory, which relates to how we see and "read" landscapes and the assumptions that lie behind landscape analysis, often needs to be inferred from descriptive and applied work (e.g. Page et al. 1998). However, some of this literature more directly exposes analytical assumptions, including those of gender, class and ethnicity (Groth and Bressi eds. 1997; Alanen and Melnick eds. 2000; Thompson ed. 1995; Hayden 1995). For instance, Robert Melnick discusses the assumption of gender-blindness: "We also must recognize that gender perceptions and experiences play a role in understanding the influence of landscape upon everyday life. To be gender-blind is to deny the historic variants in landscape experience" (Melnick 2000, 23).

Critical Approaches

The main framework for this study is a critical gender studies approach, which informs application of approaches from cultural landscape studies, history, art history, and heritage preservation. While I discuss a variety of analyses of O’Keeffe’s work and legacy, the overall approach and analysis of the literature and data is from a feminist, gender studies perspective. This perspective includes awareness of what framework I, and others, use for comparison and analysis of O’Keeffe’s work and legacy, and the potential need to shift this basis of comparison to one that encompasses women’s contributions and the range of concepts within gender theory.

Gender studies go beyond including women in existing theoretical frameworks to focus on how changing notions of femaleness and maleness affect women’s and men’s lives (Scott 1988). I supplement general historic methods (Howell and Prevenier 2001) with a gender studies approach, where gender is used as the key analytical variable (Scott 1988). Scott argues for moving beyond including women in existing discursive structures, to the articulation of gender dynamics in these structures, and on to the articulation of new structures and discourses which result from revised gender relations models (Scott 1988, 4,10). For example, I recognize and use the vast literature that has helped develop O’Keeffe’s stature as a major twentieth century American artist, I discuss and analyze the literature that examines the impacts of gender dynamics on O’Keeffe, and I investigate O’Keeffe’s relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape using recently-developed alternate gender relations models.

The questions I ask, the data I seek, and my analyses are influenced by my own positionality, that is, my socio/economic background. I am a white, middle-aged, educated, middle class woman who has lived in New Mexico for twenty years. I am familiar with Ghost Ranch through my work for the NPS, through this study, and through personal experiences. This landscape is special to me, as a landscape of inspiration, refuge, and emotional association, but it is not “home” to me as it was for O’Keeffe. As did O’Keeffe and many others, I came to New Mexico for the natural beauty, the colors and the light, the romanticism of the multi-cultural community, and the sense of space that I associate with freedom and self-discovery. I share O’Keeffe’s aesthetic relationship with nature, and I relate to ecofeminist ideas on possible alternative

relationships with nature. In my work for the NPS, I use heritage landscape analysis and evaluation systems of the U.S. National Register of Historic Places, and to some degree with the UNESCO World Heritage Program, to study cultural landscapes within a conservation and education context. This context gives me a geographic perspective; I focus on the nature and influence of landscapes themselves in addition to associated social dynamics. As a result, I may have a tendency to emphasize landscape and the nature of experiential, interpretive, and educational interactions with landscape more than historical influences. I understand Anglo-American relationships with nature more than Hispanic and Native American relationships, and have more experience with an aesthetic approach to nature than a pragmatic approach like farming.

Another goal of this study is to avoid “presentism,” that is, imposing recent concepts on past people and events, in this case, imposing twentieth century feminist ideas on O’Keeffe. To avoid this, I use contemporary theory not to try to represent what O’Keeffe felt and thought and why she did what she did, but to help make her legacy more relevant to today’s visitors to heritage landscapes. I attempt not to impose intention based on contemporary theory, that is, I avoid saying that O’Keeffe intended this or that, but rather I use recent feminist and other theoretical insights to help us understand O’Keeffe’s legacy within today’s culture (Bailey 2002, pers. comm.). Performing Shakespeare’s plays in modern settings and modern dress is an example of a similar effort. The core themes and ideas remain intact, but are related within a setting to which today’s audience can relate. I am interested in how O’Keeffe’s legacy has been differently interpreted, and used, within various contexts, within recent decades. This inquiry uses contemporary feminist and ecofeminist concepts to understand recent interpretations in addition to using these concepts to maintain O’Keeffe’s relevance.

Method

I used a combination of textual analysis and study of lived experience, a combination appropriate for bridging theory and on-site experiences. Document analysis, participant observation and auto-observation, unstructured interview, landscape analysis, formal and informal focus groups, and conducting an on-site workshop were used to

collect and analyze information. I included my own experiences and interpretations as part of the research findings.

Primary documentation includes visual images and paintings:

- 1) O’Keeffe’s images and writing. O’Keeffe’s own expressions (her writings, interviews, and paintings) that pertain to her relationship with the landscape of northern New Mexico, Ghost Ranch in particular, are key. Some of this material is published, and some is contained in letters, interview transcripts, and other documents located in various archives, for example, The Georgia O’Keeffe Museum Research Center in Santa Fe. I studied original O’Keeffe paintings at the Georgia O’Keeffe Museum and at various other locations, and the *Catalogue Raisonné* (Lynes 2001) provides a comprehensive chronological description of O’Keeffe’s work. I also studied original feminist, ecofeminist, Modernist, and landscape painting at various Santa Fe galleries;
- 2) Published and unpublished geographical and historical information on Ghost Ranch, and recent original art and writing focusing on this landscape by artists and writers other than O’Keeffe;
- 3) Documents relating to interpretive programs on Georgia O’Keeffe and J. Alden Weir. These materials include a) draft and final planning studies, briefings, correspondence, and other materials associated with the NPS 1992 *Georgia O’Keeffe: Study of Alternatives*, located in NPS files and archives in Santa Fe and Denver, and b) interpretive brochures and other material related to various on-site programs on O’Keeffe and from Weir Farm.

Secondary documents used include published literature on O’Keeffe that interprets her New Mexico art and relationship with the New Mexico landscape, for example, magazine and newspaper articles from 1929-2004; published and web-based literature on feminist and ecofeminist art; and unpublished dissertations, journal articles, and edited volumes that provide related scholarly analysis.

Structured and unstructured interviews, participant observation and auto-observation, formal and informal focus groups, and conducting the workshop were used for collecting information related to on-site, lived experience. To most directly access lived experience, my participant observation, auto-observation, and focus groups occurred on-site at Ghost Ranch. Interviews were held on-site if possible, otherwise in an

office or restaurant environment. I interviewed those who design and implement interpretive programs, participants in these programs and other events such as workshops, and NPS staff involved in O’Keeffe planning studies. Participant observation and interactions occurred during workshops and programs in which I participated, and during the workshop that I created and led. Using concepts from participant observation, auto-observation, and dialog methods (Atkinson and Hammersley 1994; Adler and Adler 1994, 385-386) as a guide, I participated in the programs, and observed how they were run and how participants responded to workshop content and to my questions. Some unstructured interviews and discussions occurred in the field, for example, during painting sessions or interpretive programs, when I asked questions of participants designed to encourage them to express how they related to landscape, and how they interpreted O’Keeffe’s art. I held formal and informal focus groups during the workshop and other programs, and used focus group methodology from Tracey Bedford and Jacquelin Burgess (Bedford and Burgess 2001). Specific concepts from Atkinson and Hammersley and Bedford and Burgess are discussed in Chapter Four in the context of specific use of participant observation and focus groups.

In formulating the questions I asked of fellow participants (Appendices B, C, and E), I tried to steer away from vague questions like “So, how do you relate to this landscape?” to use more specific questions like “How do you think your painting expresses your feelings about this landscape?,” “How is this landscape gendered?,” or “How do you think you experience this landscape in ways similar to and different from O’Keeffe?” I asked questions specific to O’Keeffe’s writings and art during interviews with O’Keeffe scholars and those involved in developing interpretive programs. When I analyzed my notes from focus groups, informal discussions, and observations, I attempted to keep in mind that, as Scott discusses (Scott, quoted in Olesen 1994, 167), actual experiences and verbal or artistic interpretations of those experiences overlap and blend into one another, so that the “data” is usually a combination of the two. Since I am the only participant with whom I share actual lived experience, I studied other’s experience through the stories they told about those experiences (Clandinin and Connelly 1994; Dewey 1934).

In all workshops and interviews, I introduced my dissertation project, and tried to ensure that all interviewees, workshop participants whom I observed and from whom I collected written statements, and workshop focus group participants, were aware of how I might be using information that I gained. As necessary, I requested and acquired written permissions to use specific quotes gained during the interviews and interactions. For information gained from interviews with professionals, I did not request written permission to use material from the interview, but I did invite the interviewee to review and comment on the passage in which I used their material. For use of specific quotes from written comments submitted by focus group participants, I requested written consent to use the material, and also invited their review and comment on the passage. Direct quotes are not included in this study unless I received written consent. I did not request written permission from leaders of or participants in programs (e.g. academic courses, workshops, interpretive tours) in order to discuss my own observations and experiences of these programs, although I did inform them of the nature of my project.

Ghost Ranch is the focus landscape for this dissertation because of the strength and longevity of O’Keeffe’s personal relationship with this landscape. O’Keeffe lived seasonally at Ghost Ranch for over forty years, and her paintings of this landscape are powerful illustrations of her very personal relationship with nature in the desert southwest. Numerous specific painting sites have been identified within this landscape, affording a comparison between the site, O’Keeffe’s image, and interpretations of the image. Ghost Ranch is within reasonable travel distance and is open to the public, two factors that facilitated my research. I focus on the nature of the interaction with the Ghost Ranch landscape, the sense of communication with this landscape, how the landscape is perceived (e.g. gendered or not), and how people describe their experiences. To analyze my own responses to this landscape, I use site analysis methods from cultural geography and landscape architecture, and focus on my aesthetic and associative responses, that is, relating to Ghost Ranch as an associative and inspirational landscape.

Weir Farm provides an effective comparison example for developing my workshop. While Weir Farm is not within the same geographic region as Ghost Ranch, the ways in which Weir’s relationship with the Weir Farm landscape is interpreted provide the key basis for comparison (NPS 2000a, 2000b). At Weir Farm, the NPS

encourages an understanding of J. Alden Weir's relationship with the landscape through direct experience of actual painting sites (NPS 2000a, 2000b). In comparison with O'Keeffe who often juxtaposed landscape elements in space and who usually did not include people or buildings, Weir painted intimate expressions of his pastoral rural landscape, and included farm buildings and farm workers (Cikovsky et al. 2000). Also, Weir Farm is associated primarily with a male artist, which is useful for gender comparisons.

Using my own experiences as "data" relates to an important issue within feminist methodology--the issue of voice. Whose voice is expressed in the text, and how does this relate to bias, and to relationships, including power relationships (Olesen 1994, 67)? While I elicit the direct voice and expression of others through interviews and study of original writings and art, I write through my own filters and for my own purpose. This dissertation is my account, and represents primarily my voice, as an "interpreter" of O'Keeffe, informed by others through quotations and replication of images. My combined status--that of "outsider" and, in some respects, "insider"--has both benefits and disadvantages. Because I did not meet O'Keeffe personally and do not work for an institution directly related to O'Keeffe's legacy, I do not have the familiarity that this would afford but also am not biased by personal impressions of O'Keeffe and do not need to respond to institutional objectives. As a participant in the NPS study and an NPS employee, I have an "insider" view of the agency, which has the benefit of more familiarity with the NPS but also possibly the disadvantage of a less critical approach.

As with any study, this one has certain parameters and limitations. The focus on Ghost Ranch provides a consistent basis for comparison of O'Keeffe's images and workshop participant responses, but excludes O'Keeffe's experiences related to other landscapes she visited and lived in during the same time frame, for example, her 1939 trip to Hawaii and her world-wide travels during the 1950s and 1960s. While my sample for interviews and interactions is focused on certain populations--for example, I didn't include interviews with gallery owners or participants in primarily indoor interpretive programs--my choice of interviewees is congruent with my specific research questions. My intention here is not to be inclusive, but to describe and analyze a range of responses to O'Keeffe's relationship with a beloved landscape.

Significance

This dissertation contributes to the fields of American Studies, gender studies, O’Keeffe studies, and heritage landscapes interpretation. Contributions to American Studies include using direct experience with specific landscapes as data within a study that integrates theory and lived experience, analyzing an artist’s relationship with landscape using a gender lens, and approaching theoretical issues from the perspective of a professional cultural landscapes specialist. Specific landscapes associated with O’Keeffe are considered as sources of inspiration and as independent subjects. Gender is not addressed adequately within the field of heritage landscape preservation and interpretation; this study demonstrates how a consideration of gender enriches our understanding of artists’ relationships with nature and landscape. This dissertation contributes to O’Keeffe studies by considering specific landscapes at Ghost Ranch as entities in their own right with which O’Keeffe related, in addition to considering them as painting sites. I also update the interpretation of O’Keeffe’s work in the context of post-1960s gender/nature/art concepts. According to several O’Keeffe scholars and program directors, these are relatively unexplored lines of inquiry (Lynes 2001; Udall 2001; M. 2001). Comparison with existing O’Keeffe programs and interpretation at Weir Farm highlight the value of my interpretive approach, which focuses on gender.

CHAPTER TWO

O'KEEFFE AND THE GHOST RANCH LANDSCAPE

. . . it is really absurd in a way to just love country as I love this . . .
--Georgia O'Keeffe

Your letter gives me such a vivid picture of some thing I love in space--love
almost as passionately as I can love a person--that I am almost tempted to pack
my little bag and go--
--Georgia O'Keeffe

Standing on the road to the Ghost Ranch Conference Center, we can look east up to the orange cliffs and white mesas that enclose Yeso Canyon, we can look west across the Piedra Lumbre valley to Pedernal as it dominates the horizon, and we can look north across to the red, purple, and yellow hills near Georgia O'Keeffe's Ghost Ranch house (fig. 4). Within this landscape, O'Keeffe was partial to the rounded hills and views of Pedernal. Thinking about O'Keeffe's relationship with this landscape and how best to help visitors understand this relationship, a number of questions come to mind. What was the character of her relationship with nature, and with the Ghost Ranch landscape in particular? What was it about the Ghost Ranch landscape that attracted and kept O'Keeffe? To what extent did established gender associations with New Mexico landscapes influence O'Keeffe's approach to painting the Ghost Ranch landscape? How did her relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape mature over time? What do her writings and paintings indicate about how her relationship with this landscape might have been gendered? Are there meaningful connections between characteristics of O'Keeffe's relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape and the three ecofeminism-inspired relationship aspects outlined in Chapter One?

In this chapter I examine and reflect on O'Keeffe's writings and paintings to provide some thoughts on these questions. O'Keeffe's relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape was at once personal, aesthetic, practical, symbolic, spiritual, and



Figure 4: View of red hills and cliffs from Ghost Ranch entrance road, 2002.
Author photograph.

romantic, in the sense of passionate and adventurous. Her relationship was also gendered in traditional and non-traditional ways. Studying O’Keeffe’s own expressions--her sketches and paintings, her writings and letters, and the interview transcripts--before considering the range of interpretations of her life and work by critics and scholars is important in order to establish her own expressions, and my interpretations of them, as the base for analysis. O’Keeffe’s 1976 book (O’Keeffe 1976) and the collection of letters and images put together by Jack Cowart, Juan Hamilton, and Sarah Greenough (Cowart et al. eds. 1987) are the two main sources of quotes from O’Keeffe used in this chapter. References from O’Keeffe 1976 are indicated by “O’K,” followed by the plate number opposite which the quoted text appears. References from Cowart et al. are indicated by “CHG” followed by the page number. Quotations from O’Keeffe are reproduced here with their original spelling and punctuation.

O’Keeffe and the Ghost Ranch landscape

Essence

O’Keeffe’s relationship with nature and with specific landscapes influenced her way of being, how she lived her life, and how she related to her environment. Her life was an interwoven mixture of experiencing landscapes, loving landscapes as she loved people (CHG 207). She paid close attention to the details of natural elements, in domestic and practical ways when gardening, cooking, and arranging spaces in her home, and in aesthetic ways when noticing shapes and colors. All of us experience nature through filters. Art was O’Keeffe’s filter; art, and an aesthetic way of seeing. To interviewer Katherine Kuh’s question “What do you feel has been the strongest influence on your work?” O’Keeffe replied “Some people say nature--but the way you see nature depends on whatever has influenced your way of seeing” (Kuh 1960, 185). O’Keeffe’s way of seeing was through her own eyes rather than painting according to established styles. She painted from nature, interpreting nature through shapes and colors from inside her own mind (O’K 1). She combined familiarity with natural elements in her landscapes with her own aesthetic style to give us images that are both grounded and transcendent. Her paintings of pelvis bones against the sky relate an earthy physical element of the desert with the limitless blue (fig. 5).



Figure 5: Georgia O'Keeffe, *Pelvis with Moon*, 1943
Georgia O'Keeffe, American (1887-1986). Oil on canvas. 30 x 24 in (76.2 x 61.0 cm).
Purchase, the R.H. Norton Trust, 58.29.

After the intense and sexualized scrutiny of her life, her work, and her body in New York, living at Ghost Ranch offered O’Keeffe the privacy, solitude, and self-determination that she craved. Her New Mexico paintings, and her post-1929 letters and interviews, are windows into both the public and private aspects of her relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape. The paintings give us her more public expression--expressions of how she saw nature through color and shape, through the beauty of balance and composition, and through aesthetic meaning and aesthetic possession, her desire to own a landscape she loved, to have it all to herself. Her letters give us a more personal O’Keeffe--her experiences and preferences associated with landscapes she loved, how her friends and associates influenced her, how she associated certain people with specific landscapes, how she was influenced by what happened to her in specific landscapes, and her sense of caring for her home landscapes. Transcripts of her interviews show a combination of the public and private O’Keeffe, for instance, as she explains her approach to her work (Tompkins 1974). O’Keeffe’s long-term familiarity with the Ghost Ranch landscape, and her direct, committed, personal, and very strong emotional attachment to this landscape contributed to the clarity of purpose that characterized her life and work. While her letters, the text of her 1976 book, and her paintings don’t overtly indicate gendered interpretations of her work or lifestyle, her life and work combined traditional and non-traditional gender roles and attitudes towards the land.

O’Keeffe comes to Ghost Ranch: Geographic and Socio/cultural Context.

O’Keeffe first visited Ghost Ranch in August of 1934. Describing her first view of the Ghost Ranch area to interviewer Laura Soullière, O’Keeffe said she thought it the most beautiful place in the world, and thought “this is my world” (O’Keeffe 1981). O’Keeffe also felt very close to the landscapes of Amarillo and Palo Duro Canyon (Pollitzer 1988, 145-151), but it was the Ghost Ranch and Abiquiu area which she made her home for over four decades. While the view of Ghost Ranch that O’Keeffe saw in 1934 is more developed today, with Abiquiu Lake the major visible difference, the affective impact of the landscape--the space, the colors, and the clear air--is similar to what O’Keeffe might have experienced. When O’Keeffe first visited, Arthur and Phoebe

Pack ran Ghost Ranch as a guest ranch. Ranch Headquarters was located, as it is now, at the mouth of Yeso Canyon, in a narrow valley that fans out to the west towards Pedernal and that is surrounded by multicolored sandstone cliffs rising up overhead. This landscape is not unique within northern New Mexico, but its dramatic topography and colorful rocks contrast with the Taos and Alcalde areas, parts of New Mexico that O’Keeffe had already seen.

The propensity and ability of artists to form a strong and lasting bond with a particular landscape--and sometimes to find an ideal “match”--is well documented (Gussow 1971). Why did O’Keeffe so instantly feel attached to the Ghost Ranch landscape? Why did this landscape “fit her exactly” (Adato 1977), and provide her with her ideal landscape “match”? Perhaps it was the combination of huge sky and wide spaces, dramatic colors and shapes, distance from the social complexities of the Taos art circle, and her ability to buy a house there and establish it as her home. It was also a matter of responding to an emotion. O’Keeffe had felt New Mexico calling her in 1930: “. . .--but the Mountain calls one and the desert--and the sagebrush--the country seems to call one in a way that one has to answer it” (CHG 200); the Ghost Ranch landscape called to her in the same way.

The heart of the area known today as Ghost Ranch is a section of the Piedra Lumbre Valley consisting of a canyon oasis and surrounding cliffs, hills, and plains. The Rito del Yeso Canyon, the location of Ghost Ranch headquarters since the 1930s, was first homesteaded by the Archuleta brothers, infamous within the region for their cattle rustling, and later by Carol Bishop Stanley, one of the first Anglo woman landowners in the area (Poling-Kempes 1997, 124). The canyon is an oasis within a region of vast dry plains and mesas and sparse water. Massive sandstone cliffs enclose the Ghost Ranch landscape on the east. Rito del Yeso Canyon is the oasis and focal point, with its running water, dense and intensely colored riparian vegetation, and relative density of human activity and development that contrasts with the sweep of open and less developed plains to the west. The water of Arroyo del Yeso runs down and past the massive, solid, vertical cliffs, on into the fields of small rolling hills, and down into Arroyo Seco and the Rio Chama. Riparian vegetation in the canyon gives way to sparse piñon/juniper woodland and plains shrubs and grasses to the west. The canyon forms a large pie-shaped space

that opens to the west. Water attracted human settlement; ranch headquarters, residences, and ranch working areas are now, as they have been for many years, located where the Rito emerges from the steep canyon into the valley floor (figs. 6, 7).

In addition to moving into this southwestern geography, O'Keeffe also moved into the existing regional social and cultural system. The primary groups she first came into contact with were members of the Taos and Santa Fe artist circles, Ghost Ranch staff and guests, and local Indian and Hispanic residents like Mabel Dodge Luhan's husband, Tony Luhan from Taos Pueblo (Drohojowska-Philp 2004, 322, 256). Having experienced relative poverty and difficult financial circumstances in her childhood and early teaching years, O'Keeffe became financially secure and independent from Stieglitz family support in 1927, due to the sale of a number of her paintings (Drohojowska-Philp 2004, 72, 112, 234, 274). Disheartened by Stieglitz's affair, declining health, and continued sexual interpretations of her work, O'Keeffe came to New Mexico in 1929 financially able to spend time exploring a new place, new people, and new painting subjects. She was accepted into Mabel Dodge Luhan's artist circle as an accomplished and well-off artist, and in turn decided to settle in a different area--Ghost Ranch--due to her preference for the landscape and the less complex social environment. While located within a relatively poor, primarily Indian and Hispanic area, Ghost Ranch was run by and for primarily middle to upper class Anglo-American guests, and would have been a relatively familiar social environment for O'Keeffe (Poling-Kempes 1997). Like many guests at Ghost Ranch, O'Keeffe had a somewhat distant relationship with the local communities until she bought the Pack's Ghost Ranch house and hired local Hispanic women for household help (Robinson 1989; Drohojowska-Philp 2004).

Within northern New Mexico, Native American and Hispanic residents and their communities have long-standing ties to the regional landscape and relate to the landscape as their traditional home. These attachments have developed over the centuries as they and their ancestors used, modified, and celebrated the land upon which they depended, and much native New Mexican art reflects this close relationship. In contrast, the newcomer Anglo-American artists and writers like O'Keeffe who escaped to New Mexico from cities in the eastern U.S. to find a new landscape and a new life (Luhan

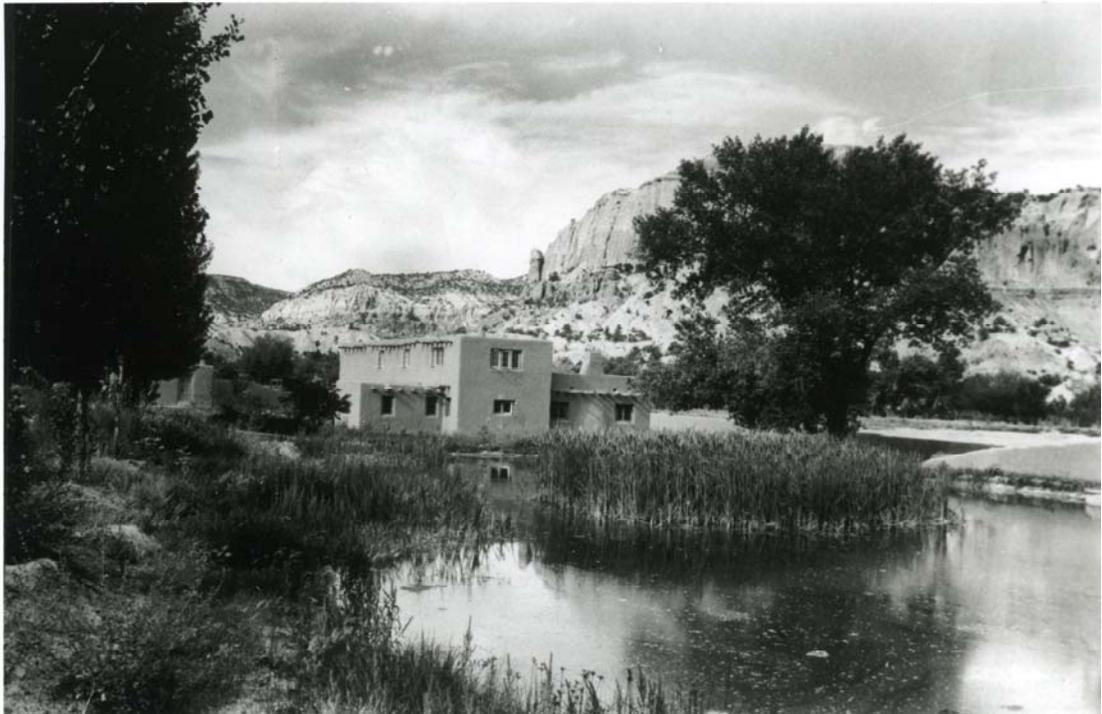


Figure 6: Ghost Ranch, Johnson House, 1930s.
Photo by: T. Harmon Parkhurst. Courtesy Palace of the Governors (MNM/DCA). Neg.
No. 89631.



Figure 7: Ghost Ranch, Cottonwood Building (former Johnson House), 2004.
Author photograph.

2000, 251, 301) shared the locals' love of the landscape, and also added a strong aesthetic, romantic, and sometimes nostalgic layer.

Many Anglo-American artist newcomers related to the northern New Mexico landscape in terms of gender dualities. Gender-duality notions brought west by many of the newcomers to New Mexico included notions of nature as female, and of the landscape of the western U.S. as unspoiled (and, as unspoiled and female, as morally superior to the corrupt Eastern cities). Associated with these notions was the "feminizing" of indigenous people, that is, considering them as inferior and as part of the natural landscape (Coke 1963, 1974; Luhan 2000; Weigle and Fiore 1982). Mixed in with these notions were the occasional glimpses of what we might today describe as ecofeminist thinking. For example, the notion of nature and elements within nature as conscious beings was present within the culture of Taos and Santa Fe artists and writers; Mabel Dodge Luhan wrote that "It seemed to me the mountain was alive, awake, and breathing. That it had its own consciousness" (Luhan 2000, 71). While some artist and writer newcomers like Georgia O'Keeffe and Mary Austin shared some of the gender duality based ideas about the landscape of the western U.S., they lived in New Mexico long enough to establish long-term practical relationships with the landscapes of the region. For women as well as men, moving west often meant an opportunity for independence and self-determination in addition to adventure and escape (Norwood and Monk 1987, 8-9). This was certainly true for O'Keeffe.

Unlike many traditional New Mexico residents for whom the landscape was home, painters in the elite Santa Fe and Taos artist communities aestheticized the landscape; some with romance, and some with sentiment. Aestheticizing the landscape involves turning the land into landscape; selecting and framing a section of the landscape and using formal elements (line, color, shape, perspective) to make a picture (Andrews 1999, 1-24). Some early New Mexico painters--women and men--produced romantic images, full of passion, adventure, and idealism, using strong forms and intense clear colors to convey the intensity and passion of the landscape. Others--mostly men--produced more sentimental images, full of nostalgia, often depicting Native Americans as "noble savages" and depicting the landscape as a benign pastoral. O'Keeffe aestheticized the landscape without sentiment; her images are strong, clear, and romantic.

For example, in Jules Tavernier's *Indian Village of Acoma* (1879) (fig. 8), the exaggerated landforms, hazy air in pastel shades, and reverential pose of the Puebloan figures make this a sentimental image. Maynard Dixon's *Desert Journey* (1935) (fig. 9) combines romance and sentiment. The rugged, colorful mountain forms and dramatic lighting give the image a romantic flavor, and the story of the image--the silhouetted cowboy in the foreground--adds a nostalgic human theme to this western pastoral landscape. Ernest L. Blumenschein's image (fig.10), while including a group of people in the foreground and the highlighted village in the midground, is titled *Sangre de Cristo Mountains* (1925), implying that the dark, huddled, reverential group of people and their community are but a part of the larger natural landscape. While the forms are strong and clear in this image, the attitude of the group of people, and the way the title of the painting subsumes them into the landscape, add sentiment. Even as Modernist emphasis on form, color, and shape in depicting landscapes influenced images such as this one, colonial and gendered notions persisted, for example, where representations of Indian or Hispanic people were treated as part of the natural landscape, in effect feminizing them both. Art critic Van Deren Coke characterized these kind of images--majestic mountains, cowboys, and native people as part of the landscape--as Romantic Realism, using "romantic" as I use "sentimental" (Coke 1963). Coke also likened portrayals of members of the local Pueblos as "noble savages" in male Anglo-American painters' studio portraits to portraits of female nudes in that the Indian subjects were objectified in much the same way as women (Coke 1963, 14).

In comparison, Barbara Latham's *Tourist Town, Taos* (1940-49) (fig. 11) clearly identifies her theme as a peopled community rather than a landscape, and Gene Kloss presents a strong, dynamic, unsentimental landscape in *The Old Taos Junction Bridge* (1941) (fig. 12). While Laura van Pappelendam's *Adobe with Hollyhocks* (1920s) (fig. 13) is characteristically feminine in that she represents a small-scale garden scene in pastel colors, she does not sentimentalize the scene by including a nostalgic theme or including native peoples. In contrast, O'Keeffe's *Red Hills with Pedernal* (1936) (fig. 14), is romantic and unsentimental in its strong forms and colors which both show the landscape as it is and suggest strong feeling for the landscape. The great majority of her Ghost Ranch paintings do not include people or structures; a human presence or



Figure 8: Jules Tavernier, *Indian Village at Acoma*, 1879.
Courtesy of The Anschutz Collection.



Figure 9: Maynard Dixon, *Desert Journey*, 1935.
Courtesy of The Anschutz Collection.



Figure 10: Ernest L. Blumenschein, *Sangre de Cristo Mountains*, 1925.
Courtesy of The Anschutz Collection.

(image reproduction permission not received in time)

Figure 11: Barbara Latham, *Tourist Town, Taos*, 1940-49
Courtesy of the Collection of the Roswell Museum and Art Center.



Figure 12: Gene Kloss, *The Old Taos Junction Bridge*, ca. 1941.
Oil on canvas. 24 x 25 in. Museum of Fine Arts, MNM, Department of Cultural Affairs,
P.E.R.A.



Figure 13: Laura Van Pappelendam, *Adobe with Hollyhocks*, 1920s.
Oil on canvas. 20 x 18 inches. Courtesy of Aaron Galleries Chicago.

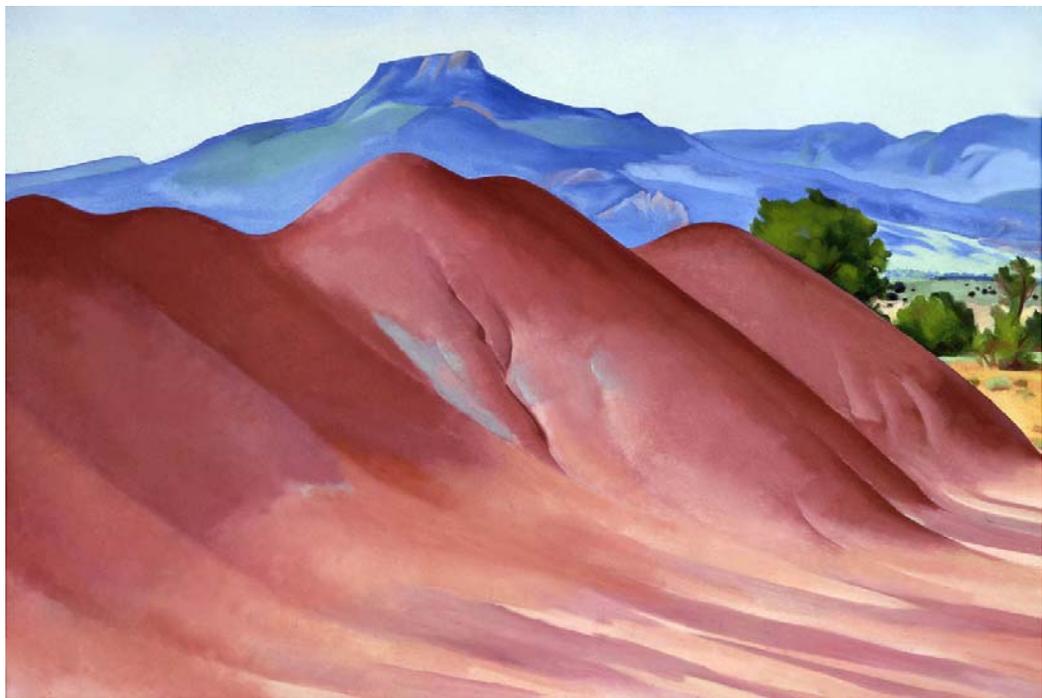


Figure 14: Georgia O'Keeffe, *Red Hills with the Pedernal (Pedernal and Red Hills)*, 1936. Georgia O'Keeffe, (1887-1986). Oil on linen. 19 ³/₄ x 20 ³/₄ in. Museum of Fine Arts, MNM, Department of Cultural Affairs. Bequest of Helen Miller Jones, 1986.

story is not needed for her to depict her romantic relationship with the landscape. In the paintings and writings of this time (1920s, 1930s and 1940s), nature as female was a given; I found very specific references to nature as female (e.g. Calvin 1965, 315; Bynner 1995, 53; Austin 1974, xvi), and didn't find evidence that this was questioned (Coke 1963; Weigle and Fiore 1982). Individual elements within nature, such as mountains, were sometimes referred to or implied to be male--O'Keeffe herself likened Tony Luhan to a mountain (CHG 205)--but the description of the New Mexico landscape as exotic and mysterious (Weigle and Fiore 1982, 85,129) implies a nature-as-female, and landform-as-female, association. Even though painting styles identified and lauded as masculine in the eastern U.S. were used to portray the New Mexico landscape, this did not alter the perception of nature as feminine. An example is John Marin's *Storm Over Taos* (1930) (fig. 15), with its strong diagonal and horizontal lines that Stieglitz celebrated as characteristically masculine Modernism (Brennan 2001, 142).

Writer Mary Austin spent much of her later life in New Mexico. Austin expressed an attitude towards and relationship with nature that was non-traditional in some ways, to the point of being described as ecofeminist by late twentieth century scholars (Lanigan ed. 1996). Like O'Keeffe, Austin expressed and lived a different relationship with nature than many men and women in the Taos and Santa Fe artists and writers circles. While traditional in a number of ways, Austin's relationship with nature was in general more community-centered, more nurturing, more interested in integrating people and nature than separating nature as female and culture as male, with less emphasis on controlling or modifying nature, more appreciation for indigenous approaches to nature, and less emphasis on the self (Austin 1974; Lanigan ed. 1996). Austin strongly conflated nature and femaleness, and she shared with O'Keeffe a sense of poetic possession with the landscapes she describes. Addressing readers, Austin stated: "The earth is no wanton to give up all her best to every comer, but keeps a sweet, separate intimacy for each . . . And I am in no mind to direct you to delectable places toward which you will hold yourself less tenderly than I. So, by this fashion of naming I keep faith with the land and annex to my own estate a very great territory to which none has a surer title" (Austin 1974, xvi). Austin also characterized the earth as strong and as an entity valuable in its own right in addition to being female, and characterized



Figure 15: John Marin, *Storm Over Taos*, 1930
Alfred Stieglitz Collection. Image copyright 2005, Board of Trustees, National Gallery
of Art, Washington D.C. Watercolor on graphite. (Reich 1970 30.57), 0.382 x 0.532 (15
1/6 x 20 15/16).

women (both indigenous and Anglo-American) as capable of relating to nature independently, that is, outside a masculine context (Austin 1974, 103-111). She promoted the notion of an ideal relationship with nature as one of equality, balance, and harmony (Austin 1974, 101-112). Her writing approach and voice are characteristic of nature writers of her time in that she idealized southwestern landscapes and their original inhabitants, but her voice also had many characteristics today considered feminist or androgynous (Lanigan ed. 1996). Her voice was intimate and familiar, she addressed nature on both small and large scales, and she valued the ordinary (Austin 1974, 79-88). Austin portrayed a kind of relationship with nature shared by ecofeminist writers and artists of the late twentieth century; she thought ecologically, at times hinting that the earth has its own voice and desires (Austin 1974, 83, 88), and described Native American women's relationships with nature as healthy (Lanigan ed. 1996, 239).

Where did O'Keeffe fit into this picture? At least initially, she participated in the attitudes towards nature that she and other Anglo-Americans brought with them from their lives in the eastern U.S. As illustrated in the exuberant language in her letters from New Mexico in 1929 (CHG 189-99), she shared the same sense of magic, inspiration, and awe at the landscape that other artists (women and men) had on their arrival in New Mexico (Benke 2000, 55). However, in terms of her art, O'Keeffe was not especially influenced by other painters when she started spending her summers in New Mexico. Her letters do not indicate that she changed her ideas about gender and nature as a result of her visits to the west (CHG); she continued to follow her own painting style, and applied it to a new place, over time developing her own New Mexico vision. O'Keeffe was definitely exposed to the Taos artists group and Mabel Dodge Lujan, but it is difficult to know how much other artists and writers, like Mary Austin, influenced her thinking. While Austin applied her ideas and values to the political arena to a greater extent than O'Keeffe, they shared some basic ideas about nature. As that of an independent minded, strong-willed woman, O'Keeffe's approach may have shared much with Austin's, but with less overt emphasis on characterizing the earth as specifically female. O'Keeffe came to New Mexico with the authority of an artist with an established reputation, and she felt free to develop her own vision of the New Mexico landscape.

Did O’Keeffe consider the landscape of New Mexico, and Ghost Ranch in particular, as gendered? Her writings and paintings indicate that, while she certainly sensualized the landscape, she did not necessarily consider the land to be specifically female or reminiscent of a female (or male) body. She considered the Ghost Ranch landscape as home, a place where she felt she fit the most, a landscape that felt comfortable and nurturing to her, as an artist and as a woman, a landscape within which she could express herself authentically. For her, women and femaleness were not special and rarified aspects of nature, but were part of the whole of the landscape and her environment. Her approach to the landscape was not “ungendered,” but more gender-balanced, and gendered in some subtle and non-traditional ways. For example, while she did not specifically identify the Ghost Ranch landscape as female or male, she combined landscape features traditionally associated with gender (moon – female, mountain – male) within images that portrayed a landscape with human or animal sensuousness (fig. 5).

The Relationship Between Ghost Ranch Aesthetics and Formal Qualities of O’Keeffe’s Images.

The Ghost Ranch landscape is visually complex and intense, and dynamic in its tension between stillness and movement. The high cliffs surrounding the canyon hold one inside a very large space, which continues as the canyon opens up to the plains (fig. 16). The landscape presents itself in a palette of landscape colors that include the layered reds, oranges, rusts, pinks, light purples, yellows, grays, and whites of the sandstone cliffs, the darker maroons, grays, pinks, and purples of the eroded hills, the constant dark olive greens of the piñon and juniper trees, and the bright spring greens and autumn yellows of the cottonwood leaves (fig. 17). The rock cliffs and dirt hills form strong vertical and horizontal curves respectively, and their surfaces appear smooth. Straight and angular lines, like the outline of the top of Pedernal, are distinguished by their contrast. The piñon, juniper, and sage are upright and bristly, and the more fluid and flexible cottonwoods and willows in the riparian area provide a contrast of texture and movement.



Figure 16: Ghost Ranch canyon and cliffs, 2002.
Author photo.



Figure 17: Ghost Ranch, riparian vegetation, 2003.
Author photo.

For her home base, O’Keeffe chose a relatively visually simple, drier, and less spatially dense area--the field of small hills between the cliffs and the plains, with the huge sky and the western view dominated by the focal point of Pedernal (fig. 18). Even this area, away from the main canyon drainage, shares in the movement and dynamic strength of this landscape. There is a palpable tension between the stillness; the solid rock and stiff vegetation, and the strong movement of flash floods, erosion, and rock falls, which vary with the seasons. This balance between stillness and dynamic strength is embodied both in O’Keeffe’s life and work and in the Ghost Ranch landscape.

O’Keeffe felt the rightness of the match, when she expressed “This is my world” (O’Keeffe 1981). Often, the landscape and O’Keeffe were mutually identified by workshop participants, in statements such as “this is O’Keeffe’s landscape,” and “this is the landscape that O’Keeffe painted.” The Ghost Ranch landscape is often described in terms of O’Keeffe’s personality: strong (massive landforms); clear (clear air, huge sky and far-reaching views); solitary (quiet, undeveloped, dry, and sparsely vegetated); mysterious (changeable weather, stillness on the surface); deep (juxtaposing seemingly endless space with the clarity of small-scale elements like rocks and bones); intense (multi-colored rocks); and sensuous (smooth, eroded hills). These characteristics also relate to O’Keeffe’s painting style. According to art historian Jane Downer Collins (1980), key elements of O’Keeffe’s New Mexico painting style include “. . . horizontal bands of contrasting colors . . . a static, motionless, timeless quality . . . an interest in the close-up, intimate view . . . (and) sculpted, rounded, sensual shapes . . .” (Collins 1980, 63-64).

Also according to Collins, in her New Mexico paintings O’Keeffe often painted land rather than sky; was interested primarily in ordinary, unspectacular landscape features; used flat, even lighting, with a frontal, eye-level viewpoint; excluded people, animals, and structures; intensified natural colors and simplified forms and textures; and made minor modifications to what she saw for the sake of composition (Collins 1980, 63-64). O’Keeffe often excluded the middle ground, focusing on the near and far, expressing her sense of the “Faraway Nearby,” juxtaposing small-scale elements like bones against the vast hills or sky (fig. 19). Her style reflected her direct, unsentimental, face-to-face relationship with the landscape; she didn’t elaborate or fancify. O’Keeffe



Figure 18: Ghost Ranch, red hills and Pedernal, 2005.
Author photo.



Figure 19: Georgia O'Keeffe, *From the Faraway Nearby*, 1937
Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, and The Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation.

grew into the landscape over time; her paintings of the landscape surrounding her house depict her everyday, domestic world. She painted what she saw, and how she felt about what she saw.

The Relationship Matures

O’Keeffe’s relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape matured over time, and grew in emotional density. Her increased familiarity with every inch of her home landscape, the time she invested in painting different aspects of this landscape, and the degree to which elements like the moon, Pedernal, bones, and specific trees played constantly in her imagination all contributed to the density of emotional investment and associations she had with this landscape. In her 1929 letter to Mabel Dodge Luhan, O’Keeffe expressed the sense of awakening she felt during her first season in Taos: these days are “. . . like the loud ring of a hammer striking something hard . . . It isn’t even just the place--it is the life you let happen” (CHG 191). She also expressed: “When I got to New Mexico, that was mine . . . it fitted me exactly” (quoted in Adato 1977). Five years later, in 1934, when O’Keeffe started staying at Ghost Ranch and painting this landscape, she found a place where she could indeed let her new life happen. In a 1937 letter to Stieglitz, O’Keeffe expressed her sense of excitement, adventure, and discovery in this new landscape: “It was the best ride I’ve ever had here--up and down all sorts of places that we could only get the horses to go by getting off and pulling several times-- . . . -- perfectly mad looking country--hills and cliffs and washes too crazy to imagine all thrown up into the air by God and let tumble where they would. It was certainly as spectacular as anything I’ve ever seen . . .” (O’Keeffe 1938). After exploring Ghost Ranch landforms and small scale elements like desert flowers in her sketches and paintings, O’Keeffe started combining images, for example, in her series of skulls floating in the sky: “I had looked out on the hills for weeks and painted them again and again--had climbed and ridden over them--so beautifully soft, so difficult . . . They seemed right with the Ram’s Head” (fig. 20).

O’Keeffe’s statements and paintings during the late 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s show increasing familiarity with and affection for her home landscape. After staying at Rancho de los Burros, the original Pack residence, for three seasons, her financial



Figure 20: Georgia O'Keeffe, *Ram's Head, White Hollyhock--Hills*, 1935
Courtesy of the Brooklyn Museum of Art, New York, and The Georgia O'Keeffe
Foundation.

resources and the Pack's willingness to sell enabled her to buy the house in 1940, and really make it her home (Poling-Kempes 1997, 190-192). "The ranch is really home to me . . . All my association with it is a kind of freedom" (O'Keeffe, quoted in LIFE 1968). In her attempt to explain how she felt about the Ghost Ranch landscape to those attending her 1939 exhibition at An American Place in New York, O'Keeffe expressed that the red hills meant as much to her as her flower subjects:

A red hill doesn't touch everyone's heart as it does mine and I suppose there is no reason why it should. The red hill is a piece of the bad lands where even the grass is gone. Bad lands roll away outside my door--hill after hill--red hills of apparently the same sort of earth that you mix with oil to make paint. All the earth colors of the painter's palette are out there in the many miles of bad lands. The light Naples yellow through the ochres--orange and red and purple earth--even the soft earth greens. You have no association with these hills--our waste land--I think our most beautiful country--You may not have seen it, so you want me always to paint flowers. (O'Keeffe 1939)

Here, O'Keeffe was expressing that, as a painter, not a "woman painter," she could paint what appealed to her and not be bound by the gendered convention that said that, as a woman painter, she should stick to painting flowers. This quote illustrates how O'Keeffe refused to live within gender dualities; she demonstrated that landscapes could be painted with the same sensuous intensity and emotion as flowers, that landscapes of rugged hills were not necessarily masculine artistic territory. O'Keeffe sensualized the landscape and felt the landscape with her body rather than "feminizing" the landscape or applying gender associations.

During her first few years in New Mexico and again in the 1960s, O'Keeffe painted kachinas and other small-scale elements from Native American culture, and a number of regional churches. She also attended a number of pueblo dances, and explored reservation landscapes on her many trips around New Mexico and Arizona. As an elite Anglo-American coming to New Mexico to seek a new life and to rejuvenate her art, O'Keeffe did participate in the overall colonial settlement and aesthetic appropriation of the Southwest, and was a part of the system of interaction between Indian and Hispanic people in New Mexico and Anglo-American newcomers (Jensen 1995, 74; Weigle and Fiore 1982, 38-39; Rodriguez 1989). Her possessive approach to the Ghost Ranch landscape--for example, when she said that God would give her Pedernal if she painted it

enough times--was an aesthetic or poetic possession which had an appropriative edge in addition to being an expression of closeness to elements of her home landscape. It was appropriative in that she seemed to be assuming that she, as a newcomer, could overwrite centuries of local history and identification with Pedernal. Given her sense of humor and likelihood that she made this statement with a sense of irony, and given that--unlike many other New Mexico Anglo-American and European painters--she did not use members of the Indian and Hispanic communities as subjects for her art, this appropriative statement does not extend to colonialism. Even after she bought the Ghost Ranch house and became a property owner, her comments retained an emphasis on aesthetic rather than actual possession, and do not seem an expression of colonialism (e.g. CHG 230, 233, 237). Rather, O’Keeffe grew to appreciate and respect the cultures of her neighbors, if from a distance. Her success as an artist and her sense of belonging to a somewhat elite group--the artist “caste”--set her at a certain distance from the local community. She didn’t have to rely on the local community, except for procuring household help. O’Keeffe grew up in a family that used hired household help, so this was not new to her (Drohojowska 2005, 73). Her relationship with the community of Abiquiu was one of a wealthy, but not exploitive, patron. For example, she made a number of financial contributions to the Abiquiu community and helped and mentored Abiquiu children (Robinson 1989, 486-88). Overall, O’Keeffe focused on landforms and vegetation in her New Mexico paintings; for O’Keeffe, the landscape was not complex, not necessarily tied to a web of cultural or community associations.

While her deep friendships, and friends’ visits to her Ghost Ranch house, were very meaningful to her (O’Keeffe 1938, 4), O’Keeffe preferred to relate to the landscape through her own eyes, as if there were no other human associations with the land. She enjoyed feeling as though her relationship with the landscape was exclusive, and she encouraged this approach in others: “. . . You have caught something of your own country but I would wish that you could look at it only with your own eye . . . Try to paint your world as tho you are the first man looking at it . . .” (CHG 214). She wanted the landscape to be clear of all but her own associations. In letters, she wrote: “--My world here is a world almost untouched by man--I feel that your world out there has been colored by the soul of the Mexican . . .” (CHG 243), and “. . . the deers’ head . . . it is of

our country there without any of the feeling imposed by peoples who have lived there--“ (CHG 227). Her own associations included identifying one particular Ghost Ranch tree as “Gerald’s tree” (O’K 90) after a visitor of that name who danced around the tree. Her solitude at Ghost Ranch was, however, both comfortable and a little lonely. In a 1950 letter to her nephew William Howard Schubart, she says: “--I thought to myself--Well--it would be good to sit on the wall and drink my tea--but one doesnt do that alone--I’ll go in and ask Howard if he drinks tea--“(CHG 252).

O’Keeffe’s painting subjects grew out of her everyday experience at Ghost Ranch. In the sparsely populated Ghost Ranch area there were people and human themes she could have painted, but she chose to focus on the landscape, and her home, rather than on people. For example, in 1945 she wrote: “A little way out beyond my kitchen window at the Ranch is a V shape in the red hills. I passed the V many times--sometimes stopping to look as it spoke to me quietly. I one day carried my canvas out and made a drawing of it. The shapes of the drawing were so simple that it scarcely seemed worthwhile to bother with it further. But I did a painting--just the arms of two red hills reaching out to the sky and holding it” (O’K 85) (fig. 21). The inspiration for her famous 1958 painting, *Ladder to the Moon*, came from an experience integral to her everyday life at the Ranch: “At the Ranch house there is a strong handmade ladder to the roof . . . One evening I was waiting for a friend and stood leaning against the ladder looking at the long dark line of the Pedernal . . . Painting the ladder had been in my mind for a long time and there it was--with the dark Pedernal and the high white moon--all ready to be put down the next day” (O’K 102) (fig. 22). As in many of her Ghost Ranch paintings, this one includes Pedernal and the moon, two ever-present elements of her home landscape that became characters in themselves. Even with her affectionate letters and descriptions of enjoying company and those who came to visit her at the Ranch, O’Keeffe also expressed a strong preference for living alone (CHG 261). Her love and affection for friends was very much alive within her solitary life in the desert--she could love intensely and still have the privacy she needed for her work. With this lifestyle, it is not surprising that at times O’Keeffe suggests that the Ranch landscape kept her company.

O’Keeffe’s paintings reflect an aesthetic interpretation of the landscape in a way



Figure 21: Georgia O'Keeffe, *Red Hills and Sky*, 1945
Courtesy of The Georgia O'Keeffe Museum and The Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation.
Private collection.



Figure 22: Georgia O'Keeffe, *Ladder to the Moon*, 1958
Courtesy of Collection Emily Fisher Landau, New York (Amart Investments LLC), and
The Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation. Oil on canvas. 40 x 30 inches.

that can be interpreted as spiritual (e.g. Rose 1997; Peck 2002). She expressed her sense of awe, her sense of being in the middle of something much bigger than herself. In her 1976 book, O’Keeffe shows us a series of her Ghost Ranch paintings, without any narrative. She breaks the silence to say: “The unexplainable thing in nature that makes me feel the world is big far beyond my understanding--to understand maybe by trying to put it into form. To find the feeling of infinity on the horizon line or just over the next hill” (O’K 100). O’Keeffe does not indicate that she experienced the landscape as inhabited by individual spirits, but that the landscape was infused with spirit. Like many others--transcendentalists, nature writers, environmentalists, and ecofeminists--the source of O’Keeffe’s sense of spirituality came from nature.

While O’Keeffe often denied that her work had specific influences, some of her paintings suggest an influence from Chinese and Japanese art, and Kakuzo Okakura’s *The Book of Tea* (Okakura 1989) was one of her favorite books. The simplicity of subjects and composition in her paintings, and especially some of her early abstracts and calligraphic paintings completed in the 1960s and 1970s (e.g. fig. 23) not to mention her two paintings of Mount Fuji itself, suggest an Eastern influence. In her later years, *The Book of Tea* was one of the books she most requested that her companions read to her (Patten and Cardona-Hine 1992a, 82-83).

The Book of Tea, written in 1906 to help Westerners understand Japanese and Chinese culture, describes the Zen philosophy behind the tea ceremony: Teatism is a “religion of aestheticism . . . The Philosophy of Tea is not mere aestheticism in the ordinary acceptance of the term, for it expresses conjointly with ethics and religion our whole point of view about man and nature. It is hygiene, for it enforces cleanliness; it is economics, for it shows comfort in simplicity rather than in the complex and costly; it is moral geometry, inasmuch as it defines our sense of proportion to the universe” (Okakura 1989, 29). Flower worship was part of the “aesthetic ritual” (Okakura 1989, 119). And, the tea ceremony fused art and life. The way O’Keeffe infused aesthetic simplicity and order in her home, in her paintings, and in her lifestyle, her acceptance of the mystery of the unexplainable in nature, and the sense I get from her writings that for her painting was a spiritual experience, are similar to the Zen philosophy of the tea ceremony.



Figure 23: Georgia O'Keeffe, *Winter Road I*, 1963
Gift of The Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation, Image copyright 2006 Board of Trustees,
National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.

At times, O’Keeffe denied that her paintings included symbolism. She especially denied this in response to critics who imposed their ideas on her work. At other times, when she described what inspired particular paintings, she expressed that symbolism was part of her intent. During her trip to Glen Canyon in the 1961, she expressed her affection for the black rocks: “The black rocks from the road to the Glen Canyon dam seem to have become a symbol for me--of the wideness and wonder of the sky and the world” (O’K 107). The bones and skulls of the Ghost Ranch landscape started as symbols of her life there: “--I brought home” (to New York) “a lot of bones--cows head--a horses head--and what not--and painted them with artificial flowers--a new way of trying to define my feeling about that country” (CHG 205). Over time, they became part of her home environment at Ghost Ranch, one of many natural elements that became “characters” within her desert community: “. . . the pelvis bones lay about the house indoors and out seen and not seen as such things can be--seen in many different ways” (O’K 73). She related to natural elements within her Ghost Ranch landscape--the moon, Pedernal, the red hills, bones--as characters, companions, and at times personal symbols, more than symbols from the culture at large or from outside her Ghost Ranch landscape.

In 1949, O’Keeffe moved into her Abiquiu home, an old adobe hacienda that was renovated to O’Keeffe’s taste by her friend Maria Chabot (Lynes and Paden 2003). From this time, O’Keeffe used the Abiquiu house as her winter and spring home, staying at the Ranch in the summer and autumn. In a 1951 letter to William Howard Schubart, O’Keeffe expressed the different way she felt about her two homes: “That truck came today with crates and crates of things--I dont mind it so much in Abiquiu because--after all--being here is rather new--but up at the ranch it seems like an invasion” (CHG 258).

Having grown up on a farm and having lived in rural Texas before moving to New Mexico, O’Keeffe had a familiarity and love for the practical side of relating to nature and to landscapes, and this comes out clearly in her letters. Not only did she love to garden and cook, she had to deal with desert critters and climate, and the isolation at the Ghost Ranch house forced her to be self-reliant. An example of the way her life combined both beauty and danger comes from a 1950 letter written from her Abiquiu house: “Do you drink mint tea? It is a full moon tonight . . . --the back patio from the kitchen to the studio is a big dark shadow -- . . . Now it is snake time again--anytime I

might step on one walking across that big dark shadow--I dont mind--in some odd way they seem to be my friends-- . . . --it is a special kind of awareness I always feel about them -- . . . --so I carried my pot of mint tea very carefully-- . . . Yes--mint tea and snakes--the mesa and the moon” (CHG 252). O’Keeffe accepted the reality of living in the desert, and accepted that beauty and terror could exist in the same place at the same time.

In the 1950s and 1960s, O’Keeffe traveled extensively, and while she kept sketching the Ghost Ranch landscape, most of her finished oil paintings were of subjects from her travels, or moving more towards abstracted landscapes and abstractions (Lynes 1999). In addition to having the financial security that made travel possible, and in addition to having completed the settlement of Stieglitz’s estate, it was as if she was comfortable enough with her New Mexico homes that she allowed herself to let go of them a little and explore, both other geographical places, and also the sky above the landscape. The few letters O’Keeffe wrote in these later years reflect the integration of her life in New Mexico with her travels (CHG 260, 265). As much as she loved her Abiquiu house, her Ghost Ranch house was her heart’s home. Before moving with Juan Hamilton and his family into Santa Fe in 1984, O’Keeffe repeatedly asked her caretakers to take her out to the Ranch one more time, and after her death in 1986, her ashes were spread in the Ghost Ranch area (Patten and Cardova-Hine 1992a, 168-169, 200; Drohojowska-Philp 2004, 545).

The Three Relationship Aspects and O’Keeffe’s Relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape

In this section, I use the three relationship aspects discussed in Chapter One to discuss how O’Keeffe’s relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape was gendered. Derived from ecofeminist concepts (Legler 1997), the three aspects represent approaches that contrast with and complement dualistic notions about our relationship with nature that derive largely from a patriarchal worldview. These aspects help us discern gender fluid, gender balanced, and non-dualistic ideas about gender, which serve as “markers” for alternative ideas in the same way that dualistic gender associations (e.g. private/public) serve as markers of more traditional gender ideas. Approaching one’s

relationship with nature according to the three relationship aspects is not limited to women or a feminist perspective.

Nature As Its Own Being: Two-way Communication

Characteristics of the first aspect--experiencing nature and landscape as its own being with voice and desires--include ascribing human attributes to landscape elements, experiencing landscape elements as reflecting one's emotions, experiencing nature as speaking for itself, and having a sense of two-way communication with nature, that is, that the landscape in some way responds to us. There is no doubt that O'Keeffe felt that the landscape was very much alive. Describing a walk she took during her time at the Art Students League, she said: "When I looked about at the night I saw two tall poplar trees breathing--rustling in the light spring air" (O'K 12). She describes skulls and other bones as alive in her famous quote about bringing desert bones back to New York: "So I brought home the bleached bones as my symbol of the desert. To me they are as beautiful as anything I know. To me they are strangely more living than the animals walking around--hair, eyes and all their tails switching. The bones seem to cut sharply to the center of something that is keenly alive on the desert even tho' it is vast and empty and untouchable--and knows no kindness with all its beauty" (O'Keeffe 1939).

O'Keeffe often attributed human qualities to landscape elements; in 1929, she wrote that she saw "--one bright--bright star--so bright that it seems like a tear in its eye" (CHG 191). Several times she describes hills at Ghost Ranch "holding up the sky" (O'K 86). Also, O'Keeffe combined finding equivalents for her feelings in nature with painting how she felt about what she was painting. Often, rather than painting a natural feature that reflected her mood, her interaction with the landscape elicited certain feelings in her, and this is what she painted. In this way, there was a greater sense of mutual influence between her and nature than there was in Stieglitz's equivalents. Stieglitz photographed a natural scene that reflected his emotional state (Richter 2001, 70-72). O'Keeffe painted how the landscape made her feel--more of a conversation with than a projection onto nature. Also, O'Keeffe used the notion of equivalents in a number of ways. She wanted to convey how she felt about what she was painting: "And I long ago came to the conclusion that even if I could put down accurately the thing that I saw and

enjoyed, it would not give the observer the kind of feeling it gave me. I had to create an equivalent for what I felt about what I was looking at--not copy it" (O'K 63), for example, "I painted the flower big to give the feeling I had in me when I looked at it" (Pollitzer 1988, 224). She painted landscapes in terms of how she felt about them, perhaps projecting her emotions onto them as she painted them over and over with increasing abstraction.

For example, in her Black Place series, within which she painted over and over again a small landform in the badlands of northwest New Mexico, she started with realistic rounded forms and progressed to stronger, angular lines. Two paintings of the Black Place that O'Keeffe includes in her 1976 book show first a realistic depiction, and second, the same place in a more angular and abstracted style that perhaps reflects her feelings about the place as she and Maria Chabot experienced a violent storm when they were camping there (figs. 24, 25). Because O'Keeffe's Ghost Ranch paintings tend to be more representational than her earlier abstracts, the sense that she painted elements in nature to represent her feelings is less apparent. However, there is a sense of equivalents in her 1960s aerial paintings of sky and clouds that illustrate the vast spatial expanse of the West. In these paintings O'Keeffe may have been using the sky and clouds to reflect her feeling of freedom, expansiveness, and detachment.

O'Keeffe expressed her sense of nature speaking for itself and the possibility of two-way communication between her and her home landscape in subtle ways, indicating that the communication was through her senses and feelings. She mentioned that the V shape outside her kitchen window "spoke to me quietly" (O'K 85). She mentioned how landscape elements "touched my heart," and she emphasized how long it takes to really get to know a flower (Lynes 1989, 240). She experienced being "called" by the New Mexico landscape, and experienced how "--it seemed as if all the trees and wide flat stretch in front of them--all warm with the autumn grass--and the unchanging mountain behind the valley--all moved right into my room to me--I was very amused" (CHG 256). The expressions suggest that she felt that the hills and trees were responding and reaching out to her. Communication with nature for O'Keeffe was more a matter of her being with the landscape over time, of listening and observing, of sharing the same place with the



Figure 24: Georgia O'Keeffe, *Grey Hills (The Grey Hills)*, 1942
Georgia O'Keeffe, American (1887-1986). Oil on canvas, 20 x 30 inches, IMA Object ID: 43.47. Courtesy of the Indianapolis Museum of Art, gift of Mr. and Mrs. James W. Fesler.



Figure 25: Georgia O'Keeffe, *Black Place III*, 1944
Courtesy of The Georgia O'Keeffe Museum and The Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation.
Private collection.

plant and animal residents, of responding to the colors and shapes that the landscape provided, and of the landscape and natural elements like the wind helping her understand what she was trying to say with paint. On a plant gathering walk, O’Keeffe noted how she found it interesting that she was looking for a plant that the antelope liked so much, that she shared this with an animal (CHG 238). When she tried to find the shapes she had in her mind, the wind helped her: “I have the shapes . . . it is from something I have heard again and again till I hear it in the wind--but I can not get the color for it” (CHG 267). Two-way communication consisted of the landscape offering shapes and colors and O’Keeffe responding and expressing it in her art.

For O’Keeffe, nature and landscape did not have the overt voice and conscious volition of some ecofeminist writers (e.g. Le Guin 1990; Silko 1977). Communication was more subtle, more through sight and feeling. She related to nature more on its own terms. O’Keeffe related to the Ghost Ranch landscape as part of her everyday life, to the point that it became part of herself, and to the point that landscape elements that she lived with every day--Pedernal, the moon, the red hills--became her companions. Rather than describing nature approaching her, like the male character in Leslie Marmon Silko’s *Yellow Woman* stories (Graulich ed. 1993, 31-46), she reached out to the landscape through her aesthetic intensity and domestic familiarity, and at times she felt that the landscape responded to her.

Knowing landscape through the body, and landscape as body

This relationship aspect focuses on the sense of knowing the landscape through one’s body and feelings in addition to one’s mind. Related, and included within this aspect, is a sense that the landscape represents a human body, primarily a female body. Seeing landscape as a female body can be associated with an ecofeminist personal identification with the landscape, and with an ecofeminist belief in the earth as powerfully female. While her writing and art do not give us any overt indications that O’Keeffe related to the Ghost Ranch landscape, and other landscapes, as the body of a woman or as specifically female, they do give us strong and clear indications that she related to nature through her senses, her body, and her feelings.

For example, one of her childhood memories was an early experience of relating to nature through color and through her senses: “The color of the dust was bright in the sunlight . . . It was warm, full of smooth little ridges made by the buggy wheels. I was sitting on it, enjoying it very much--probably eating it. It was the same feeling I have had later when I’ve wanted to eat a fine pile of paint just squeezed out of the tube” (O’K 2). In a 1934 letter, O’Keeffe expressed: “My center does not come from my mind--it feels like a plot of warm moist well tilled earth with the sun shining hot on it” (CHG 217). Here, O’Keeffe stressed the physical, sensual, organic nature of her core. While O’Keeffe did not overtly associate tilling the earth with traditional ideas of men tilling the female earth, the strength and persistence of this metaphor in Western culture brings it to mind when reading this quote. What or whom is tilling the earth of O’Keeffe’s core, and what or whom is shining the hot sun on her core? Perhaps herself; she tills and is tilled, she both shines and is warmed. That is, in this quote, O’Keeffe expressed that her core was active and to a large degree self-formed, through nature, feeling, experience, and image, rather than by concept and belief. In addition, the fact that she specified “well tilled” earth is interesting here, and supports, as I discuss below, that her relationship with nature was practical as well as aesthetic.

O’Keeffe experienced landforms as alive and sensual, but not necessarily symbolic of human bodies. Several times, she hints that she experienced certain landscape elements as gendered, for example, she refers to the moon as male (Pollitzer 1988, 148-149), and she equates Tony Luhan with a mountain, or the sky (CHG 205). However, most of her writing lacks clear references to nature, or landscape, as female or male. In her paintings of Ghost Ranch landforms, O’Keeffe enhanced curves rather than lines and angles. In as much as curves suggest a human body, and more a female than a male body, this style element could be interpreted as characterizing the landscape as female. To my mind, however, O’Keeffe sensualized the landscape rather than specifically gendering or feminizing it. She rounded the edges of the hills, and made the rough-textured soil look smooth. Whether or not O’Keeffe intended to suggest human forms, some of her paintings for me are difficult not to read as human bodies, for example *Cliffs Beyond Abiquiu* (1943) (fig. 26). No matter what she intended, we bring to her paintings our own interpretations, which may include gendered or erotic

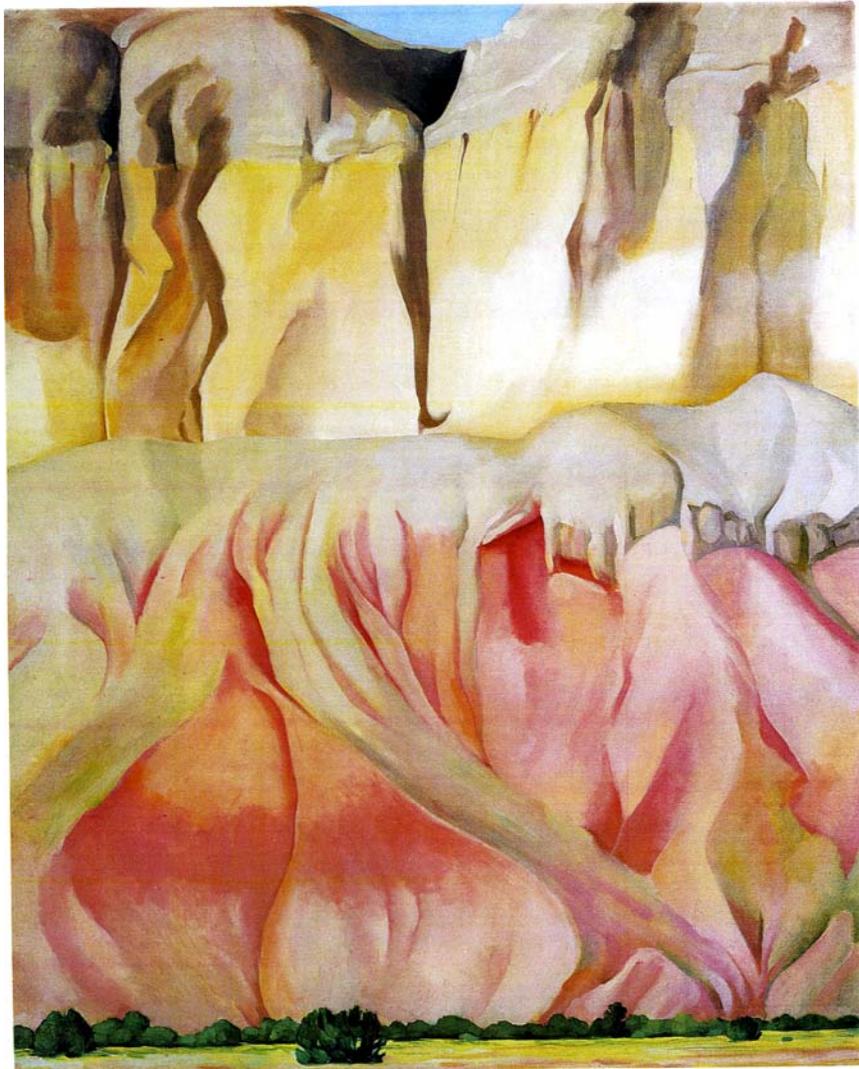


Figure 26: Georgia O'Keeffe, *Cliffs Beyond Abiquiu*, 1943
Courtesy of The Georgia O'Keeffe Museum and The Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation.
Collection of Warren and Jane Shapleigh.

associations. For example, in *Cliffs Beyond Abiquiu*, the long sinuous “arms” and suggestion of teeth make the “body” in this painting more male than female. And the one painting I experience as clearly “female” is her 1938 *Red and Pink Rocks* (fig. 27), because of the associations I have with the shapes and colors of this painting, i.e. an egg shape, the oranges and pinks, and the suggestion of an embryo. O’Keeffe, however, may not have consciously been working from these kinds of associations. Also, through her paintings and writings it is evident that O’Keeffe steered away from referring back to Stielgitz’ portraits which had made a public expression of her female sexuality. Her paintings of the Ghost Ranch landscape were not personalized--for example, compared with many of Frida Kahlo’s paintings (Udall 2000, 65-66)--and she wrote about them with language of sensuality, not sexuality.

There is little doubt that O’Keeffe experienced and got to know the Ghost Ranch landscape through her body and sense of touch as well as through sight. Of the small red hills outside her Ghost Ranch house, she said “--it is so bare--with a sort of ages old feeling of death on it--still it is warm and soft and I love it with my skin” (CHG 243). At times, she described her response to landscape in kinesthetic terms: “When I stand alone with the earth and sky a feeling of something in my going off in every direction into the unknown of infinity means more to me than any thing any organized religion gives me” (CHG 265). She also perceived the desert landscape as pulsing and moving, which suggests a connection between landscape and body. For instance, she described the Taos valley landscape: “. . . The plain was covered with grey sage, that in a few places crept up a bit against the base of the mountains, looking like waves lapping against the shore” (O’K 76).

In summary, O’Keeffe reached out to nature and specifically to the Ghost Ranch landscape with her body, and her sense of touch. As she became more and more familiar with this landscape, she increasingly felt it in her body, as part of herself. Colors and shapes came from inside her and from the landscape, they became part of her as she painted, and her paintings put the colors and shapes back out to the world. Whether or not she consciously made the association, I look at her paintings of the small red hills at Ghost Ranch and feel, through their curvilinear weight and volume, the sensuality of the hills’ “bodies,” for example, in her *Red Hills Series II* (fig 28). Even though she did not

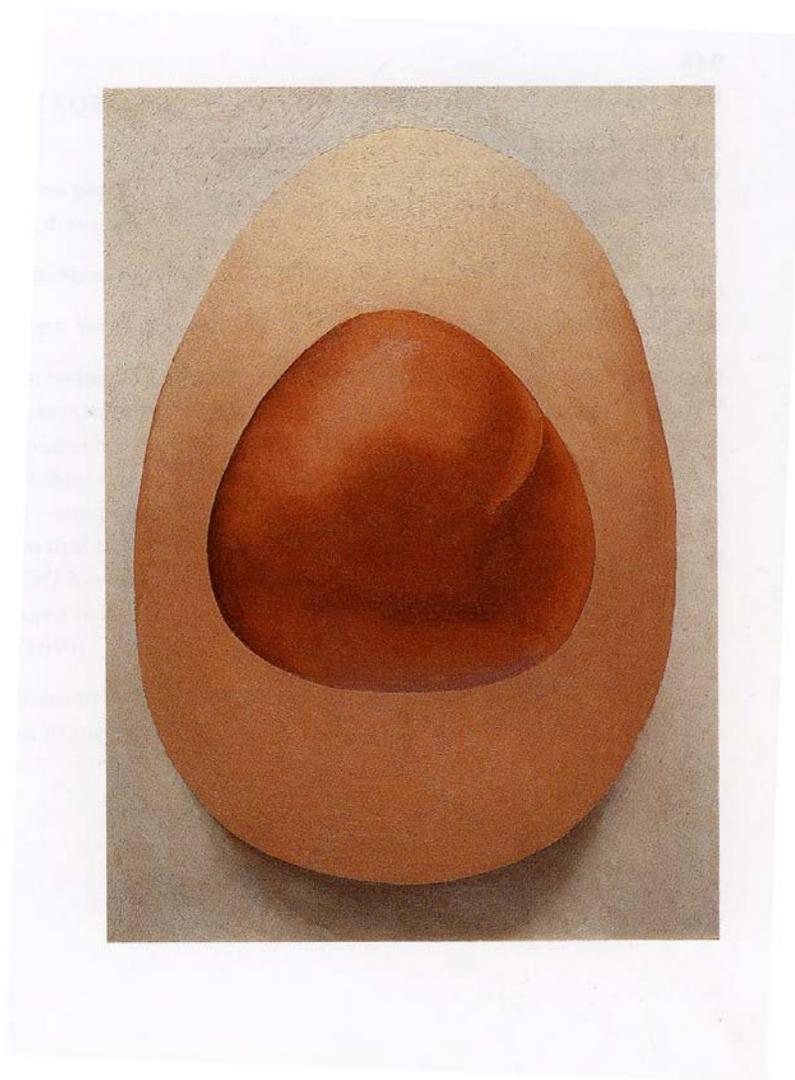


Figure 27: Georgia O'Keeffe, *Red and Pink Rocks*, 1938
Courtesy of The Georgia O'Keeffe Museum and The Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation.
Collection of James and Barbara Palmer.



Figure 28: Georgia O'Keeffe, *Red Hills Series II*, 1935/1938.
Courtesy of The Museum of Texas Tech University.

openly mention it in her letters, O’Keeffe may have associated the landscape with femaleness or female bodies.

Intimacy with the Landscape

As discussed in Chapter One, scale and distance, concept and feeling, how we interact with the landscape, possessiveness, and how we identify with nature are involved in the experience of intimacy and closeness with a specific landscape. O’Keeffe’s relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape was rich and complex, involving multiple dimensions of all these factors. Her writings and paintings indicate that she felt her relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape very intensely and very intimately.

In her interviews, and also in her 1976 book, O’Keeffe was more reserved in talking about her desert home than in her letters. Interviewer Beth Coffelt records O’Keeffe as saying “ ‘The desert is the last place you can see all around you. The light out here makes everything close, and it is never, never the same. Sometimes the light hits the mountains from behind and front at the same time, and it gives them the look of Japanese prints, you know, distance in layers’ ” (Coffelt 1971). In an earlier letter, however, O’Keeffe expresses “I wish you could see what I see out the window--the earth pink and yellow cliffs to the north--the full pale moon about to go down in an early morning lavender sky behind a very long beautiful tree covered mesa to the west--pink and purple hills in front and the scrubby fine dull green cedars--and a feeling of much space--it is a very beautiful world--I wish you could see it” (CHG 233). Either in a reserved or an exuberant tone, O’Keeffe expressed the closeness of her relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape.

O’Keeffe’s intimacy and closeness with the Ghost Ranch landscape did not necessarily overlap with her intimacy with people. Except for a few selected portraits (Lynes 1999, 624, 654-5) her paintings did not include people. O’Keeffe related to the Ghost Ranch landscape as an unpeopled place, and was happy to feel the exclusivity of her relationship with the landscape as the only human around. She was very close to the Ghost Ranch landscape, as one is close to a person. She felt like her core was from the earth (CHG 217), and the sense of merging that comes from being so identified with a particular landscape strengthened this personal identification. By describing the extent

of her feelings, O'Keeffe indicated a very personal relationship, not a sense of the landscape being peopled by spirits or by centuries of cultural interactions with the land. Overall, O'Keeffe's writings and paintings indicate that, while she maintained very close and meaningful friendships from her desert home, she did not have an overarching sense of people being merged with nature. She didn't talk much about landscape features having human-like spirits, and didn't express a sense of people becoming animals or animals becoming people, as present in some ecofeminist writing. O'Keeffe painted her landscape the way she saw it, through her own relationship with it; but she was painting the way she experienced the landscape--how she felt--more than painting the landscape as a literal portrait of herself.

O'Keeffe related to the Ghost Ranch landscape in diverse and holistic ways. She felt close to both the near and far landscape, and often juxtaposed them in her paintings, leaving out the middleground, as in her *From the Faraway Nearby* (fig. 19). In a 1951 letter, O'Keeffe expresses: "--I am really most fortunate that I love the sky--and the 'Faraway'--and being so rich in these things" (CHG 258). Here, she referred to the vastness of space and the far horizon, not necessarily the sky, as the "Faraway." Her close up paintings of flowers, bones, and rocks attest to her affection and fascination for small natural objects (fig. 27).

O'Keeffe's gaze was unsentimental, with a hint of aesthetic possessiveness. Her paintings do not portray nature as necessarily benign, and they do not try to show a harmonious relationship between people and a benign nature, as in many pastoral landscape paintings. She did not portray Native Americans as "noble savages." Like Mary Austin, O'Keeffe expressed a fond possessiveness, not only for Pedernal, as suggested in the following quotes: "--As I looked at my beautiful Black Hills . . ." (CHG 239), and ". . . I like seeing all over my world with the rising sun" (CHG 248). A real desire to own the landscape was also present; for example, in addition to buying her Ghost Ranch house, she was upset when Arthur Pack gave the Ghost Ranch property to the Presbyterian Church rather than to her (Poling-Kempes 1997, 227). O'Keeffe combined traditional masculine and feminine attitudes, and, by not identifying them as male or female, she expanded the range of possibilities for women. Her images of vast areas of the landscape indicate a possessive gaze somewhat similar to that of a wealthy

male landowner surveying his property (fig. 29), and smaller-scale landscapes at times show a hint of maternal affection (fig. 30). O’Keeffe’s gaze and approach to her painting subjects had a sense of private affection that is not apparent in those of male Modernist painters like Marsden Hartley and Andrew Dasburg who also painted New Mexico landscapes (Skolnick and Campbell 1994) (fig 31). For example, O’Keeffe’s warm colors and positioning of the shell within the hill in Figure 30 suggest affection more than Hartley’s dark colors and neutral forms in Figure 31.

The type of interaction with the landscape can also influence the type and degree of intimacy. O’Keeffe did not farm the land as many of her neighbors did; her relationship was one of owner, observer, and interpreter rather than as someone who worked the land and depended on the land for her livelihood. Gardening at her Abiquiu house was a preference and a choice, not a necessity. O’Keeffe’s kind of intimacy with the landscape was not necessarily more intense or more personal than that of others who lived in the region over a long period of time and who worked the land (Poling-Kempes 1997; Lynes and Paden 2003; Sellars 2005), but it was specifically more aesthetic, and was specifically expressed in her unique painting style.

O’Keeffe’s intimacy with the Ghost Ranch landscape was also influenced by the fact that her financial security made it possible for her art to be her work; she didn’t need to have a paying job. Her art was her primary focus, and she had the time and space within which to fully explore the transformation of her relationship with the landscape into art. The basic nature of her relationship with landscape--aesthetic and personal--was similar when she was struggling financially as an art teacher as when she lived at Ghost Ranch; her focus on abstracting to the essence of the landscape was similar when she was squeezing her own creative work into her off hours as when she had plenty of leisure time. However, I believe that having the time and space at Ghost Ranch to focus on her own art, and to have a “landscape of her own,” facilitated the depth of her intimacy with the landscape, the degree to which she could explore a pure, uninstrumental relationship with the landscape.

Others were not so fortunate. For example, O’Keeffe’s help and companion Maria Chabot spent time in the same landscapes as O’Keeffe (e.g. Ghost Ranch, The Black Place), and also had an artistic sensibility (Maria was an aspiring writer), but she



Figure 29: Georgia O'Keeffe, *Untitled (Red and Yellow Cliffs)*, 1940.
Courtesy of The Georgia O'Keeffe Museum and The Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation.



Figure 30: Georgia O'Keeffe, *Red Hill and White Shell*, 1938
Georgia O'Keeffe, American (1887-1986). Oil on Canvas. 30 X 36 ½ inches. Courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Gift of Isabel B. Wilson in memory of her mother, Alice Pratt Brown.



Figure 31: Marsden Hartley, *Desert Scene*, 1922
Courtesy of the Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art, Indianapolis.

also had to work for a living. Her time working for O’Keeffe, farming the Los Luceros property for Mary Wheelwright, and trying to establish herself on her own property forced her writing into second place, and she had difficulty completing her own creative projects (Lynes and Paden 2003). As someone who knew O’Keeffe, Stieglitz, and other artists, and as someone who lived and worked within northern New Mexico communities, Maria bridged the artist culture and the working class. While the combination of farming the land and writing may have given Maria a more practical kind of intimacy with the landscape, O’Keeffe had more opportunity to explore her aesthetic and personal intimacy with the landscape, and to a greater depth. If O’Keeffe had had to take a paying job to support herself, her aesthetic interpretation of the landscape may have been basically the same, but with less time to spend on her art probably with a more distant kind of intimacy with the landscape.

O’Keeffe interacted with the landscape visually, through her art, kinesthetically, through her long walks and rides, and sensually, feeling the wind and the soil, and also feeling colors. She related to the landscape both through her body and through aesthetic analysis, and aesthetic analysis brought her back to her feelings. She felt more drawn to, and closer to, the ordinary and the everyday than the unique or spectacular (with the exception of Pedernal). From a 1922 interview: “You know . . . how you walk along a country road and notice a little tuft of grass, and the next time you pass that way you stop to see how it is getting along and how much it has grown? Often I remember little things like that and put them into my pictures” (*New York Sun* 1922). And later, at Ghost Ranch, “The Jimson weed blooms in the cool of the evening . . . one moonlight night at the Ranch I counted one hundred and twenty-five flowers . . .” (O’K 84).

O’Keeffe’s relationship with the moon is a good example of how she related intimately with natural elements within the Ghost Ranch landscape. The presence of the moon is a consistent theme in her paintings, from her early watercolors on (Zilczer 1990s); and the moon is a major presence in her Ghost Ranch paintings. In her letters, she mentioned the moon many times, its colors and how it feels (CHG 256; O’K 6). Sometimes she offered it as a gift to friends far away, combining a sense of closeness with the moon and suggesting that it could represent how she felt about living at Ghost Ranch: “. . . tonight I’ll send you the moon--I just went out to look at it--“ (CHG 258).

Consistent with her aesthetic relationship with nature, she noticed how the color and shape of the moon varied from night to night: “I’ve been up on the roof watching the moon come up--the sky very dark--the moon large and lopsided--and very soft--a strange white light creeping across the far away to the dark sky--” (O’Keeffe 1938, 8); and “By the way a very hot colored thin moon went down in the West last night--and I always think of the thin moon as a pale moon” (CHG 263). The moon was almost as constant a presence in her paintings as Pedernal and, like Pedernal, the moon was one of her companions.

O’Keeffe was not picking up on an existing New Mexico painting theme, or consciously using an archetypal or feminist theme, when she included the moon in her paintings. She did not state or imply that she thought of the moon as a female entity or symbol. In fact, in some early statements (Pollitzer 1988, 147-149), she suggested that the moon was more male than female. As shown in the next chapter, the presence of the moon in her paintings was mentioned briefly only a few times in the criticism of O’Keeffe’s work from 1929 on. The moon was not a major presence in the paintings of, and not a major theme for, other New Mexico artists of the 1920s-1940s (Skolnick and Campbell 1994; Udall 1981). O’Keeffe was painting one of her constant Ghost Ranch companions.

O’Keeffe not only felt an intense intimacy with the Ghost Ranch landscape, she also was well aware of how long an intimate relationship takes to develop and grow. A well known O’Keeffe statement on experiencing landscape describes how she felt on returning to New Mexico after being in Hawaii in 1939: “One sees new things rapidly everywhere when everything seems new and different. It has to become a part of one’s world, a part of what one has to speak with--one paints it slowly. One is busy with seeing and doing new things--one wants to do everything. To formulate the new experience into something one has to say takes time . . . Maybe the new place” (Hawaii) “enlarges ones world a little. Maybe one takes one’s own world along and cannot see anything else” (O’Keeffe 1940). As O’Keeffe grew into her sixties and seventies, she traveled extensively, in part to see if she was living in the right place, if there were better places for her to be. While she found other places where she felt comfortable, for example, Japan and the Colorado river (Robinson 1989, 499-501) she always returned to her Ghost

Ranch home. And, up until her death, she wanted to go back to her Ranch house to maintain her intimate relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape (Patten and Cardona-Hine 1992a).

This examination of how O’Keeffe related to the three relationship aspects shows us that, more than many other Anglo-American artists in the Santa Fe and Taos circles, the nature of her relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape shared much with approaches identified as ecofeminist by recent writers. She felt a kind of communication with the landscape through her senses, knew the landscape through her body, and felt a keen intimacy with the landscape on a number of levels.

Gender and O’Keeffe’s Relationship with the Ghost Ranch Landscape

How we respond to gender is relational and behavioral, and the three aspects address relationship and behavior. Working through these relationship aspects gives us examples of how O’Keeffe combined ways of relating to the landscape which, within a gender duality context could be associated with masculine or feminine, but which she combined without reference to traditional gender associations, thereby expanding the range of possibilities for what is normative for women and men. O’Keeffe lived a combination of traditional and non-traditional gender roles. She lived her own combination of independence and dependence on specific men, and her own combination of strength and vulnerability. She was both very self-determined, and she accepted the intense mentorship of a man. She both gave up on the idea of having children because of Stieglitz’s desire for her to focus on her art (Robinson 1989, 235-6, 259), and did not give up on the idea of living in the southwest, where she felt most herself. While her art also at times combined traditional and non-traditional gender associations, for the most part she combined them in ways that expanded the range of what a woman could do. For example, O’Keeffe related to the landscape through art and feeling and didn’t feel the need to exert her will on the landscape. She didn’t feel the need to impose culturally gendered associations on the landscape (e.g. as place to be conquered or domesticated) that would support or reinforce her identity, as a person, an artist, or a woman. Appropriative naming of geographical features is associated with men--for example, male explorers--more than with women. O’Keeffe named specific areas and features (e.g. The

Black Place, The White Place) both to lay claim to them and to become closer to them, to bring them into her world; a combination of appropriative and affectionate naming. O'Keeffe had a very strong domestic attachment to the landscape without feeling the need to modify it in traditionally domestic ways. For instance, at Ghost Ranch, she collected bones rather than planted flowerbeds. Her landscape home was both a place in which to feel at home and a place to discover. Primarily on her own, living with household help more than family, O'Keeffe demonstrated that this independent path was acceptable for women. In O'Keeffe's paintings, the landscape is at the same time gentle and harsh, and active and passive. The combination of smooth curves of eroded red hills juxtaposed with jagged edges of a dead tree show gentle and harsh elements in the landscape co-existing in *Stump in Red Hills* (1940) (fig. 32). Her paintings of the cliffs behind her house where the mass and stillness of the cliffs combine with visible evidence of erosion show the landscape as both active and passive (fig. 29).

Sexualized interpretations of her images followed her from New York to New Mexico. Her frustrating experience with sexual associations being imposed on her flower paintings and abstractions in the 1920s may have not only led her to change her subject matter after her seasonal visits to New Mexico began (Lynes 1989), but made her less likely to express any gender associations in connection with her Ghost Ranch work. However, some of her expressions, for example, that she loved the hills with her skin, can be interpreted as sensual and almost sexual feelings towards the landscape.

O'Keeffe related to the landscape through both her body and her mind, and additionally through emotional associations. She felt comfortable with her landscape at a large and small scale. O'Keeffe did not subscribe to gender-dualistic notions of men relating to large landscapes and women being restricted to small-scale domestic places characteristic of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries (Kolodny 1975; Norwood 1998; Massey 1994). Like a number of other women of her time (Norwood 1988) she related to the landscape at all scales and felt at home in all of them. O'Keeffe expressed more affection for her landscape than a concern for preserving it, in terms of its ecological health. She cared for the landscape inasmuch as she left it alone, and she left it alone because it suited her the way it was.

From the above discussion, can we conclude that O'Keeffe's relationship with the



Figure 32: Georgia O'Keeffe, *Stump in Red Hills*, 1940
Courtesy of The Georgia O'Keeffe Museum and The Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation.

Ghost Ranch landscape was not gendered? Thinking of gender as a historical and cultural way of assigning characteristics to sexual difference (Hanna 2003), the answer to this question is in part yes and in part no. Markers of gender duality associations--for example, that men paint vast natural scenes and public environments, and that women paint details of domestic gardens and private scenes--assign specific approaches to either women or men, and are not flexible. These markers were combined and co-existed in O'Keeffe's world and her work, and in the way she described her work. By combining approaches without assigning gender, for example by combining close-up flowers and distant mountains within one image, O'Keeffe expanded the range of ways of relating to nature and landscape available to women. O'Keeffe was a pioneer of Modernism in the art world, considered by some as avant-garde (Waller 1991). She found her own vision, representing the landscape in addition to painting specific elements that had personal meaning.

The lack of gender duality markers is a presence, not an absence. Without these markers, gender is still present and an active element, and was so in O'Keeffe's relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape. A lack of gender duality association markers can indicate that gender norms are changing, and do not necessarily indicate the absence of gender as a factor. O'Keeffe is an example of an evolving cultural sense of gender association norms and how they can evolve. O'Keeffe's relationship with nature and the Ghost Ranch landscape was gendered in that O'Keeffe gave us an example of how one woman could live and respond to gender association norms of her time, an example of how someone not fitting into established gender norms can, over time, contribute to a change in how gender norms are defined.

O'Keeffe and her work is a well known and visible example of living outside accepted gender norms because, as a brilliant artist, she attracts attention, and also because she was a pioneer for her time--she set an example that did not fit into established gender norms. She was one of a number of women who came west to live an independent, relatively solitary life where she could pursue her work. She is noticed and written about more than some other artists not only because she and others marketed her image as an independent and somewhat mysterious artist, but also because of the intensity of her clarity of purpose--her dedication to her art as her consistent and

consuming life purpose. A woman living alone in the desert pursuing her art was an unusual, and to some heroic and romantic, role for a woman in the 1930s-1950s, remained so in the 1960s-1990s, and still is today for many women and men.

Compared with gender, race/ethnicity and class influenced O’Keeffe’s life and lifestyle, but did not have as much influence on her relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape or her images. O’Keeffe seemed to relate to people primarily in terms of the degree to which they shared her artistic sensibility, the degree to which they could facilitate her painting, and according to how relevant their issues seemed to her. Race and class seemed less important. For example, her friends included Anglo, African-Americans, and Native Americans, from a variety of groups and economic classes. She wanted to stay in the worker’s quarters on the pineapple plantation in Hawaii rather than in more upscale lodgings in order to be closer to the landscape, and, due to her own experiences, she related more to women than the working class as an oppressed group (Drohojowska-Philp 2005, 317-318, 381). Her interactions with Ghost Ranch guests, her hired help, and members of the Abiquiu community influenced her daily life, but not necessarily her painting subjects or painting style. Her focus on the unpeopled and undeveloped landscape, and the resultant lack of human themes in her images, minimized the presence of race and class.

Our perception of whether O’Keeffe’s relationship with nature and landscape is gendered can also be influenced by how scholars and art critics have responded to her work over time. As addressed in detail in the next chapter, the strong interpretation in the 1920s and 1930s of her flower and abstract paintings as representing female sexuality was fueled partly by the prominence of Freudian thinking, in addition to Stieglitz’s particular ideas about women (Lynes 1989). This Freudian interpretation reinforced the female gender association with sex, self-expression, emotion, and naiveté. In the 1970s and 1980s, the sexual revolution and feminist thinking encouraged the resurgence of interpretation of O’Keeffe’s flower and abstract paintings as representing the female body. During these decades this interpretation was intended to reinforce the female gender association with the idea that women’s bodies are beautiful and not shameful, and with female self-expression and strength rather than passivity. In the 1990s women’s rights were not in the cultural spotlight in the same way as they were in the 1970s. This

change may have influenced discussions of O'Keeffe and her work to focus less on gender, and more on style and spirituality. Even though gender issues may not always be foremost in people's mind when they think of O'Keeffe and her work--as with a number of workshop participants--this does not mean that gender has diminished as an important aspect of understanding her relationship with nature and landscape.

CHAPTER THREE

CRITICISM AND SCHOLARSHIP, 1929-2004

Georgia O'Keeffe's regard for nature seems virtually pantheistic. She lays hold of things with an intensely passionate understanding; loves the sky, the wind, the solitary places and what grows therein, as she might love a person.

--Vernon Hunter

The evolution of critical and scholarly responses to O'Keeffe's life and work in New Mexico from 1929 through 2004 shows that gender--more than race or class--has been a consistent theme of critique, and that gendered interpretations range widely and are not limited to sexual associations with female anatomy. How gender associations have been characterized, and to what extent the three relationship aspects (communication with nature, knowing landscape through the body, and intimacy with landscape) have been addressed, vary from one historical period to the next. While sexual interpretations of her work have received the most attention in the popular press, gender associations within discussions of O'Keeffe and her work were actually complex and nuanced. I focus on post-1960s feminism, especially ecofeminism, in order to explore potentially meaningful associations between ecofeminist thought and O'Keeffe's relationship with nature and landscape. Feminist critique is not limited to associations with core imagery (elements emanating from a central point or images of concentric circles) and the sexual interpretations of radical feminism. Ecofeminist ideas help relate O'Keeffe to a fuller range of feminisms and broaden our understanding of O'Keeffe's relationship to the Ghost Ranch landscape. The three relationship aspects are not unique to the relatively recent conceptual framework of ecofeminism; similar ideas were present in O'Keeffe criticism from the 1930s on.

Of all the gender-related critique, I focus on that which most directly relates to O'Keeffe's relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape: gender associations with visual images; how the landscape itself and landscape images can be gendered; and how

intimacy with landscape can be gendered. The writing on O’Keeffe does not show a progression from more to less dualistic approaches to gender. Discussions of gender that do not reinforce dualistic notions of male and female, and which do not focus on sexuality, were present in the 1930s and 1940s, and very recent criticism includes dualistic interpretations that continue to focus on sexual symbolism. Many recent critics equate O’Keeffe’s flower and red hills with sexual symbols. However, what such associations mean within different historic periods changes with the historical and cultural context. And, the meanings of nondualistic and more flexible, less sexual, interpretations also vary with historical context.

As has been covered in detail elsewhere (Lynes 1989; Hoffman 1984), much of the writing on O’Keeffe in the 1910s and 1920s focused on O’Keeffe’s flower paintings and their purported sexual imagery. Within U.S. culture during this time, in particular the masculinist context of Modernism (Brennan 2001), the dominant dualistic concept of gender associated women and the feminine with nature rather than culture, intuition rather than reason, body and sexuality rather than mind, and with inferior capability in artistic expression. This essentialized view of women was further reinforced by Freudian psychoanalytic theory. Stieglitz promoted O’Keeffe as quintessentially “woman,” albeit a woman with strength and talent, and through his photographic portrait of O’Keeffe and one-woman shows, he encouraged sexualized interpretations of her images (Brennan 2001).

O’Keeffe consistently denied any sexual content in her work, but this did not stop the persistence of this type of interpretation even as she changed subject matter after moving to New Mexico, or the persistence of these interpretations to the present day. This personal sexualization of her relationship with nature is part of what O’Keeffe was reacting against as she started spending time in New Mexico (Lynes 1989, 2004). O’Keeffe’s transition to New Mexico landscapes and subjects was a move toward an independent artistic voice and toward subject matter that she hoped would be less likely to be interpreted as sexual (Lynes 2004).

The 1930s and 1940s--New Landscapes, New Images

In the 1930s, O'Keeffe's change in subject matter--from flowers and cityscapes to hills, sky, and skulls--received much attention, some of it gendered. In the 1940s, responses to the southwest desert and Ghost Ranch were less sensational, and there was a shift away from Freudian interpretations towards more political criticism, with some mentions of feminism (Hoffman 1982, 13). Also, there was a marked increase in statements that related to gender and the three relationship aspects. O'Keeffe's 1946 "One-Woman Show" at the New York Museum of Modern Art--the first one-woman show ever at this museum--was the impetus for much of the 1940s criticism. While most of the gender discussions assumed gender dualities and conflated gender and sex, some nondualistic and alternative perspectives on gender appeared and were applied to O'Keeffe. These alternative perspectives hinted at ecofeminist ideas, and they represented ideas about gender that were less in the mainstream in the 1930s and 1940s, and which became more developed--within O'Keeffe criticism and within feminist thought in general--later in the century.

Some writers proposed that her move west made her work more feminine, others that it made her work more masculine. Samuel Koetz maintained that ". . . O'Keeffe, who first was painting in as purely feminine a manner . . . has of late been ripening her painting in a fashion that betokens her own new appreciation of an art that goes beyond willfulness; that she also has found the clue to a new order and restraint" (Koetz 1930). Here, Koetz associated masculine order and restraint with O'Keeffe to imply an increasing masculinity to her work. For Dorothy Moore, O'Keeffe's darker reds and purples and subjects such as crosses indicated that ". . . She is still an exponent of the feminine mind, but she has gathered new strength in the desert country of the southwest" (Moore 1930). Here, Moore suggested that a greater presence of "masculine" attributes made O'Keeffe a stronger woman, rather than more like a man, and these landscape symbols and colors made O'Keeffe's work more strongly feminine.

Many discussions focused on sexual interpretations and gender dualities. O'Keeffe was purported to find ". . . in everything a biological importance and erotic symbolism" (*The Art Digest* 1935). Sexual interpretations were applied directly to specific New Mexico painting subjects, suggesting that O'Keeffe's art as a whole was

pervasively sexualized, not just in her flower paintings. For example, “The New Mexico landscape and the sexual vocabulary are blended in the four *Black Place* canvases into paintings which become mysterious, brooding poetry” (*Art News* 1945).

In contrast, authors such as Daniel Catton Rich overtly and specifically came out against Freudian and sexualized interpretations (Rich 1943a, 1943b). Alternatives to sexual interpretations included a proposal that her enlarged flower paintings had spiritual rather than sexual meanings (Hartley, quoted in Wilder 1966). While still referring to O’Keeffe’s enlarged flower paintings, statements such as this one introduced alternative interpretations to sexual imagery at the same time critics and the public were seeing O’Keeffe’s early New Mexico paintings, perhaps encouraging non-sexualized interpretations of these paintings also. That these writers proposed alternative interpretations does not mean that gender was not a factor; rather, the fact that these writers accepted O’Keeffe’s relationship with the western desert indicates that they did not consider a rugged desert environment inappropriate for a woman artist.

Some statements during this period combined hints at gender flexibility and more dualistic gender ideas. O’Keeffe was able to “compete with man’s creative versatility” by making “daring excursions into the cold, atomic world of visual form elements” and by so doing breaking free of the “limits of established conventions” at the same time remaining an instinctive woman “to whom life includes the mysteries of sex, as art suggests the mysteries of life” (Katz 1937). Katz accepted O’Keeffe’s ability to do what the men were doing, as long as she remained appropriately feminine.

Several critics from the 1930s accepted both O’Keeffe’s lifestyle and painting subjects, and did not feel compelled to apply sexualized interpretations (McBride 1936; Mumford 1935; Sherburne 1935; Jewell 1936a, 1936b, 1937; Flint 1933). This continued in the 1940s, for example: “She has never been afraid of the lonely mountain ranges; and clear skies and immense distances and vastness in general have fed her fancy and provided her with the material for her pictures” (McBride 1946). Rather than indicating that O’Keeffe’s relationship with the northern New Mexico landscape was genderless, statements like this one said something about gender by expressing that women’s art did not have to be based on sexual metaphor, that women could be sensual and ascetic at the same time without contradiction, and that “clear skies and immense distances” were

appropriate subjects for women painters. That the desert at once was, and was not, an appropriate place for a woman artist living “alone” was a consistent theme throughout the criticism from the 1930s to 2004.

In the 1940s, critical writings from a self-identified feminist viewpoint and identifications of O’Keeffe as a feminist appeared. In 1946, Elizabeth McCausland used a feminist viewpoint to encourage a broadened understanding of O’Keeffe’s work, beyond gender stereotypes. According to McCausland, O’Keeffe’s paintings of the 1930s were overshadowed by Stieglitz’s influence and emphasis on O’Keeffe as quintessential “woman,” where her paintings during the teens were more authentic to O’Keeffe. “Where once the artist communed with herself in quietistic aloofness, she speaks now of the importance of the visible world. Does this mean that finally she has broken through the shell of myth and come out into the open air?” (McCausland 1946, 6C). By separating O’Keeffe from the masculinist ideas of how her work was and should be considered “feminine” and by trying to see O’Keeffe as her more authentic self through her paintings, McCausland took an approach similar to many post-1960s feminists--that of recognizing women for themselves, not through male eyes. It is less clear, however, if she was saying that O’Keeffe was more “truly” feminine as her authentic self, or that O’Keeffe was more gender neutral in her more authentic self. A theme throughout McCausland’s criticism of O’Keeffe was that of the inner self and the outer self. Her 1946 article implied that O’Keeffe’s inner self was being squashed by male influences and interpretations, and her outer self—as she came “out into the open air”--was more authentic for O’Keeffe, and perhaps more authentic for many other women artists. This thinking is similar to that of some 1970s and 1980s feminists who used O’Keeffe’s flower images to support their sexual “coming out.”

O’Keeffe included the moon in a number of her 1930s and 1940s Ghost Ranch pictures, for example, *Pelvis with Moon* (1943) (fig. 5). The moon has been a major female symbol within many cultural traditions including Western myth and Goddess lore (Orenstein 1998; Montgomery 1999), and gendered interpretations of the presence of the moon in O’Keeffe’s Ghost Ranch paintings could have been made. However, there was little mention of O’Keeffe’s moon as subject or feminine symbol within 1940s criticism (McBride 1944; Jewell 1944). Given that the moon was not a major subject within New

Mexico and other painting during this period (exceptions were Joan Miró's 1926 *Dog Barking at the Moon* and Arthur Dove's 1937 *Me and the Moon*), and given that the moon did not figure as strongly in the feminism of the 1940s as in that of the 1960s and later due to the emphasis on the moon as a female symbol within Goddess art later in the century, this lack of response to the moon in O'Keeffe's paintings during the 1940s is not surprising.

The three relationship aspects (communication with nature, knowing landscape with the body, and intimacy with landscape) were hinted at in the 1930s, and given a little more attention in the 1940s. Caroline Fesler (1943) described O'Keeffe's hills as animate, as speaking, and as offering a message. That nature was O'Keeffe's companion, that she conversed with nature through paint, and that she herself "was" nature, was expressed by James Thrall Soby (Soby 1946, quoted in Wilder ed., 1966). The possibility of two-way communication was hinted at here. I found no direct associations between O'Keeffe's Ghost Ranch landscapes and the human body in the 1930s criticism (*Art News* 1939); however, in the 1940s, a few statements suggested an association between the Ghost Ranch landscape and the human, and specifically female, body. Jo Gibbs (1946, 2) described the "breast-like hills" in O'Keeffe's *Black Cross, New Mexico*, and Eleanor Jewett (1943) talked about ". . . her western landscapes where rolling hills adopt human form . . .". However, I found no statements during these two decades that referred to O'Keeffe feeling and experiencing the landscape through her body and her senses. Several references were made to O'Keeffe's intimacy with the Ghost Ranch landscape, but intimacy was not explored or described in terms of bodily sensation, or degree of personal interaction with the landscape, that is, in terms associated later with ecofeminism. Vernon Hunter's expression that O'Keeffe loves the desert as she might love a person was the closest to the positive, nurturing type of intimacy between people and the land that plays an important role in ecofeminism (Hunter 1932). References to O'Keeffe's intimacy with the Ghost Ranch landscape in the 1940s were limited to general statements about women's relationship with nature being more intimate than that of men's (*Encyclopedia Britanica* 1946).

The 1950s and 1960s--Interest Wanes, and Returns

O'Keeffe criticism fell off dramatically in the 1950s compared to the previous two decades, due to fewer shows (Lynes 1999, 1146) to which critics could respond, the focus on abstract expressionist painting by other, primarily male, artists (Chadwick 1997, 326-30), and perhaps also O'Keeffe's move away from New York and the start of her international travels (Eldredge 1991, 156; 1993). Interest in Ghost Ranch waned, and discussions that did include O'Keeffe focused on her painting style. Notions of gender duality were present in the comparisons between O'Keeffe and abstractionists, within an overall emphasis on painting style (Preston 1952; Devree 1955; *New Yorker* 1955). Several critics during the 1950s pointed out that O'Keeffe's work, including her emphasis on abstracting from natural subjects and being able to paint how she felt about nature and landscape, was not unique or special, compared with other abstract expressionism of the 1950s, with little recognition that O'Keeffe had already been doing this kind of work for many years (McBride 1950; *Arts* 1958; Baur 1958). One exception was the 1956 article in *TIME* where O'Keeffe was listed, along with seven male artists, as a prominent pioneer of abstraction (*TIME* 1956, 67). In the 1950s, as with Helen Frankenthaler, Lee Krasner, and other women artists during this period, O'Keeffe's work was often delegated to the "feminine" and discussed in terms of essentialist female qualities rather than taken seriously along with other abstract expressionism (Chadwick 1997, 328). New Mexico subjects like bones and skulls were seen as erotic in addition to her enlarged flowers (*Palm Beach Life* 1953). Expressions of feminism and mentions of relationships between land and body were present within the 1950s criticism, but fewer and less overt than in the 1940s. This is not surprising, given the emphasis within American culture during the post-war 1950s on material progress and technology, and the return to more conservative ideas about appropriate roles for women (Chadwick 1997, 322-331).

John Baur's 1958 essay provided an indepth analysis of artists' relationships with nature and landscape. He discussed artists' interest in "landscape space" and in a "new sensuousness" in color and texture of the paint itself (but not in associations between landscape and the human body), and offered numerous examples of how both women and men artists related to nature and landscape through abstract expressionism. While Baur

quoted many other artists as they described how they felt about nature on the “inside,” and how they experienced nature through spirit, his only mention of O’Keeffe was a quote which addressed O’Keeffe’s approach to realism and abstraction, not how much O’Keeffe also stressed feeling and sensation in connection to her relationship with nature (Baur 1958, 6). Baur placed O’Keeffe within an earlier tradition, along with John Marin, to illustrate how early twentieth century painters moved towards abstraction rather than starting with abstraction. Perhaps Baur did not use O’Keeffe as an example of an artist feeling a connection with nature more through body sensation and feeling because he wanted to focus on more recent artists, and because O’Keeffe’s public statements about her art up until this point had mostly been about her style and choice of subject matter; material that showed O’Keeffe’s personal experience of nature such as her 1976 book and especially her personal letters, were not available at this time.

Baur used quotes from a number of artists to illustrate how these artists experienced intimacy with nature. Some expressions focused more on cognition and understanding nature--these were mostly from male painters--and some focused more on internal feeling and sensation--these were from both female and male painters. Some combined cognition and feeling, for example, Helen Frankenthaler as she discussed how her subjects emerged, “ ‘ . . . I seem to find myself in something new in terms of nature. I think that, instead of nature or image, it has to do with spirit or sensation that can be related by a kind of abstract projection’ “ (Baur 1958, 12). Some were more ambiguous: “ ‘I want to paint nature from the inside, not as a spectator’” (Baur 1958, 7, quoting Gabor Peterdi). I wonder, from inside nature, or from inside himself? While Baur did not locate O’Keeffe within his discussion of artists’ varying relationships with nature, others during the 1950s hinted at it. Critic Doris Bry alluded to the intimacy O’Keeffe gained with the landscape, through seeing: “She looks at her surroundings with an alive quality of interest and pleasure that is rare” (Bry 1952, 79). Baur’s piece indicates that artists’ intimacy with nature was worthy of discussion, but does not indicate that artists necessarily thought of nature as a being in its own right, or that two-way communication with nature was possible or was a part of the artistic process.

Criticism in the 1960s showed a renewed interest in O’Keeffe, perhaps due to the two major retrospective shows and the appearance of O’Keeffe’s large sky paintings

which contrasted with her earlier work in both size and subject (Eldredge 1991, 156). Some interest was specifically feminist. Various discussions of gender associations with O’Keeffe and her work, and a renewed interest in O’Keeffe’s relationship with nature and the Ghost Ranch landscape, appeared. As in previous decades, gender-related discussions ran the gamut between sexualized interpretations of her subject matter to applications of more gender-flexible thinking.

Mentions of red hill paintings can be used to track attitudes towards O’Keeffe’s visual interpretations of specific landscape features within the Ghost Ranch landscape over time. Specific discussions of her red hill paintings and red hills as subjects were included in 1960s criticism, and some were gendered. Discussing two hill paintings, critic Donald Key stated, “In her world, ‘Rust Red Hills’ and ‘Grey Hills’ are rolling eloquent monuments of nature, engraved with meandering florid lines of erosion yet majestically enduring” (Key 1965). Here, “meandering florid lines of erosion” could be interpreted as referring to feminine qualities in nature, even though no overt gender associations were made by the author. *Red Hills and Blue Sky* (1945) was used by critic Peter Plagens to make the association between hills and “pliable flesh,” which, in the 1960s, probably referred to the female body (Plagens 1966). In comparison, Winthrop and Frances Neilson used the red hill paintings as examples of O’Keeffe’s more masculine style and subjects: “Not that her painting is in any way ‘feminine.’ It is strong and rugged with New Mexican hills and mountains and bones in the desert. A man might equally have done these” (Neilson and Neilson 1969, 157). Neilson and Neilson combine this statement with an emphasis on the importance that these paintings were done by a woman, thus both recognizing a woman painter as worthy in her own right, and indicating that it was appropriate for a woman to paint the “strong and rugged” hills.

With respect to the three relationship aspects (communication with landscape, knowing landscape through the body, and intimacy with the landscape) interest in O’Keeffe’s relationship with and experience of nature returned in the 1960s. While there were many comments about relationship with nature, few addressed actual communication with nature. Some commented on the presence, or absence, of emotional intensity of O’Keeffe’s relationship with nature; Emily Genauer maintained that “Where once she was the detached observer of nature, now she has become an

exultant participant” (Genauer 1961), and photographer Laura Gilpin remarked on O’Keeffe’s unsentimental sense that dying was part of living (Gilpin 1963). O’Keeffe’s intimacy with landscape through seeing was alluded to with Grank Getlein’s statement that “. . . I’ve seen with her eyes . . . I’m more at home in my world . . . than I would have been without her” (Getlein 1960). During this period, O’Keeffe served as a role model for relationship with place in addition to a role model for alternative career options for women (*Saturday Review* 1957).

As in Baur (1958), during the 1960s, artists’ relationships with nature were discussed without including O’Keeffe. According to Allen Weller, in his discussion of primarily male artists of the 1952-1962 period, some of these artists experienced nature as a partner and a source, rather than a setting, in relation to their paintings (Weller 1965, 7). Weller also quoted artist Carl Morris: “ ‘I think of my work as being *within* nature rather than *from* it’ ” (Nordness and Weller 1962, 250; emphasis in the original). This sounds like something O’Keeffe might have said, except that Morris framed it in terms of how he thought of his work, rather than how he felt and experienced his work. In comparison, we can imagine O’Keeffe saying something similar to Weller’s quote from artist Margo Hoff: “ ‘My figures do not “talk,” nor my landscapes “move.” I want them to “be,” to exist in their own sphere and light, and space’ ” (Nordness ed. 1962, 250). O’Keeffe might have added, “and I want them to exist for me.”

During the 1960s, comments addressing the second relationship aspect, knowing the landscape through the body, were scarce; comments on O’Keeffe’s relationship with the landscape related more to how she saw and translated the landscape into paint than to how she felt. Mentions of landscape as body were also scarce; one exception was Peter Plagens’ discussion of *Red Hills and Blue Sky* (1945) where he likened the hills to “a portion of a female nude” which gave “to the landscape a corporeal life” (Plagens 1966, 27, 29). Within the same piece, he suggested that O’Keeffe could give the landscape a sense of human life and body, referring more to the presence of human substance than to sexuality or gendering the landscape female. Here, we have a combination of a gendered and non-gendered statement within the same passage.

Earthworks--large-scale manipulations of soil and terrain (Boettger 2002, 23)--developed in the late 1960s. Earthwork art related to the interaction between nature and

culture, and to the kinds of intimacy that artists had with the landscape. The majority of earthwork artists were men (Boettger 2002). Earthwork artists like Robert Smithson imposed large-scale outdoor sculptures on the landscape, motivated not so much by a sense of kinship with nature as a being with voice and volition as by a desire to make an artistic and social statement (Boettger 2002, 244-45). This kind of interaction with nature was very different than that of O'Keeffe. O'Keeffe manipulated the landscape through her eyes and onto her canvas--a less invasive, less public, and less political approach. The fact that that O'Keeffe did at times give the landscape voice and volition, and that she lived within the landscape she painted over a long period of time and did not actually physically modify the environment in substantial ways for her own purposes, makes her relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape more intimate than that of most earthwork artists with their subject landscapes.

The 1970s--Feminism and O'Keeffe

Renewed interest in O'Keeffe during the 1970s was fueled by events and publications such as her 1970 Whitney Museum retrospective, to which feminists reacted strongly, the publication of O'Keeffe's 1976 book, O'Keeffe's ninetieth birthday in 1977, and the exhibition of Stieglitz's photographs of O'Keeffe. Feminist thought played a large role in discussions of gender, and much was written about O'Keeffe's relationship with nature and the Ghost Ranch landscape. As in previous decades, landscape and body, and intimacy with nature were topics of discussion, but there was little indication that O'Keeffe critics and feminist artists were at this time proposing--or suggesting that O'Keeffe subscribed to--the possibility of two-way communication with nature. During the 1970s, O'Keeffe criticism focused on the themes of purported sexual imagery, O'Keeffe's relationship to feminist art, O'Keeffe's relationship with nature, and, to a greater degree than previous decades, the three relationship aspects.

Sexual Imagery: Judy Chicago and Others

Different feminist groups approached reclaiming the female body in different ways. Some Chicana artists reclaimed women's role in religious symbolism (Goldman 1988, 200-201; Stoller 1987), and many Anglo-American women artists focused on

reclaiming women's sexuality. Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro developed a theory of the inherent femaleness of central core imagery (Schapiro and Chicago 1973; Lippard 1976; Lucie-Smith 2000). Abstract images of circles and elements emanating from a central point, and more realistic images of female genitalia, are examples of core imagery. For Schapiro and Chicago, central core imagery was more than a symbol of a womb or vagina; it connected women, the soul and infinity, and women's sexuality, it served as a metaphor for women's feelings, and it was a political symbol (Schapiro and Chicago 1973). Chicago especially made a direct connection between central core imagery and O'Keeffe's flower images and early abstractions, maintaining that O'Keeffe had intentionally made art that represented her sexual experiences as a woman (Chicago, quoted in Lippard 1976; Chicago, quoted in Mitchell 1978, 685), and that most of her imagery, including the patio door paintings, used central imagery (Schapiro and Chicago 1973, 12-13). Some O'Keeffe critics were generally supportive of this perspective (Willis 1971; Seiberling 1974; Nochlin 1974). For example, Willis believed that all O'Keeffe's subjects--flowers, hills, pelvises--were images of the female body, and all were sensuous and sexual in nature (Willis, 1971).

This renewed emphasis on the purported sexuality of O'Keeffe's images also received criticism. For instance, Lawrence Alloway (1977) criticized the Schapiro and Chicago sexualized interpretations as overly simplistic, stating that while O'Keeffe's flower paintings did portray female sexuality, the context and other meanings of the flowers should also be part of the interpretation. While a number of writers have objected to Chicago's take on O'Keeffe's images, and Chicago herself later broadened her interpretation of O'Keeffe's images (Chicago 1987), reclaiming a sense of women's validity, strength, sexual power, and beauty was extremely important to feminists of the 1970s (Seiberling 1974). Drawing O'Keeffe into their circle and citing O'Keeffe's work as early examples of female imagery (Rose 1974; *New York Times Magazine* 1977) seemed both obvious and valid to many feminist artists.

O'Keeffe and Feminist Art

Feminist art during the 1970s was primarily focused on women's social and political issues; environmental and ecofeminist art did not appear in force until the 1980s.

To many feminist artists in the 1970s, O’Keeffe was considered a foremother and leader of feminist art (Lippard 1995, 107; Duvert 1987, 202). In the 1970s, art critic and writer Lucy Lippard explored gender differences in art in the interest of adding visibility and credibility to women’s art. Lippard used O’Keeffe as an example of woman artists who “cultivate their feminist identities through self-conscious choice of ‘female’ images and techniques and content”, and used a quote from O’Keeffe where she seemed to admit that there may be eroticism in her paintings (Lippard 1995, 71). In addition to focusing on O’Keeffe’s core imagery as symbolic of women’s sexuality, Schapiro and Chicago related O’Keeffe to gender roles, asserting that she opened up new options for women and men by showing the possibilities of human expressiveness in art (Schapiro and Chicago 1973, 13).

Various ideas about androgyny were also being explored within feminist thinking (Singer 1976). For example, in her 1994 essay on 1970s women’s art, Joanna Frueh referred to the androgyne as a positive symbol of the equality of the feminine and the masculine, of women and men (Frueh 1994, 207). Since the 1920s, O’Keeffe had been identified with androgyny, but more in terms of how she was able to be a strong woman by borrowing from men--borrowing physical appearance and personality traits. Within a 1970s feminist context, however, androgyny was not interpreted as borrowing from men, but as a quality inherent in both men and women. For some artists and writers in the 1970s, identifying O’Keeffe as androgynous made her more strongly female.

As ideas about gender grew and varied, they may have been variously applied to O’Keeffe, and, perhaps by inference, to the way her relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape was perceived. For example, the desert in general was identified as Goddess-space, and described as both female and male (Orenstein 1978, 77). This gendering of desert landscapes may have influenced people to think of O’Keeffe’s Ghost Ranch desert landscape as gendered, and her paintings representing a gendered landscape. Overall, whether or not O’Keeffe was believed to be a feminist influenced the interpretation of her art and of her relationship with nature and landscape. In general, the more that O’Keeffe was associated with feminism, the more she was believed to have associated her subjects--flowers and landscapes--with the feminine.

Relationship with Nature

In the 1970s, O'Keeffe's relationship with nature was the theme most often talked about by the critics (Hoffman 1976; 1977, 266). Discussions of O'Keeffe's relationship with nature and landscape did not necessarily overlap with feminist discussions of O'Keeffe's art. Many critics interpreted O'Keeffe's painting as relating to nature as a universal, to nature as mystical, and to specific natural objects and images (Hoffman 1976). There was also a relative absence of reference to gender within discussions of O'Keeffe's painting subjects and style. For example, Robert Martin (1970) talked about O'Keeffe's mountains and skulls taking on universal meaning, and Judith Dunham (1977, 1) described O'Keeffe as painting essences of nature.

The importance of the moon to Wiccan and other women-centered spiritualities that grew during the 1970s is well documented (Harding 1979; Orenstein 1978; Adler 1979; Orenstein 1994). While some 1970s critics stated that O'Keeffe's *Ladder to the Moon* (1958) was a surreal image (Glueck 1970), or mentioned the moon as subject matter in passing (Young 1977), they did not associate O'Keeffe's use of the moon with feminist associations, and discussions of Goddess art during the 1970s (and later, in the 1980s) related to O'Keeffe only in terms of identifying her as a Goddess herself (Dijkstra 1998, 197). Perhaps these critics and writers on feminist art agreed with my sense that O'Keeffe included the moon in her paintings because it was one of the major features of her environment--one of her companions--rather than for any intended gender symbolism.

Some commentary on O'Keeffe's work during this period did address gender. The statement in an *Arts Magazine* article (1970) that "Nature has always been her master" could be interpreted as gendered, that is, implying that the "master" is male and that O'Keeffe relates to nature and landscape as she would to a man (e.g. Stieglitz), and that, by further implication, her response to nature is determined from the outside, and is somehow not her own. Katherine Kuh combined gendered and ungendered comments in her discussion of O'Keeffe's work. Kuh focused on O'Keeffe's experience, aesthetic interpretations, and personal associations in a general and ungendered way, when she described how O'Keeffe related to nature in her work: "For her, immediate contact with nature is the touchstone. It is never just plants, rocks, shells, bones, mountains, and rivers

that fascinate her; it is their transmutation by variations in distance, scale, color, angle, and by such immediate circumstances as the time of day, the slant of the sun, the slightest atmospheric nuance. Not least are the artist's own associations; for who can deny how difficult it is to separate what one sees from who one is?" (Kuh 1977, 45). Later in this same article, however, Kuh referred to the jack-in-the-pulpit images as phallic, and discussed how the focus on erotic content upset O'Keeffe. Again, gendered and non-gendered descriptions of O'Keeffe's work existed together within the same article and within the perception of particular art historians and critics.

The Three Relationship Aspects

Within discussions relating to the three relationship aspects (communication with nature, knowing landscape through the body, and intimacy with the landscape) gender played a larger role during the 1970s. Within feminist discussions of the relationship of feminist artists to nature, the fact that nature was alive and an active presence was widespread, but not quite to the point of two-way communication. For artist Michelle Stuart " . . . The earth lives as we do, elastic, plastic, vulnerable . . . " (Stuart quoted in Lippard 1976, 111), and Goddess artists wanted the earth to be part of themselves (Orenstein 1978, 76), that is, to merge with, rather than having a conversation with, the earth.

Feminist art emphasized the value of the female body and the tie between women and the earth. In body art, women made artistic statements by interacting with natural elements like soil, rocks, and trees (Frueh 1994), and artists like Hannah Kay considered women's body to be like, or to be, the landscape, with women's bodies representing the sensuality of the universe (mountains, oceans, planets) (Orenstein 1978, 82). In addition, Orenstein directly and Frueh more indirectly, moved away from the body-mind duality attributed to patriarchal thought by using "body" to refer to a combination of body and mind (Orenstein 1978, 74), and by saying that 1970s women's body art gave the female body a mind (and by inference, gave the landscape a mind) (Frueh 1994, 194).

During the 1970s, it is possible that the increased discussion of the Ghost Ranch landscape as a human or female body and O'Keeffe relating to the landscape through her body was influenced by these feminist ideas. Feminist themes of being the landscape,

and interacting and merging with the landscape, were present within O'Keeffe criticism. For example, Mary Lynn Kotz quoted O'Keeffe: "These hills look so soft. Such good earth. I have wanted, sometimes, to take off all my clothes and lie back against these hills" (Kotz 1977, 44), and Barbara Rose stated that: ". . . if O'Keeffe's curving and undulating forms suggest analogies between the human body and landscape, these analogies are better explained by her sense of the unity of nature and the correspondences between all natural forms than they are by Freudian or surrealist symbolism" (Rose 1977, 32). Critics were paying attention to how O'Keeffe related to the Ghost Ranch landscape through her body, but they did not indicate that O'Keeffe considered the landscape to be female.

Discussions of O'Keeffe's intimacy with the Ghost Ranch landscape may also have been influenced by ideas about intimacy with nature and landscape within discussions of feminist art. According to critic Sanford Schwartz, O'Keeffe was able to "get inside" the landscape and then work outwards. He contrasted O'Keeffe with early twentieth century artist Stuart Davis, who was not impressed with the New Mexico landscape, and for whom getting "inside" the landscape would not have even been thought of, let alone considered (Schwartz 1976, 96). The notion that women are more likely to feel landscape on the inside, that is, inside their own bodies, expressed by Lucy Lippard in 2002 (Lippard 2002, pers. comm.) is an interesting comparison to Schwartz' comment, which referred to O'Keeffe getting inside the landscape rather than the landscape getting inside of her. Both referred to the ability and inclination of women artists--more than men artists--to merge with the landscape with their own bodies.

Goddess art and Land Art were important movements in women's art and thoughts about women's intimacy with nature during the 1970s, and are part of the context within which O'Keeffe's work was considered. Women's use of Great Goddess imagery and associations in their art during the 1970s was a way to use ancient symbols for reclaiming women's worth and strength, for psychological, spiritual, and political awareness and renewal (Orenstein 1978). Women used shamanism, ritual, and exploration of ancient goddess religions (Orenstein 1994, 177-78). The energy, drama, and strength of conviction of women Goddess artists during this time, especially in performance art, is indicative of the intensity with which they wanted to interact with

nature and with women's traditions in order to promote the value of women and women's art and to deconstruct the traditional nature/culture dichotomy and its associated degradation of women. These women felt a communion with, and a sense of communication with, nature and specific sites within the landscape. Within this context, O'Keeffe was identified as an "intuitive Goddess-woman" (Dijkstra 1998, 197), a woman to exult and emulate. However, O'Keeffe felt intensely intimate with her landscape and was happy to relate to her landscape on her own, without the need for ancient women's symbols and goddesses as intermediaries.

In comparison with Earthwork art of the 1960s, Land Art of the 1970s tended to be smaller scale and more urban, and included large-scale outdoor sculpture where elements were added to natural settings. Land Art included land reclamation projects that embodied an awareness of environmental concerns and outdoor sculptures that interacted with natural processes (Boettger 2002). Examples are Nancy Holt's outdoor sculpture *Sun Tunnels* (Boettger 2002, 241-42), and Andy Goldsworthy's *Throws* (where he threw soil or sticks up into the air and then let them blow over him) (Goldsworthy 1993, 44-51). *Throws* is an example of men's art that reflected a more personal intimacy with landscape than many of the earlier Earthworks. The type of intimacy with nature demonstrated by Land Art was one of interacting with and caring for nature, in addition to using nature to make a social and political statement. In contrast, O'Keeffe was happy to make statements about her own relationship with her landscape, and limited manipulation of her outdoor environment to collecting rocks and bones, and gardening at her Abiquiu house.

The 1980s--O'Keeffe Dies, and Gender and Feminist Interpretations Strengthen

Georgia O'Keeffe died in 1986. Evaluations of her life and work became more prolific, more critical, and more personal after her death. Major shows in 1981 and 1987 fueled critical reviews. Themes of 1980s criticism addressed here are: O'Keeffe, gender, and feminism; O'Keeffe and feminist art; the Ghost Ranch landscape and gender; and the three relationship aspects. With the 1980 Congressional decision to study establishing her Abiquiu house as a National Historic Site, one of O'Keeffe's special places became a focus for historic preservation, in addition to O'Keeffe herself being considered historic

(Moore 1986, 35). Writings on O’Keeffe included stories of personal visits to see O’Keeffe, and the somewhat mystical and pilgrimage nature of these visits, which one author (Lerman 1986) characterized as a journey to discover the self. The interpretation of O’Keeffe as a personal icon of independent and mystical creativity was strong, and grew stronger with her passing. In the 1970s and 1980s, as the visibility of women artists of color increased (Lippard 1990; Norwood and Monk 1987), O’Keeffe was popular with, and was identified primarily with, Anglo-American culture and feminism.

O’Keeffe, Gender, and Feminism

O’Keeffe criticism in the 1980s reflected trends within feminism and gender concepts; for instance, discussion of gender and O’Keeffe’s work and relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape compared the masculine and feminine rather than focusing on the feminine, and compared men’s and women’s experiences, rather than labeling based on accepted notions of gender dualities. For example, in Norwood and Monk’s 1987 volume on women’s art relating to the southwest landscape which includes O’Keeffe, they framed the discussion in terms of gender, and described differences between women’s and men’s experiences of the southwest landscape, the role the landscape played in women’s and men’s experiences of family, and how men and women related to the region as a whole, in particular, women’s creative responses to living in the southwest (Norwood and Monk 1987). They used O’Keeffe as an example of a woman who found a source of strength and creativity in the southwest rather than trying to domesticate the landscape. More specifically related to O’Keeffe, Susan Crean compared landscape art done between 1920 and 1947 by men to that done by O’Keeffe and Canadian artist Emily Carr (Crean 1988). According to Crean, the male painters “objectified nature and organized the landscape (color and form) into patterns, the outward projections of human sensibilities. Because of this, their work seemed rather modest in scale and intimate by comparison; nature has been groomed and tailored to their personal purpose” (Crean 1988, 18). In contrast, O’Keeffe and Carr “seem to be speaking about nature in a different language, about something much larger than human life, primordial” (Crean 1988, 18). This comparison reverses earlier gender associations of the small-scale and intimate with women and the large-scale with men.

Interpretations of O’Keeffe’s work focusing on sexual imagery were certainly still present during the 1980s (Rhem 1984; Hobhouse 1980,13; Hobhouse 1987). More often, however, writers--especially feminist writers--broadened the discussion beyond the strict association between images and female anatomy, to relate to women’s experience. According to Hoffman (1982, 14) O’Keeffe’s images were about the depths of human experience as well as sex, and Frueh (1985, 155-56) compared the central core imagery of women, which represented a sense of fullness, with the central core imagery of men, which represented a sense of emptiness. Judy Chicago broadened her interpretation of O’Keeffe’s imagery from specific sexual representations to representing “the world according to women” (Chicago 1987, 26). And, according to Raven, O’Keeffe “. . . pictured essential and existential femininity in a sensorial and transcendent female principle” (Raven 1988, 228).

When identified as a feminist, O’Keeffe was included in the group of feminist women artists as a leader and example, with feminist social and political intentions and symbolism attached to her images (Moore 1986, 35; Rose 1987, 204). Seen as a non-feminist, her New Mexico images were examined more in terms of painting style than symbolism (Hughes 1986). While O’Keeffe was a feminist in terms of supporting women’s rights (Lynes 1992), she resisted being labeled a feminist due to the consequent identification with radical feminists and sexualization of her images. Even so, critical identification of O’Keeffe as a feminist further “feminized” the Ghost Ranch landscape and her representation of it; her paintings were interpreted as feminine statements and the landscape more of a female landscape.

In her exploration of a female aesthetic within her article on O’Keeffe and Carr, Susan Crean noted that “. . . circles and spirals, as opposed to arrows and daggers . . . composition and imagery that encloses rather than penetrates . . . [are] subject matter that relates to women’s worlds rather than men’s” and that “representational painting by women has a peculiar complexity of viewpoint that men’s lack” as a result of women having been both the subject and object of the male gaze (Crean 1988, 18). For Crean, these kinds of differences made up an “ephemeral and pluralistic” female aesthetic. These same “feminine” characteristics were seen within O’Keeffe’s work. However, while many of O’Keeffe’s Ghost Ranch paintings are more curvilinear than angular, and

some of the hill paintings can be interpreted as having enclosing forms, O’Keeffe did not identify these characteristics as feminine or feminist. O’Keeffe humanized the Ghost Ranch landscape by emphasizing the sensuousness and smoothness of the hill’s “skin.” For many 1980s feminists, however, O’Keeffe feminized this landscape by purportedly demonstrating ideas of a female aesthetic.

O’Keeffe and Feminist Art

Related to Orenstein’s discussion of Goddess art, Lucy Lippard and Elizabeth Duvert wrote about how ideas and images from ancient art were used in contemporary art. Lippard (1983) addressed women’s and men’s art, Duvert (1987) focused on women’s art; Lippard used O’Keeffe as an occasional example, Duvert focused on O’Keeffe as one of three women who specifically--according to Duvert--invoked the archaic in their work. Including feminist art in her broad look at contemporary art’s relationship to archaic forms and designs, Lippard stated that “Many of these artists turned to prehistory for inspiration and encouragement . . .” because of their disillusionment with modern American culture, and the contrasting way that ancient cultures integrated art with life to a greater extent (Lippard 1983, 6). One could say something similar about feminists’ use of O’Keeffe--they turned to her for inspiration and encouragement, and found something in O’Keeffe that related to women’s collective unconscious. Lippard associated O’Keeffe with ancient art in a general way: “In a lone black stone or the bleached aperture of a cow’s pelvic bone or the harsh multicolored folds of dry mountains, she evokes what the earliest peoples once saw--the spirit of the object, its simultaneous past and future” (Lippard 1983, 50). According to Duvert, O’Keeffe’s mountain and skull combinations “. . . recall what are now recognized as ancient symbols of female transformation and sexuality, of the goddess’ epiphany” (Duvert 1987, 208). While Duvert did qualify that she interpreted O’Keeffe’s paintings as leading us back to archaic--especially Native American--symbols, her article also suggests that O’Keeffe’s art incorporated religion and ecology in ways that O’Keeffe herself would likely have denied. These two writers articulated how and why O’Keeffe was used as a catalyst for modern feminist and non-feminist artists.

Part of the development of 1980s feminist art was the growth of ecofeminist art. In this type of art, “. . . ecofeminists joined hands with Mother Earth to collaborate with nature itself” (Stein 1994, 243). Most examples of art identified specifically as ecofeminist from the 1980s were performance art and land reclamation art projects. For example, to encourage connections between “public issues, public spaces and aesthetic forms” (Damon quoted in Stien 1994, 245), Betsy Damon created *A Memory of Clean Water* in 1988. In this project, “a two-hundred-and-fifty-foot paper casting of a dry riverbed along Castle Creek, Castle Valley, Utah” was made “on site using paper pulp made from both commercial flax and the fibrous plants at hand” (Stein 1994, 245). O’Keeffe was not mentioned as a foremother of this kind of feminist art in Stein’s discussions of 1980s ecofeminist art, perhaps because O’Keeffe did easel painting that did not have an obvious earth-healing message.

Ghost Ranch and Gender

O’Keeffe’s relationship specifically to New Mexico and the Ghost Ranch landscape was discussed more in the 1980s than in previous decades, perhaps due to the attention given to her Abiquiu house and perhaps also to the feeling that it was more acceptable to explore Ghost Ranch (in writing, and in the landscape) now that O’Keeffe was gone. There was a mix of gendered and non-gendered statements as in previous years, but without specific reference to red hills or other landscape features. Gendered descriptions included a comment that the Ghost Ranch landscape was an “immense fecund desert plateau” (Crean 1988), and that it contained “the firm articulation of the musculature, the rock-thrust . . .” (Tomlinson 1981, 77). The desert as a source of strength and creativity for women, including O’Keeffe, was discussed in accounts of women’s art (Norwood and Monk 1987, 9). Due to this association, the fact that O’Keeffe led her independent life in the desert was especially meaningful to many women. According to Jan Castro, O’Keeffe associated the use of symbols with gendering the landscape; Castro maintained that O’Keeffe did not intentionally use natural elements as symbols, that, in fact, O’Keeffe denied using male and female symbols in order to “. . . assert the real, as opposed to the symbolic, nature of each object” (Castro 1985, 170). It is possible that O’Keeffe felt various natural elements as

feminine or masculine in their “realness,” even if she did not want to use them as symbols of femininity and masculinity.

Comments on the presence of the moon in O’Keeffe’s paintings were mostly, as in previous decades, brief mentions only to recognize the subject matter of her images (Castro 1985, 102; Kenner 1986). Celia Weisman was an exception, when she brought up some of the associations with the moon found in feminist writings and Goddess art. She did not overtly gender the moon or moon cycles, although she characterized O’Keeffe’s pelvises as female. In her description of *Pelvis with Moon* (1943), Weisman said “A full moon floats above the bone . . . this bone, associated with the genital region, may be considered a source for life; yet bones constantly remind us of death. This life/death image unifies mountains and moon, thus affirming the creative place of death in the rotations of nature. Like the changing of season and the moon’s cycles, animal life is seen here undergoing transformations . . .” (Weisman 1982, 13). That this article appeared within *Woman’s Art Journal* and that Weisman’s focus in this article was “the interplay between spirituality and art” (Weisman 1982, 10) in O’Keeffe’s work both suggested that Weisman was associating O’Keeffe’s use of the moon with feminist spiritual symbols. O’Keeffe may have denied the association with feminist symbols, while acknowledging that, for her, bones and the moon mean life more than death.

The Three Relationship Aspects

Communication with nature, knowing landscape through the body, and intimacy with the landscape--the three relationship aspects--were addressed with 1980s criticism. Nature as a being in itself, with voice and volition, was directly expressed to a greater extent within discussions of women’s art, and within criticism of O’Keeffe, than in earlier decades--perhaps influenced by emerging ecofeminist ideas. For Norwood and Monk, “the landscape talks back to us and influences our behavior” (1987, 3). Janet Hobhouse spoke about voices coming from nature (God) as well as voices coming from within O’Keeffe: “The New Mexican desert where O’Keeffe settled served as a potent symbol of where the American saint/artist should reside . . . it was a place . . . where one could be alone with one’s voices, clearest of which was the voice of out there, ‘the Faraway Nearby’ in O’Keeffe’s phrase” (Hobhouse 1987, 75).

While a few writers did find direct connections between O’Keeffe’s painting of hills and the female body--for instance, Weisman’s observation that her hills were “breast-like forms” (Weisman 1982, 13)--more writers commented on how O’Keeffe animated and enlivened the landscape by referring to humans rather than women, and by going beyond humans. For curator Patterson Sims, O’Keeffe both animated nature and took life from it: “The becalmed and well-crafted surfaces of her work imbue nature with a strangely sensual yet disembodied tranquility; it is as if nature were being seen for the first time” (Sims 1981, 3). O’Keeffe’s hills were variously thought of as enfolding a baby (Lewis 1986) and as the body of a sleeping creature (Baker 1987), and as representing the living contour present in all elements in nature (Duvert 1987, 200). Others made a strong connection with female bodies and feminism.

According to Arlene Raven, O’Keeffe’s perspective, as shown in her paintings of pelvis bones, was one of “seeing through the body, knowing through the bones” (Raven 1988, 228). Raven continued, “Not only her bones, but her desert mountains, flowers, and skies, are spirited analogs for a female body made, as Susan Griffin has written, ‘from this earth’ “ (Raven 1987, 228). Here, Raven related O’Keeffe’s sense of intimacy with the landscape directly with O’Keeffe’s purported representation of that landscape as a female body. Raven’s statement is an example of how feminist writings from the 1970s and 1980s on the relationship between women and the earth--women being made of the earth, women being the earth, women having a closer relationship to the earth than men--sometimes slanted O’Keeffe interpretations in the same direction. While O’Keeffe did feel that she herself was part of the landscape, and likely felt that she had a closer relationship to the Ghost Ranch landscape than anyone else, her writings do not indicate that she connected this to the fact that she was a woman or to the association of landscape forms with the female body.

There was a shift towards describing intimacy with nature as sexual rather than as a general sense of closeness. Overall, comments related to intimacy with landscape ranged from the sexual, to the personal, to the mystical. Hobhouse characterized O’Keeffe’s relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape as passionate and almost sexual (Hobhouse 1987, 76), and Raven suggested that O’Keeffe was nature’s lover (Raven 1988, 116). Duvert connected O’Keeffe’s intimacy with the landscape with her intimacy

with people as she maintained that O’Keeffe used natural objects to depict intensely personal relationships (Duvert 1987, 270). Other writers compared O’Keeffe’s approach towards nature to that of masculine nineteenth century Transcendentalists in order to explore the spiritual and mystical side of O’Keeffe’s work and how O’Keeffe identified with nature. Wallach maintained that O’Keeffe shared Emerson’s “conviction that the sublime was to be found in nature” (Wallach 1989, 38). Alluding to Emerson’s “transparent eyeball,” critic Kenneth Baker said that O’Keeffe’s paintings of hills and flowers “look like what a disembodied eye with perfect freedom of movement in space might see” and that these images made her a “transcendentalist without God” (Baker 1987, 173). In contrast, Arlene Raven implied gender difference when she said that, unlike Emerson who considered nature to be “not me,” O’Keeffe “*was* nature” (Raven 1988, 116, emphasis original).

As this analysis shows, during the 1980s many critics continued to explore various associations with and meanings of O’Keeffe’s paintings. Others, however, were able to accept O’Keeffe’s explanation that she simply painted what she saw, and what pleased her. These writers had an understanding of the direct and experiential nature of her relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape. For example, Roger Lipsey came close to O’Keeffe’s sensibility when he stated that the badlands of New Mexico were a figure for “what *is* after the nonsense has subsided” (Lipsey 1988, 374). And, according to Lippard, “The profound simplicity of Georgia O’Keeffe’s responses to space and form . . . can probably be attributed to 80 years of . . . walks through the places she has in every sense inhabited” (Lippard 1983, 125-26).

1990 to 2004--Recent Thought on O’Keeffe

Much of the material published on Georgia O’Keeffe from 1990 to 2004 focused on her personality and personal life, more than gender associations and her relationship with Ghost Ranch. These discussions included O’Keeffe’s influence on feminism and other woman artists, her value as an artist and specifically as a woman artist, and the importance of seeing her outside of masculine influence and filters (e.g. Chave 1992). Popular press coverage included an extraordinary amount of sensationalistic writing

about O’Keeffe’s personality and sexuality (e.g. Cork 1993). I focus here on criticism relevant to my research questions; themes from this period addressed here are gender and feminism, the Ghost Ranch landscape, and the three relationship aspects. Within the literature on gender, a few works provided more indepth analyses, for example, addressing gender symbolism and ideas of pre- and post-gender (Udall 2000; Dijkstra 1998). An additional section explores associations between O’Keeffe and ecofeminism.

Gender and Feminism

For the first time, writing that broadened the discussion from sex to a wider sense of “eros” and that provided alternatives to dualistic and sexualized interpretations dominated the criticism, reflecting the more expansive and fluid thinking about sexuality and gender during this period. Feminist thinking was often applied to O’Keeffe, as in the 1970s and 1980s. Some criticism still continued sexual and essentialist female interpretations (Hubbard 1993; Brumer 1992; Chave 1992); some rejected dualistic interpretations, for example, O’Keeffe’s skyscrapers could be thought of as images of female bodies and there was no contradiction between female flowers and female buildings (Curinger 2003, 35-36). Other writers agreed that O’Keeffe’s paintings were sexual, but broadened the meaning of sexual: O’Keeffe expressed “the whole psyche” not just sexuality (Curiger et al. 2003, 22); and O’Keeffe’s paintings were about human nature rather than just female sex (Koons 2003, 187). Hoffman (1997) maintained that music and dance played important roles within O’Keeffe’s work, and that what others interpreted as purely sexual was actually the integration of the life and joy of music and dance into her paintings, for instance, the presence of flow and movement in O’Keeffe’s spiral imagery (Hoffman 1997, 46). In addition to describing the types of male interpretations of O’Keeffe’s work that overly emphasized sexuality and applied stereotypes of the “female” onto O’Keeffe (e.g. O’Keeffe as a passive plant growing with male care, O’Keeffe painting maternal space), Chave discussed how O’Keeffe’s work challenged and threatened male critics’ notions of what was appropriate for a woman painter. For example, O’Keeffe’s paintings were the result of a woman artist speaking for herself, as the agent of her own desire (Chave 1992, 41; Chave 1990, 116, 119, 123).

For a number of writers, especially ecofeminists, and a number of O'Keeffe critics, it was important to broaden "erotic" from human sexuality to a sense of overall relationship with the earth's creative forces. Frueh, writing from a feminist viewpoint, resolved the apparent contradiction between O'Keeffe's passion and purity by interpreting O'Keeffe's energy as an example of the "erotic intellect," with "erotic" referring to a passionate engagement in life rather than a sexual focus (Frueh 1994, 279). For art historian Sharyn Udall (1996, 106), O'Keeffe's images were erotic, and united "living forces in earth, plant, and human." Dijkstra related eros to O'Keeffe's relationship with her art. He described O'Keeffe's images as reflecting a "polymorphous eroticism" (Dijkstra 1998, 6), an eroticism that connects colors and textures with the body and the self, which bridges between the genders, and between self and other. While these discussions of O'Keeffe and eros primarily addressed her New York period abstracts and other early work, this broadening of the concept of eros that appeared in the 1990s may have influenced people to see her Ghost Ranch landscape paintings within this sense of eros, rather than as specifically sexual.

Udall explored the mythic and symbolic influences on O'Keeffe's artistic vision, combining classical and feminist approaches (Udall 2000, 1996), at times referring to Goddess imagery and other imagery used by feminists and ecofeminists (Orenstein 1988), as when she stated that O'Keeffe recreated the Black Place as a "primeval female creatrix" (Udall 1996, 123). O'Keeffe used skulls as symbolic references to herself, as in her use of a ram's head in *Ram's Head, White Hollyhock--Hills, New Mexico* (1935) (fig. 20), with its visual connotation of a woman's body and birthing, to represent her own personal restoration (Udall 2000, 186). For Udall, O'Keeffe's relationship with, and sense of communication with, nature and landscape was mediated by associations and symbols, many of which had been re-enlived by feminists. Along these lines, scholar Dan Peck maintained that O'Keeffe's later New Mexico paintings were more mystical and symbolic than her earlier work, that O'Keeffe's work used symbolism to a greater extent as her relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape grew deeper (Peck 2002). Udall also described the danger of using traditional symbols, especially within a feminist context. Misogynous associations can be made, for example, between women-as-tree which characterize women as "powerless, rooted, passive, and non-thinking beings"

(Udall 2000, 128, quoting Lynes). On the other hand, “. . . we can see that trees gave O’Keeffe a positive, powerful vehicle for studying the integration of self and nature” (Udall 2000, 128). Here is an example of how a feminist viewpoint can influence our perception and understanding of O’Keeffe’s art and relationship with nature.

A number of critics writing during this period proposed a strong mystical element within O’Keeffe’s work that related to gender duality. According to Udall, one of the mystical concepts is duality and the oneness that comes from joining opposite but complementary polarities, including that of masculine and feminine (Udall 1996, 89, 107). In her early painting, O’Keeffe worked with a sense of masculine/feminine color and value oppositions (Udall 1996, 107). Udall raised questions relating to O’Keeffe’s possible application of gender complements to the Ghost Ranch landscape: “Did she consciously identify herself with the lower, feminine earth forms in her New Mexican landscapes? Are the floating clouds or suspended sky-forms masculine? . . . More probable are loose resonances with her longtime mystical affinities; paired opposites, analogies of things above with things below” (Udall 1996, 107). This type of gender duality contrasts with the early twentieth century gender duality of masculine Modernists. This earlier duality held that things, and people, had to be either one gender or the other. The mystical gender duality has more in common with the unity of feminine and masculine within an androgynous being (Singer 1976). However, both dualities focus on either ends of the spectrum rather than exploring possibilities of focusing on the space inbetween the two polarities.

Several scholars of O’Keeffe’s art and nineteenth century Transcendentalism proposed a strong connection between the two (Novak 1997; Eldredge 1993, 193-194; Mitchell 1996), while others maintained that the connection was not as close as often supposed (Peck 2002; Curiger et al. 2003, 36-37). Supporters of this connection included Barbara Novak, who maintained that nature was a “spiritual repository” (Novak 1997, 73) for O’Keeffe, and David Teague who characterized O’Keeffe’s approach as “aesthetic transcendence” (Teague 1994, 272). O’Keeffe’s relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape combined transcendence and immanence--transcendence referring to moving from the material world to the spiritual world beyond and finding meaning in the spiritual or psychic, immanence referring to being present with how the physical world

unfolds and finding meaning in material reality. Relating to the landscape in terms of the “faraway” horizon or infinity, or in terms of the “nearby” objects, were both felt experiences for her. Feminists and ecofeminists value a balance between immanence and transcendence (Solnit 2001, 56). Traditionally, the immanent has been associated with the female (along with the earthy and bodily), and the transcendent with the male (along with the intellectual and conceptual). O’Keeffe raised the immanent to the level of the spiritual--seeing the beauty and specialness in unprepossessing natural objects--and brought the transcendent down to earth--connecting the “faraway” directly with the “nearby,” combining the opposites in the process--opposites that are often gendered.

Concepts of transcending gender, pre- and post-gender, gender dialectic, androgyny, and hermaphroditism have been related to O’Keeffe, her work, and her relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape. Because O’Keeffe’s work integrated images and forms associated with the female or male (circles, spirals, jagged lines) and depicted a “universal” essence of nature, several writers proposed that O’Keeffe’s work existed in a place outside or beyond gender. The image of the Lawrence Tree in one of O’Keeffe’s paintings was described as “a passionless, non-phallic column, rising in the shadows of the pre-sexual world” (Udall 2000, 135, quoting D.H. Lawrence). For Bram Dijkstra, O’Keeffe transcended dualistic gender ideologies by existing within a “pre-gender” state, returning to an earlier, pre-industrial society of gender harmony or even further back to some primordial time, rather than transcending into a “post-gender” world (Dijkstra 1998, 26, 107). His discussions included some joyful and forward-looking ideas about the creative and harmonious possibilities of a state outside of gender duality thinking. For Dijkstra, being human without gender brings a sense of joy in experience that goes beyond gender dualities and “confounds all theorizing” (1998, 201); without gender we can experience the merging of perception and being, and let ourselves see the world without a filter of aggression (1998, 45). According to Dijkstra, O’Keeffe had a “love affair with sheer being” (128), and:

. . . recognized that the human qualities that matter all stand beyond gender. She saw them as related to what we see and fail to see . . . As a woman--as a denigrated, yet desired “body”--she had no difficulty recognizing herself in the American land. She did not see nature as “feminine.” She saw it as the source of everything that brings out our sense of interconnectedness with what exists in

nature beyond ourselves, as the “oversoul” of one’s being in the world. Intuition, visual thinking, was as important to her as “the intellect.” (Dijkstra 1998, 88)

Dijkstra also promoted the concept of gender dialectic, of being able to move between the two gender poles rather than attributing either masculinity or femininity to an image (Dijkstra 1991, 123).

Whether a lack of emphasis on gender dualities means combining the two genders or means exploring a third place in between the two genders was also addressed by other writers. Kari Weil discussed the difference between androgyny and hermaphroditism within feminist thinking and interpretations (Weil 1992). Where androgyny refers to the combination of the two genders, hermaphroditism refers to the oneness of a being that incorporates maleness and femaleness (Weil 1992, 145, 169). Wonder, according to Weil, is a non-gendered emotion because it has no opposite (Weil 1992, 166), and a sense of wonder was certainly characteristic of O’Keeffe. O’Keeffe may have seemed and felt androgynous in some ways but she was not herself “hermaphroditic.” However, she may have experienced the Ghost Ranch landscape as “hermaphroditic,” as a place and a being that incorporated masculine, feminine, and gender-neutral elements. The interpretation of O’Keeffe as an androgynous being who painted androgynous images was supported by Terry Tempest Williams, who maintained that O’Keeffe embodied an androgynous soul (Williams 1992, 183). These applications of various ideas about gender illustrate how writers during this period used gender notions of the late twentieth century to try to understand and make sense of how O’Keeffe felt about gender within herself and how--and whether or not--she portrayed gender in her images. O’Keeffe not only combined elements of the male and female but portrayed a world and state of being outside of or beyond gender, a more essentially human state.

In her 1995 essay on female photographers, Lucy Lippard proposed that images that show cultural differences and multiple viewpoints, that portray nature’s internal movement and view nature from within rather than from without, that look at the landscape through the family, that portray a personal relationship with the landscape, and that portray gendered power relationships are more often made by women than by men (Lippard 1995, 311). Lippard was defining a feminist, not female, landscape, implying that the landscape image had something to say about women’s social status, roles, and

opportunities. While O’Keeffe was indeed a feminist in many of her ideas and actions (Lynes 1992), her Ghost Ranch images did not portray a peopled landscape that made statements about women’s status, and her writings about her relationship with this landscape suggested more of a “being-to-being” or conversational approach than a feminist approach towards the landscape. Nor did she overtly indicate that she thought of the landscape as female or male. One aspect of Lippard’s feminist landscape that does fit O’Keeffe is the notion of feeling, and representing, landscape from the inside out--from a position of experiencing the landscape from inside oneself and from inside the landscape (Lippard 1995; Lippard 2002 pers. comm.).

This analysis shows that gender was seen as a very important factor in discussing O’Keeffe’s work and her relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape. Nondualistic and feminist notions of gender, and the expanded understanding of eros, were seen as relevant to--and embodied by--O’Keeffe. These writers were discussing O’Keeffe’s 1920s and 1930s work in the latter part of the twentieth century, indicating that O’Keeffe was ahead of her time with regard to living and representing alternative gender ideas.

The Ghost Ranch Landscape

As in previous decades, associations with southwestern deserts and the Ghost Ranch landscape influenced how critics characterized O’Keeffe’s relationship with this landscape. During this period, criticism variously described the Ghost Ranch landscape as the “region most closely allied to her inner visual landscape” (Benke 2000, 61), and as a combination of the vital and the cruel (Eldredge 1991, 124). James Kraft maintained that moving to New Mexico was the “releasing factor of her female nature and its freedom, a return to a sense of self before Stieglitz” (Kraft 1992, 26). The more sentimental descriptions of Ghost Ranch (Eldredge 1991; Adams 1992) suggested an emotional and perhaps more gendered relationship between O’Keeffe and this landscape; the less sentimental ones (Eldredge 1993; Benke 2000) suggested a more analytical, down-to-earth relationship.

The desert as a material and metaphorical place was written about in ways that related to O’Keeffe, but not necessarily referring directly to O’Keeffe. According to Baudrillard “. . . the desert is simply that: . . . an ecstatic form of disappearance”

(Buadrillard quoted in Skolnick and Campbell 1994, 112). For Lucy Lippard, (1995, 316), the desert was more than scenery, mood, or history--we experience it more personally. The desert was thought of as both mystical and down-to-earth, both transcendent and immanent. For feminist writer Rebecca Solnit, the desert was a combination of beauty and death, as in O’Keeffe’s skull paintings (Solnit 2001, 85, 86); a place “where the middle ground and the gentle elements of the pastoral are already largely missing” (Solnit 2001, 79). Present in the experience of a desert of violent beauty are both the awe of fear, and the awe of appreciation--the sense of awe and aesthetic appreciation behind many women’s and feminist celebrations of the desert (Norwood and Monk 1987). O’Keeffe experienced this same range of feelings--awe, fear, aesthetic appreciation--for the Ghost Ranch landscape, and, because this landscape was her home, felt these feelings on a daily and intimate basis.

The exhibit catalog for the major 2004 exhibit *Georgia O’Keeffe and New Mexico: A Sense of Place* at the Georgia O’Keeffe Museum focused on Ghost Ranch painting sites and brought readers and exhibit viewers into a more direct relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape than many previous works (Lynes et al. 2004). While the comparisons of O’Keeffe’s paintings and photographs of the matching painting sites focused on O’Keeffe’s painting style and the degree to which she modified and abstracted the natural forms to make her paintings (figs. 33, 34), the effect of reading the book and seeing the exhibit was one of sharing O’Keeffe’s intimacy with this landscape through closer observation of specific landforms. Several viewpoints on O’Keeffe’s relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape were expressed within the exhibit catalog. In this volume, Frederick Turner characterized O’Keeffe’s relationship with this landscape as one of conquest and domination. O’Keeffe achieved “parity” with the landscape, and “took on” the landscape (Turner 2004, 114, 115). This view contrasts with descriptions of O’Keeffe’s relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape as symbiotic and nurturing; perhaps it is not a coincidence that the author is male. O’Keeffe herself suggested a possessive relationship with the landscape, but not a dominating or violent one. Does Turner use language of domination, reminiscent of masculine approaches to settling the U.S. West, to counter the idea of O’Keeffe’s relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape as a nurturing one and to emphasize an aspect of this



Figure 33. Malcolm Varon. Photograph of site of O’Keeffe’s *Lavender Hill Forms*, and *Purple Hills Ghost Ranch--2 / Purple Hills No. II*, 2004. Courtesy of the photographer, and The Georgia O’Keeffe Museum.

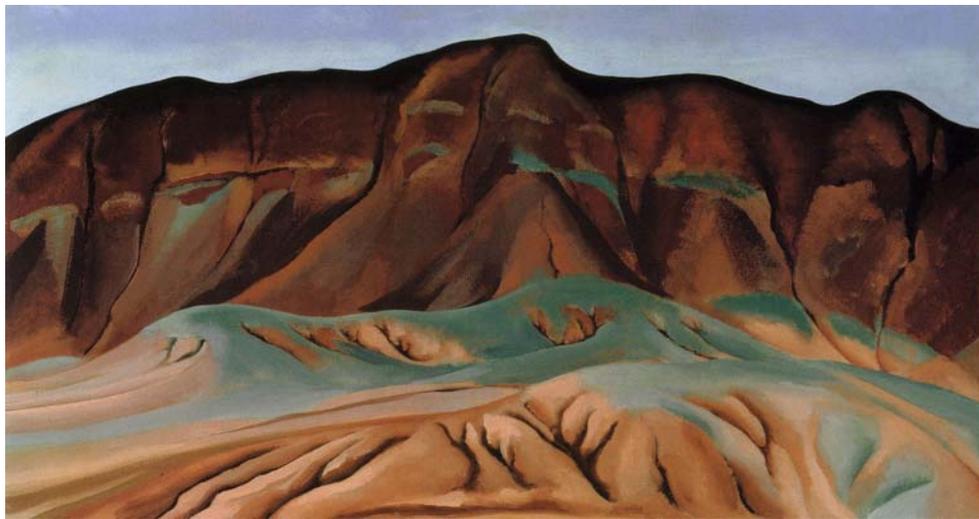


Figure 34. Georgia O'Keeffe, *Purple Hills Ghost Ranch--2 / Purple Hills No. II*, 1934. Courtesy of The Georgia O'Keeffe Museum and The Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation.

relationship that feminist writers have been less willing to see? If so, one exception is Virginia Scharff, who depicts O’Keeffe’s move west as a combination of commanding the view and conquest in addition to expanding the notions of what a woman could do (Scharff 1995, 6). O’Keeffe’s approach to the landscape was a combination of “male gaze” in terms of feelings of possessiveness, and an intimacy that could be considered feminine.

The poems of Sage Mansfield and L. Luis López provide a comparison of how responses to the Ghost Ranch landscape can differ by gender (Mansfield 2000; López 2000). Both sets of poems were inspired by the Ghost Ranch landscape, Mansfield’s specifically by Pedernal and O’Keeffe. Mansfield’s poems are filled with references to the female body and female goddesses or religious figures, and to her own personal relationship with Pedernal: “Lengthen shadows on Pedernal / outlining Lilith’s shape / bare breasted bare buttocks;” and “Georgia O’Keeffe. Where is she buried? / Last night I read her ashes were / scattered on Cerro Pedernal. / That’s where my ashes will go” (Mansfield 2000, 4, 32). In contrast, López describes the Rio Chama without overtly gendering the landscape: “in October you / wind / so slow / around each boulder / your / gentle belly / brushing / bedded pebbles” (López 2000, 16). Both poets express their very personal relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape. For Mansfield, experiencing this landscape as the body of a woman, and relating directly to O’Keeffe, are important aspects of this relationship. Gendering the landscape is not as important for Lopez. Mansfield’s poems indicate that associating Ghost Ranch and O’Keeffe with female bodies and imagery is still relevant and meaningful to some women as a way of expressing how they feel about this landscape.

Reproductions of the red hill paintings appeared in various publications during this time. The hills were described as an indicator of the region, a visual symbol to the viewer: “Although lacking a specific landmark such as the Pedernal, the red hills nevertheless provide a strong indicator of region, of the terrain that inspired so many of O’Keeffe’s most powerful landscapes” (Eldredge 1991, 128). Within her discussion of landscape and body, Udall referred to O’Keeffe’s red hill paintings as important “body-landscape paintings” (Udall 2000, 117), and Rosen (1990) said that “The wonderful ‘Red

Hills, Grey Sky' depicts the area's luscious, mound-like terrain as something erotically human." These comments refer to the red hills as visual icons and symbols, more than referring to O'Keeffe's relationship with the red hills.

In contrast to earlier periods of O'Keeffe criticism, the presence of the moon, and the sun, as a subject in her paintings received more attention. According to Judith Zilczer, O'Keeffe was ". . . fascinated with the atmospheric effects of both sunrise and moonrise . . ." (Zilczer n.d., 191), and she reminded us that O'Keeffe referred to the moon as male, quoting her saying: ". . . from the glare of the middle afternoon till long after the moon--a great big one--bumped his head just a little . . . as he came up out of the ground-light" (O'Keeffe quoted in Zilczer n.d., 192). Throughout history, the moon has often been referred to as male (Montgomery 1999), and O'Keeffe may have been reflecting this dual-gendering of the moon. During this period, the most extensive discussion of the moon as one of O'Keeffe's subjects was by Sharyn Udall. Because Udall included references to the moon as a female symbol, she may have been inspired by feminist writings about the role of the moon in Goddess lore and the role of the Goddess in women's art of the 1980s and 1990s. Udall discussed O'Keeffe's *Pelvis with Moon* (1943) (fig. 5): "Circular symbol of continual rebirth, the moon is an image of cycles and seasons associated since prehistory with women (as are the animal horns, ancient attributes of the Great Goddess, so often seen in O'Keeffe's paintings). Below the moon is O'Keeffe's beloved Pedernal" (Udall 1996, 106). Udall described Pedernal as a female deity in Navajo thought, and to describe the painting overall as ". . . full of the mystery of life and death" (Udall 1996, 106-107). The moon is an important element of this purported depiction of the mystery of life and death.

The Three Relationship Aspects

A fair amount of O'Keeffe criticism and scholarship from 1990 to 2004 related O'Keeffe's work to the three relationship aspects--nature as its own being and communication with nature, relating to landscape through the body, and developing intimacy with the landscape. Writing that addressed O'Keeffe's relationship with nature and landscape focused on her general sense of nature, how she captured the essence of

natural objects, and her emotional responses to nature and painting emotive equivalents. Specific responses to places like Ghost Ranch were less common.

A common thread throughout the O’Keeffe criticism is her relating to the essence of nature and natural objects through her emotions, and during the 1990s to 2004, the breadth and range of this discussion expanded. O’Keeffe painted the “emotional impression of nature” (Kraft 1992), and “transformed desert landscapes into emotional ones . . .” (Williams 1992, 182). For Koons (2003, 183), O’Keeffe’s natural subjects dealt with a combination of internal and external contemplation--connecting her inner feelings with how she responded to the external environment. In earlier decades, O’Keeffe’s way of using images from nature to represent emotions was equated with Stieglitz’s photographic equivalents (e.g. Brennan 2001); during this later time period, this is discussed more in terms of O’Keeffe’s own experience, without reference to Stieglitz.

In addition to using natural images to represent emotions, O’Keeffe painted her emotional response to nature (Bowman 2001, 24). This important distinction was made in some criticism throughout the decades from 1929 to 2004, and was made more meaningful when related to the ecofeminist notion of two-way communication with nature that is needed to really be able to relate with nature. Using natural images to represent emotions involves first feeling an emotion then finding an image to represent it--the emotion comes first. Painting one’s emotional response to nature involves first encountering something in nature, then having an emotion, then painting the emotional connection to natural object. The combination of these two approaches, which O’Keeffe seems to have experienced, is a form of two-way communication with nature.

In a rare example of overlap between O’Keeffe criticism and ecofeminist ideas, Sharyn Udall quoted Carolyn Merchant’s thoughts on relating to nature, and described O’Keeffe’s use of feminist and Goddess art symbols (Udall 2000, 108). For Dijkstra, O’Keeffe gave inanimate objects a heartbeat through her paintings (Dijkstra 1998, 91). For Peck, O’Keeffe’s more mature New Mexico paintings were about nature as a symbol of human concepts of spirit--not necessarily a nature that had a spirit with which she could communicate (Peck 2002). These writers were saying that O’Keeffe related with the landscape and projected herself and a sense of life onto the landscape. O’Keeffe

related to the Ghost Ranch landscape as a character with which she could interact, as other authors have related to the desert landscape as a character (Teague 1994, 11). However, her paintings and writings do not indicate that she related to the landscape in terms of ecology.

From 1990 to 2004, O’Keeffe’s representations of the Ghost Ranch landscape were seen as variously gendered bodies. Eldredge saw O’Keeffe’s landscapes as female bodies, “Twin hills rise breastlike above a fertile cleavage, evoking Mother Earth . . .” (Eldredge 1991, 116). Benke saw them as human bodies: “She portrays the hollows and furrows of the geological forms in a manner which recalls the folds and contours of the human body” (Benke 2000, 68). Dijkstra stated that O’Keeffe painted the “ever shifting bodyshapes of an androgynous earth” (Dijkstra 1998, 250-251), and returned to the idea of finding emotional equivalents in natural forms when he stated that O’Keeffe’s landscapes’ curving lines and gullies were an analogy of nature representing emotions (Dijkstra 1998, 59). Landscape is to body as nature is to emotion. This variation suggests that late in the twentieth century, those writing about O’Keeffe were thinking in terms of the landscape being generically human or androgynous as much as being specifically gendered, and that, outside of feminist writings, men were more likely to interpret her landscapes as female. Mostly, these statements gave a continuing sense of O’Keeffe sensualizing the landscape and giving it life through her paintings. They were not necessarily saying that the landscape itself was gendered, human, or androgynous, but that O’Keeffe was depicting it that way.

The possibility of the landscape being male did not appear within the literature on O’Keeffe, but was explored within the literature on feminist approaches to art. Geographer Catherine Nash considered how women artists could represent the male body as landscape in art, and how turning the tables on the “male gaze” in this way could unsettle the more familiar men-looking-at-female-nature paradigm and open the way for more diverse approaches to landscape and gender: “It is as easy in this instance to find curves in the male body to correspond to apparent rounded forms in the natural landscape. This frees the body-landscape metaphor from any essential equation between nature and femininity . . . the female body can be reclaimed as a landscape or the male body be revisioned as land to change conceptions of both male and female sexuality”

(Nash 1996, 160, 167). O’Keeffe may have experienced the landscape, or certain landscape features, as male, but she did not overtly indicate this in her writing or images. In Chapter Five I propose a workshop exercise to explore how interpreting the landscape as male influences our sense of relationship with the landscape.

Anna Chave, Sharyn Udall, and Bram Dijkstra offered their impressions of how O’Keeffe related with the Ghost Ranch landscape through her body. Their impressions complement O’Keeffe’s statements by adding images and metaphors. For Dijkstra, O’Keeffe’s motivation was not spiritual as much as related to direct sense experience, and it had to do with the “weight of the sky molding her being into the curves of the earth” (Dijkstra 1998, 153). For Chave, O’Keeffe “. . . found in natural configurations, large and small, homologies for the felt experience of the body” (Chave 1992, 35). For Udall, O’Keeffe “made the landscape coextensive with the body,” and O’Keeffe restated “the cultural phenomenon of the body as a primary landscape” (Udall 2000, 81, 112, 82). These writers related O’Keeffe’s work and her relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape to a sense that we relate to place by being present in our bodies, by feeling the landscape and our bodies as one, by interacting with the sky and the earth through our bodies, and that O’Keeffe’s paintings help us to feel the landscape. Gender is not mentioned in these statements, but the fact that these writers are talking about the work of a woman painter makes a difference--the cultural undercurrent of the special relationship between women and their bodies makes it more likely that they would make these statements about a woman’s images than a man’s.

O’Keeffe scholarship during the 1990s and early twenty-first century was rich with explorations of O’Keeffe’s sense of intimacy with nature and the Ghost Ranch landscape. Several writers described this intimacy in terms of a general, more diffuse feeling of closeness with nature. Both Udall and Messinger related this general feeling of closeness to O’Keeffe’s coining and use of the term, the “Faraway.” For Udall, O’Keeffe’s “Faraway” reflected a desire for “. . . oneness with ultimate reality” (Udall 1996, 92), and that O’Keeffe used “Faraway” to refer to the mystical as revealed in nature (Udall 1996, 109), that is, more as a concept and general feeling than a far-off place. For Messinger, O’Keeffe used “Faraway” to refer to a combined physical and emotional state of mind--a combination of the far and the lonely (Messinger 2001, 135).

By coining and using this term, and “The Faraway Nearby,” O’Keeffe was actively formulating her own kind of intimacy with nature and the landscape. For Dijkstra, O’Keeffe was intimate with nature and landscape in a nongendered or pre-gendered way (Dijkstra 1998, 87-88), that is, did not think of the landscape as feminine or masculine, and did not relate to the landscape as a female or masculine being. Given that O’Keeffe was definitely a gendered being, her intimacy with nature could not have been non-gendered; perhaps Dijkstra was saying that her relationship was less gendered, and not in terms of gender dualities.

Comments also dealt with O’Keeffe’s sense of intimacy with nature and the Ghost Ranch landscape in a more specific way, for example, O’Keeffe’s relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape as an entity in itself, as a combination of the landscape and O’Keeffe’s presence within that landscape, and how she related to the landscape. This intimacy had a certain character, elements of which included O’Keeffe’s long term and day-to-day familiarity with this landscape, an uncluttered directness of her approach to the landscape, and of the landscape’s presentation of itself to her (Cowley 1994). O’Keeffe’s direct approach to the landscape involved experiencing its presence and taking it for what it was, without associating it with symbols or other meanings. According to Udall, “She is painting landscapes in the first person singular, voicing her intimacy with landforms that became symbolic extensions of her own body” (Udall 2000, 121). Here, Udall combined senses and symbolism, saying that certain landscapes became the symbols themselves, and symbols of O’Keeffe’s body itself. To me, painting in the first person singular means that, through her paintings, O’Keeffe was saying “I am . . . this landscape,” “I look like . . . this landscape,” and “I feel . . . this landscape.” Indeed, O’Keeffe often made declarative statements to this effect. Through her writing, O’Keeffe expressed a very direct intimacy with specific landscapes, hills, trees, and rock faces by describing how she sat with them and transformed them into her images, for the most part without consciously using myths, symbols, or associations to mediate between herself and the landscape.

These writers suggested that O’Keeffe had a two-way relationship with nature. O’Keeffe certainly knew the landscape through her senses. Her subject was a landscape of desire, but more of her own desire than the landscape’s desire, contrasted with Leslie

Marmon Silko's *Yellow Woman* stories where nature spirits take the form of desiring men and women (Norwood 1988, 180). O'Keeffe may have felt that she became the hills and rocks she painted, but perhaps this was a desire to merge with the landscape more than a desire to approach the landscape as an equal being, as in Legler's postmodern pastoral approach.

Ecofeminism

In the 1990s and into the new century, the literature on ecofeminism expanded. The different kinds of ecofeminism--radical, social, spiritual, expressive--share the belief in a direct connection between the degradation of nature and the discrimination against women in Western culture (Warren ed. 1996). From 1990 to 2004, O'Keeffe criticism and ecofeminist writings were somewhat separate dialogs, and they did not intersect often. However, I maintain that there is a strong relationship between ecofeminist concepts and O'Keeffe's approach to landscape. Ecofeminist ideas can help us understand O'Keeffe's relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape by providing a relevant basis for comparison. And, they can update our interpretations of O'Keeffe's life and work in terms of relevant contemporary feminist thinking. As I compare O'Keeffe, her work, and her relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape with ecofeminist thought, literature, and art, I am not saying that O'Keeffe was an ecofeminist. However, ecofeminist thought about how women and men can relate to nature resonates with O'Keeffe's experience and can help us understand O'Keeffe as we encounter her from the early twenty-first century.

A belief in the possibility of two-way communication with nature is not unique to ecofeminists, but it is a belief that figures strongly in ecofeminist literature (Legler 1997). The possibility of two-way communication with nature, with a landscape, and with specific elements within a landscape--whether "verbal" or through the body or one of the senses--is key to a sense of relating *with* the landscape rather than just relating *to* the landscape. Relating with the landscape is more likely to foster a more appreciative and less-destructive relationship, and artists who show us images of how they imagine relationships with nature can show us alternative futures for more nurturing and sustainable relationships between people and the earth.

The range of applications of ecofeminist thought is broad, from exploring moving beyond gender dualities, to comparisons with Deep Ecology theory, to discussions of environmental justice, our relationships with animals, and valuing indigenous women's knowledge of natural processes, to explorations of racial politics, and to analyzing how art and literature can communicate ecofeminist values and serve as "literary activism" (Carr ed. 2000, 15; Warren ed. 1997; Sturgeon 1997, 113-134). Applications of ecofeminist thought can raise our awareness of how women-and-nature associations influence policy and personal decisions, and suggest ways to change this thinking and value both women and nature more highly. Moving beyond gender dualities is a key element within this effort for many ecofeminists (Warren ed. 1997). Deconstructing the dualities of female/male, body/mind, and nature/culture, can allow us to consider nature as either female or male, can reduce the degree to which the feminine is relegated to the intuitive and body-centered, can encourage respect for an overall sense of unity without associations with personal ego (Spretnak 1997), and can enhance respect for "body knowledge" (Curtin 1997, 90-91). I focus here on ecofeminist literature and art, which share the objective of moving beyond dualities and reimagining our relationship with nature (to use Legler's phrase) through story and image. Ecofeminist literature--often within the science fiction/fantasy genre (Norwood 1993, 263)--has explored revisioning relationships with nature primarily through voice and vision. Ecofeminist art has included land reclamation projects, performance art, sculpture, and, to a lesser degree, painting.

A number of writers discuss ecofeminism and literature (Carr ed. 2000; Norwood 1993; Murphy 1991), and Gretchen Legler provides a good summary of, and organizing structure for, these discussions. A belief that nature is its own being with voice and volition, and the possibility of two-way communication with nature, is evident where animals, natural places, or natural forces are active characters in the story, where they are beings with agency that affect the story's outcome. Using women's sexuality as a source of women's power and as a metaphor for expression and creativity indicates a belief in the ability to communicate with nature and to know nature and landscape through the body. Stories of women's interactions with nature, animals in particular, offer models of alternative kinds of intimacy with nature.

“Pastoral” is one of the terms that ecofeminists have reclaimed. Legler’s “postmodern pastoral” refers to an ability to have a “conversation” with nature; communication between humans and non-human nature can be a conversation between knowing subjects (Legler 1997, 229). Contrasted with Harrison’s literary “female pastoral,” where the rural landscape is a source of strength and a liberating force for women rather than a place of patriarchal servitude (Harrison 1991), Legler’s postmodern pastoral addresses relationships with nature more than gendered social relationships. These two reclamations of “pastoral” update the eighteenth and nineteenth century pastoral described in Buell (1995), where pastoral was an ideology or myth, and where nature was a passive object with which people used to compare themselves and which they used for their own purposes.

The stories of European-American writer Ursula Le Guin and Native American writer Leslie Marmon Silko are often cited as examples of expressions of ecofeminist ideas (Legler 1997; Norwood 1987). In Le Guin’s story *Buffalo Gals Won’t You Come Out Tonight* (Le Guin 1987a), she “. . . explores why women identify with nonhuman animals, how women might express their connection with nature without unduly projecting Western ideas about gender on the earth, and whether women must choose between loyalty to nature or to culture” (Norwood 1987, 267). In this story, Le Guin’s protagonist survives a plane crash and is taken to a community of animals on a different side of the world. Myra can communicate with these animals through language. They give her a new pine pitch eye to replace the one she lost in the accident, and this eye is the key to her new awareness of relationship with nature, her new vision (Le Guin 1987a). Myra returns to her world with the gift of integrated sight, “. . . with both eyes, joining culture and nature into one vision” (Norwood 1993, 268). In this story, both the female protagonist and animal characters have agency, but not necessarily the earth and plants. There is definitely two-way communication between Myra and animals, but not necessarily between Myra and the landscape. Her new sense of intimacy with nature is more through language and sight than through overall body awareness, sensation, and experience. As an artist rather than a writer, O’Keeffe used primarily sight and body awareness.

In Leslie Marmon Silko's *Yellow Woman* story (Silko 1981, 54-62), the female protagonist relates directly to the landscape and to natural forces within the landscape, as they appear to her in human form. In this story, a male character--at once a man and the male wind spirit--is a catalyst for the protagonist's spiritual and physical experience (Silko 1981, 54-62). A natural element--the wind--has agency and voice and is anthropomorphized into a human male. Moving towards wilderness and wildness, which are associated with her sexuality, the protagonist interacts with a male nature spirit. Thus, women's sexual yearning is connected to a yearning to feel nature closer and inside herself (Barnes 1993). Rather than humans being opposed to nature and nature being identified as male through the use of a male spirit character, Silko uses a male being from the animal and spirit world to help her protagonist achieve the link she desires. In another Silko story, *Ceremony*, a female spirit from the animal and spirit world helps a male protagonist achieve this link (Silko 1977). Nature is not necessarily associated with the feminine; it can be feminine or masculine. Within this connecting of human and spirit world, both the female protagonist of the *Yellow Woman* story and the spirit world have agency: she seeks, he responds; he leads, she follows. In this story, Silko does not make the landscape itself--the river, the mountain--a character. It is a more ephemeral element, the wind, that is anthropomorphized.

Compared with Le Guin's relating to nature through voice and vision, and Silko's relating to nature through spirit and sexuality, Anglo-American writers Gretel Ehrlich and Terry Tempest Williams relate to landscape through language and through their senses. Communicating with nature and landscape, knowing landscape through the body, and intimacy with nature and landscape are very strong in Ehrlich's writing. Her intimate relationship with nature involves familiarity with the landscape, interacting with the landscape, and identifying with the landscape, and has the same sense of accepting nature for what it is that is also present in O'Keeffe's writing. For example, "As I begin to walk again, it occurs to me that this notion of eating the earth is not about gluttony but about unconditional love, an acceptance of whatever taste comes across my tongue: flesh, wine, the unremarkable flavor of dirt"; ". . . the elusive shapes of summer--the hipbones and elbows of a mountain's body, or a lover's"; and ". . . a view is something our minds make of a place, it is a physical frame around a natural fact, a two-way transmission

during which the land shapes our eyes and our eyes cut the land into ‘scapes’” (Ehrlich 1991, 29, 43, 64). Legler interpreted Ehrlich’s relationship with nature as erotic, and as an example of postmodern pastoral. Postmodern pastoral can address relationships between humans and the landscape as well as humans and animals, and humans and natural forces (Legler 1993), and Ehrlich does both. For Legler, Ehrlich’s nature writing was about using language and body to find nature’s voice, and her own erotic voice (Legler 1993, 47). As with other feminist writers, Legler broadened the meaning of ‘eros’ to refer to the voice of imagination, creativity, life force energy, and the capacity for touch and joy. According to Legler, Ehrlich’s vision “. . . is a post-humanist vision of landscape that, instead of imaging the land as agentless female object, emphasizes erotic conversation between humans and the land; a reinvention that constitutes the land as an agent, a ‘speaker’ with erotic autonomy” (Legler 1993, 46). Ehrlich suggested that “the land can speak, be spoken to, can be engaged with as a body” (Legler 1993, 54).

Terry Tempest Williams uses “erotic landscape” to refer to being in relation with the earth and the landscape, in a sensual and not necessarily sexual way. “To be in relation to everything around us, above us, below us, earth, sky, bones, blood, flesh, is to see the world whole, even holy . . . eroticism, being in relation, calls the inner life into play” (Williams 2001, 104, 111). She experiences the landscape with and through her body, and as a body: “Once I enter the Joint Trail, it is as though I am walking through the inside of an animal. It is dark, cool, and narrow with sheer sandstone walls on either side of me . . . I come to the rock in a moment of stillness, giving and receiving, where there is no partition between my body and the body of Earth” (Williams 2001, 195-96). And, she suggests a sensual and sexual intimacy with the landscape: “I dissolve. I am water . . . Playing with water. Do I dare? My legs open. The rushing water turns my body and touches me with a fast finger that does not tire . . . It is endless pleasure in the current . . . my body mixes with the body of water like jazz” (Williams 2001, 201-202). There is two-way communication between Williams and the landscape, through being, sensation, and pleasure. Williams doesn’t directly associate the erotic landscape and O’Keeffe, but she does talk about O’Keeffe and animal spirits. According to Williams, because of her close relationship to the land and her persona, O’Keeffe related to the spirit of the landscape through the coyote character, and in a way herself was coyote

(Williams 1992, 181-186). Here, coyote is anthropomorphized, and O’Keeffe is “animalized.” For Williams, there is little separation between O’Keeffe, the landscape, and the creatures and spirits of that landscape. O’Keeffe is not so much relating with the landscape as becoming it and embodying it.

The writings of these authors are examples of expressions of women relating to the land in an intimate way, and they provide useful comparisons with O’Keeffe. O’Keeffe’s sense of relationship with nature and landscape grew in her throughout her life as she lived on the prairies of Wisconsin and Texas, and came to fruition when she turned the Ghost Ranch landscape into her home. She didn’t acquire the wisdom of relating to landscape in a separate place and return home with this new wisdom as did Silko’s protagonist; she developed the wisdom at home, and took it with her when she traveled away from home. O’Keeffe related to the Ghost Ranch landscape through her senses and her body, and did not always feel the need to anthropomorphize the landscape, animals, or natural forces to be able to relate to them and to have a sense of communication. Where Le Guin’s and Silko’s stories have female protagonists relating to nature through language and sexuality, and characterize their relationships with nature as similar to human-to-human interactions, O’Keeffe experienced her relationship more in terms of sight, aesthetics, and bodily sensation that was often more purely sensual than necessarily erotic. If asked, O’Keeffe may have spoken of the landscape as sensual, but probably not as erotic. Ehrlich’s expression comes close to O’Keeffe’s when she says “‘Space . . . starts right here at my lips. I gulp it in . . .’” (Legler quoting Ehrlich, 1993, 49).

While ecofeminist literature addresses relationships with nature in terms of language and story, ecofeminist art uses image, aesthetic symbols, and visual processes. Deborah Mathew defines ecofeminist art as a combination of feminist and ecological spheres (Mathew 2001). “Some ecofeminist artists articulate social and environmental concerns in conventional gallery spaces. Others choose alternative forms in unorthodox spaces. These may be site-specific installation, ritual and performance, habitat restoration and other unconventional media that mainstream society may not yet identify as ‘art’ ” (Mathew 2001, 10). For Rebecca Solnit, “Ecological theory, feminist social theory, and postmodernism all embrace some version of this systemic worldview, which

is reflected in temporally unstable, site-specific, performative, bodily, and process art, as well as in photography, installation, and other more familiar genres” (Solnit 2001, 58). Ecofeminist recuperative ecological projects can involve some manipulation of the earth, but on a small scale compared with 1960s Earthworks, and usually have a healing intent (Boettger 1994, 248). In general, feminist ecological art involves community collaborative projects, environmental activism, environmental rehabilitation, and performative statements about women’s and men’s relationships with nature (Boettger 1994) more than studio art, perhaps because studio art is associated with masculine individualism. Some ecofeminist art “involves a union of stereotypically ‘feminine’ and ‘masculine’ modes of being” (Boettger 1994, 261).

Examples of art that is either identified as ecofeminist or which shares some ecofeminist themes include: Susan Leibovitz Steinman’s planting of native grass and wildflowers along a roadway median that related to the community’s ecological history (Mathews 2001); Erica Fielder’s “sensory field guides” for relating to certain natural places and her Native American inspired rituals that illustrate human’s relationships with watersheds (Mathew 2001); Patricia Johanson’s *Endangered Garden* project, an ecological design for a sewage plant that provided a public park, where Johanson collaborated with environmental specialists to produce a piece of “utilitarian ecological art” (Boettger 1994, 259); and Basia Irland’s 1990s *Water Library* project that involved a collaboration between many people along the Rio Grande to celebrate and raise awareness of the importance of the river system to the health of adjacent communities. Another example is Joseph Beuy’s 1968 piece “in which a black telephone is linked to an Adamic clod of dirt: the implication of conversation with the earth is clear and dizzying” (Solnit 2001, 155). This piece suggests direct communication between people (albeit through a machine) and the earth.

To further research ecofeminist painting, I asked the secretary of the nation-wide organization *Art, Nature, Culture* to send a message to the membership, requesting information on ecofeminist art. I received information from, and about, five American women artists who self-identify as ecofeminist, or whom others in the organization identify as ecofeminist. These five artists all express the three relationship aspects-- communicating with nature, knowing landscape through the body, and intimacy with the

landscape--through the creation of images. No male artists were identified. One respondent characterized art in the ecofeminist tradition as “a shamanic/earthbased way of relating through art to the Gaia hypothesis” (Horton 2004, pers. comm.) Within this small sample, ecofeminist art includes abstract and more realistic paintings addressing environmental justice and women’s relationship with nature and landscape.

Beth Ames Swartz and Susan Loonsk both self-identify as ecofeminist artists, and both work with abstract images that convey how they feel about and interpret a landscape, place, or an environmental issue. Loonsk combines color, line, and words to produce images that are “social political commentary on ecopsychology, war, hierarchies, and related topics” (Loonsk 2004, pers. comm.; Art-To-Earth, Inc. 2004). Personal spiritual transformation, religious symbols, personal and global healing, and relationship with special places within the landscape are themes within the work of Beth Ames Swartz, who identifies her work from the 1980s and early 1990s as ecofeminist (Rubin et al. 2004; Swartz 2005). Figure 35 is an example of her late 1980s work where she uses symbol, color, and collage in an abstract design that focuses on women’s role in the ecological healing of the earth (fig. 35). According to Swartz, “the leaves . . . symbolize the growth of natural plant life on our earth and contrast with the images that depict the issues facing us, hunger, ecological destruction, war, disease, etc.” (Swartz 2006). Several of her series use natural materials and were completed on-site at places she felt to be sacred (Rubin 2002, 13-14; Jungermann 2002, 45). Swartz also shares the ecofeminist sense of communication and merging with nature; on a 1970 rafting trip down the Colorado River, she “wanted to be able to penetrate these rocks, enter into their soul and assimilate myself into them” (Jungermann 2002, 41). Unlike O’Keeffe, whose images of the Ghost Ranch landscape remind us of a human body, Swartz painted the body as a symbol of the universe in her chakra series (Raven 2002, 35).

While Katherine Ace does not describe her work as ecofeminist, she concedes that she uses various symbols within her somewhat surreal images that relate to ecofeminist themes. Her image *Stump* (fig. 36) is an example of how Ace juxtaposes representational elements within an image (Froelick Gallery 2004) where the different elements serve as specific symbols. According to Ace (2005), the truncated log is a “direct representation of the human body,” a natural and human scarred entity that

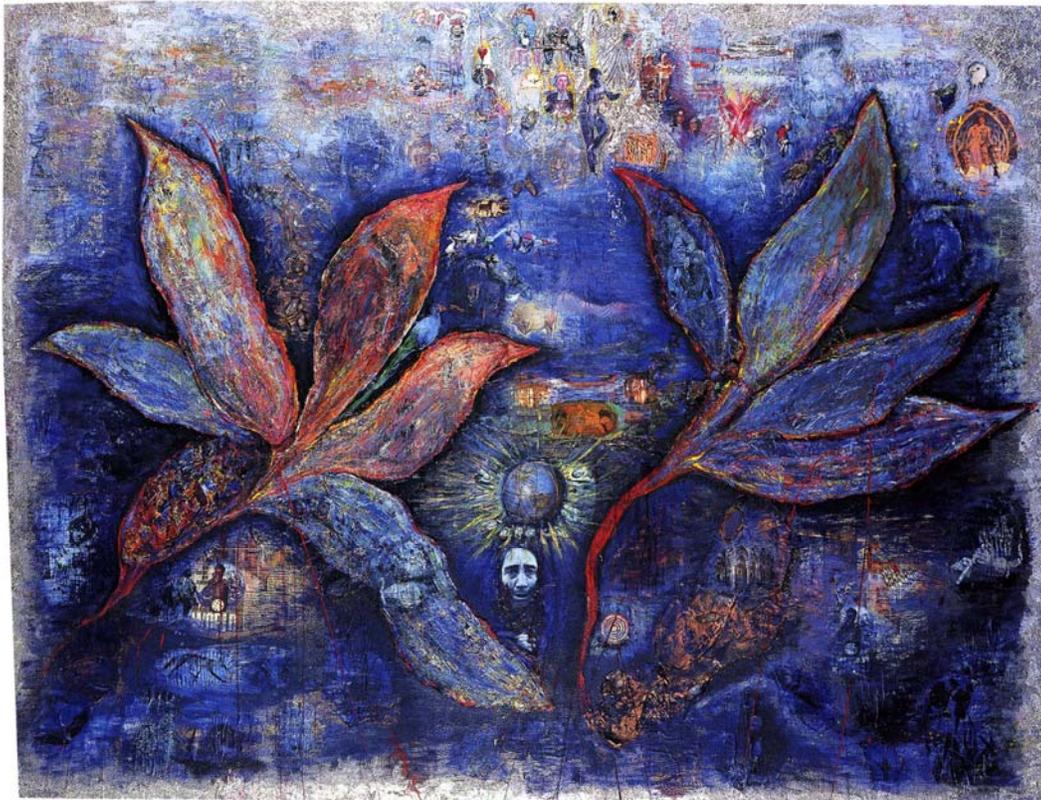


Figure 35. Beth Ames Swartz, *Dreams for the Earth, #6*, 1989.
Courtesy of the artist.



Figure 36. Katherine Ace, *Stump*, 2004
Courtesy of the artist, and the Froelick Gallery, Portland, Oregon.

embodies violence, and the newspaper folded in the shape of a bird represents the overuse of natural resources and the “loss of inner life to produce . . . NEWS” (Ace 2005). For Ace, the painting process, where “pieces of a painting change in the heat of doing the work,” is “a very feminine process” (Ace 2005). The images of O’Keeffe and Ace are very different, and yet can both be considered ecofeminist in a number of ways.

The images and artistic process of Maggie Remington have many similarities with O’Keeffe. One reviewer of Remington’s work characterized it as a combination of Mark Rothko and O’Keeffe (Stanfill 2000). Inspired by various southwestern landscapes, Remington’s large abstract paintings are completed on-site within the landscape, where she camps and collects natural materials such as mud and clay with which to make the painting, which in turn expresses how she feels about that landscape (fig. 37).

Remington describes her painting process:

I prefer to spend the night at the location where I plan to paint, especially lying on the earth in my tent. I dream and commune with the ancestors of the area. I feel--and feel more deeply--our connection to mother earth and the inner and interdependence of all life within the animal and mineral kingdoms.

Prior to commencing, I call on the spirits and energies of the area . . . The earth pigments, themselves, demand to be spread in certain designs, circles . . . While painting I loose myself into total focus on the task--feeling the colors, how they wish to be spread on the canvas. I tune into my soul/spirit and into the energies all around me, and my past--it all comes together in sensual expressions on canvas. (Remington 2003)

Remington gives agency to the landscape, the ancestors, and the earth paint. She connects to mother earth through dream and feelings, through the landscape’s spirits and energies. Like O’Keeffe, she involves her body both through feeling the sensations of camping on-site, and during the process of painting the large canvases. One difference is that Remington’s pieces are hung as draped, somewhat three-dimensional surfaces, rather than as two-dimensional surfaces.

Malcolm Andrews’ description of sculptor Giuseppe Penone’s “new intensity of intimacy with the natural world” provides a comparison with a male artists’ expression of how he relates to the site before creating his art: “In order to make sculpture, the sculptor must first lie down, flatten himself on the ground letting his body sink . . . concentrating his attention and efforts upon his body, which pressed against the ground allows him to see and feel the things of the earth . . . and attain the necessary degree of peace for the



Figure 37. Maggie Remington, *Upper Colona, Ouray, CO, 1999 / Colonas*
Courtesy of the artist.

accomplishment of the sculpture” (Penone, quoted in Andrews 1999, 206). Both Penone and Remington want to physically merge with and gather inspiration from the site; Remington specifically mentions Mother Earth, sensuality, and spirits of the land, and gives the earth pigments agency.

Compared with these five contemporary artists, Georgia O’Keeffe did not use symbols to portray ecofeminist global healing themes, but focused on the landscape itself, and let it speak through her images. Although O’Keeffe was not consciously or intentionally an “ecofeminist,” she participated, from early in the twentieth century, in the feelings and awareness that, looking back from the early twenty-first century, were similar to ecofeminist feelings and awareness. She experienced herself as a warm plot of earth, and spoke of lying down on a rock to feel the skin of the earth. She lived within and developed a profound intimacy with her home landscape. For Teague, O’Keeffe demonstrated an “imaginative sustainability,” a less violent transformation of the landscape (Teague 1994, 271-272) into what she needed it to be. In hindsight, O’Keeffe was expressing something that now resonates with ecofeminist thought. In addition to the recuperative and intentionally healing intent of much ecofeminist literature and art, one of the concepts at its heart is an acceptance of nature and landscape for what it is, and the primacy of direct sense experience. Accepting nature and landscape without trying to modify it is an important goal that is sometimes combined with trying to make the landscape what we would like it to be. O’Keeffe, through her writings, her paintings, and her long-term day-to-day relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape, gave us a sense of accepting the landscape for what it was, manipulating the landscape primarily on canvas, and being able to relate in an intimate way with the landscape, to the hills and rocks and plants, without necessarily trying to make them human.

Conclusion

This examination of O’Keeffe criticism and scholarship from 1929 to 2004 shows that not only has gender been a major topic within the writing on O’Keeffe, but that there is a rich diversity of thought about gender applied to O’Keeffe. Gender is important to many of those writing about O’Keeffe; something in her painting--combined with her persona--encourages discussion of gender. Gender is a key factor in criticism and

scholarship because it influenced O'Keeffe and it influenced how people have interpreted her work. The Ghost Ranch landscape itself (e.g. the red hills) has been gendered, certain aspects of the landscape such as the moon have been described as gendered symbols, and the kind of intimacy O'Keeffe had with the landscape has been gendered.

Over the decades, as Freudian ideas came in and out of fashion early in the century, as women's art was given a back seat in the 1950s and 1960s, as environmental art was approached differently by women and men in the 1970s and 1980s, and as feminist art grew in the 1980s and 1990s, O'Keeffe's artistic vision and mature painting style remained remarkably consistent. Interpretation of her work has varied widely--perhaps because the straightforwardness of her approach seemed too simplistic to many critics--but O'Keeffe's voice remained for the most part unswayed. Not one to be caught up by fashion or trends, O'Keeffe retained her clarity of purpose--to find and express her authentic self. In this, she was a feminist from the start, and ahead of her time in expressing and living alternative ideas about gender.

Critical and scholarly thought can be compared with O'Keeffe's own statements to form a rich set of material to use in an on-site workshop that discusses how O'Keeffe's relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape relates to gender and to the three relationship aspects. The research in this chapter provides grist for many questions, for example, how have ideas about intimacy with landscape changed over time? Why have so many writers felt the need to sexualize O'Keeffe's Ghost Ranch images? How do different workshop participants relate to various gender ideas, how do they relate these to O'Keeffe, and how do their ideas compare with the critics? In Chapter Four, I analyze to what extent existing programs that address O'Keeffe's relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape have incorporated gender and the three relationship aspects.

CHAPTER FOUR

EXISTING PROGRAMS

In her choice of subjects and illumination, and in her rendering of bare rock as vital form, O’Keeffe created a distinctly recognizable landscape aesthetic. She made the earth come alive.

--National Park Service, O’Keeffe study team

I do believe that O’Keeffe saw the landscape through her eyes, that of a feminist . . . the result was a beautiful rendering of feminist beauty and female beauty. I believe that all of our actions and work and ideas are influenced by the fact that we are women.

--Margaret Morris

O’Keeffe’s words and paintings and the extensive O’Keeffe criticism analyzed in the past two chapters provide a rich background about O’Keeffe’s relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape. How can this material be used to develop an on-site workshop focusing on gender and the three relationship aspects (communication with nature, knowing landscape through the body, and intimacy with the landscape)? Analyzing examples of programs that focus on artists’ relationship with the landscape, including O’Keeffe’s relationship with Ghost Ranch, is a useful first step.

In this chapter, I first look at some National Park Service (NPS) examples because it was through the NPS study that I became interested O’Keeffe and Ghost Ranch, and because the National Park System includes planned and implemented protected areas which commemorate artists’ relationships with the landscape. Characteristic of the agency as a whole, interpretive programs at these sites do not address gender in a substantial way. Weir Farm National Historic Site (Weir Farm), which preserves painter J. Alden Weir’s farm landscape, was listed on the National Register in 1984 and established as a National Historic Site in 1990, prior to the 1992 NPS O’Keeffe Study. Development of interpretive themes for Weir Farm and the potential O’Keeffe landscape

did not include gender; there is very little mention of gender in Weir Farm material, and gender is referred to only briefly in the O’Keeffe study.

After developing an appreciation for the importance of gender during my PhD coursework and my decision to focus on gender within this dissertation, I was curious to find out in what ways other programs on O’Keeffe addressed gender. I developed a participant-observer project to explore watercolor workshops held at Ghost Ranch, a number of Georgia O’Keeffe Museum Education Program events, especially their “Walks in the American West,” and an ecofeminist women’s art-and-landscape retreat. These are described and analyzed below as examples of implemented programs that addressed artists’ relationships with the northern New Mexico landscape, focusing on O’Keeffe, Ghost Ranch, or ecofeminism. Varying in scope and degree of visitor participation, these programs had in common a focus on the relationship between the artist--in most cases, O’Keeffe--and the landscape they painted, and the importance of providing on-site experiences. Gendered associations with O’Keeffe’s flower images and O’Keeffe’s relationship with feminism were sometimes mentioned; however, none of these programs addressed gender in detail. The artist’s intimacy with the landscape was addressed to varying degrees in most of the programs. Considering landscape as a being with voice and volition, the potential for communication with the landscape, landscape as body, and knowing the landscape through the body, were directly addressed only in the ecofeminist retreat. In the other programs, the relationship aspects were at times brought up by participants (including myself) in the course of discussion, but were not part of the instructor’s presentation. No programs that I attended--including various related lectures and exhibits not discussed here--addressed the role of gender in O’Keeffe’s life and art in a substantial way (App. A).

Within this participant-observer project, my analysis questions included: How do these programs facilitate an understanding of the artist’s relationship with landscape? Upon which aspects of O’Keeffe’s story do they focus? What experiences do they encourage? What processes of relating to the landscape and processes of group interaction do they use? How do they use and relate to the Ghost Ranch landscape--and other landscapes--to help participants understand O’Keeffe’s relationship with this landscape, and also to help participants become more aware of their own relationship

with landscape? How do these programs incorporate themes of gender associations and the three relationship aspects? And, how do participants respond to their experiences during these programs?

Weir Farm National Historic Site

The interpretation program at Weir Farm provides an example of how the story of an artist's relationship with his home landscape is presented to, and directly involves visitors at an existing National Park System unit. It also is an example of an interpretation program that does not substantially address gender within the story of an artist's relationship with their landscape. Weir Farm is a sixty-acre property in Connecticut, the one NPS unit that has been established specifically to preserve the landscape associated with a significant artist (NPS 1990b; NPS 1992b). J. Alden Weir was a key American artist of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries who is associated primarily with American Impressionism. Weir Farm is also significant due to its role in nurturing a community of artists associated with Weir.

While there are some major differences between the Weir Farm landscape and Ghost Ranch--size and scale, geographical region and landscape character, and time period, gender, and artistic style of the associated artist--some key aspects of Weir Farm make the comparison useful. This landscape was Weir's summer home and artistic inspiration for thirty-seven years, the relationship between Weir and his farm landscape was intensely personal, and this relationship is the key theme in the park's interpretation programs. These programs include a self-guided walking tour of painting sites used by Weir, his daughters, and other artists who lived on the property following Weir's death in 1919.

While Weir painted a smaller scale, peopled, and cultivated landscape, both Weir and O'Keeffe had strong emotional and practical connections with their landscapes, and both painted their personal responses to their own sense experiences of the landscape (Cummings 2000, 80). Weir's ". . . beloved Connecticut farm provided him with the means to explore his emotional and spiritual impressions of nature" (NPS 2004). Weir called his 240-acre farm near Branchville, Connecticut "The Good Great Place" (Evans 2000, 9). Both Weir and O'Keeffe painted familiar, ordinary landscape subjects, from

eye-level rather than as grand vistas. They both abstracted from the actual scene to capture the essence of the landscape (Cummings 2000, 83,87). During Weir's time, the farm was a pastoral, cultivated landscape of rolling hills and rock-lined pastures and fields; since Weir's time the oak, maple, and ash forest has been allowed to grow over much of the fields and pastures (Child Associates Inc. and Zaitzevsky 1996, 189-190). Many aspects of the Weir Farm interpretive approach are directly relevant to thinking about how to present to, and involve visitors in, the story of O'Keeffe and the Ghost Ranch landscape.

The three primary themes for interpretation at Weir Farm address the landscape (as an inspiration for the artist), the artist (Weir), and art (as a creative and social process) (NPS 2000b, 18-20). Intimacy with the landscape is addressed, but gender and the three relationship aspects are not. The interpretive material offers background history on Weir, his artistic development and his family, and descriptions of Weir's relationship with his farm landscape in the context of his relationship with nature (NPS 2000a, 2004). Weir's images and the juxtaposition of elements within his paintings derive from, and serve as symbols of, his feelings and philosophy about nature; for example, many of his paintings locate various obstacles (e.g. fallen trees, tree branches) in the foreground to represent, according to curator Hildegard Cummings, Weir's belief that it takes effort to penetrate to the heart of nature (Cummings 2000, 95).

The primary vehicle for involving visitors in the story of Weir's relationship with his farm landscape is the outdoor trail and trail brochure (Weir Farm Trust 1994). The brochure provides information on the artist, how he interpreted the landscape within an image based on his artistic style, and what his painting meant within the context of American Impressionism. The trail takes visitors out into the landscape. Weir himself “. . . felt it was particularly important to experience the landscape firsthand and once advised a student to . . . ‘go out into the country and paint with a stick--look at nature and get the paint on anyhow’ ” (Weir Farm Trust 1994). Within the brochure, Weir's paintings are compared with historic and recent photographs of the matching landscape (figs. 38, 39). In addition to experiencing the landscape itself, visitors are invited to participate in the creative process, for example, by sketching or painting on-site (NPS 2000b, 23). The farm landscape is the major element in this interpretive approach even



THE FISHING PARTY (c. 1915)
 Oil on canvas, 28" x 23"
 The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.

9 Weir chose a landscape full of personal associations for this canvas, considered an excellent example of American Impressionism. The painting reflects both the artist's sensitivity to nature and his appreciation for this particular place. Using consistent brush strokes throughout, Weir emphasized the effect of light filtering through the trees and drenching the open field with a palette limited to soft, pastel tones. Although the figures, who are probably friends and family, are incidental, they enhance the light mood of the scene. The rocky outcropping in the field beyond the bridge is only suggested, not fully rendered. This was characteristic of Weir's work in the last few years of his life, when his approach became less deliberately structured.



Path to the pond, after 1896
 Private collection

Continue on the trail for some distance. As you near the pond, look for a post on your right marking a detour to site #10.

Figure 38. Weir Farm Trust, Painting Sites Trail Brochure, Stop #9, 1994
 Courtesy Weir Farm Trust and National Park Service, Weir Farm National Historic Site

To reach the first painting site, pass through the little gate across from the Visitor Center and go past the terraced garden and through the bar-way (opening) in the next stone wall. Turn right and continue through a second bar-way into a field.



SPRING LANDSCAPE, BRANCHVILLE (1882)
Watercolor on paper, 5" x 6 1/4"
Weir Farm Heritage Trust



Spring landscape, 1988
Photograph by Susan Lapedis

1. This tiny landscape is the earliest known painting done by Weir at his newly acquired farm. Although the artist worked primarily in oils, he also experimented with watercolors throughout his career. On trips abroad, Weir used these fast-drying paints to make quick sketches, capturing scenes in much the same way we take a snapshot today; perhaps "Spring Landscape" was meant to show Weir's friends his new country retreat.

This sketch has vibrant, crisp colors and a loose, natural touch that some critics feel is lacking in the artist's oil paintings. The work is also important because it shows Weir was interested in landscape painting before his mid-career association with such artists as Theodore Robinson and John Twachtman, with whom he would more fully develop his Impressionistic landscape style. The textures, changing light, and colors of the property around the farm clearly inspired this new direction in the artist's work.

Figure 39. Weir Farm Trust, Painting Sites Trail Brochure, Stop #1, 1994.
Courtesy Weir Farm Trust and National Park Service, Weir Farm National Historic Site

though it looks somewhat different today than it did during Weir's residence, and visitors are encouraged to directly experience the specific places that Weir painted. Rather than encouraging visitors to wander and explore, the trail guide directs visitors to stay on the trail, and the landscape is presented as a view or scene--what Weir himself saw and painted--rather than as a place to explore on one's own.

Of the various socio-cultural variables (class, gender, race, ethnicity, age), class is addressed to some extent within the primary Weir Farm interpretive literature, but the others, including gender, are not. For example, one book describes the trend of middle and upper class New York City residents, like Weir, finding gentlemen's farms in the rural areas around the city (Milroy 2000). While variables other than class may not seem to the NPS to be relevant to the story of Weir Farm, other variables, especially gender, are part of the story and of the larger context of the Weir story. Interpretive material includes some gender-related facts, but no gender analysis. For example, Weir headed up the all-male Ten American Painters group, artists visiting Weir farm were primarily men, the farm of Weir's daughter Cora is now used as the visitor contact and orientation location, and Weir sometimes juxtaposed male and female figures in his paintings for symbolic effect (Cikovsky 2000, 24; Spencer 2000, 61). Daughter Dorothy Weir Young is included as a person significant to the story of Weir Farm NHS in the Interpretive Plan (NPS 2000b, 19). However, even the more indepth book-length study (Cikovsky et al. 2000) does not discuss gender dynamics and associations, including those that might be relevant to Impressionism. In this book, Hildegard Cummings discusses how, in the 1880s, the preference of artists and of the public shifted from large-scale iconic landscapes to more intimate and personal landscapes. She relates this trend to politics, the sense of nationalism, and the closing of the frontier, but does not mention factors related to gender (Cummings 2000, 81). Discussions of Impressionism within the basic interpretive literature also do not mention gender.

As Anthea Callen and Bram Dijkstra have demonstrated, however, Impressionism, both European and American, had a lot to do with gender. Not only were women artists like Berthe Morisot active in the Impressionist movement (Criss 2004), the Impressionist painting style was also gendered. Dijkstra argues that American Impressionism with its emphasis on bold use of quantities of paint ("paint as paint") was

virile and masculine, compared with European Impressionism (Dijkstra 1991, 68). According to Callen, in 1890s France, line and form were considered masculine, and thus appropriate for male artists, whereas color was feminine and not an artistic element appropriate for male artists to use as a determining factor of their images (Callen 2001, 29). Impressionism, with its emphasis on color effects and relatively light hues, was considered effeminate, and male Impressionist painters like Monet wanted to change this perception to engender more support for their chosen style. Because of the association during this period of light with reason and science and its connection to sight and line of sight, Monet proposed a style where light and line of sight were used to order the image, with color playing a secondary role (Callen 2001, 30-31, 41-42). To support her argument, Callen analyzed Monet's use of lines of sight and representations of light in landscape paintings of haystacks and poplar trees.

Using Callen's article as an example, a number of questions related to Weir in the context of gender associations within Impressionism could be addressed in the Weir Farm interpretive literature. These questions could expand visitors' understanding of the larger social context within which Weir's paintings were produced, and also their understanding of gender associations within Impressionism in general. Weir trained in France in the 1870s--did gender associations current in French art during this period influence his painting then or later? Did the European emphasis on light and line of sight rather than color influence Weir, and if so, are these emphases present in his Weir Farm paintings? Did Weir relate more to American "masculine" Impressionism than European "feminine" Impressionism? Was he aware of gender associations within Impressionism, but were other elements of painting style more important to him than, say, the balance between light, line of sight, and color (Cikovsky 2000, 17; Cummings 2000, 94)?

The Weir Farm interpretive materials communicate to visitors that Weir had a strong emotional intimacy with his farm landscape: ". . . the development of his own style coincided with his growing love for the farm and his desire to capture its magic and spirit . . . From his letters, we know that Weir himself drew immense pleasure from the meadows, stone walls, and wooded wetlands in Branchville, and they inspired some of his greatest work . . . his deep-rooted connection to this particular New England landscape--both on an artistic and personal level--never faded" (Weir Farm Trust 1994);

and the Weir Farm landscape promised “. . . peace and spiritual refreshment through intimate communion with the most benevolent aspects of nature” (Cummings 2000, 102). However, communication with nature, landscape as body, and knowing the landscape through the body, are not addressed within the basic Weir Farm interpretive literature. No mention of the Weir Farm landscape being visually similar to a woman’s body are present; the fact that the late nineteenth century Connecticut landscape did not have the large, skin-toned landforms as does the Ghost Ranch and other southwestern desert landscapes may have something to do with this. Experiencing his farm landscape through his senses is mentioned as important to Weir (Cikovsky et al. 2000), but a sense of knowing the landscape through his body is not mentioned. He may have experienced this, as a study of his personal papers may reveal, but it is not mentioned in the material that visitors are exposed to on-site. Through the primary interpretive materials, visitors learn that Weir was intimate with his farm landscape in terms of emotional associations and finding artistic inspiration, but not necessarily in terms of feeling that the landscape spoke to him or that he felt the landscape within him.

National Park Service O’Keeffe Study

Towards the end of Georgia O’Keeffe’s long life, a national level of interest in preserving places with which she was associated as a way of preserving her legacy emerged. The NPS often develops house museums to commemorate and interpret the lives and works of individuals significant in American history and culture, and converting O’Keeffe’s Abiquiu house into a national monument and house museum was the first idea pursued (NPS 1979a,b,c, 1982). When O’Keeffe wrote to Senator Pete Domenici to express reservations about the potential of national monument designation to disturb the local community and requested that the project be stopped (O’Keeffe 1983), the NPS plans were put on the shelf. O’Keeffe’s letter to Domenici mentioned that the landscapes she painted were there for all to see; this letter played a part in redirecting interest from her houses to the northern New Mexico landscape (O’Keeffe 1983; Mitchell 2005). The Georgia O’Keeffe Foundation now owns and manages the Abiquiu House and Studio, and the property was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1998 (Burt 1998).

In 1988, after O’Keeffe’s death and with both the Abiquiu and Ghost Ranch houses in private ownership, interest in commemorating O’Keeffe in ways other than a house museum emerged. The NPS was asked by Congress to explore ways to commemorate O’Keeffe’s nationally significant contributions to the world of art using the landscape rather than her houses. Quoting the legislation, the study “shall include but not be limited to an evaluation of the feasibility of marking and interpreting the landscapes consisting of the scenes and physical features from which Georgia O’Keeffe drew much of her inspiration” (P.L. 100-559, 1988). The resulting document, the 1992 National Park Service *Georgia O’Keeffe Study of Alternatives / Environmental Assessment* (NPS 1992a), is referred to here as the O’Keeffe study. This document was completed and sent to Washington in 1992. No action has been taken to implement any of the O’Keeffe study alternatives; in 1993 it was transmitted to the Secretary of the Interior and to House and Senate committees, with no subsequent action (Brown 2004; Director, NPS 1993; Cohen 1993).

A set of criteria for establishing the significance of places associated with artists were developed by the 1991 NPS Painting and Sculpture Theme Study Workshop, in order to respond to a number of proposals, including the O’Keeffe study. Two other landscapes associated with artists--Weir Farm National Historic Site (which had been established in 1990) and the houses and landscapes associated with the Hudson River school in New York--were mentioned in the Workshop report (Evans 2000, 9; NPS 1992b, 9, 23), and were part of the context within which landscapes associated with O’Keeffe were evaluated. This context used a broad art history approach for developing significance and interpretive themes. Themes focused on the evolution of the artist’s style and how the landscape influenced development of that style, and the relationship between the artist and the landscape, rather than substantial exploration of the role played by gender or other socio-cultural variables. The Workshop’s statement of significance of landscapes associated with O’Keeffe reflects this approach:

The lower Rio Chama valley is considered a nationally significant landscape because of its exceptional association with the life and work of Georgia O’Keeffe . . . The values O’Keeffe placed on simplicity and solitude are readily apparent in the surroundings she chose . . . O’Keeffe lived in her landscape for almost 60 years, drawing personal inspiration from it and continually reinterpreting it. The relationship between O’Keeffe and the landscape was so uniquely personal and

intimate that her work there became a consummate expression of them both, to the point that it changed the American public's perceptions of the Southwest (NPS 1992b, 24).

The membership of the O'Keeffe study team also reflected the agency's art history approach. The core team consisted of NPS planners and interpretive specialists. Consultants included other NPS staff like myself, representatives from various federal and state agencies and The Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation, art historians (including Jane Downer Collins, whose thesis provided a guide to and analysis of O'Keeffe's New Mexico painting sites), O'Keeffe scholars, and private landowners (NPS 1992a, 47). The Georgia O'Keeffe Museum in Santa Fe had not yet been established.

As a national-scale study completed by a federal agency that considered options for access and interpretation for the general public, the O'Keeffe study focused on developing an argument for a national level of significance for the landscapes associated with O'Keeffe. The significance statement addressed the landscape itself as the tangible resource to be protected (Bearss, quoted in Associate Director, Cultural Resources, National Park Service 1991, 1) and focused on the story from the perspective of the history of American landscape art in the West, rather than from the perspective of perceived political agendas like feminism or concerns of special interest groups or local residents. As with other NPS new area studies, the physical integrity of the landscapes (to what degree landscape character during O'Keeffe's time was retained) and the authenticity of the story told were primary concerns.

The O'Keeffe study document is a concise outline of study purpose, objectives, and alternatives. Management issues, logistics and access, cost, and potential impacts to the region are major issues, in addition to the basic story--O'Keeffe's relationship with the northern New Mexico landscape. In the study, of the various socio-cultural variables, ethnicity was addressed in terms of the importance of these landscapes to regional Indian and Hispanic communities, and some gender factors were mentioned. The study limited its attention to gender to the fact that O'Keeffe was a woman *and* a nationally significant artist, and was a major female role model for other women in terms of her independent life (Mitchell 2004). As a preliminary and general document, the O'Keeffe study does not go into details on interpretive themes; if the project had been

authorized, implementation plans would have gone into considerably more detail, but, given the NPS's relative lack of attention to gender, probably would not have addressed gender in more detail. In contrast, the NPS planning files--records of study team discussions and field trips, memos, review comments on study drafts--reveal the breadth and depth of thought that went into the study. Planning team discussions ranged over various topics, including more questions and thoughts about gender; the study document represents a distillation of these thoughts.

The concept of a "landscape museum" was key within the O'Keeffe study. Rather than focusing on the houses or development of a new and separate facility, (Estate of Georgia O'Keeffe 1988), visitors would be directed out into the landscapes associated with O'Keeffe, either by car or on foot (Faris 1991, 11). The landscape museum concept received support from NPS and non-NPS study participants as a way to connect visitors with O'Keeffe's places and experiences to a greater degree than with an indoor experience. The meaning of the term was also debated during the study. Are the landscapes a container for the painting sites and views of these sites? Can you "museumize" a living and evolving landscape as you can with objects within a structure? How would the landscape be perceived, and preserved? The key point connected with the landscape museum idea was that the degree of facility development within a landscape (buildings, trails, signs) (Cowley 1987), and the degree to which a landscape is formally protected and identified with an individual, influence experiences within that landscape. If the landscapes associated with O'Keeffe were turned into an outdoor museum, with signs and displays, would those interested in O'Keeffe's relationship with the landscape seek less structured and self-conscious places for a more authentic experience of this relationship? Within a designated landscape museum, visitors might look at the landscape rather than actually experience, and be within, that landscape. The O'Keeffe study addressed this by offering both "looking at" and "being within" experience alternatives, and by carefully considering the impact of on-site development.

The three alternatives developed within the O'Keeffe study varied according to the degree of access to the actual painting sites and degree of intimacy with the landscape (viewing from the road or on foot), the type of experience (informational or contemplative), how much the experience was directed and supported (visitor facilities

provided), and how much of the landscape was preserved (figs. 40, 41). The first alternative would take visitors to roadside pullouts to view painting sites. Signs or a brochure would focus on O’Keeffe’s painting style, and how she translated the view of the landscape into a two-dimensional image, combining realism and abstraction. For instance, a roadside stop along State Route 84 would allow a distant view of the Ghost Ranch hills and cliffs. This experience would be highly visual, and would preserve “the integrity of the resource” (NPS 1992a, 22). The experience could be deepened through more educational information, through including viewing points along minor roads as well as the main highway, and by providing access to short trails into the landscape, where feasible (NPS 1992a, 19, 22). Viewing sites would be near The Black Place and in the Taos and Alcalde areas in addition to Ghost Ranch and Abiquiu.

The second alternative would take people into an area just north of Ghost Ranch, on U.S. Forest Service land, that contains colored hills and cliffs similar to those on Ghost Ranch property directly to the south. Visitors would go to a small contact station to access minimal interpretive material and proceed into a designed commemorative space, then onto trails into the landscape that would allow a close-up contemplative experience of a landscape similar to Ghost Ranch (NPS 1992a, 30-33). The nature of the “designed space” would be left to a national design competition. The experience encouraged by this alternative would be a combination of seeing, feeling, and being more directly in the presence of a landscape directly associated with O’Keeffe. The experience would be more physical, sensory, and reflective than in the first alternative, and more likely to provide opportunities to touch the spirit of O’Keeffe by being physically within the landscape, and to discover qualities of the landscape by being able to wander within it. Of the three alternatives, this one would most afford “opportunities for entering the landscape and experiencing it on a more intimate level and in solitude, much as O’Keeffe did” (NPS 1992a, 11). Also, this alternative would be most likely to encourage visitors to take time and make the experience a more active one by doing creative activities (e.g. painting, writing) on-site. Of the three, this second alternative was popular among the study team due to the potential for experiences similar to O’Keeffe’s, and is my preferred alternative due to the possibility of visitors being more inclined to explore communication with the landscape and experiencing the landscape through the body than

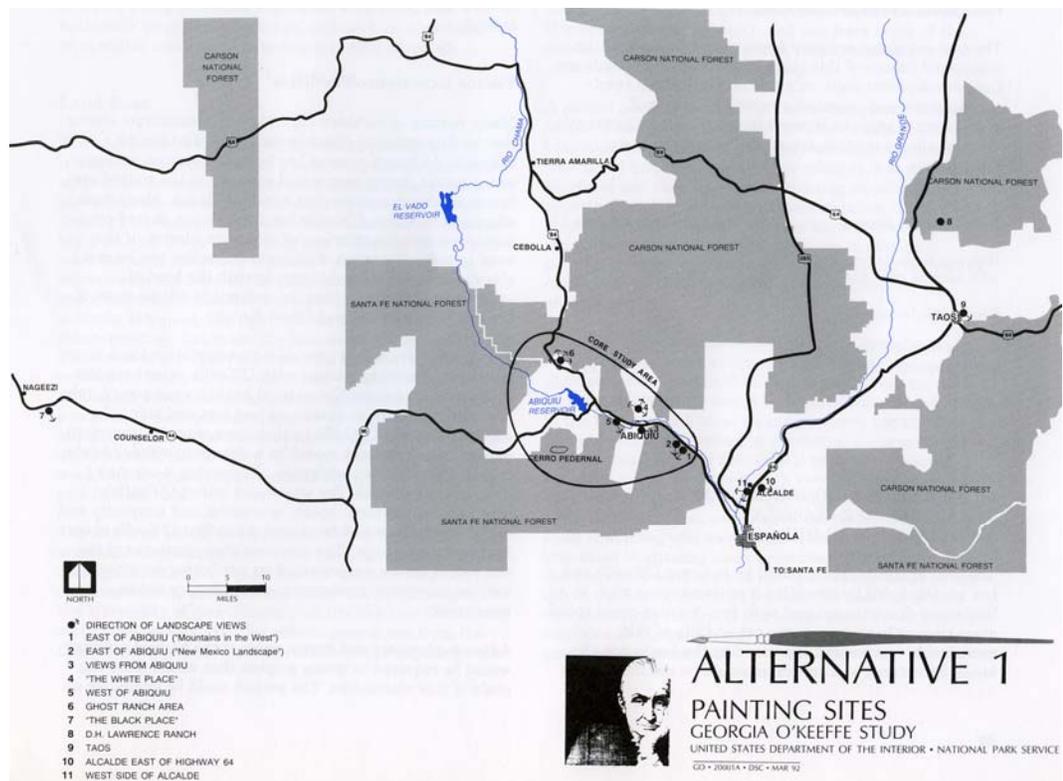


Figure 40. O'Keeffe Study, Alternative One, Painting Sites. (NPS 1992a, 23)

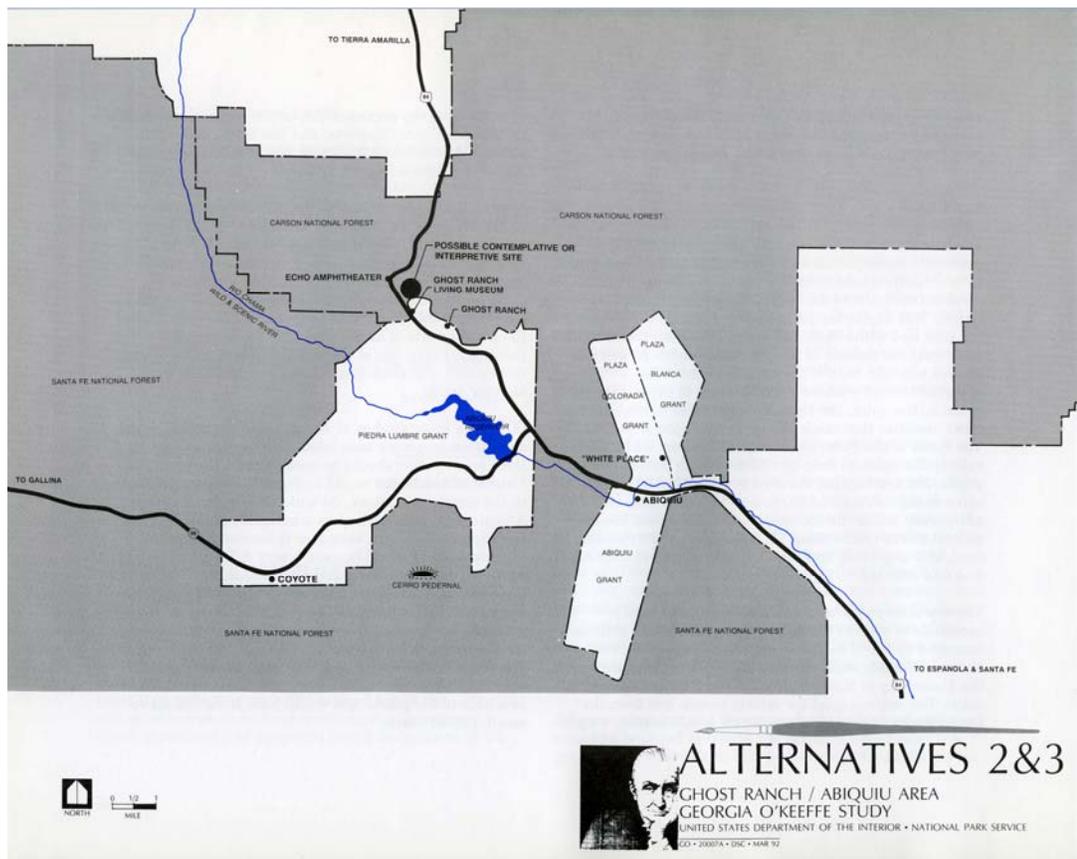


Figure 41. O'Keeffe Study, Alternatives Two and Three, Ghost Ranch / Abiquiu Area. (NPS 1992a, 26).

with the other alternatives.

The third alternative would afford a combination of educational and contemplative experiences, with a larger visitor center, more developed trails, and less opportunity for solitude and reflection. Learning about the context of O’Keeffe’s life at Ghost Ranch and her painting style would be offered through the visitor center. Additional layers of external stimulation, such as original paintings, would provide “a sensory-rich experience” (NPS 1992a, 28), but an experience less like that of O’Keeffe herself, that is, experiencing the landscape by itself, alone, wandering and discovering for oneself.

Integrating O’Keeffe’s story with other regional themes such as cultural diversity and geology, comparing O’Keeffe’s relationship with the landscape to various Native American approaches, and discussing O’Keeffe’s celebrity and public image, were raised as potential themes, but planning discussions and the final study focused on O’Keeffe’s relationship with the northern New Mexico landscape. The O’Keeffe study text is concise and eloquent: “The relationship between O’Keeffe and the northern New Mexico landscape was so close that her work there would become a consummate expression of them both;” and “. . . art historians agree that her relationship with the northern New Mexico landscape was uniquely personal and intimate” (NPS 1992a, 6, 7). As expressed later by a 1991 Workshop participant, the difference between O’Keeffe and many others who had close relationships with the northern New Mexico landscape was that she could convert her feelings into art (Sellars 2005).

As these quotes show, O’Keeffe’s intimacy with the Ghost Ranch landscape was an important theme in the O’Keeffe study. Study materials other than the study document show that core study team members had various ideas about this intimate relationship, and what “essential visitor experiences” (Faris 1991, 13) could be offered. Visitors could be encouraged to understand the “complexity of landscape perceptions and the creative process” (Mitchell 1990, 4). They could become aware of the spiritual and redemptive power of the landscape (O’Keeffe study team 1990, 1), and they could learn about how the northern New Mexico landscape was and still is a landscape with meaning to artists and non-artists alike. They could explore how the act of painting can be thought of as “place celebrating,” how the artistic consciousness might be a “. . . consciousness

defined by place . . .” (Faris 1991, 4), and the importance of the interface between the artists’ perception and their painted image to developing intimacy with the landscape. The study team discussed the importance of offering experiences that ranged from more superficial to deeper experiences of understanding and self-discovery (Faris 1991, 14).

In April 1990, I participated in the study team field trip to find O’Keeffe painting sites in the Ghost Ranch, White Place, Black Place, Taos, and Alcalde landscapes, and to meet with Ghost Ranch staff, Forest Service staff, and others involved in the project. Finding painting sites, which was facilitated by Jane Downer Collins and her thesis on O’Keeffe’s New Mexico paintings (Collins 1980), became a landscape “treasure hunt” for trip participants. Finding the painting sites was a key aspect of the O’Keeffe study, because these were the places to which visitors would be taken and which would be interpreted (figs. 42, 43). More like solving a puzzle than exploring O’Keeffe’s relationship with the landscape, this landscape treasure hunt experience made me aware that I was interested in encouraging visitors to move beyond this kind of experience, that is, not only matching paintings with painting sites, but also gaining an understanding of their own relationship with this and other landscapes.

Staff from both the Forest Service and Ghost Ranch Conference Center mentioned visitors’ desires to feel that they were experiencing, and even touching, something “of O’Keeffe”--a need to satisfy a sense of sacredness and pilgrimage. Study team members including myself were aware of the importance of encouraging visitors to move from this place of awe and outward focus to a place of understanding and appreciation, where they could relate O’Keeffe’s relationship with the northern New Mexico landscape to the need to develop relationships with other unprotected landscapes, and the possibilities of their own creative potential in response to landscapes. By encouraging on-site active creative expression (writing, painting, singing, dancing) and perhaps also learning about the psychology of artistic perception and creativity in addition to direct sense experience of the landscape, visitors could experience the combination of taking the landscape in and then producing something as a result of this experience, as did O’Keeffe. The 1990 field trip, more than prior visits to Ghost Ranch and tours of the Abiquiu House and Studio, felt like a pilgrimage to me. I have kept my notes from that trip and have kept the memories alive, not least in completing this

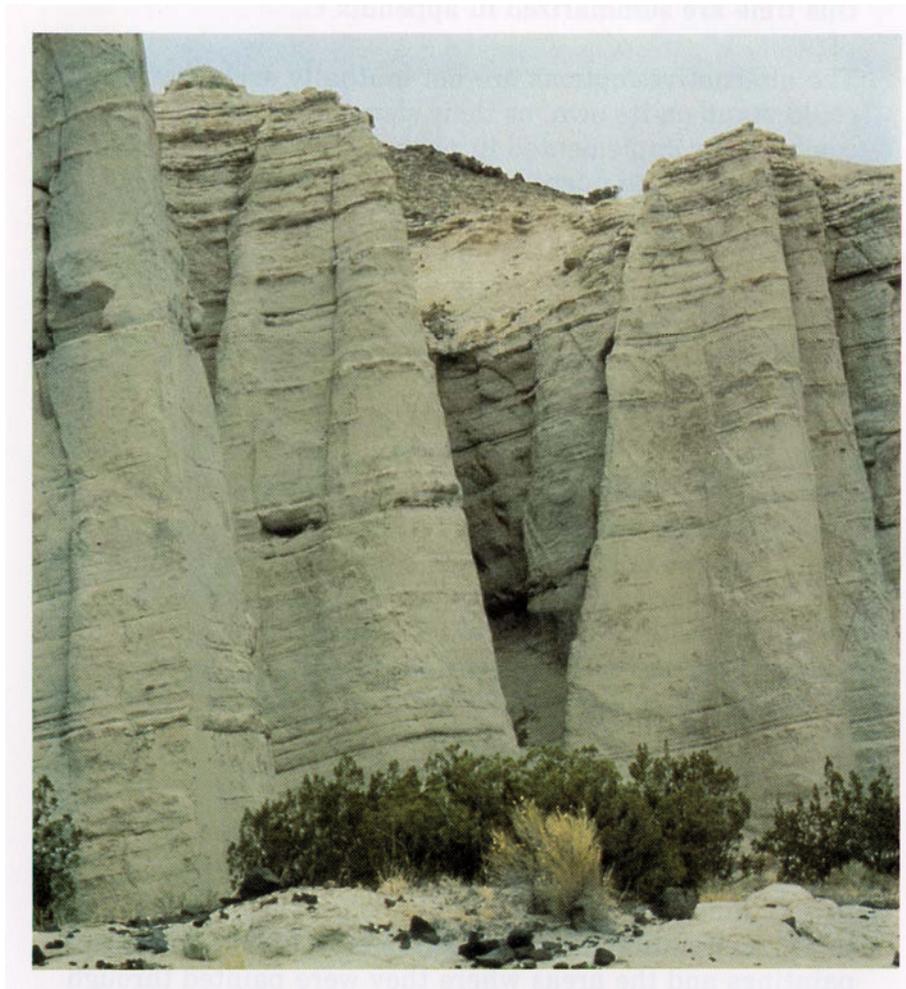


Figure 42. O'Keeffe study, comparison of painting site and painting. Photograph of the view depicted in *From the White Place* (1940) (NPS 1992a, 20)

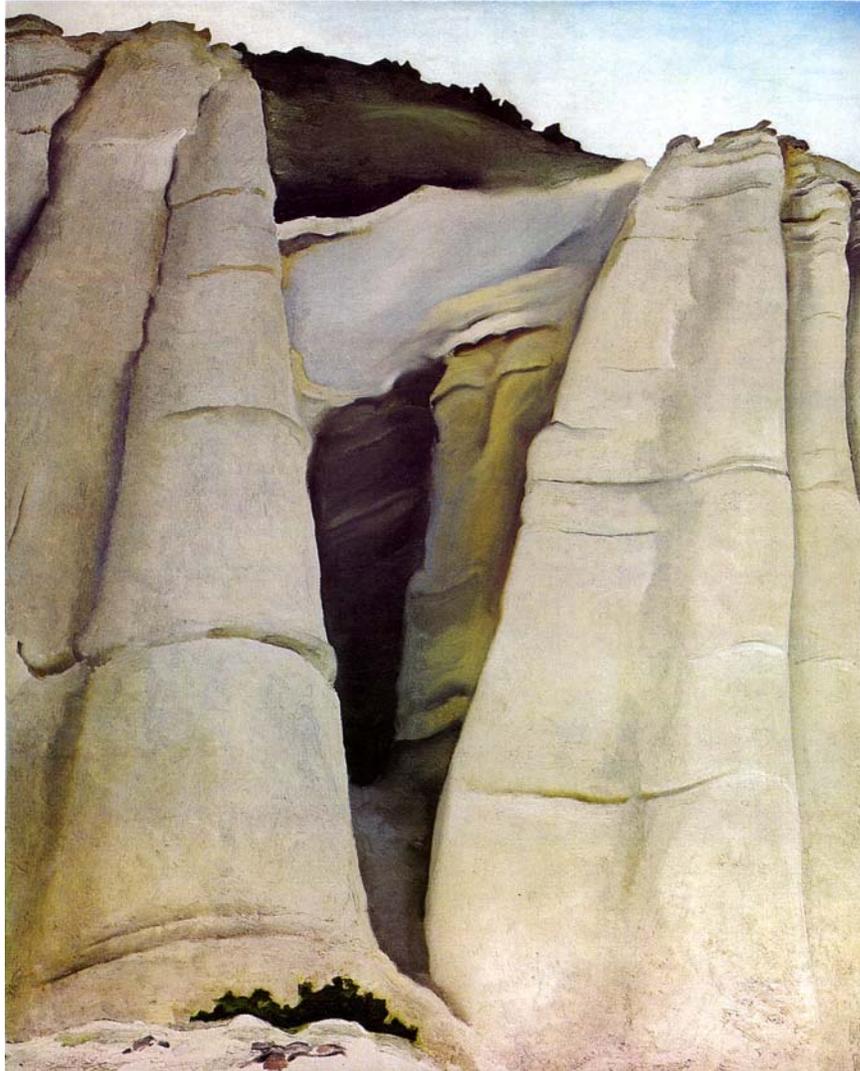


Figure 43. O'Keeffe study, comparison of painting site and painting (NPS 1992a, 21). Georgia O'Keeffe, *From the White Place*, 1940. Oil on canvas. 30 x 24 in., 76.2 x 60.96 cm. Acquired 1941. The Phillips Collection, Washington D.C., and courtesy of The Georgia O'Keeffe Foundation.

dissertation. A successful on-site workshop needs to combine aspects of pilgrimage and self-discovery.

The landscape itself plays a large part in people's understanding of O'Keeffe's relationship with the landscape, and during the O'Keeffe study much discussion centered on what the landscape offered, and how the landscape could be used to encourage certain experiences. Using the actual painting sites rather than "similar places," and having a direct experience of O'Keeffe's places, of being able to walk where she walked, was considered critical (Faris 1991, 13, 15, 19). Feasibility factors included access and the importance of respecting community members' privacy. Within the overall "contemplative potential" of the northern New Mexico landscape (Faris 1991, 5), preserving the integrity of landscape character in areas more closely associated with O'Keeffe was also mentioned (O'Keeffe study team 1991); how preservation of landscape character would be accomplished was left to a later planning stage. The question, what interpretive opportunities are presented by the landscape? (Faris 1991, 20) led to discussion of two approaches. One approach starts with a specific landscape and determines what story is best told in that location (e.g. using a painting site at the White Place to explore O'Keeffe's combination of realism and abstraction). The second approach starts with the story and looks for places within the landscape associated with that part of the story (e.g. telling of O'Keeffe's motor trips into remote areas at the Black Place). Study alternatives would combine these two approaches.

With other team members, I explored the U.S. Forest Service land directly north of Ghost Ranch specifically to find if there were suitable "contemplative places" within this landscape for use in Alternative Two (identifying places on private land such as Ghost Ranch was not appropriate). My criteria for contemplative place locations were: opportunity for a sense of enclosure combined with a wide view; quiet and distance from the highway; landscape character similar to Ghost Ranch (combination of low hills and cliffs, variety of colors); and sufficient topographic variation for a sense of solitude and for a sequence of gradually deepening experiences as one walked into the area. Within this landscape, there are a number of crescent-shaped hills that open towards the expansive western view--"landscape armchairs"--that fit the bill. These criteria reflect my understanding of O'Keeffe's preferences (quiet, wide views, landscape character and

color) and my own preferences (a sheltered, enclosed viewpoint). O’Keeffe’s letters and images do not indicate a preference for enclosed viewpoints over open viewpoints. The experience afforded visitors, if this landscape had been used, would have been a combination of understanding how O’Keeffe related to the landscape, experiencing places that planners like myself thought appropriate for having an “O’Keeffe-like” experience, and experiencing the landscape itself, “. . . the landscape on its own terms-- the fresh air, the summer heat . . .” (O’Keeffe study team 1990, 3). Many visitors may be seeking a similar combination of O’Keeffe’s experience and their own preferences. Ultimately, the way O’Keeffe’s story is told, and the places used to tell it, reflect the perspective of the planners as much as that of O’Keeffe.

Within discussions of visitor facility development, the idea of using designed spaces, such as the commemorative space to be included in Alternative Two, as substitutes for O’Keeffe’s Ghost Ranch and Abiquiu houses was raised. This approach contrasted with the house museum approach, which would provide substitutes for outdoor experiences by using photographs of the artist on site. Criteria for the designed architectural section of the contemplative space for Alternative Two included that the design reflect O’Keeffe’s esthetic values, “. . . the attitudes of grace, simplicity, and quiet” (Glassman 1991). The setting for this Alternative “. . . would reflect O’Keeffe’s attitudes toward form and space, spareness and simplicity, and foster a meditative and creative mood” (O’Keeffe study team 1991, 2), with the intent of providing a substitute for being at her Ghost Ranch house (O’Keeffe study team 1990, 2).

With regard to the three relationship aspects, O’Keeffe’s intimacy with the landscape was a key point, but was not discussed in gendered terms. For example: “A source of the power of O’Keeffe’s paintings is the fact that she lived in the landscape, tirelessly explored it, and acquired an intimacy with the rocks, hills, and bones she painted” (NPS 1992a, 5). Understandably for a project of such broad scope, relating to nature as its own being with voice and volition, the potential for two-way communication with nature, the landscape as body and knowing the landscape through the body, were not mentioned in the study document, any more than details of the development of her unique painting style. Only the mention of experiencing the landscape on its own terms (O’Keeffe study team 1990, 3) hints at a perception of the landscape as its own being.

The interpretation of O’Keeffe painting rocks as “vital form” (NPS 1992a, 7) hints at a perception of landscape elements being similar to the human body. As with other plans for experiences within protected landscapes (NPS 2000b), visual experience and cognitive understanding of the story were primary; sensory experiences involving smell, touch, taste, and hearing may have been developed as part of more detailed interpretive programming.

O’Keeffe’s intimacy with the landscape was the main interpretive theme present within the O’Keeffe study. Facilitating an appreciation of how O’Keeffe related so closely to the landscape (through long-term residence, detailed and concentrated visual exploration, and translation into her own images) would encourage visitors to feel a sense of intimacy with the landscape. This approach was supported variously within the three alternatives (NPS 1992a, 7, 24, 28; Faris 1991). For the most part, however, only a one-way intimacy was addressed in the NPS study; how O’Keeffe related to the landscape was addressed, but the possibility that the landscape responded to her was not. The emphasis was on how O’Keeffe translated her landscape subjects into images. Actual programs could use O’Keeffe quotes to show how she responded to the landscape, for instance, how she expressed that the landscape called to her, and how she felt that the landscape was responding to her (O’Keeffe, quoted in Cowart et al. 1987, 200).

The O’Keeffe study represents the beginning of the idea to use landscapes associated with O’Keeffe to commemorate her legacy. If a protected area had been authorized, more detailed planning and interpretive documents may have addressed the three relationship aspects and gender in more detail. Assuming, however, that they would not have, what would the approach to telling the story of O’Keeffe’s relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape as outlined in the O’Keeffe study have missed by not incorporating more on gender and by not exploring the three relationship aspects? Not only would it have missed out on exploring the relationship in more depth and from varying perspectives, it would have missed out on the richness of the many and various gendered interpretations of O’Keeffe’s work and her relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape, how these interpretations influence our perception of her work and her legacy today, and the varieties of feminist responses to and interpretations of her work. Most importantly, it would have left O’Keeffe as a somewhat disembodied and ethereal, not

quite fully human, entity. Cultural gender associations were not only a key influence on her work and self-perception. Being gendered is part of being fully human, and is an important aspect of understanding O’Keeffe’s relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape that extends beyond the visual and intellectual.

My interest in O’Keeffe grew after being involved in the O’Keeffe study. Since 1992, I have offered a number of informal tours to O’Keeffe landscapes and painting sites in the Abiquiu and Ghost Ranch areas (App. A). During the tours, I took small groups of friends, fellow church members, performance artists, visiting professors, and NPS colleagues on short hikes to O’Keeffe painting sites. The majority of tour participants were female; one church member, a few NPS colleagues, and about half of the performance artist group were male. I primarily used the White Place to take advantage of a greater sense of remoteness and the ability to get very close to landscape features that O’Keeffe painted. Several times I combined my tours with a tour of the Abiquiu House and Studio given by Georgia O’Keeffe Foundation staff.

Like other O’Keeffe landscape tours that have been offered (Mitchell 2004), the main objective for my on-site tours was to facilitate a direct experience of the landscape within the context of O’Keeffe’s appreciation for and interpretation of the landscape. I wanted to offer an experience of pure and direct personal contact with the landscape, an experience that I have had in these places and which I imagine O’Keeffe to have had. The experience included walking to the painting site, and once there, seeing reproductions of O’Keeffe paintings of that site and hearing selected quotes from O’Keeffe and others (figs. 42, 43). Participants were then given time to wander, to experience the landscape on their own, and to paint, write, and meditate. Facilitating an experience of personal discovery, relationship with, and creative response to the landscape was as important to me as communicating O’Keeffe’s thoughts and feelings about the place and how she translated them into images.

As with other programs described in this chapter, these tours offered only a brief exposure to landscapes associated with O’Keeffe; White Place tours ran for a half-day, and tours that included both the White Place and Ghost Ranch ran for a full day. Themes addressed in my presentation included how O’Keeffe experienced the landscape, the perceived congruence between the northern New Mexico landscape and O’Keeffe’s

personality, various associations O’Keeffe had about color, especially white and black; how O’Keeffe translated the landscape into images, and O’Keeffe’s intimacy with the landscape. I incorporated ideas from the O’Keeffe study and from my 1994 article on interpreting O’Keeffe’s relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape (Cowley 1994). I addressed intimacy, but, like the O’Keeffe study, did not address intimacy in gendered terms. I brought people into the landscape and let the landscape speak for itself. When the tours included a stop at Ghost Ranch, I took the group walking in the red hills area, and let them experience the landscape without adding educational information, only adding a few quotes from O’Keeffe.

Tour participants responded in various ways, depending on their background and whether or not I asked them to fill out a questionnaire. During the tours, most participants remarked on the qualities of the landscape and their general sense of well being from the experience of a beautiful place, and remarked on the special feeling of recognizing and seeing an O’Keeffe painting site close up. Their questions for the most part related to O’Keeffe’s personal history and painting style. The performing arts group responded more in terms of their direct sense experiences; they remarked on the quality of light, the quiet and rhythm of specific sounds, the colors, and the sense of movement within the landscape. Their responses impressed upon me the importance and potential of focusing on experiences that went beyond the visual in gaining an understanding of O’Keeffe’s relationship with the places she painted.

I used a written questionnaire for my 2003 tour, after I started my dissertation and was consciously using the tours as a research opportunity. Specific questions referred to the possibilities of communicating with nature (App. B). One participant responded: “In reflection--nature and myself--I am and always have been closely connected to nature . . . I also sometimes ‘talk’ to nature--individual plants/animals, possibly considering them my ‘children’ or responsibility. Having heard that O’Keeffe enjoyed gardening--and hiking out to scenic places and observing the landforms, sky and shapes of nature--I feel very much a ‘mindset’ with O’Keeffe--I believe that nature was fascinating to O’Keeffe and it is as well with me!” (Freilich 2003). Another participant responded during the tour, saying that she was observing the geology and aesthetics of the White Place, and thinking that a place she had thought of primarily in terms of geology also had a sense of

mystery, a mystery related to color and form and light. In terms of my own responses, during the roaming part of the tour, I tried to be very present within the landscape, and to listen and be open to what came to me from the landscape. I was not aware of a sense of the landscape “talking” to me; it was more a sharing of being present. I sensed a sharing of material being, of my own body being part of the landscape and the rocks and trees being a “body,” but not necessarily a human body--more the sense of myself, the other participants, and the landscape being part of a larger, encompassing natural “body.”

Since these tours were based on the experiences I had had during the O’Keeffe study and the ideas in my 1994 article, I did not discuss gender and thus also presented O’Keeffe as somewhat of a gender-less person, and her relationship with the landscape as primarily visual. While my objective for these short, introductory experiences was to encourage a direct, one-on-one experience with the landscape with a minimal amount of educational information, I could have incorporated ideas and questions related to gender and the three relationship aspects to encourage a broadening of participants’ understanding of O’Keeffe’s relationship with the landscape. Leaving out gender leaves out an important part of the story and an aspect of what O’Keeffe’s images might mean. For instance, during my mention of Sharyn Udall’s ideas of how the mystical duality of white/black influenced O’Keeffe I could have added that Udall also discussed male/female as a mystical duality that strongly influenced both Stielglitz and O’Keeffe (Udall 1996). I could have mentioned how critics continued to sexualize O’Keeffe’s images after she began to focus on New Mexico landscape subjects, and I could have asked whether discussion of the sexualizing of landscape images influenced tour participants’ perception of the landscape and/or of O’Keeffe’s images, either positively or negatively. For some participants, adding these ideas may have made the experience richer and deeper. For others, it may have been too much for a brief introductory experience. Delving into ideas and experiences related to gender and the three-relationship factors may be better during a more in-depth experience. My Ghost Ranch workshop (Chapter 5) gave participants and I an opportunity to explore gender and the relationship aspects within a longer and more indepth experience.

Participant-Observation Project

The Watercolor Workshops

Each year, a number of weeklong painting workshops are held at Ghost Ranch, some of which focus on O’Keeffe. I participated in three workshops during 2002 and 2003 (App. A), to find out how such workshops approached O’Keeffe’s relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape, and to involve myself in the painting process. All three were watercolor workshops, held on-site at Ghost Ranch. While pastel, oil, and acrylic workshops are also offered, I chose watercolor because it was easier to use outdoors and because it was my personal preference. The first two workshops included references to O’Keeffe and visits to a few O’Keeffe painting sites; the third, titled “O’Keeffe’s Inspiration” focused on O’Keeffe, incorporated several slide-lectures on O’Keeffe’s history and painting style, and used a number of specific O’Keeffe painting sites for outdoor painting sessions. The first workshop was a “pre-test” for the following workshops. I did not hand out questionnaires or hold focus group sessions during the first workshop. My discussion and analysis of participant responses, outlined below, is based primarily on feedback I received during the second and third workshops. Each workshop combined indoor studio instruction with outdoor painting sessions held both at Ghost Ranch and at other landscapes in the region. Participants explored the Ranch landscape on their own during early morning and evening hikes.

I used a combination of participant observation, auto-observation, and dialog methodologies during these workshops, and during the other parts of my participant observation project. I played the role of “participant as observer” and a “complete-member-researcher” (Adler and Adler 1994, 379), that is, I was a paid member of the workshop group and also an observer bringing with me my own agenda and research questions. I observed how other participants responded to my questions, observed what their questions were, and participated so that I could, in turn, observe my own responses to my questions. The interaction between these different responses and my observations made it a kind of dialog (Atkinson and Hammersley 1994, 256). With my background on O’Keeffe and Ghost Ranch, and my pre-determined research questions, I had a privileged position in terms of my questions about O’Keeffe’s relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape, but not in terms of learning about the instructors’ and participants’

perspectives, and not in terms of being an experienced artist. The bias introduced by using my interpretations of my observations was somewhat balanced by asking participants to complete post-workshop questionnaires, to elicit their responses to my questions in their own words.

An average of twelve people participated in each workshop, most were from out-of-state, and the great majority was female. One workshop was all female, the other two had one man enrolled in each. The fact that primarily women participated in these watercolor workshops may reflect that more women are interested in watercolor painting in addition to more women being interested in relating their experiences to those of O’Keeffe. Some differences between the men and women participants were evident. The men had less painting experience, were either not familiar with O’Keeffe or not especially enamored of her or her work, and responded to gender questions more in terms of gender roles and sexuality than some of the women. While these differences are not surprising given common cultural differences between men and women, the small number of participants compared does not necessarily indicate that these differences are characteristic of those involved in painting the Ghost Ranch landscape. Of the out-of-state participants, most were from the eastern U.S., with a group from California attending one of the workshops. All participants and instructors were Anglo-American. Ghost Ranch Conference Center being a Presbyterian institution, a number of participants had become familiar with Ghost Ranch through their involvement in the Presbyterian Church. The great majority of participants were middle-aged, with a few exceptions; a mother-daughter duo in one workshop, and a participant’s elderly mother in another. From appearances, all seemed to be middle or upper class; this is explained primarily by the cost of the week-long program. They were primarily interested in painting technique, their own aesthetic and spiritual experience within the Ghost Ranch landscape, some education on O’Keeffe herself, and using the workshop as a vacation and/or inspirational retreat.

The first two workshops were taught by two different watercolor artists, and the third was co-taught by a watercolor artist and an art historian involved in the Georgia O’Keeffe Museum docent program. Workshop objectives varied with instructor. Both watercolor artists were interested in participants improving their watercolor skills,

experimenting with *plein-air* painting, and learning about northern New Mexico landscapes and cultures. One had participants copy O’Keeffe watercolors, using O’Keeffe’s images as a vehicle for learning about O’Keeffe’s style in addition to learning basic watercolor skills; both had O’Keeffe images available in the studio for reference. Both held outdoor painting sessions at O’Keeffe painting sites. I discussed workshop objectives and planning process with one of the watercolorists. Her objectives included helping people create images and finding their own expression; for her, O’Keeffe gives us permission to break with convention and the focus on “talent,” and permission to explore our own internal creative process and to paint how we feel about our subject, whether landscape or people (Hallenback 2003). Most important to the art historian who co-taught the third workshop was to share O’Keeffe’s story, an appreciation of her life and art, and historical accuracy (Falcon 2003, 2004).

Topics and themes addressed varied with instructor, the planned focus of the workshop, and participant questions, including my own. O’Keeffe’s relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape was used as a context and reference point in all three workshops. During instruction sessions, O’Keeffe’s painting style and use of color were referenced, and outdoor painting sessions where *plein-air* techniques were taught used O’Keeffe painting sites. Regional cultural and geographical context themes were discussed during field trips away from the Ranch. Within the art historian’s sessions, O’Keeffe’s use of color and her symbolic portraits (e.g. trees representing specific people) were discussed. A theme for the third, jointly taught workshop was the individuality of the creative process. According to the instructors, all art is autobiographical (Hallenback 2003); and we do not see things as they are, we see things as we are (Falcon 2003). O’Keeffe’s approach was cited as an example of the individual nature of the painting process.

The Ghost Ranch landscape was a major player in all three workshops. Most participants had not been to Ghost Ranch before, and many had not experienced northern New Mexico landscapes. They described experiencing the landscape in a way shared by many visitors to Ghost Ranch, including O’Keeffe; they were alternately amazed and awed by the landforms, colors, and qualities of light and space, and many--whether their first time there or returning--felt a sense of emotional connection. This response to the Ghost Ranch landscape, within the context of O’Keeffe’s experience, set up a special

relationship with the landscape as a potential painting subject. Not only was it a beautiful place, but a beautiful place imbued with the mystique and emotional intensity of a great artist. That this great artist was a woman was significant to a number of the female participants. Within this context, sites for outdoor painting sessions were chosen by the instructors both to provide opportunities for trying different kinds of painting subjects and to provide participants with a direct experience of O’Keeffe painting sites. In the first two workshops, which focused primarily on the painting process, the group was taken to the red hills area just west of the main Ranch building complex, and to the area upcanyon to the east where various views of cliffs are available. To satisfy participants’ curiosity about O’Keeffe’s life at Ghost Ranch, and to provide variety in painting sites, the group visited Casa del Sol, a house at Ghost Ranch similar to O’Keeffe’s Ghost Ranch house. Within the “O’Keeffe’s Inspiration” workshop, participants were taken to more specific O’Keeffe painting sites, for example, the site of O’Keeffe’s *Cliffs Beyond Abiquiu* (1943) (fig. 26). Within all three workshops, in addition to referring to and using specific O’Keeffe painting sites, participants were encouraged to explore, find, and interpret their own places.

During the second and third workshops, I was able to spend time with participants to specifically explore gender issues and associations. I touched on communication with landscape, but did not go into the other relationship aspects. The timing and format of my discussions were determined by the instructors; I requested permission to hold a discussion session, and they accommodated my request within their objectives for the week. During the second workshop, I held an evening discussion session separate from the workshop agenda, and in the third, “O’Keeffe Inspiration” workshop, I held a half hour session as part of the course. Participants were generally curious and interested in the ideas I raised. Within both workshops, those unaccustomed to thinking in terms of gender (both women and men) related more to interpretations of O’Keeffe’s images as sexual symbols and whether O’Keeffe was a feminist. Communicating with the landscape was a new and somewhat foreign idea, but many expressed curiosity about this idea and how it might apply to O’Keeffe. Those more familiar with feminist thought and gender issues (all women) had more definite ideas about sexual imagery and O’Keeffe as a feminist. Communication with nature and ecofeminism were also new to

these participants. For those participants who did have thoughts on gender, the association between communicating with landscape and gender—that how we relate to nature and landscape is associated with gender--was a new concept. Comments on gender brought up later by both male and female participants related again to the more familiar or understandable aspects of sexual imagery and O’Keeffe as feminist role model more than gender or communication with landscape.

Participants may not be able to respond to a new idea, such as the landscape speaking to us, until they have had an experience with which to relate to the idea. For example, during the first, “pre-test” workshop, I raised the question of two-way communication with nature during general discussion. While the group did not respond to this question at the time I raised it, an event later in the course brought it up again. During a painting session at Echo Amphitheatre, a dramatic landscape feature just north of Ghost Ranch, a group of us walked up close to the amphitheatre itself, where we could produce an echo from the rock formation. We sang “Happy Birthday” to a participant who was back at the painting site. The group joked about this event in terms of my question--the landscape was “singing back” to her through its echo. While one could argue that this event had nothing to do with a “real” response from nature--it was initiated and produced by us--this echo event is an example of one way that communication with the landscape can occur; we put something out towards the landscape, and the landscape mirrors it back to us, in this case, through amplification. The experience of hearing the echo brought the question of two-way communication with the landscape back to mind for a number of participants.

To access participants’ thoughts about their experiences, I used focus groups. The watercolor workshop focus groups consisted of one evening group discussion, and one day-time presentation/discussion session, both of which I facilitated. Bedford and Burgess (2001, 121) define a focus group as “a one-off meeting of between four and eight individuals who are brought together to discuss a particular topic chosen by the researcher(s) who moderate or structure the discussion;” my groups fit this definition. I structured the discussions around my question handouts (App. C). Bedford and Burgess also advise ensuring “homogeneity within the group and heterogeneity between them” (124). All workshop participants had an interest in Ghost Ranch and in painting.

However, participants from the two focus groups did differ in terms of the degree of their specific interest in O’Keeffe and her relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape.

Participant selection was done partly by Ghost Ranch and partly by myself. Participants responded to the Ghost Ranch Conference Center course listings, and I selected which course to attend. Principles I used within the focus groups to elicit participant responses about their experiences at Ghost Ranch included: introducing my ideas early in the week and following up later once they had had a chance to consider the ideas; considering both verbal and written responses; talking with participants at Ghost Ranch (within the workshop studio) as soon as possible before and/or after their experiences; combining asking them about their concerns and issues and asking my questions; and encouraging and considering both individual responses and group discussion (Bedford and Burgess 2001, 123). Because I was not a workshop instructor for either of these workshops, and I was given the opportunity to hold these focus groups at the discretion of the instructors, I didn’t interrupt on-site painting experiences or emphasize my questions as much as if I were leading the workshop. Limitations of my approach include only conducting two focus groups, not conducting the focus group discussions within the landscape itself, not separating the group by gender, and not taping the discussion, which means my findings from these groups (except for quotes from written questionnaires) consist of my interpretation of the groups’ responses.

Participants’ responses from the two focus group sessions are described separately because the specific focus on O’Keeffe within the second focus group influenced their responses. The first focus group was the evening discussion session held at the May 2003 workshop, the workshop that mentioned O’Keeffe but did not specifically focus on O’Keeffe. The second focus group was the half-hour presentation and discussion session I facilitated during the October 2003 workshop, “O’Keeffe’s Inspiration”, which did specifically focus on O’Keeffe. Related discussions and feedback I received after the half-hour session are also considered to be part of this second focus group.

During the first focus group, issues important to participants were discussed in addition to my specific questions. Overall, they were more interested in experiences of place attachment, the overall painting experience, and the process of getting to know the landscape than the relevance of gender to their experience. Some found the landscape

visually overwhelming. Their immediate, or evolving, sense of connection to the landscape was variously associated with “genetics” (we gravitate towards types of places that remind us of where our family and ancestors have lived) and personality (we gravitate towards places that match our needs and preferences). I asked the question: Has the experience of painting this landscape changed your relationship with it, and if so, how? In response to this question, some said that they found the process emotionally revealing, some felt the process brought them closer to nature through observation, some felt that the process brought them closer to God (God as the source of creativity and creator of the landscape). Some expressed that the workshop experience illuminated for them their innate need to interact with nature on a regular basis to “rejuvenate their soul,” and to “be content, satisfied, and less anxious” (Heintz 2003, 2005). One participant specifically mentioned that, for her, nature had no malice or avarice; in other words, she experienced nature (and perhaps specifically the Ghost Ranch landscape) as benign and non-threatening.

Relating to nature was an important theme for this group, but not in terms of gender, and two-way communication with nature was not something to which they specifically responded. For one female participant, a mountain gives us its gift of being and we translate that gift into art; for another, places (e.g. Yosemite Half-Dome) have spiritual energy that emanates from their own creative source; and another felt that a physical connection, a kind of knowing, occurred when she felt she became part of the mountain when skiing. For this group, the sense that places could influence them and that they could feel part of natural places was strong, but the sense that the place itself--the landscape, the mountain--“spoke” back to them, was not. To provide them with an example of considering landscape as its own being, with voice and volition, I described an Ursula Le Guin story where a tree is the first-person narrator (LeGuin 1987b). There was no response to my description of this story. A female participant responded to my question “Do you have a sense of the natural world or specific natural places, as independent beings--in other words, as a ‘character’?” by saying: “The natural world is not a ‘character’ to me, or an independent being, but is part of a large continuum of Earth and God’s creation” (Heintz 2003). Individual participants may have had thoughts and feelings about landscape having voice and volition, but group discussion did not indicate

this, and they didn't anthropomorphize natural elements in an effort to make it easier to think in terms of nature having "voice" and speaking back to them, as is characteristic of much ecofeminist writing (LeGuin 1987a; Silko 1993). O'Keeffe did both; she felt a general sense of communion with the landscape and a specific sense of relating to particular natural elements--hills, trees, rocks--which she did, at times, anthropomorphize (O'Keeffe, quoted in Pollitzer 1988, 149).

Participants in the first focus group did not relate to the mind-body duality being gendered; that is, of body being associated with the female and mind being associated with the male. They found this distinction to be irrelevant--for them, mind and body were one. More analytical or more emotional approaches to painting were not gendered by this group; they maintained that women or men could take either approach, or a combination of approaches, just as O'Keeffe combined feeling for landscape and aesthetic analysis in her Ghost Ranch paintings. One participant shared her opinion that male artists tended to be more sensitive than men in less creative professions, and that this belief did not necessarily mean that the artistic process was a "feminine" activity. Overall, gendering the landscape or the artistic experience did not seem to be a concern with this group. For one participant, the "Ghost Ranch landscape helps me appreciate nature. It is God and, like God, not male or female" (Heintz 2003).

This first group related to the Ghost Ranch landscape and to O'Keeffe mostly in terms of feeling attracted and attached to the place rather than gender or the three relationship aspects. One participant expressed that she was attracted to O'Keeffe's passion for the Ghost Ranch landscape, perhaps more than to the landscape itself. Relating to O'Keeffe's passion and closely comparing the landscape and O'Keeffe's paintings suggest a sense of intimacy with O'Keeffe and her art, and with the landscape. Among focus group participants, a non-sexual intimacy--as in the O'Keeffe study--seemed to be a more understandable and socially-acceptable way of relating to O'Keeffe's relationship to the Ghost Ranch landscape, in comparison to the more specific aspects of relating to landscape as an independent being or in terms of knowing the landscape through their bodies or through a sexual experience.

The second focus group was held during the "O'Keeffe's Inspiration" workshop, which focused specifically on O'Keeffe's painting style and relationship with the Ghost

Ranch landscape. Within the half-hour discussion session and subsequent discussions, both male and female participants responded with more energy and curiosity than the first group to notions of gender and ecofeminist aspects of relationship with landscape, perhaps due to the O’Keeffe focus and perhaps due to individual interest. Gender and feminism had previously been referred to within the workshop. During a slide lecture, the art historian instructor maintained that O’Keeffe painted what she saw, not symbols as many critics maintained, so it was unlikely that O’Keeffe used the moon in her paintings as a female symbol. According to this instructor, *Ladder to the Moon* (1958) (fig. 22) was not a mystical or feminist image but rather an image based on what O’Keeffe saw from her Ghost Ranch house one evening while she waited for a friend to arrive (Falcon 2003; O’Keeffe 1976, 102). My half-hour session (the second focus group) was the first structured discussion of gender within this workshop. It is difficult to know how the instructor’s views may have influenced participant’s responses during this session. The instructors indicated a level of support for my questions by giving me time during their course, but neither participated in the discussion or expression any opinions on my questions afterwards.

Gender was relevant to some focus group participants and not to others. Some directly applied gender dualities, and some denied or were indifferent to gender associations. In support of gender dualities and the genderedness of O’Keeffe’s images, one participant said that O’Keeffe’s flower paintings were female because of the gentle and flowing images, and another said that the concept of unity, which was discussed as a concept important to O’Keeffe, was female. Indifference or objection to gendered interpretations and the three relationship aspects was expressed in a comment that the body/mind duality is not valid and has little to do with gender, a comment that painting a tree involves trying to understand it, how it is made, how it works, rather than trying to gender or communicate with it, and a comment that gender “sorting” in terms of women do x and men do y is not valid. All of these comments came from women. One woman said that she didn’t consciously think--or want to think--of gender dualities (e.g. mind/body), and that for her, gender was not relevant to her experience of developing an aesthetic intimacy with the Ghost Ranch landscape.

From these responses I sensed that within each focus group and potentially within individual participants was a combination of automatic responses to gender ideas based on prior life experiences, and a deeper ambivalence about gender. The ambivalence seemed to be between the desire for gender not to be an issue and for gender dualities to no longer be relevant, and the tendency to fall back on and use traditional gender dualities in some circumstances. I did not have a chance during the second focus group to get into details of the three relationship factors, so I did not get responses specific to knowing the landscape through the body, or a chance to find out in what ways ambivalence about gender influenced their responses.

Later in the “O’Keeffe’s Inspiration” workshop, gender was brought up again by participants. Over dinner one evening, the topic was raised in terms of O’Keeffe’s personality and relationship with Stieglitz. Did he exploit her as a woman? Was O’Keeffe a lesbian? Do some of O’Keeffe’s paintings, for example her depiction of Chimney Rock, represent male or female genitalia? Again, O’Keeffe’s personal relationships and sexual symbolism in her paintings were topics that were associated with gender--perhaps because they were easier to relate to than ecofeminist concepts and the three relationship aspects. During the workshop closeout discussion, some responses related to gender. One participant mentioned that responding to gender questions was difficult for her; she grew up with an overdose of feminism, and now she avoids “gender” and “gendering.” This participant directly associated gender and feminism, and her ambivalence about feminism was directly applied to ideas about gender. In response to this, another female participant stated that believing O’Keeffe’s images to be celebrating women’s sexuality was important to feminists. I focused on the three relationship aspects. I described to the group how, during the workshop, I experimented with O’Keeffe’s approach of painting how I felt about what I saw, rather than attempts at realism or making images of shapes that were in my head. By focusing more on being *in* the landscape, and my awareness of sensations, sounds, and smells, I became more intimate with the landscape. I became aware of how I filtered the landscape through my eyes, my mind, and my being into an image on paper, and how this felt to me like two-way communication with the landscape. Through this process the landscape became an active participant in my painting--I felt the landscape coming back to me through my

eyes. This closeout discussion indicated that gender was important enough to some participants to raise independently.

I received one written response to the questionnaire I handed out at this second focus group (App. C). In addition to providing background on her history with Ghost Ranch and general feelings and impressions, Margaret Morris' response elaborated on her workshop experience. In response to my question "Do you experience nature, or parts of this landscape, as being 'male' or 'female'?" she wrote "I don't experience the landscape as being male or female, but rather I would say I respond to it as female. I believe there are more feelings and emotion attached to the landscape that either of my husbands had or have." Here, she was connecting the ability to have a stronger emotional connection with landscape to being a woman. In response to my fifth question, a fairly open-ended question addressing gender, she wrote:

I am a feminist. So therefore I do believe that O'Keeffe saw the landscape through her eyes, that of a feminist. Whether she intended to be gender specific who knows . . . but the result was a beautiful rendering of feminist beauty and female beauty. I believe that all of our actions and work and ideas are influenced by the fact that we are women. How that is expressed or how that appears to others depends upon who they are. In many ways O'Keeffe acted and responded to things in a typically male fashion (being stereotypical) but that does not say she wasn't a feminist. I think she was terribly individualistic and probably did not relate to "community" very much. Maybe that made her art better, who knows. But I believe the experience of her life, the beauty of the hills and mountains and desert, sent her art to a most feminist height. Gender issues are ALWAYS important to me. It is part of being a woman and being human. I don't think I am a good enough for that to be communicated in my art, but the more I work on expressing myself and what is inside me when I see a landscape or anything the more I can communicate (Morris 2003) (author emphasis)

Compared with the participant mentioned above who conflated feminism and gender ideas and had trouble with both, Morris' response shows an integration of, and a lack of conflict between, feminism and gender ideas. Her feminism, as expressed in this passage, is more expressive than political--O'Keeffe rendered "feminist beauty." Morris related to O'Keeffe as a woman, and the fact that she was aware that she herself was a woman experiencing the Ghost Ranch landscape was important to her workshop experience.

Within this O’Keeffe-specific workshop, relating to and being intimate with the landscape was discussed both with and without specific reference to gender or feminism. Raising gender issues and ecofeminist-based relationship aspects got some responses and got people thinking. Many responses dealt with a comparison of men’s and women’s traditional social and cultural roles (e.g. men as active and women as passive, and how O’Keeffe went against the grain of this gender norm), and with sexual imagery and sexuality. This is a pattern reflected in much of the O’Keeffe criticism over the years, and the presence of this pattern of responses during the workshop provides further evidence that questions about the landscape and one’s relationship to the landscape being gendered are often difficult for people to respond to before they have had a chance to think about it and to integrate it into their own experience.

As a participant-observer, I noted other participants’ responses and use them here as data, and also use my own experiences and responses as data. In addition, the approach and process of the instructors of these workshops gave me ideas for my own. As an observer, I struggled with trying to formulate questions that would encourage deeper reflection on gender and relationship aspects among participants. As a participant, I noticed an evolution of my own relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape and my sense of intimacy with this landscape.

Prior to participation in these workshops, I had been to Ghost Ranch many times to work, to hike, and to retreat, but not to paint. During the first workshop, I thought about how the act of painting both adds to and takes away from my intimacy with the landscape. The process of image-making involved analysis of formal qualities and attention to painting technique, and this analytical process took me away from direct sense experience. On the other hand, learning how to see the landscape enhanced my direct sense experience of the place, especially my visual experience. Painting is similar to other kinds of nature appreciation such as plant identification and bird watching in that using a conceptual structure such as color analysis enhances sensual discrimination; in the case of landscape painting, it helps me to see. Painting helps me be visually intimate with the Ghost Ranch landscape, and the part of painting where I take what I see and translate it into an image feels like the landscape moving in my direction--offering something to me, “speaking” to me. Do I associate this experience of intimacy and two-

way communication with being a woman? Yes--I associate it with being who I am, with my particular background and interests, and I am a woman. My gender influences my interests, how I see and how I paint, even though I may not be aware of it.

Various kinds of conceptual analysis played a bigger part in my experience during the second workshop. I thought about the nature of inspirational landscapes, about how I would relate to Ghost Ranch if I did not associate it with O'Keeffe and the inspiration her relationship with this landscape provides me. I completed a landscape character and spatial analysis of the Ghost Ranch landscape for Chapter Two, considering aspects of enclosure and sense of movement in the landscape in addition to formal elements such as line and color. I used an analytical approach to heighten my awareness of different kinds of sense experience, not necessarily associated with painting. And I thought about how painting works to enhance my emotional connection to the Ghost Ranch landscape and to make the landscape feel "mine." I noticed how, similar to other participants, I felt that mind and body acted together in approaching the painting process.

During the third, O'Keeffe-specific workshop, I focused more on my emotional response to the landscape, and associated this with painting how I felt about what I saw. For instance, I was aware that I was painting how I felt in my body--physically and emotionally--about what I saw. Painting *Precairous Delicate Solid* (fig. 44), I anthropomorphized aspects of the landscape; I imagined myself as the thin vertical section of rock, feeling the pressure and vulnerability. However, painting *River Under the Mountain* (fig. 45) I felt movement within the landscape--the river beneath the rocks--without anthropomorphizing or gendering the landscape. Relating to the landscape was a combination of feeling it on the inside of myself--identifying with it through body sensation--and feeling it on the outside--becoming aware of a feeling emanating from the landscape. Painting how I felt about what I saw coincided with greater familiarity with the landscape that allowed a shift from my earlier emotional "wow" response and a passionate feeling about the landscape to a calmer, gentler sense of familiarity through which I noticed more ordinary and detailed aspects of the landscape. I noticed the variation in color of Pedernal at different times of day, the character and shape of different trees, and small changes in the landscape that had occurred over the years. Perhaps a slower and gentler attention to detail and an ability to feel responses to the

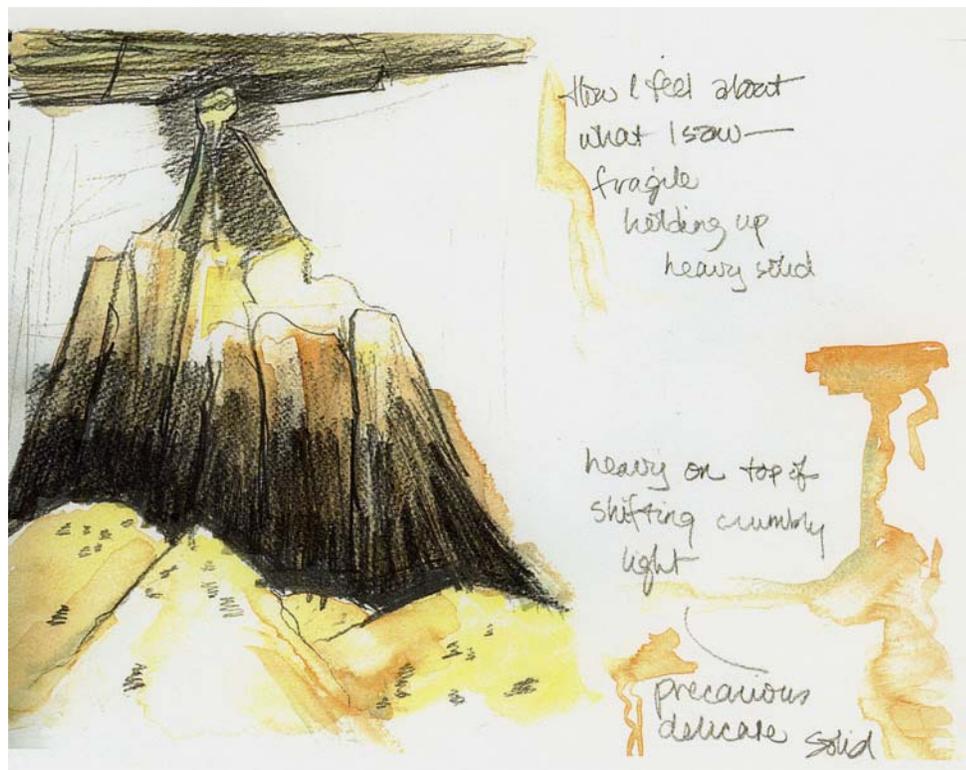


Figure 44. *Precarious Delicate Solid*, 2003.
Author painting.

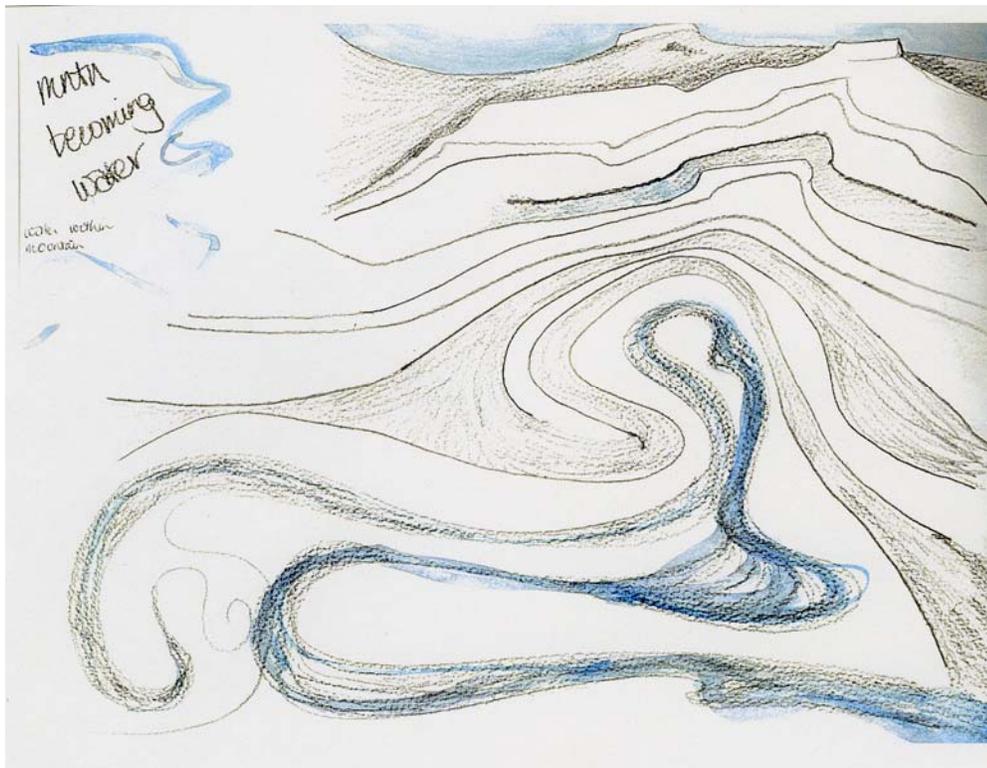


Figure 45. *River Under the Mountain*, 2003.
Author painting.

landscape go together. This process of moving from more realistic images of larger landscape areas to more interpretive images of details makes sense as one gets to know a landscape. This process was experienced by myself, by other workshop participants, and by O’Keeffe.

During these workshops I didn’t feel that I was gendering the landscape. I was curious about this, and conducted an experiment. During a painting session at another northern New Mexico landscape, I tried painting a small, enclosed creek-side landscape first relating to that landscape as a female place and then as a male place. Painting this landscape as female was easy and I felt involved with the shapes and colors. However, when I tried painting this landscape as male, I felt very uncomfortable and awkward, and the image that I finally produced was sketchy and less colorful. Relating to the landscape as a female place, I felt I was painting aspects of myself, and I could feel a bodily connection between myself and the landscape. Relating to the landscape as a male place, I felt I couldn’t relate to the landscape as easily, and that there was a barrier between us. Back at Ghost Ranch as I was photographing the red hills area and the cliff faces, I was aware that I felt that the soft, rounded, human-scale red hills made up a feminine landscape, and the vertical, larger than life and imposing, rigid cliff faces made up a masculine landscape, and that both together made up a gendered landscape. Based on these experiences, I know that, even when I’m not aware of it, I do gender the landscape. When a landscape feels familiar and approachable to me, I often identify it as female because it feels familiar. During my Ghost Ranch workshop (Chapter Five), we explored whether we--both men and women--gendered the landscape as the same gender as ourselves when it felt familiar and safe.

O’Keeffe Museum “Walks in the American West”

The Georgia O’Keeffe Museum puts on a variety of educational programs related to O’Keeffe, Modernism, art and landscape, the creative process, and the empowerment of women and youth. The programs most relevant to this dissertation are their “Walks in the American West,” where a small group joins a noted regional author for an exploratory walk within a landscape special to that author. These walk experiences are designed to give participants a direct experience of the environment through an activity beloved by,

and characteristic of, O’Keeffe--walking (M. 2002). The majority of participants were female, Anglo-American, middle class, and middle-aged. Of the four walk programs in which I participated (App. C), the most relevant were walking within a northeastern New Mexico ranch landscape with writer Rebecca Solnit, and taking a walking tour of Ghost Ranch with writer Leslie Poling-Kempes. As a participant observer, I noticed that during these two walks, the relationship aspects (communication with the landscape, knowing the landscape with the body, and intimacy with the landscape) were variously addressed, but were not associated with gender. All four walks addressed relationship with landscape, in addition to landscape history and aesthetics.

After Rebecca Solnit discussed the nature of walking--walking as a vehicle to ideas, as a way of being embodied in an experience of nature (Solnit 2002)--we went on a long walk as a group to gain a direct experience with which to compare the concepts. During the post-walk discussion, several participants including myself spoke of a heightened sense of relatedness to the landscape through an experience of walking with our whole body, not just our feet. I raised the question of the possibility of two-way communication with the landscape. Similar to the watercolor workshops, this seemed to be a difficult question for participants to respond to, except for the O’Keeffe Museum group leader who related my question to O’Keeffe, saying that landscape can communicate with someone not through “language” but in terms of how that person responds to that landscape. The Ghost Ranch landscape communicated with O’Keeffe through O’Keeffe’s response to the landscape, through how the landscape affected her thoughts and feelings (M. 2002). Within the Solnit walk program, participants were given an opportunity to practice seeing and feeling at the same time, as an integrated experience. While Solnit’s writing often incorporates gender (Solnit 2001), she did not specifically discuss gender in this particular program. She brought up intimacy with the landscape, and knowing the landscape through the body was an element of the discussion of the act of walking, but the potential for two-way communication with the landscape was not mentioned until I raised the question. We used landscape in the way that Solnit described, as a vehicle for inner process, as much as we focused on the material and aesthetic characteristics of the landscape. This program showed me that, in terms of understanding O’Keeffe’s intimacy with the landscape, having an experience of one’s

own and then relating it to O’Keeffe as we did during this walk can be as effective as learning about O’Keeffe’s relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape prior to one’s own experience.

The history of Ghost Ranch, how various people including O’Keeffe have related to and modified the Ranch over time, was the subject of Leslie Poling-Kempes’ walk. This walk was more educational than experiential, and connected the story with the place through direct experience of the associated place (Huyck 1988). In response to my question “Do Ghost Ranch visitors develop a relationship with this landscape similar to O’Keeffe’s, or was O’Keeffe’s relationship different and/or unique?” Poling-Kempes replied that, like O’Keeffe, Ghost Ranch is the center of the universe for many visitors, and that an emotional connection with the landscape--a sense of “emotional ownership” similar to O’Keeffe’s--was common among Ghost Ranch visitors (Poling-Kempes 2004). Each experience and relationship is special and unique, and O’Keeffe’s relationship, as the best known and best articulated, is the primary basis for comparison. In this program, the focus was on physical characteristics of the landscape and its history to a greater extent than participants’ inner process. Gender or feminism were not brought up as part of the program, nor were the three relationship aspects. Perhaps, as with many other O’Keeffe-related programs, gender associations were not mentioned due to the instructor’s desire to avoid the subject of purported sexual imagery in O’Keeffe’s work. Many of those involved in O’Keeffe programs seemed to object to and dislike the critic’s sexualizing O’Keeffe’s work, and perhaps preferred to avoid the subject.

An Ecofeminist Workshop

As part of my participant observation project, I wanted to include a painting workshop with an ecofeminist theme so I could compare O’Keeffe’s approach to landscapes with that of an early twenty-first century ecofeminist approach. Would current ecofeminist thought about relating to southwestern landscapes be similar to what I interpret in O’Keeffe’s approach as ecofeminist?

In October 2004, I participated in “Earthmagic,” a women’s art and nature retreat identified by retreat leaders as having an ecofeminist theme (App. A). This experience provided me an opportunity to compare with O’Keeffe, and to explore my questions with

a group of women who were familiar with ecofeminist ideas such as two-way communication with nature and landscape, knowing landscape through the body, and the kind of personal, embodied intimacy that grows from these two experiences. The five female participants in this invitation-only group spent five days at a guest ranch outside Santa Fe. I was able to join the group for one day, and was more of a guest observer than a participant. All participants were middle-class Anglo-American women, with four middle-aged and one younger woman. Activities included group and individual experiences within the ranch landscape focusing on one particular site, individual artwork expressing their relationship with this site, and group sharing sessions. O’Keeffe and other women artists were occasionally referenced, mostly in terms of their association with northern New Mexico, and in response to questions about my project. Objectives of the retreat included “. . . opening our Hearts and Spirits to begin this Art-filled, Soulful Journey, through intimate relationship with the Land and the Spirits . . . to walk out onto the earth, softening our human intentions . . . to continually record (dance, meditate, write, create, sing, chant) our five day experience inside, outside and around the bones of the Holy Earth Place that chooses us this night. Thus creating an ever changing, ever living, Metaphysical Map of the Body Mind Spirit of the Earth, the Universe, and our own Human-ness” (Horton 2004).

During the five days, intense relationships were developed with the chosen site. This site was a visually unimposing but aesthetically compelling patch of scrub and grass along one of the ranch roads. Located along an orchard road away from the main developed area, it did not contain elements that differed from the surrounding areas, for example, large trees or sources of water. Rather, the spatial arrangement of elements within this area made it aesthetically, and spiritually, appealing to the women. The site was made up of a sculptural patch of scrub that was encircled by an open grass area, in turn enclosed on all sides by patches of scrub and orchard trees. This visual and spatial structure of an enclosed circle with a central feature was conducive to a group meditative experience. I joined the women for a silent meditation at the site. We were sitting or lying down around the central shrub feature; the two men working in the adjacent orchard may have wondered what we were up to. I felt connected with the earth and a strong connection with the other women. Since this was my first exposure to this landscape, the

memory of the women sharing their art work that morning played a large role in my sense of connection to the place.

Gender was an important aspect of the workshop. While the leaders' introductory messages emphasized "human-ness", it was an all-women group. Terms like rebirthing and having a sensuous (not necessarily sexual) relationship with the site, in addition to ideas relating to the three relationship aspects, were mentioned when art works were shared. The women's creative work that responded to their experience at the chosen site included images of emergence and transformation, with lots of circles and curvilinear shapes, and lots of color and movement. The pastel drawing I completed in the afternoon (fig. 46) depicted intense emotion beneath the cool green surface of the earth. I definitely gendered this image; both the green rolling hills and red spikes of emotion were female. Perhaps being with other like-minded women, focusing on the female earth and female imagery, influenced my gendering of this image.

The landscape and the focus site were definitely considered to be alive and active by those involved in the retreat. For example, leaders and participants felt that the site chose them, not the other way around. Rather than consciously selecting an area that had certain spatial characteristics, they felt that this site had special energy and spoke to them. And, while sitting on the side of a hill, talking with one retreat participant about her images, a small dust devil crossed right in front of us, and we both joked about how the spirit of the landscape was paying us a visit.

Within the artwork sharing and during my one-on-one discussions with participants, the sense of personal intimacy with and communication with the focus site that grew from studying the site, creating images, and communicating through dreams, was very strong. For some, earth spirits served as a communication conduit between themselves (their bodies, their inner sense, rather than their mind) and the site. Participants strongly focused on a particular material place within the landscape, in addition to using the landscape as a vehicle for inner experiences and as a symbol for the possibility of communication with, and travel through, the larger landscape. Shamanism--the process of entering an altered state of consciousness to journey to a different reality (Adler 1979, 431)--was an aspect of the retreat, adding a different dimension to the way I had previously thought about the three relationship aspects. For example, intimacy with



Figure 46. *Beneath My Soft Green Hills*, 2004.
Author drawing.

the landscape and the sense of two-way communication with the landscape included relating to the chosen site as a “portal” through which we could travel to and from other places. Also, humor and camaraderie flavored our interactions, and the importance of valuing the feminine was an unspoken but shared goal.

During the retreat, I enjoyed being with others who understood and responded to my questions, and, with little background in Shamanism, I was also in unfamiliar territory. Like participants in the watercolor workshops who were unfamiliar with gender ideas, I was not quite able to respond to the new ideas after only brief exposure. Much, however, was shared between us; we were able to relate in similar ways to common questions, such as how to communicate with the landscape. And, we had different interpretations of these questions; for some, two-way communication came from the landscape, in this case, from their chosen site, and for others, two-way communication included being transported through the landscape. Personal creative responses ranged from paintings to moving meditations to dreams. Some aspects of their unique personal experiences seemed to be understood within the group, and other aspects seemed to remain a mystery to others even after lively discussion and sharing of creative responses. We shared a sense of mystery about the landscape, and I sensed the mystery of our own personal responses to the landscape.

While the experiences of the women at this ecofeminist retreat incorporated more shamanism, symbolism, and gendered psychologist interpretation of the images they created than O’Keeffe describes as being part of her experience of the Ghost Ranch landscape, the three relationship aspects (communicating with nature, knowing landscape through the body, and intimacy with the landscape) were common to both types of experiences. And, the women at the ecofeminist retreat expressed that O’Keeffe was an artist with whom they related, as someone who they felt understood their approach to celebrating landscapes.

Conclusions

My two hypotheses--that gender is important to O’Keeffe’s relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape, and that ecofeminist ideas relate to O’Keeffe’s experience and how we interpret her experience--were reinforced within my participant-observation

project. While responses varied widely, many workshop participants did respond to gender questions and how these questions related to O’Keeffe. Within a number of programs, intimacy with the landscape was a topic of discussion, and within the women’s retreat, ecofeminist ideas associated with the three relationship aspects were a major component of participants’ experiences, and O’Keeffe was described as an artist who understood ecofeminism.

Participation in the programs described above showed me that the more analytical approach of identifying and studying responses to the three relationship aspects needs to be balanced with a respect for participants’ experiences of pilgrimage, mystery, and self-discovery. Encouraging participants to use senses other than sight can help them access feelings and openness to new ideas. The kinds of experiences provided within most of the programs discussed above--one-time workshops within, or relatively brief visits to, landscapes associated with O’Keeffe--would likely provide insufficient exposure to the landscape or to new ideas such as those on gender for participants to be able to substantially explore subtleties of O’Keeffe’s relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape, and their own relationship with this landscape. Having some knowledge of O’Keeffe and Ghost Ranch prior to the on-site experience, being able to visit the landscape a number of times, and reflecting on their on-site experiences between visits would all help deepen their experience and understanding.

Gender is a complex and often emotionally-charged subject. Within the context of these programs, the questions of whether O’Keeffe’s images symbolized sexuality and whether O’Keeffe was a feminist were easier for participants to relate to than subtleties of how landscapes can be gendered and how the three relationship aspects relate to relationships with landscape. A number of participants seemed ambivalent about gender, combining an aversion to gender stereotypes with using gender dualities in their responses to my questions. Some ambivalence came from conflating gender and political feminism; O’Keeffe was also ambivalent about political feminism, and this influenced her response to Freudian and feminist critics. For many participants, political feminism may be their only exposure to ideas related to gender, and nuances of gender ideas and associations and ecofeminist ideas about relating to landscapes may be new and potentially foreign ideas.

In the next chapter, I describe the workshop I developed and conducted at Ghost Ranch in 2005. My workshop focused on gender and the three relationship aspects in relation to O’Keeffe, and in order to help participants focus on and respond to these ideas and have a meaningful experience within the landscape, I addressed the issues described above in a number of ways. I provided background information on O’Keeffe and Ghost Ranch to help them become familiar with their environment. To avoid conflation of gender with political feminism, I discussed gender without referencing feminism, and discussed ecofeminism primarily as the context for the relationship aspects. I again used a questionnaire to encourage post-workshop reflection. Within Chapter Five, I discuss in what ways these approaches made a difference to participants’ experiences and responses. My workshop at Ghost Ranch represented an attempt to deepen and broaden the understanding of the role of gender in O’Keeffe’s life and images and the understanding of how different kinds of feminism can relate to O’Keeffe.

CHAPTER FIVE

MY WORKSHOP

The relationship with the landscape captured an essence unattainable with human relationships.

She (O’Keeffe) painted what she saw . . . (and) at the same time revealing the bi-sexual nature of the landscape.

I do not analyze the view for masculine or feminine or androgynous effects . . .

The cliffs, draws; eroding etched forms seem so sensual.

--workshop participants

On May 14 and 15, 2005, I conducted a workshop on O’Keeffe’s relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape to see how participants would respond to an emphasis on gender and the three relationship aspects. My workshop represented the next phase of research into the question of how visitors’ understandings of O’Keeffe’s relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape would be influenced by an emphasis on gender. The discussion of my workshop within this chapter serves both to synthesize and apply ideas from previous chapters, and to test my research hypotheses: first, that focusing on gender, within a direct experience of the landscape, makes a difference in how O’Keeffe’s relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape is understood and interpreted; and second, that O’Keeffe’s relationship with Ghost Ranch, and her Ghost Ranch paintings, can be understood more broadly by exploring associations with ecofeminist ideas.

The sequence of discussion in this chapter follows my process of developing, then conducting, the workshop. I used the structure of the National Park Service’s Interpretive Planning process and my research questions to develop the workshop outline (App. D). Following discussion of how I developed the workshop outline, I describe the conditions, experiences, and outcomes of the actual workshop. Participant responses from the

workshop show how a focus on gender and the three relationship aspects influenced their experiences.

Concepts and Themes

The National Park Service (NPS) interpretive planning process (Kohen and Sikoryak 2005), other methodology used in research on responses to landscapes (Tolia-Kelly 2004, 2005; Maciá 1979; Cowley 1987), and comparisons with other O’Keeffe-related workshops and experiences including the 1992 O’Keeffe study, provided guidance for my workshop. While a workshop setting is somewhat different from an NPS ranger-led interpretive program, many concepts from the NPS interpretive planning approach apply. Goals of interpretation within the NPS include helping “visitors to explore their own intellectual and emotional connections to the natural and cultural resources that comprise shared heritage” (Kohen and Sikoryak 2005, 4), and helping “. . . each park visitor find an opportunity to personally connect with a place . . . an opportunity to explore how a park is meaningful to them . . .” (NPS 2005). Direct contact with tangible resources is emphasized. Within NPS interpretive theory, interpretation acknowledges multiple perspectives without an intention to persuade visitors to a particular perspective, and contrasts with education by not being “. . . based on presenting a curriculum that is designed *to be learned*” (Kohen and Sikoryak 2005, 9; author emphasis). My workshop stressed direct contact with the landscape; however, I had a persuasive agenda--to encourage consideration of gender dynamics and associations, and consideration of O’Keeffe’s contemporary relevance. Also, I combined opportunities for participants to develop their own intellectual and emotional connections with the Ghost Ranch landscape and O’Keeffe’s experience with a curriculum of ideas about O’Keeffe, landscape, and gender.

Identifying the significant story and related themes, being aware of related context and issues, identifying desired visitor experiences, and determining where and how within the landscape to relate the themes are stages in the NPS interpretive planning process (NPS 2000; Kohen and Sikoryak 2005). Deciding how best to facilitate desired visitor experiences involves asking whether a guided or self-guided experience would be most useful. Key to helping visitors develop a personal connection with the landscape

and its associated story is providing as much direct access to and experience of the actual physical resource as possible, whether a rural or urban landscape (Huyck 1988). Some NPS interpretive programs provide opportunities for visitor activity and interactions with the landscape. My workshop was interactive; after sharing my perspective, I encouraged participants' active exploration of their reactions and thoughts. I facilitated this by providing opportunities to interact with the landscape and with other participants.

Previous chapters define the significant story (O'Keeffe's relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape, especially related to gender), and the relevant context, issues, and influences (O'Keeffe's writings and paintings, the range of critical responses to O'Keeffe's work, existing interpretive opportunities, and my research questions). This chapter draws on my survey of literature on environment perception and describes my interpretive themes, desired participant experiences, and process of facilitating interaction with and responses to the landscape. Workshop themes derived from my hypotheses: Theme One--Focusing on gender, within a direct experience of the landscape, makes a difference in how O'Keeffe's relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape is understood and interpreted; and Theme Two--O'Keeffe's relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape, and her Ghost Ranch paintings, can be understood more broadly by exploring associations with ecofeminist ideas. Ecofeminist ideas discussed focused on the three relationship aspects: the possibility of two-way communication with landscape; landscape and body and knowing landscape through the body; and intimacy with the landscape.

Desired participant experiences--what I wanted participants to experience during the workshop--derived from my hypotheses and research questions, and were influenced by the discussions of desired visitor experiences during the 1992 O'Keeffe study. I wanted participants to gain an understanding of O'Keeffe's relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape, to develop their own personal relationship with this landscape, to explore O'Keeffe's and their own thoughts about gender and landscape, and to explore O'Keeffe's and their own thoughts about the three relationship aspects and how these might be gendered. Exploring gender associations within their on-site creative work was the most important participant experience I wanted to encourage and facilitate, in order to test my first hypothesis and to see in what ways focusing on gender might make a

difference to their experience and understanding. While copying O’Keeffe images and other studio work is a valuable part of an art workshop, especially one that focuses on technique, my workshop stressed on-site sessions to encourage a more direct relationship with the landscape and to encourage a sensory and emotional experience in addition to exploring formal artistic elements such as line and color. I wanted to take participants beyond purported sexual imagery in O’Keeffe’s work to broaden their understanding of the role of gender in O’Keeffe’s life and art. Experiences I facilitated served as the jumping-off point for the range of participants’ experiences and creative expressions.

The choice of an on-site workshop with a follow-up questionnaire seemed intuitively appropriate for facilitating creative responses to the Ghost Ranch landscape, based on my previous experiences in workshops of this kind. However, comparing this method to other researchers’ methods of facilitating responses to landscapes clarified why this choice was appropriate for my study. Aspects from other research relevant to my workshop include the experience variable studied (emotional attachment to landscape, visual quality preferences, and landscape character preferences) and participant actions (drawing, completing a questionnaire, and rating preferences on a numbered rating scale). Some study methods focus on the expression of emotional attachment to certain landscapes. For example, Divya Tolia-Kelly (2004, 2005) explored how British women of Asian and African descent compared how they felt about the landscape of their country of origin and the landscape of Britain, their adopted country. Tolia-Kelly encouraged them to talk one-on-one about personal objects in their homes that served as symbols of the home country, to discuss ideas in a group of other women, and to participate in drawing workshops where they made images of their landscapes and the ideas and emotions they associated with these landscapes. The drawing workshops were not held on-site due to the impracticality of returning to India or Africa during the study. Also, the emphasis was on comparing memories of the past with recent experiences. In contrast, my workshop focused on emotional reactions to attachment to one landscape, and focused on the participants’ present experiences. However, their creative expressions of relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape during the workshop were influenced by previous experiences at Ghost Ranch and within other landscapes, and prior knowledge of O’Keeffe’s life there.

Many visual quality studies were completed in the 1970s and 1980s using a variety of qualitative and quantitative methods to determine what factors influenced perceptions of environmental attractiveness (Elsner and Smardon 1979; Noe and Hammitt 1988). In one such study that also addressed gender, A. Maciá (1979) asked groups of male and female art students to rate paired slides of landscapes on visual attractiveness to determine if observer gender influenced landscape preferences. One of the attractiveness variables tested was straight versus rounded landscape forms. Results of the attractiveness test were statistically correlated with information on observer gender and personality types. For example, results indicated that more extroverted women preferred diffuse, rounded forms in the landscape over straight forms. A comparison with forms preferred by men was not conclusive. This study showed that observer gender, combined with personality, can influence landscape preferences, but did not address gender of the landscape itself. In contrast, during my workshop, asking participants to explore their responses to their own choice of landscapes, and to explore whether the landscape itself was gendered, encouraged responses related to their experience of relationship with the landscape rather than responses related to visual preferences alone.

Other studies elicit park visitors' preferences for landscape character rather than visual preferences. For example, in my study of visitor experience preferences related to development levels at three landscapes within Bandelier National Monument (Cowley 1987), I used questionnaires and statistical analysis to test for associations between visitors' desired experiences (e.g. discovery/education, exercise, socializing), and landscape character (levels of development, e.g. wilderness, minimal trails and signs, and full visitor facilities). In this study, I encouraged park visitors to complete the questionnaires on-site so that experiences of direct contact with the landscape would be fresh in their minds. However, how they expressed their responses to the landscape, and how I used that information, contrast with my present study. In my research at Bandelier, visitors were asked to respond quantitatively to a set of pre-determined questions for later statistical analysis rather than responding to ideas about the landscape with their own creative expressions. Compared with these three kinds of studies, I wanted to provide an

opportunity for participants to respond in an open-ended way to their on-site experiences in order to compare their responses with O’Keeffe’s as much as possible.

Structure and Process

My two-day weekend workshop was held at Ghost Ranch, with participants staying at the Ranch overnight to maximize their experience with the landscape. Prior to the workshop, I sent each participant a series of readings on O’Keeffe and Ghost Ranch (Ghost Ranch Conference Center 2004; Messinger 2001, 140-148; Cowley 1994) so that they would have common background information and have some of their biographical questions answered. As with the watercolor workshops I attended, a combination of presentation/discussion sessions, on-site painting/writing sessions, and group discussions, were included. The two days were organized around three “experience cycles”--three cycles of presentation/outdoor creative session/group discussion that addressed specific topics. The first cycle provided an introduction to thinking of the landscape as gendered, the second explored landscape and body, and the third explored communication and intimacy with the landscape. Key ideas and analysis from earlier chapters were integrated throughout the workshop. In the interest of spending most of the time outdoors in creative sessions and not overwhelming participants with concepts, I focused my presentations on the basic ideas of gender associations and the three relationship aspects derived from ecofeminism.

The full workshop outline is included as Appendix D. Following is an abbreviated outline:

Saturday

10:00 am: Welcome, Introduction, Logistics

10:30 am: Gender, and Gendered Landscapes--presentation/discussion
classroom exercise--drawing gendered shapes

11:30 am: Outdoor Creative Session, participants chose location
(lunch)

1:00 pm: Sharing images and writing from morning creative session

2:00 pm: Landscapes as gendered--more indepth

2:30 pm: Landscape as body--presentation/discussion

3:00 pm: Outdoor Creative Session at the Red Hills area
(dinner)

8 pm: Optional outdoor session--sunset and moonrise

Sunday

9:00 am: Sharing images and writing from Saturday afternoon creative session

10:00 am: Communication / Intimacy / Ecofeminism

11:00 am: Outdoor Creative session in the Box Canyon area
(lunch)

2:30 pm: Sharing images and writing from morning creative session

4:00 pm: Close-out discussion.

The indoor location for presentation and discussion sessions was the Cottonwood lounge (figs. 7 and 47). Since the group was small, I shared O'Keeffe painting images by holding them up or passing them around rather than using slides. I didn't encourage close examination of O'Keeffe's images of the on-site locations prior to the on-site session, to avoid participants being overly influenced by her images. The majority of O'Keeffe images came from O'Keeffe's 1976 book. In addition, various books on O'Keeffe were available to participants during the workshop. Outdoor creative session locations are shown in Figures 48, 49 and 50. I chose locations for the outdoor creative sessions based on their association with O'Keeffe, accessibility, and contrast of painting environments. I chose the red hills area (left of center in fig. 48) as the location for the creative session on Saturday afternoon because of the association with O'Keeffe's red hill paintings and because the forms and colors of this landscape are suggestive of a human body (fig. 49). I took them to the red hills area and from there, participants were free to choose their own specific painting/writing location. For the creative session on Sunday I chose a location along the Box Canyon trail (right of center in fig. 48) to provide an experience in a very different landscape (more vertical, more enclosed, different colors) (fig. 50), and to see if participant experiences and creative expressions would differ from the session at the red hills. I experience the red hills landscape as more feminine, and the cliffs landscape as more masculine, and I wanted to see if others felt this too. As with the red hills location, I took participants to an area along the Box Canyon trail and from there they were free to choose their own specific painting/writing location.

Of the ten participants, eight were female and two were male, nine were Anglo and one Mexican-American, all were middle class, and most were in their 40s and 50s, except for two women in their 70s and one man in his 60s (fig. 51). Of the twelve originally signed up, two (one woman and one man) had to cancel. The group was



Figure 47. Ghost Ranch Conference Center, Cottonwood Lounge, 2005
Author photograph.



Figure 48. Ghost Ranch aerial photograph.
Photo by Dugan Uekert, Courtesy of Ghost Ranch Education and Retreat Center.



Figure 49. Red Hills creative session site, 2005.
Author photograph.



Figure 50. Box Canyon Trail creative session site, 2005.
Author photograph.



Figure 51. Workshop participants, 2005.
Author photograph.

informal and conversed easily due to their interest in the workshop and due to the fact that many of them knew other participants: four of the ten were friends of mine who knew each other from the Unitarian Church; there were two mother-daughter pairs (the mothers were sisters, and I knew one of the daughters); and the other two were a couple associated with the University of New Mexico American Studies Department. About half were at Ghost Ranch for the first time, and the others had visited a few times. Other than being visually impressive, Ghost Ranch was not a particularly special place to them at the beginning of the workshop. All but two (two of the women) had either been to Ghost Ranch previously or were familiar with the northern New Mexico high desert landscape. One of the women had studied O’Keeffe; the others had some general knowledge of the artist. Five of the ten are active artists (some professional), including one of the men who is a sculptor. All had college degrees. Some had backgrounds or interest in gender; one of the men had completed a dissertation in gender and masculinity studies, and feminist thought was important to a few of the women.

Of these variables, prior knowledge of O’Keeffe, exposure to ideas about gender, and participants’ own gender most influenced their responses. Class, educational background, and ethnicity did not seem to be the reason for differences in responses. Overall, participants shared a common interest in art and nature and a basic knowledge of O’Keeffe, a minority had a specific interest in gender, and women outnumbered men. Discussion during the workshop ranged widely; analysis of discussion relevant to my objectives, hypotheses and research questions is included below.

Discussion and Findings

On Saturday morning, after going over some background on O’Keeffe’s life at Ghost Ranch and the characteristics of her relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape, I introduced the topic of landscape and gender by discussing gender as culturally-determined, the male-female gender duality as normative within our culture, and alternatives to a gender duality. To keep things simple, I mentioned the possibility of combining female and male, and of an androgynous state between the two poles of the duality, rather than going into details of pre- and post-gender, and gender fluidity. I did not mention feminism during this discussion. I also talked about how O’Keeffe lived a

combination of early twentieth century male and female norms, and about the conflation between nature and the female. Group responses to this introduction related to gender roles and the nature of personal relationships. Their responses to my introduction to O’Keeffe’s relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape and the possibility of her images being gendered concentrated on O’Keeffe’s personality, relationships, and independent lifestyle. Androgyny and the possibility of combining the female and male, as applied to art, got very little response at this point.

Responses that addressed gender associations in art more specifically were evoked during the Saturday morning exercise. I first directed them to draw a point, line, circle, square, and oval, and to ask themselves if they had gender associations with any of these shapes. Feedback indicated that they associated the curved shapes with the feminine, and the linear and angular shapes with the masculine. One man drew a curved line, which he didn’t associate with either gender, or with androgyny. Then I asked them to draw landscape shapes or come up with landscape words and see whether they had gender associations. One woman developed a list of gendered word pairs, with the pair receiving most interest from the group being “watchful (male) / watching (female).” We associated watchful with awareness of external threats and protection, and watching with close observation of the environment. This contrast was applied to responses to the landscape at various other points during the workshop. Another woman talked about assumptions she made based on the belief that the earth and landscape were female, for example, that the (female) landscape is not a safe place and that clarity (which she associated with maleness), in both communications and painting, was important. One of the men played with lines that evolved into various phallic representations or male artistic associations like the finger of God in Michaelangelo’s *Creation*. The other man said that cosmic or large scale landscapes are not gendered but smaller human-scale landscapes could be gendered. One of the women drew what she referred to as an androgynous landscape, of a sun, mountain, and tree--she was the tree. And, a few participants--both women and men--expressed an aversion to the idea of assigning gender (male, female, or androgynous) to the landscape. One of the reasons given was that it would interfere with the experience of being with the landscape in the moment.

The idea that the landscape could be gendered was new to most if not all participants. Responses to this idea, as expressed during the drawing exercise, were varied, with more women than men being open to landscapes being androgynous (as opposed to not gendered at all), and with some men and women resisting the idea of gendering the landscape at all. My objectives for the morning session were for most part met; androgyny as a place between male and female was accepted by some, but further exploration of moving beyond dualities required more explanation and examples.

For the first creative session, which was combined with lunch, participants chose their own locations and subjects. I encouraged them to experiment with painting, or writing about, the landscape as female, male, and androgynous. One woman completed a series of four pastels: a masculine landscape that had hard colors and crisp edges (fig. 52); a feminine landscape that had softer more pastel colors (her favorite colors) and more curvilinear shapes (fig. 53); a mixed (androgynous) landscape, which she intended to be a combination of the male and female but which looks more like the feminine landscape (fig. 54), and a landscape self-portrait, with a Pedernal-shaped hill as the main focus (fig. 55). This series both reinforces stereotypical associations (male having hard crisp lines and dark colors; female having soft flowing lines in pastel colors), and goes against stereotypical associations (a mountain peak is associated with a female self). Another woman portrayed the cliffs to the west as two strong, protective, and nurturing female figures (fig. 56) watching over the group, showing that strong vertical landforms can be felt and identified as female. Experimenting with a self-portrait, one of the men in the group did a black and white abstract with swirling circular forms. While, according to him, his painting was not specifically related to the landscape and not specifically gendered, as a self-portrait it suggests that he relates to circular forms. This creative session indicated that the women in this group were more likely to gender the landscape than the men, and that there was variety among the women's responses. Participants indicated that relating to the landscape as male rather than female was unfamiliar, but not necessarily uncomfortable.

Presentation and discussion on Saturday afternoon focused on the landscape as gendered, and landscape as body. I talked about how associating the landscape with a female body was an artistic tradition, that landscapes can be seen as male bodies as well

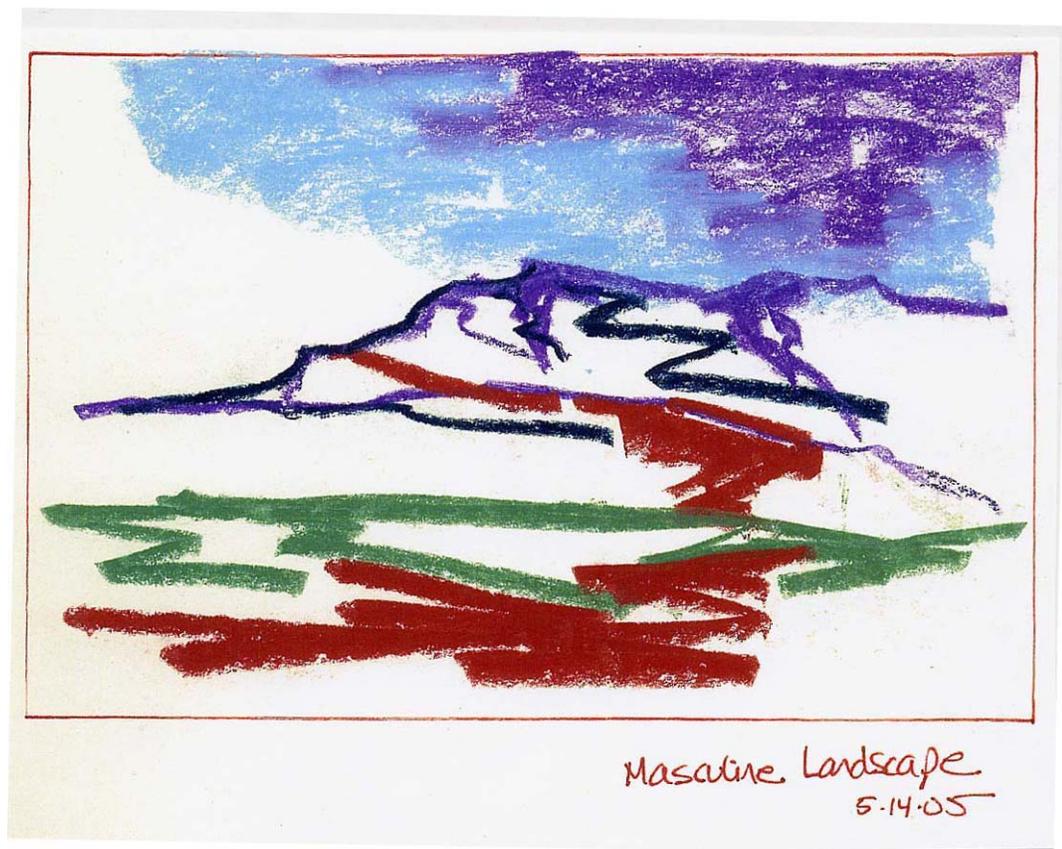


Figure 52. Suzanne Otter, *Masatine Landscape*, 2005.
Courtesy of the artist.

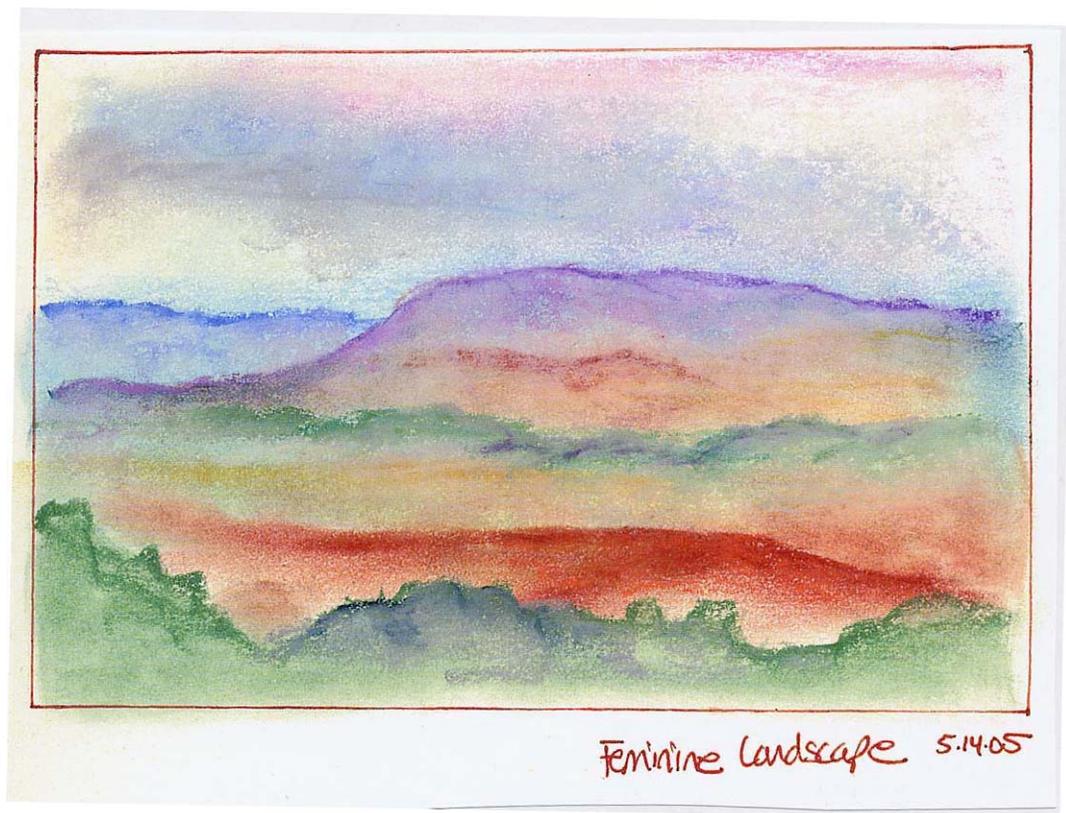


Figure 53. Suzanne Otter, *Feminine Landscape*, 2005.
Courtesy of the artist.

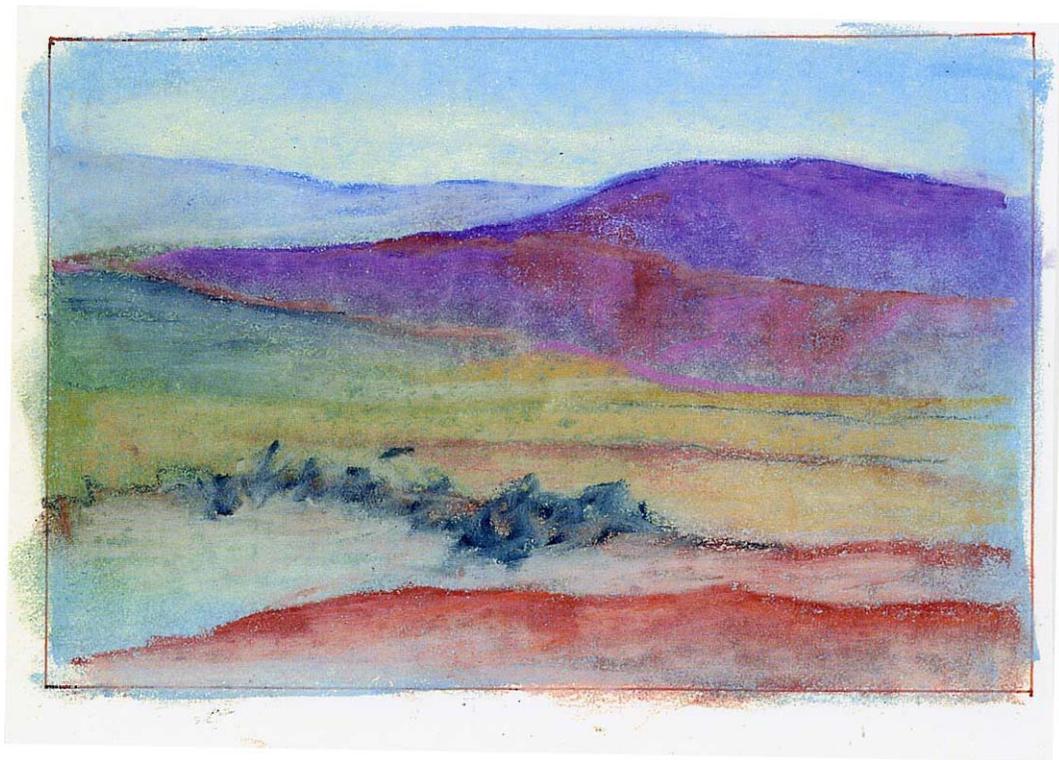


Figure 54. Suzanne Otter, no title (androgynous landscape), 2005.
Courtesy of the artist.



Figure 55. Suzanne Otter, *Landscape as Self*, 2005.
Courtesy of the artist.



Figure 56. Patricia McKay, no title (two women in the cliffs), 2005
Courtesy of the artist.

as female, and how a sense of knowing the landscape through our own bodies is related. We compared statements by O’Keeffe and her critics, and compared O’Keeffe’s images of Ghost Ranch hills with a contemporary male artist’s recent rendition of the red hills (fig. 57). During this discussion, perhaps due to my selection of quotes and O’Keeffe images or perhaps because they interpreted O’Keeffe and the critics in the same way I did, participants tended to agree with me that O’Keeffe did not overtly gender the landscape or liken it to a human body, but that she definitely did experience the landscape inside herself and that a sensual, physical intimacy was part of her relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape. Even though I mentioned critics’ sexualizing of her earlier flower paintings only for context and comparison, and even though I included critic’s quotes that characterized O’Keeffe’s images as androgynous and animal-like, most responses focused around whether or not O’Keeffe did intend her flower paintings to represent sexuality. Several participants expressed that we needed to understand in more depth the social and cultural context within which these images and interpretations were made in order to discuss whether certain O’Keeffe images (flowers and red hills) were gendered and whether she intended them to be so (this also came up in questionnaire responses). For instance, participants speculated that her early abstracts and flower paintings were the result of her being so in love with Steiglitz. After an introduction to the range of possible gendered interpretations of O’Keeffe’s work and to her written expressions, discussion still gravitated to the more popularly known issue of intentional or unintentional sexual imagery.

During this discussion session and later in the day during dinner and the sunset/moon session (which was partly rained out), participants who did explore gender focused on relating gendering the landscape to gender dynamics within human relationships, and their comments suggested that gendering human qualities made more sense than necessarily gendering the landscape. For instance, one woman made an association between the way she characterized strength, boldness, and clarity within the landscape as male with wondering what role strong, bold, and clear, almost “macho” men played in her life and why she was at times attracted to this kind of male energy. One of the men expressed that a being had to be a mammal for him to be able to relate it to gender--not even birds seemed gendered.

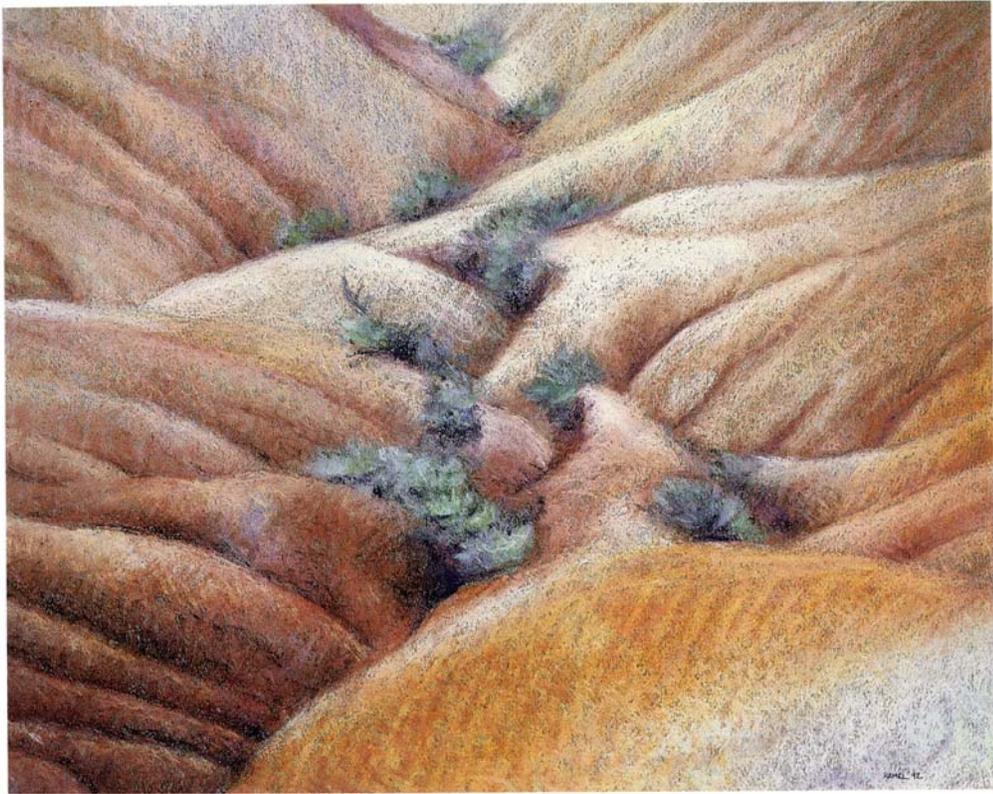


Figure 57. Gary Hamel, *Convergence*, 1993
Courtesy of the artist. Photograph by Vicente M. Martinez.

They were trying to respond to my questions about gendering the landscape by relating the questions to something familiar. I was also part of this conversation; I mentioned that at times I gender the landscape so that it seems more familiar and approachable, in the way that I know better how to relate to people of known rather than ambiguous gender. The idea that the landscape and features within the landscape could be gendered in a non-human way--as animals and plants are gendered or even that the “inanimate” landscape could be gendered in its own way--was not mentioned by participants. I did not stress this in my presentation on gendering the landscape, and perhaps participants would have explored this idea more if I had. During our time on Saturday, both men and women participants were willing to try to think of the landscape as gendered, and, in a joking moment, one of the men said that landscape elements *had* to be either male or female--no inbetween--and one of the women responded that, no, elements could be a combination of male and female. This interaction reinforced my sense that, within this group, the women related more to the possibility of gender mixing and merging than the men.

For the Saturday afternoon creative session in the red hills area, I encouraged participants to again experiment with representing the landscape as female, male, and androgynous. I also encouraged them to play with the notion of the landscape as body, including doing gesture drawings of the landscape as if it were a model in a life drawing class, and to notice how they felt in their bodies as they did this. During this session, participants painted, wrote, drew, played in the dirt, lay down on the hills, walked around, and chatted with each other (figs. 58, 59). First thing Sunday morning, we shared images and experiences of being in the red hills landscape. In their responses to this landscape, of the ten participants, three (all women) responded specifically in terms of relating to gender or to landscape as body, four (three women and one of the men) tried to relate to gender and landscape as body but were not comfortable with it, and three (two women and one of the men) preferred to explore and express their relationship to the red hills landscape without referring to gender or landscape as body. Again, those more comfortable with gender were women.

Most heartfelt response to the landscape was in terms of participants' personal interactions with the landscape, which were not necessarily gendered. Many of these



Figure 58. In the red hills area, 2005.
Author photo.



Figure 59. In the red hills area, 2005.
Author photograph.

responses related to knowing the landscape through the body in an ungendered way. Some interacted physically--one of the men experimented with using dirt and plant pigments in his painting (fig. 60), and two of the women found themselves closely observing and touching the details of the red dirt and the tracks of water in the wash. One of the women felt a distinct body sensation--a release in her stomach--when she switched from a focus on the larger landscape to focusing on the details right in front of her, and another completed a "mood" painting, where her image expressed the way she felt in response to the changing weather (fig. 61). Close observation of the landscape, comparing what she was attracted to with what O'Keeffe was attracted to in terms of color and shape, was the focus of another female participant. Anthropomorphizing the landscape helped some participants relate more closely; looking at the traces of water in the dry wash, one woman expressed that "the earth accepts the water," another described how she experienced the landscape (landforms and weather) as undependable and fickle, just like people. Not unlike O'Keeffe, relating to the landscape through their senses and knowing the landscape through the body in an intimate way was something many participants enjoyed and related to strongly. They could have a very close, body experience with the landscape without feeling the need or desire to gender the landscape itself.

Specifically gendered responses included painting images of the red hills as body in the landscape (figs. 62, 63), characterizing new spring growth as the feminine earth reaching up to the masculine rain, and describing a whole body experience of the female earth. This third experience was felt by one of the older women, who was the only one in the group who seemed totally at ease with gendering the landscape, without reservations or questions. She described how the male (or androgynous) dark clouds and "wonderfully handsome" lightning related to the female earth. Relating the Ghost Ranch landscape to her family, she told us that, years ago, she and her sister (also a participant) were at Ghost Ranch with their young daughters, and now, older and with grown daughters, they are all back at Ghost Ranch--like the earth, renewing themselves. My own response to this landscape was gendered in a fluid and flexible way. As I lay down within an "arm" of one of the red hills, I felt the earth as female and male. During this experience, I felt that, since gendering the landscape was a construct of my mind, I could



Figure 60. Doug Schocke, no title (painting using soil and plant fibers), 2005.
Courtesy of the artist.



Figure 61. Suzanne Otter, *Blue Mood Landscape Rain Wind*, 2005.
Courtesy of the artist.

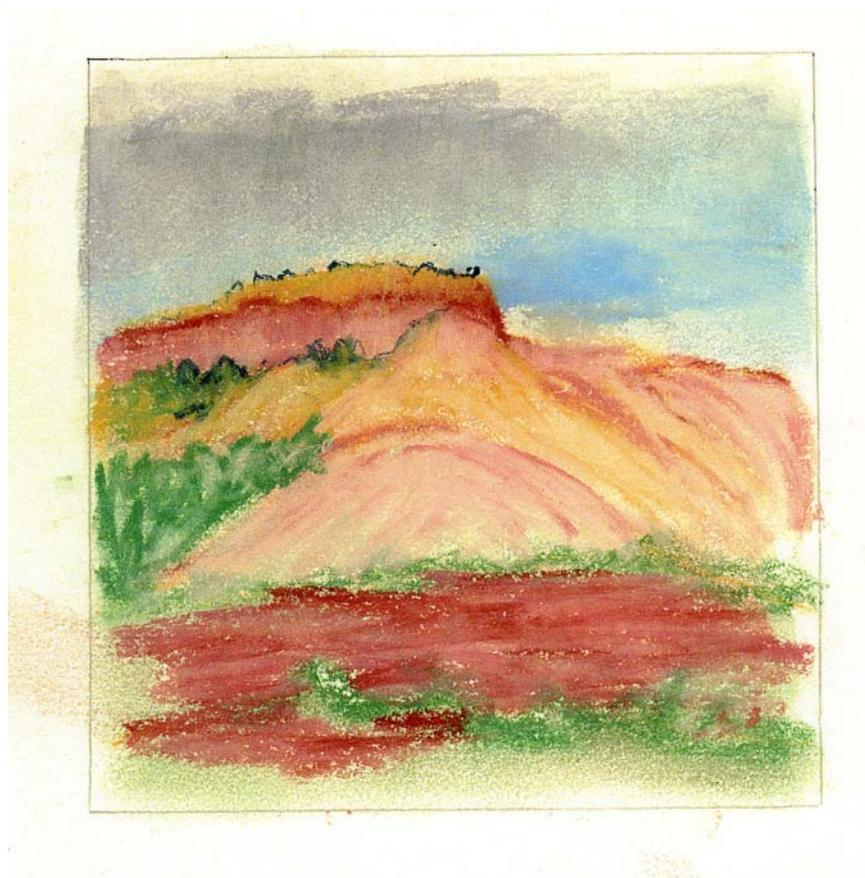


Figure 62. Suzanne Otter, *Breast in the Landscape*, 2005.
Courtesy of the artist.

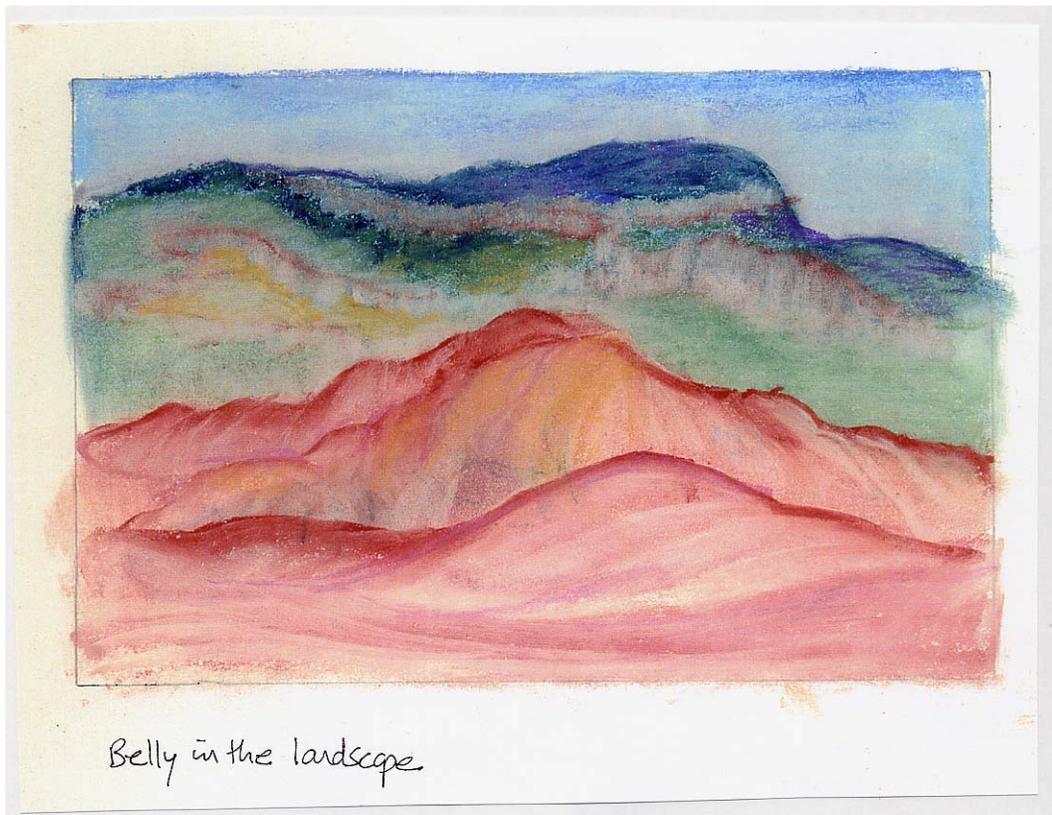


Figure 63. Suzanne Otter, *Belly in the Landscape*, 2005.
Courtesy of the artist.

gender the landscape in any way that I needed to at the time--the hill's "arm" felt alternately maternal and paternal. At other times, I feel that the landscape is inherently gendered, independent of my perception and needs. Most important to me, and a number of workshop participants, was that the landscape felt alive.

A number of participants described how an attempt to gender the landscape, or to see the landscape as body, felt uncomfortable and an imposition forced onto the landscape. Some of this discomfort seemed to derive from the belief that they had to identify the landscape, or elements within the landscape, as either male or female, even though I had stressed that the landscape can be ungendered, androgynous, or some combination of male and female. Either the way I presented the ideas or their own predilection to establish dualities made them stress choosing "either/or." For a few participants, trying to gender the landscape cut off or dampened their spontaneous feelings, including affection, for the landscape. They felt that it forced labels onto the landscape and cut off possibilities for ungendered sensual experiences, with them and the landscape just being "alive souls." For one of the men, the experience felt like a dialogue with a living entity, with both their own gender and the gender of the landscape in flux between male and female. One of the women noticed that she was attracted to fissures and crevices in the cliffs, and the sense of unresolved tension that they held. When she asked herself if this attraction was gendered (looking for female or male elements in the landscape), she was not sure of an answer. During this discussion, participants focused more on their own experience than O'Keeffe's. Perhaps because they did not take O'Keeffe images out with them on-site, it was difficult for participants to come up with ideas on whether or not O'Keeffe's images were gendered. However, there was general agreement with my thought that O'Keeffe sensualized rather than specifically gendered the Ghost Ranch landscape.

Later on Sunday morning, my presentation shifted towards qualities of relationship--communication and intimacy--and the inner experience of relating to and with the landscape, with gender still a part of the discussion but without as much emphasis. Participants seemed to respond more positively to the notion of communication with landscape and developing a sense of intimacy with landscape--both during discussion and in their on-site creative work--separate from a discussion of

gender. Ecofeminist ideas were new to the group; they listened to my presentation and quotes from ecofeminist writers and looked at the Remington images (figs. 37, 64) with interest but few questions. Some participants did integrate the gender and ecofeminist discussions; one woman did a drawing during the presentation that integrated ecofeminist ideas with notions of female and male forms and colors (fig. 65). As she explained to me, the background landscape was female and the spiraling vertical form was male. The one ecofeminist idea that received lively debate was “the erotic landscape” (primarily from Williams 2001). Some participants (both men and women) were curious about the use of “erotic” in this context, and how the broader erotic-as-life-force definition might influence their relationship with the landscape. A few (men and women) had negative reactions, including one woman who said that she objected to the use of “erotic” in this context because this term was too sex-linked; she preferred “dynamic landscape.” Terms associated with sex used in association with landscape perceptions and images still have the power to catch and hold some people’s attention and provoke strong negative reactions.

For the Sunday creative session, I encouraged participants to explore communication and intimacy with the landscape. My suggestions included writing a “conversation” with the landscape, creating images of close-up and far away landscapes, and painting/writing both from within themselves and responding to their environment. Compared with the red hills session, participants were more dispersed and felt comfortable wandering to find their own places within which to paint and write (figs. 66, 67). During the post-session discussion, I learned that their general experiences of this landscape included feeling a sense of awe at the landscape’s physical and visual intensity and strength, feeling the specialness of sharing this place with loved ones, feeling the joy of finding their own niches within which to paint and write, sensing the landscape as serene/calm and adventurous/dynamic at the same time, feeling like walking into the canyon was like going into the earth, and the specialness of observing the natural environment, for instance a snake eating a lizard and a tree hanging onto the side of a hill with its roots. Participants did not gender these responses; they expressed responses to the scale, color, dynamism, and power of the landscape, they assigned human qualities to the landscape, and expressed how it felt to be there. For me, moving into the canyon



Figure 64. Maggie Remington, *Laguna Santa Maria del Oro, Nayarit, Mexico, Full Moon*. 2000. Courtesy of the artist.



Figure 65. Suzanne Otter, *Relationship and Communication with the Landscape*, 2005.
Courtesy of the artist.



Figure 66. In the Box Canyon trail area, 2005.
Author photograph.

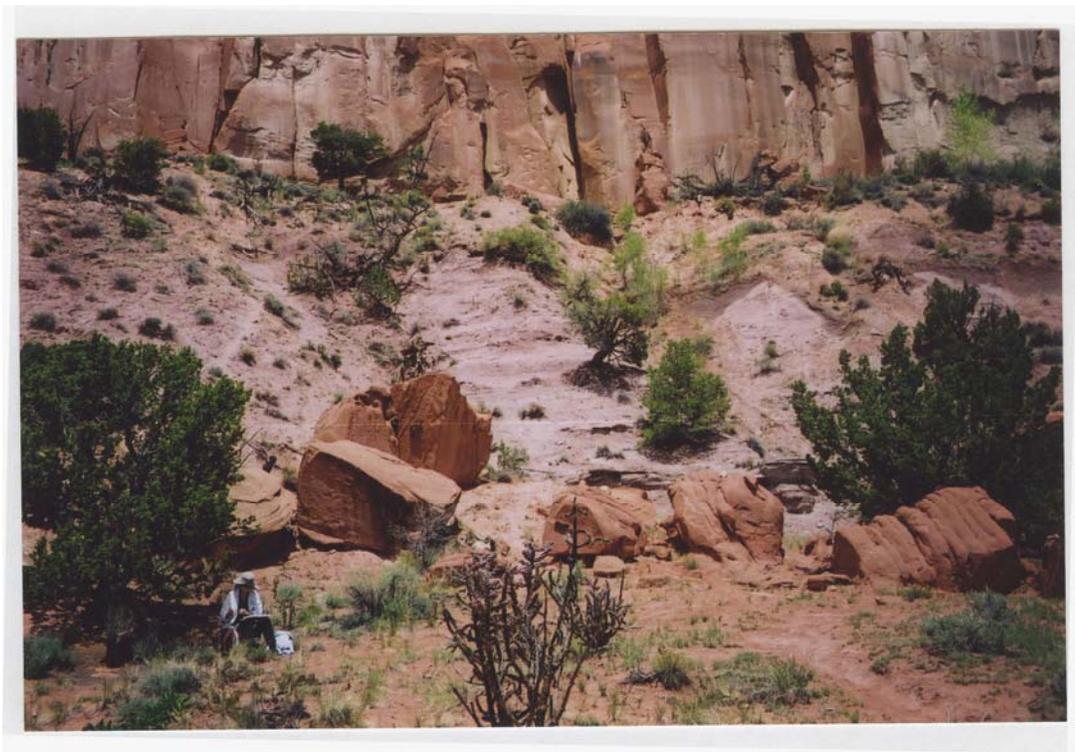


Figure 67. In the Box Canyon Trail area, 2005.
Author photograph.

was like going into the earth was gendered, depending on the gender I assigned to the landscape. During this session, participants managed to experiment with the questions I had introduced in addition to being so affected by the intensity of the landscape.

There were many specific responses related to communication, including two-way communication, and intimacy, with a wide range among participants. For a few of the women, communication and intimacy overlapped with gender; with most participants however gender did not come up unless I asked a prompting question. Gendered responses related to the landscape communicating in color, and being reminded of communication within human relationships. One woman related that, after settling into a secluded spot, she let the landscape speak to her. What came back to her was color--the great variety and intensity of color. I interpreted this as an experience of the landscape saying "look at me!" For her, the spring green of the new growth also held undertones of reds and oranges--the green was a feminine color, and the reds and oranges were masculine colors. O'Keeffe certainly felt the landscape speak to her with and through color, but her writings and images do not suggest that she specifically gendered colors. Another woman described how she experimented with experiencing the landscape as passionate and erotic. The landscape seemed more intense up close, and calmer and softer at a greater distance, and she likened this to human relationships with both men and women. For her, the cliffs seemed like elephants--large and massive--and she likened this to being very close to another person. Again, women within this group, and during this exercise, gendered the landscape more than the men. I also gendered the landscape, this time within a written "conversation" between myself and the landscape that transformed from male to female in the course of the dialogue.

Even though some participants didn't associate their responses with gender, some of their responses were actually quite gendered. Expressions of communication and intimacy that participants said did not overlap with gender, and with whom I agreed, included one of the women feeling welcomed by the landscape and having a reciprocal relationship like old friends where the landscape nourished and loved her back, and one of the women saying that the massive rock cliffs didn't talk to her but yet they did. Her painting of the cliffs (fig. 68) is not overtly gendered--the image is fairly realistic, without emphasis on either flowing or angular lines or forms. In addition, black and white

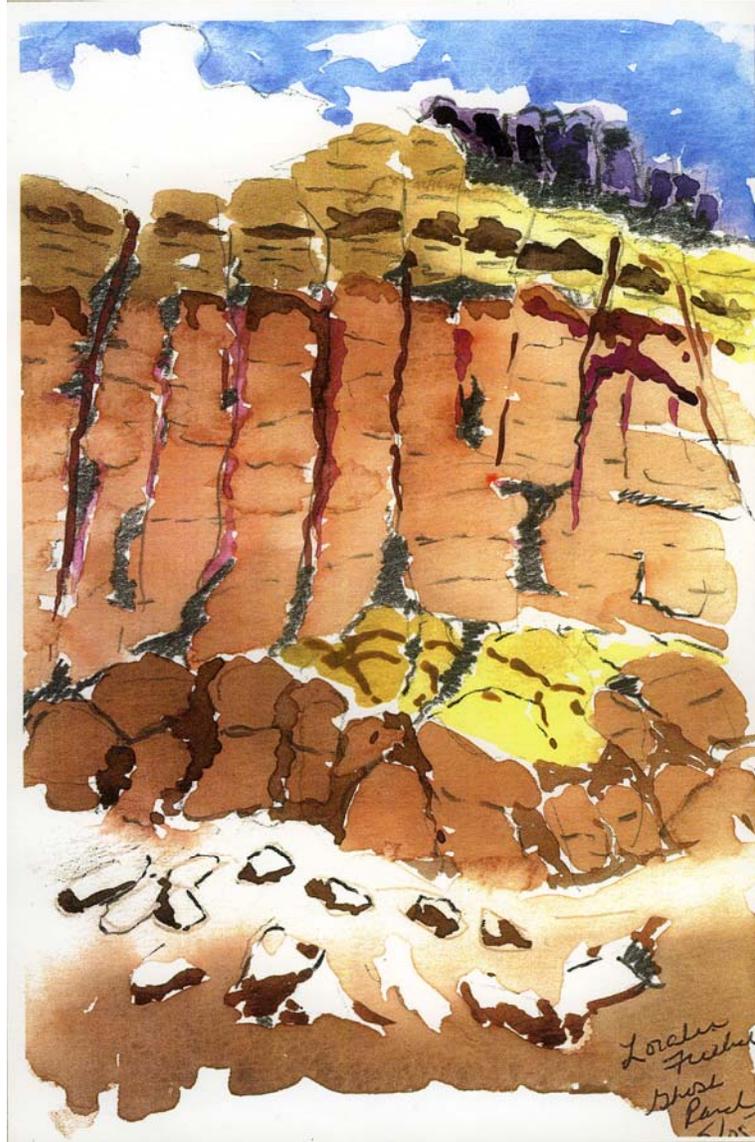


Figure 68. Lorelee Freilich, *Ghost Ranch*, 2005.
Courtesy of the artist.

images of a similar canyon scene were made by the couple. Both images are not obviously gendered, but combine flow and angle, with the man's image more representational (fig. 69), and the woman's image more abstract (fig. 70).

Expressions that I think are gendered, but which the participants did not think were gendered, included a drawing completed by one of the men that depicted communicating with the landscape in which the head of a cowboy appeared larger than life above a mesa top, and a passage written by one of the women about feeling the landscape offering her a gift:

The Earth, Water from the Earth, Trees from the Water like Arms and Hands from the Soul Offering It's Gifts, It's Life, It's Being, It's Treasure to the Sky, the Air, to the Blue, the Sandstone, the Cool, the Warm, the Openness, the Closeness, the Raven, the Lizard, the Imposing, the Hidden, the Confident, the Trembling, the Beautiful, the Absurd, the Grey, the Green, the Predator, the Prey, the Taking, the Giving Back--ME. (McKay 2005) (author capitalization)

The fact that the man's drawing was of a cowboy, rather than an androgynous being or animal, indicates that he associated this landscape with maleness, and perhaps also with the romantic western cowboy myth. While McKay's passage does not use specifically gendered language, the expressive and personal style of the passage is more characteristic of writing associated with the feminine. Overall, these gendered and ungendered expressions indicate that a number of participants felt a two-way communication with the landscape, with the writing passage and the landscape "speaking" in color being the strongest and most emotional expressions of this.

Of the questions I posed for this creative session, the ones not directly addressed by participants were about knowing the landscape through the body, the difference between anthropomorphizing the landscape and communicating with the landscape, and comparing ecofeminist ideas with O'Keeffe's approach to the landscape. Associating various body sensations with feelings about the landscape was understood, but I think knowing the landscape through the body, and the related idea of responding to the landscape from the "inside," were a little harder to grasp and apply. Participants mixed anthropomorphizing and communicating with the landscape; no specific distinctions were made and I didn't pursue this question. However, I did get the sense that they were comfortable assigning human qualities to the landscape without specifically



Figure 69. Gary Wellman, no title (landscape in the Box Canyon trail area), 2005. Courtesy of the artist.

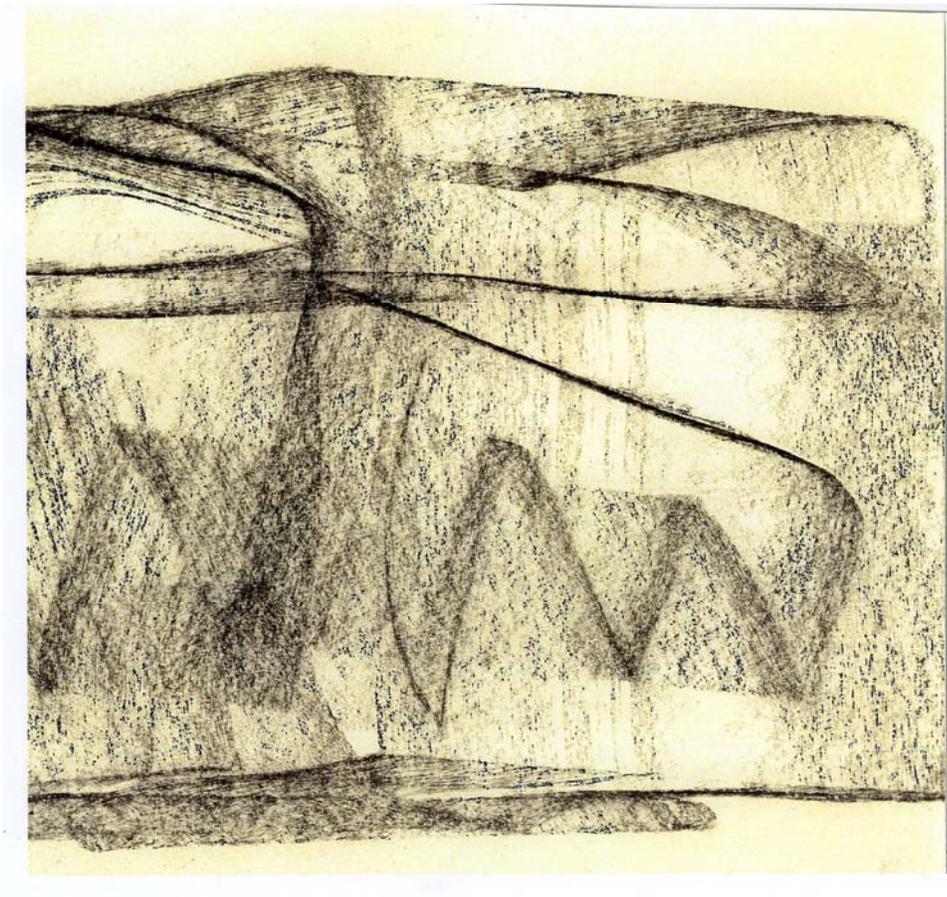


Figure 70. Maria Munguia Wellman, no title (landscape in the Box Canyon trail area), 2005. Courtesy of the artist.

gendering the landscape. And, I think that the relatively brief introduction to both ecofeminism and related quotes from O’Keeffe may not have given some participants sufficient background knowledge to feel like they could respond to questions about the relationship between the two.

During the closing session, I brought the discussion back to O’Keeffe’s relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape. In response to my question of whether O’Keeffe felt she had two-way communication with the Ghost Ranch landscape, both men and women in the group said that giving back to the landscape was necessary for two-way communication. One of the men questioned that while O’Keeffe definitely received something from the landscape, what did she give back? He said that O’Keeffe was an astute observer and close observation necessitates intimacy, but he didn’t have a sense of a two-way connection. Two of the women in the group alluded to the sense of electricity between the landscape and O’Keeffe; a cycle of give and take, where the landscape gave O’Keeffe shape and color and she gave back through her paintings. It was not enough for her to have lived in and to have felt a strong emotional connection to the landscape, to love it with her skin; she had to give something back to the landscape for these participants to feel that it was a two-way relationship. This sentiment is similar to that of ecofeminist artists who feel the need for their artistic pieces to actively heal and restore damaged landscapes.

I asked participants if their relationship with Ghost Ranch had changed over the weekend, related to gender and the three relationship aspects. There was a general sense that being within the Ghost Ranch landscape that weekend, having experiences within the landscape and getting to know the landscape better, and also of being where O’Keeffe lived, made the most difference in increasing their sense of intimacy with the landscape. The ideas on gender and the relationship aspects were interesting to participants, and played a major role for a few in determining their experiences that weekend, but it was the direct experience of being present within the landscape that most influenced the majority of participants in terms of how they related to the landscape. This suggests that gender and the three relationship aspects might more effectively be explored in a more advanced workshop where participants have already spent time at Ghost Ranch, are familiar with O’Keeffe’s life and work, and are familiar with the basics of ecofeminism.

Considering the workshop as a whole, it seemed that many participants (women and men) interpreted the discussion of gender as a directive to label landscape elements as either male or female, that is, they focused on the duality, rather than interpreting the discussion as an invitation to explore androgyny and combinations of gender. More explanation and examples of ways to approach gender other than the duality may have helped. And, similar to participants in the watercolor workshops, there was a certain amount of ambivalence to thinking in terms of gender. There was, within both male and female participants, a more positive response to ecofeminist ways of thinking about relationship with landscape and nature (two-way communication, knowing the landscape with the body), than to “gendering” the landscape. This response is reminiscent of O’Keeffe, and to many responses to critics’ efforts to gender her images; that is, that gendering the landscape--especially if sexualized--somehow takes away from the experience and is an imposition upon the landscape rather than taking the landscape for what it is. For some, trying to be aware of whether they were gendering the landscape inserted concepts and conditions between themselves and the landscape, and muddied their direct experience of the landscape. Perhaps they objected to the “muddying” of their experience because they were aware of it; we all brought our own ideas, values, and prior experiences (our positionality) to our experience of the landscape and so the experience was not really direct or pure for any of us. Not everyone felt this way--some participants (both men and women) felt that exploring gender enlarged their experience of the landscape and broadened their thinking about their relationships with people. One woman in the group took the ideas beyond the workshop into her other activities, for instance, when hiking with friends she asked them what they thought about gender and landscape.

Responses during the workshop also indicated that both female and male participants felt comfortable humanizing and sensualizing the landscape without necessarily gendering it--again, similar to O’Keeffe. The fact that more women than men within the group felt comfortable experimenting with gendering the landscape can perhaps be explained in part by my sense that middle-aged women in U.S. culture think more about gender because they have felt the need to compare their lives with men’s and consider how gender roles and issues have affected their lives.

Race/ethnicity and class did not seem to be major influences on participants' responses to O'Keeffe or on how they interpreted the landscape. The workshop was not set up to focus on race or class; I didn't raise issues of race or class, participants didn't either, and we focused on the unpeopled, undeveloped landscape of Ghost Ranch, as did O'Keeffe. The two instances of human presence with their images--the cowboy and the two women in the cliff--seemed to be of the same ethnicity as the artists (i.e. Anglo), and did not appear (e.g. from clothing) to be of a particular class, so these participants did not seem to be trying to make a statement about race or class with these images. The images of the one Mexican-American member of the group did not differ substantially from the others in terms of subject, theme, or interpretation. Variation between participants' responses seemed to be based on other factors. The relatively homogeneous group--similar education, class, and ethnic backgrounds, and with similar interests in art and nature--differed widely in their responses to issues of gender and landscape due to different individual experiences with and responses to ideas about gender.

The follow-up questionnaire afforded participants an opportunity to respond in more detail to the closing questions (App. E). Seven of the ten participants (six women and one of the men) filled out and returned the questionnaires. Some questionnaire responses reinforced what the participant said during the workshop, and some responses indicated that their thoughts had developed further in the weeks between the workshop and when they mailed back the questionnaire. For example, one of the women said that she came away from the workshop with the question, where does one gender end and the other begin?

To the first question--whether the gender and relationship aspect ideas made a difference to their experience--five said yes, one was neutral, and one said no. Reasons for these ideas making a difference included: the ideas caused her to see herself in the landscape (e.g. the earth as Mother transformed into the earth as Sister/Myself); the ideas helped her experience the landscape as alive and not just as a pretty place; the ideas stimulated exploration of how he experienced nature; and exploring the ideas enhanced her experience and intimacy with the landscape and helped her develop a relationship with the landscape, which brought to mind the connection between having a relationship with the landscape and caring for the earth. These responses suggest that discussing

gender and ecofeminist ideas did enhance their personal relationship with the landscape, and helped the landscape come alive. The last response made the ecofeminist connection between personal intimacy with the landscape and environmental concern; as she expressed it, “I felt held by the landscape and I held it” (Munguia Wellman 2005).

Responses to this first question also related gendering the landscape with human relationships, and with sexuality. One woman expressed that peopled landscapes were easier to gender, and that because there were so few people at Ghost Ranch, gendering that landscape was more difficult. For her, gendering the landscape seemed to need some human context. The women who said no to this first question said she didn’t gender the landscape and didn’t want to; she associated gender with her sense of self, that is, that she was comfortable with herself, and was not a feminist. She associated gendering the landscape with gendering herself; she no more wanted to divide the landscape into male and female than she wanted to fall in line with stereotypical male and female roles and behaviors. Here, ideas about gendering the landscape were associated with relationship with oneself. One of the men said that he experienced nature (while at Ghost Ranch) as bisexual, and, while he did not explain this comment further, his responses during the workshop suggest that he was referring to feeling that the landscape included male and female elements rather than the landscape itself having sexual desires. However, he may have chosen to use “bisexual” rather than “androgynous,” a term we did use during the workshop, because “bisexual” has greater connotation with human relationships.

To the second question--whether O’Keeffe’s relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape was gendered--four (three women and one of the men) said yes, one woman said no, one man said perhaps subconsciously, and one said that she would have to know what O’Keeffe was experiencing when she made her art in order to respond to the question. For the four who said that O’Keeffe’s relationship was gendered, one of the women elaborated by saying that O’Keeffe’s forms are profoundly female, in that they are sensual, erotic, and curvaceous; one of the women said that O’Keeffe approached the landscape in a feminine rather than a masculine way because she did not feel the need to dominate or be dominated by the landscape; and the third woman who responded positively took the sense of relating to landscape beyond a human context when she said that O’Keeffe’s intimacy with the landscape afforded a relationship that “captured an

essence unattainable with human relationships” (Munguia Wellman 2005). The man who responded positively to this question extended his sense of the landscape as bisexual by saying that O’Keeffe revealed the bisexual nature of the landscape. The woman who said that she did not think O’Keeffe’s relationship was gendered said that O’Keeffe didn’t intellectualize to the extent of thinking in terms of gender. These responses indicated that several of the participants who were willing to explore gendering the landscape within the workshop did not necessarily think that O’Keeffe’s relationship was gendered.

Responses to the third question--whether O’Keeffe shared ecofeminist ideas--indicated both a range of responses and a range of interpretations of ecofeminism. Two participants (one man and one woman) didn’t feel qualified to respond. One was unsure, saying that she couldn’t tell what O’Keeffe believed so she couldn’t say. Other responses to this question indicated that the participants were connecting ecofeminism more with the association between degradation of the earth and degradation of women than with two-way communication and intimacy with the landscape. One woman said yes, that O’Keeffe felt exploited, as the land had been. One woman said no, that O’Keeffe was dominated by the weather--the “Storm King” or the female furies--rather than the earth. One woman expressed a qualified yes--O’Keeffe did share ecofeminist ideas, but her possessive approach to the landscape and the fact that she took from the landscape what was not hers (e.g. taking the bones to New York) ran counter to ecofeminist ideas. And one woman’s response equated ecofeminism with sexualizing O’Keeffe’s images, saying that O’Keeffe did not purposefully paint sex or erotic images. After a brief introduction to the three relationship aspects and ecofeminism, different participants remembered and focused on different ideas.

The fourth question asked how their own responses compared with those of O’Keeffe’s and ecofeminists. Three said they were different (one that she wished she could paint like O’Keeffe, one that Ghost Ranch, with its large distances and sense of tension, was a difficult place for her to paint, and one that O’Keeffe’s relationship with Ghost Ranch was much more long-term than his); one said that her responses and images were not comparable to O’Keeffe’s because they reflected her own experience, not O’Keeffe’s; one said she didn’t feel qualified to answer; and two women expressed that

they shared with O’Keeffe intimacy and respect for this beautiful place. From these questionnaire responses, it seems that a number of participants were more interested in and related more to O’Keeffe during the workshop than afterwards--this may have been a result of my influence during the workshop.

Ideas for Future Workshops

My two-day workshop was long enough to give participants an introduction to ideas on gender and the three relationship aspects and a chance to explore these ideas in their painting and writing. I kept my workshop to two days because I wasn’t sure whether I could attract enough participants with the additional time commitment and associated costs. Within a longer workshop, however, there would be more opportunity for exploring concepts and responses to the landscape in greater depth. During my two-day workshop, which focused on the self-directed outdoor creative sessions, presentation of ideas was kept relatively simple. In a longer workshop there would be time to address concepts of relating to nature, art and nature, gender and relationship with landscape, and ecofeminism, in greater depth. For example, discussing the range of artists’ characterizations of and their relationships with nature from Baur’s 1958 essay--and showing images from that article--could encourage participants to think about how different artists have related to nature, how they have expressed this relationship within their art, how these artists compare with O’Keeffe, and whether and for whom gender was a factor. How the creative process can serve as a vehicle for deepening one’s relationship with landscape could also be discussed. A comparison of immanence and transcendence in approaches to nature and landscape, and how landscapes can be inspirational and associative, could also be covered. If the Baur article was included in the introductory discussion, questions for the first creative session could also include: How did ideas from the Baur essay influence your experience? How did you experience the landscape through thought, sensation, and spirit? Did you feel yourself merge with the landscape in any way? How do you think the type of experience you had showed in your painting/writing?

In a longer workshop, discussion of gender could focus more on moving beyond gender dualities. A number of gender-related topics, addressed in earlier chapters, could

be covered, including: gendering, humanizing, and sensualizing the landscape; gaze and gender and its relationship to colonial attitudes towards the western landscape and New Mexico; non-dualistic approaches to gender, (androgyny, pre-gender, post-gender); relating to the landscape through personality and/or gender; and how the three relationships aspects can serve as markers for non-dualistic notions of gender and landscape.

Other options for outdoor creative sessions could also be explored in a more indepth workshop. All creative sessions could be held within the same landscape, to compare images and writing in response to this landscape completed before and after various ideas were introduced. During my workshop, I used two different locations because I wanted to include the red hills landscape and, due to access restrictions, we could only go there once. I also wanted to see if participants' images and writing would differ between the red hill landscape and the Box Canyon trail landscape.

A longer workshop would also provide the opportunity for a more thorough pre-test experience. Before the introduction of ideas about gender, participants could do a pre-test outdoor creative session, so they would have some baseline images or writings to compare with images or writings produced later in the workshop, after discussion of gender and the three relationship aspects. Prompting questions for the pre-test on-site creative session could include: What are your initial thoughts about how you relate to nature in general? To this landscape specifically? Do you tend towards realism, expressionism, or abstraction in your images of landscapes? What parts of this landscape attract you, and why? A discussion of how we relate to our environment and the Ghost Ranch landscape in particular without focusing on gender could accompany this pre-test. With less structure and choice of location, this session would help participants orient themselves more gradually and fully to the Ghost Ranch landscape and help them make the transition from their everyday lives to the workshop experience. Participants' pre-test images and writings would also help determine how gender and ecofeminism ideas made a difference to their experience. In addition, a longer workshop would give participants the opportunity to complete the written questionnaire while they were still on-site.

Compared with participant responses during the watercolor workshops, participants of my workshop had the opportunity to go beyond expressing some initial

ideas about O’Keeffe, gender, and landscape to explore these ideas and feelings on-site and to develop their own personal expressions. Given this opportunity, many participants did find gender and relationship aspect ideas sufficiently interesting to spend time experimenting with them. Similar to participants of the earlier watercolor workshops, there was within my workshop group a range of responses, from very positive to mild interest to quite strong negative responses. Gendering the landscape was connected with positive and negative experiences with feminism, with positive and negative self-image, and with positive and negative aspects of human relationships

Participant’s images completed in different locations and on different days contrasted in some ways and not in others. Their style and media were relatively consistent; participants tended to use the same painting or drawing style and to stay with the same medium, for example, pastels or watercolor. Whether or not they worked in black and white or color stayed the same, and images of both near and far landscapes were completed on both days, indicating that the emphasis on intimacy on Sunday did not influence participants to focus on smaller-scale or close-up landscapes. Subject matter, however, differed substantially, in large part due to the fact that the landscape environment contrasted between the two days and most participants did representational images of the landscape. Perhaps in response to the presentation and discussion topics, images from the Sunday session tended to be less gendered than those completed on Saturday afternoon. And, participants did not necessarily agree with me that the red hills landscape felt more feminine and the cliffs landscape felt more masculine.

My agenda for the workshop--introducing and encouraging exploration of landscape and gender, and the three relationship aspects--did influence participant’s responses. I don’t think that these ideas, except perhaps intimacy, would have been addressed without my bringing up these ideas, and they may not have compared themselves with O’Keeffe to the extent that they did. During the workshop, they were willing to experiment with my ideas, and seemed to relate to gender in the landscape and to O’Keeffe a little more than within their questionnaire responses, which were written away from the Ghost Ranch landscape after they had time to place the workshop experience within the context of their everyday lives.

The next time I do the workshop, I would like to do things a little differently to see how participant's responses might vary with different conditions and with different emphases. Within a longer workshop--a minimum of three days--I could experiment with some of the ideas for a more indepth workshop described above. Discussing the three relationship aspects without any mention of ecofeminism might help avoid conflation of gender and feminism and resulting ambivalence towards approaching ideas about gender, and might make a difference to participant's creative responses. Incorporating more examples of gendered landscapes, of androgynous relationships with landscape and androgynous images of landscapes, and of gendering the landscape without reference to human relationships might facilitate a wider range of responses, including more exploration of androgyny, the space between the two poles of the gender duality, and approaching the landscape as gendered without reference to the gender duality. Involving more participants with backgrounds in feminism and ecofeminism also might influence the group as a whole to explore these ideas in more depth.

Conclusions

The findings of this dissertation support my two hypotheses. With regard to my first hypothesis, not only has gender been a major theme for O'Keeffe and her critics, ideas about gender were explored by a number of workshop participants and were key to some participant's experience. O'Keeffe's own thoughts and attitudes about gender roles and gender associations in her art, and her reactions to what her critics had to say, influenced her choice of subject matter and, to a certain extent, painting style. She transitioned away from abstract images towards more representational images of the New Mexico landscape when she started spending more time in New Mexico and at Ghost Ranch. Many of those who have written about O'Keeffe and her art have had something to say about gender, whether supporting or objecting to Freudian and sexual interpretations of her images, developing alternative ideas about how she related to gender (such as her use of mystical gender dualities), or associating her work with feminist or ecofeminist ideas. While O'Keeffe did not overtly identify the landscape as feminine, masculine, or androgynous, her relationship with the landscape and how she

expressed this in her images was gendered--she combined gendered and nongendered subjects and shapes in her landscape images.

Relating gender associations to the understanding of O'Keeffe's relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape did make a difference to a number of workshop participants' on-site experiences. For some, these ideas were familiar. Others were interested in the questions, and others continued exploring these ideas beyond the workshop. A number of women and men participants allowed ideas about gender to broaden their understanding of O'Keeffe's relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape beyond sexual imagery; others continued to let questions of sexual associations in O'Keeffe's imagery dominate their interpretations.

Secondly, an examination of O'Keeffe's expressions, critics' and scholars' writings, and workshop participants' responses, shows that relating O'Keeffe's work to the three relationship aspects and ecofeminism can broaden our understanding of her relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape. It can help us understand the nuances of how her images relate to how she lived with and experienced this landscape. Thinking about how O'Keeffe communicated with the landscape, how she felt the landscape within her body, and the depth of her intimacy with the landscape--in addition to studying her subject matter and painting style--can help us understand how she translated her relationship with the landscape into images. It can also help us understand what other artists, what other women and men, and what we share with her. Many workshop participants--both women and men--did see a connection between O'Keeffe's approach to the landscape and ecofeminist ideas of communication and intimacy with landscape and knowing the landscape through the body, and this association helped them to better understand O'Keeffe's relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape. This association was connected with gender for some, but not all; several workshop participants (men and women) did not directly associate ecofeminist ideas with gender and gendering the landscape. For them, a sense of intimacy with the landscape did not need to be tied to gender. Exploring communication and intimacy with the landscape made a substantial difference to the on-site experience of all participants, and helped enrich their relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape. Exploring these ideas within the landscape

itself helped many participants to feel the questions on the inside, to embody the questions.

As this study has shown, a number of factors can influence how we approach these ideas, and how open we are to considering the association between O’Keeffe and ideas about gender and the three relationship aspects. When gender is conflated with political feminism, an ambivalence towards political feminism can be automatically and emotionally associated with gender issues, and this can restrict openness to ideas about gender that are not necessarily connected to feminist social action. When we think of our experience of intimacy with nature and landscape as spiritual and platonic, the role of gender can seem irrelevant to our experience. When we relate gender only to human relationships, we may tend to anthropomorphize the landscape more than if we are open to the possibility of the landscape being gendered in the way that animals and plants are gendered. And, if we have a strong conservation ethic of caring for and healing the landscape, we may be more open to developing a close and embodied intimacy with the landscape. Feeling intimate with the landscape does not guarantee that we will more actively participate in landscape conservation efforts, but the association between two-way communication and giving back to the landscape, which was mentioned by a number of workshop participants, suggests that communicating with the landscape, feeling intimate with the landscape, and caring for the landscape, are, for some, strongly connected.

EPILOGUE

In her 1992 critique of O’Keeffe biographies, Naomi Rosenblum asked the question: “Does writing about O’Keeffe from a feminist point of view guarantee that her life’s work will become more understandable to contemporary viewers, or more pleasurable?” (Rosenblum 1992). Applying this question within the context of this dissertation, yes, I believe it does, perhaps not to the point of a guarantee, but to many of those interested in O’Keeffe. Relating O’Keeffe’s life and work to contemporary feminist and gender theory--especially ecofeminist thought which addresses our relationship with landscapes--and using contemporary insights to help us understand the importance of O’Keeffe’s legacy for our time, does make O’Keeffe more understandable, more relevant to the present, and more relevant to our lives. The three relationship aspects discussed in this dissertation are not unique to ecofeminism, but it is meaningful that ecofeminists (female and male) consider them important. Feminism talks a lot about women relating to the earth, and to specific landscapes, through the body, and this ability relates to being able to sense and experience a two-way communication with the landscape and natural elements. This in turn can facilitate a special kind of intimacy with the landscape; an intimacy that is felt on the inside, with emotion. Many male writers and artists have shared this kind of intimacy with the landscape--Walt Whitman and J. Alden Weir are two examples--and, it is significant that this personal, embodied intimacy is a major emphasis within a branch of feminism.

Does using a feminist point of view make O’Keeffe’s work more pleasurable? Using an ecofeminist point of view can broaden and deepen our understanding of O’Keeffe, her work, and her relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape. Understanding can lead to pleasure and joy, and pleasure can enhance understanding. Varieties of pleasure--sensory, sensual, and sexual pleasure, spiritual pleasure and the pleasure of understanding, the pleasure of social interaction and feeling connected both to a place and to a group of people--can all be part of an experience of relating to, and responding to, a special landscape. For a number of those who participated in the

watercolor workshops and in my workshop, their understanding and pleasure was enhanced by exploring--in mind and body--questions about gender and the three relationship aspects. Pleasure intensifies feeling, and intense feeling can personalize and deepen our relationship with, and creative responses to, a landscape.

Going beyond an initial exposure to a landscape to explore a personal relationship with that landscape, and going beyond basic information to explore themes such as gender associations and ecofeminist ideas, requires more time than most visitors have on their first, or subsequent, experiences at heritage landscapes. More in-depth themes and experiences are more effectively addressed within a three to five day on-site workshop, such as those offered by the Ghost Ranch Conference Center, where participants have time to explore unfamiliar questions and relate them to their own experiences. Visitors to heritage landscapes vary widely, in country of origin, cultural background, age, and educational background as well as race, class, and gender--vary more widely than workshop participant groups discussed in this dissertation. Visitors less familiar with the region, with O'Keeffe, and with attitudes towards nature active in American culture during O'Keeffe's life may need more time to develop their own relationship with Ghost Ranch and to be able to engage in questions of gender and landscape. In addition to accommodating the diversity of visitors by providing background and context information within different interpretive media and in a variety of languages, visitors could contribute to the understanding of how O'Keeffe's relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape compares with others' by sharing their own thoughts and perspectives.

The second alternative in the O'Keeffe study (NPS 1992a), where visitors are invited to contemplate O'Keeffe's relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape within a relatively small contact station, a designed contemplative space, and on self-guided trails, could form the basis of an expanded personal experience. An initial visit to the contact station, contemplative site, and self-guided trail would give visitors an introduction to O'Keeffe's life at Ghost Ranch, the paintings she produced there, and the key aspects of her relationship with this landscape. The fact that hers was a close and personal relationship with the landscape, that she lived there seasonally for almost sixty years, that she got to know every inch of her landscape through her daily walks, and that her painting style shows how she focused on the essence of the landscape and juxtaposed

landscape elements like bones and hills, are ideas easily conveyed in a basic interpretive program. Walking out into the contemplative site and into the landscape would start to give visitors their own personal experience of the landscape. However, to be able to explore more complex ideas about gender or other themes, more time and focused attention to the landscape would be needed, for example, within a workshop similar to the one I held at Ghost Ranch. Also, the interpretive materials, exhibits, contemplative space, and trails could be specifically designed to facilitate an understanding of the role of gender and ecofeminist ideas in O’Keeffe’s relationship with the landscape.

Contact station exhibits would ideally be simple, and focused on O’Keeffe’s direct and personal relationship with the landscape. O’Keeffe quotes, such as those I use in Chapter Two, and comparisons of O’Keeffe images with the matching painting sites, could be displayed. O’Keeffe images could be compared with those of members of the Taos artist circle and of contemporary regional artists, to clarify how O’Keeffe’s interpretation of the landscape differed from her contemporaries and with more recent artists. To integrate gender and ecofeminist themes, key questions could be incorporated into the exhibit. For example, the following question could be included: “In art and literature, the earth is often characterized as female. Do you think O’Keeffe characterized the landscape as female? As you walk out on the trail, ask yourself if you feel the landscape is female, or male, and if this makes a difference to how you experience, or relate to, this landscape.” As in the Ghost Ranch workshops, these kinds of questions might be unfamiliar or confusing to visitors when first presented. To be able to explore gender and ecofeminist ideas, an introduction to gender and some discussion of these ideas in combination with more time within the landscape would be needed. Addressing the question of whether landscape was gendered for O’Keeffe, and whether it is gendered for visitors, would require some discussion of what it means for a landscape to be gendered, some background on O’Keeffe and her Ghost Ranch paintings, and an exploration of how visitors relate to ecofeminist ideas. This background and discussion could be provided in more detailed interpretive materials such as a brochure, video program, or the trail guide, or could be provided within a ranger led talk.

Key to exploring more complex questions that address knowing the landscape with the body and communication with the landscape, and that integrate different

approaches like ecofeminism, is the combination of discussion and first hand sensory experience within the landscape--the opportunity to feel the questions as well as think about them. Again working from the O’Keeffe study outline for Alternative Two (NPS 1992a), visitors would start their outdoor experience at the contemplative site. This site would ideally be a simply designed outdoor space, located sufficiently far from the contact station to afford relative quiet in addition to relative solitude, where visitors could view the landscape. Simple wood or stone benches and a shade structure of rustic design would suffice. As they walked out on an informal trail into the landscape, visitors could get to know the landscape further, on a more personal basis. The design of the trail, and the trail guidebook, could directly facilitate exploration of gender and ecofeminist themes. Experiencing the landscape directly with all of the senses could be encouraged by having visitors walk on an unpaved trail and providing seats fashioned out of natural rock. Keeping signage to an absolute minimum would help provide an opportunity for a more direct relationship with the landscape. Overall, the trail would ideally be as simple as possible, routed to offer visitors views of the hills and cliffs, and the experience of walking within the hills and close to the cliffs. Since ecofeminist ideas relate directly to conservation and caring for the earth, the whole development (trail, contemplative space, and contact station) could be designed using principles of sustainability, for example, maximizing the use of solar energy and encouraging recycling. Interpreting sustainable design along with the three relationship aspects could facilitate discussion of the range of ecofeminist perspectives.

In addition to directing visitors’ attention to specific O’Keeffe painting sites and qualities of the landscape, the trail guidebook could include the questions relating to gender that appeared within the exhibit, to help visitors carry these thoughts out into the landscape. The guidebook could include more indepth discussion of gender and ecofeminist themes, for example, comparing O’Keeffe quotes about the landscape with those of art critics, which may facilitate visitors’ thinking about their own responses to the landscape, and whether or not they perceive it as gendered. To further integrate ecofeminist ideas, the guidebook could include a discussion of the relative ecological health of the landscape, and how this relates to its aesthetic qualities. For example, comparison of historic and contemporary photographs could indicate to what extent

grazing or other disturbances had changed or reduced the amount of vegetation to produce the sculptural character of some areas of the landscape. This could be related to how we may be aesthetically attracted to, and have a sense of communicating with, a landscape that may actually be ecologically unhealthy.

Workshops addressing O’Keeffe’s relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape could cover a number of themes, including gender. A workshop could focus more on race/ethnicity and class interactions, for example, comparing O’Keeffe’s response to the Ghost Ranch landscape with those of local artists, farmers, and other members of local communities. Such a workshop could consider how race/ethnicity and class may influence gender responses. The variables of age and life stage could be added by designing workshops for children and youth, such as those run by The Georgia O’Keeffe Museum, where the girls and boys could compare their responses to the landscape with those of O’Keeffe, and other artists. Gender could also be explored here, for instance, to see at what age or life stage gender associations become meaningful and useful to participants in interpreting the landscape. The interrelationships between an aesthetic and ecological approach to relating with the landscape could be explored, going deeper into ecofeminism than in this dissertation, and adding discussion of a variety of other approaches, including Deep Ecology. Various approaches to creative expressions of our relationships with landscape, including landscape painting, could be compared with O’Keeffe’s, both generally and in relation to specific questions such as how we communicate with the landscape. Within scholarly seminars such as those put on by The Georgia O’Keeffe Museum, extended visits to Ghost Ranch and other O’Keeffe painting sites could be integrated, to provide on-site opportunities that could deepen and broaden scholarly discussions and help participants integrate ideas with their own experiences. Within these kinds of workshops, on-site interaction with the landscape is key to an exploration of more in-depth themes that relate to knowing the landscape through the body, or interpreting the landscape as a body.

Exploring gender and ecofeminist ideas in relation to other artists, and within other associative and inspirational heritage landscapes, could also be meaningful. Interpretive programs at other heritage landscapes could enhance visitors’ feelings of connection to these landscapes by helping them develop a deeper understanding of the

context within which the artist lived and worked. This context includes gender. This approach would help visitors connect more to the source of inspiration--the artist's relationship with the landscape. For example, at Weir Farm NHS, knowing more about how Weir may have related to gendered aspects of European Impressionism may deepen visitors' understanding of his relationship with his farm landscape. Exploring gender dynamics within the interpretation of landscape painters' interpretations of some of the large western national parks could add a comparison of how men's paintings of these landscapes compare with women's, historically and since park establishment, to see whether the artist's gender made a significant difference to the subjects, scale, and composition of the images. At the Desert View lookout at Grand Canyon National Park, for example, interpretive programs could address whether there were women artists who depicted the Grand Canyon landscape during the mid-late nineteenth century in addition to well known male artists like Moran, and if so, how their images compared. These early images could, in turn, be compared with images of the region from the late twentieth century, including ecofeminist images. The influence of evolving ideas about gender could be added to interpretation of artists' relationships with landscapes to compare changes in gender thinking with changes in the artists' approach. For example, looking at the evolution of critique of J. Alden Weir's art could, as with the study of critique of O'Keeffe's art, provide information for more in-depth interpretive materials. To add to the ideas that arose within the NPS Painting and Sculpture Theme Study workshop, the role of gender in the landscape paintings of various artists in the Taos School could be explored, along with other artists and groups of artists considered within this workshop (NPS 1992b). In addition to the question of how an artist's relationship with a landscape is expressed in their images of that landscape, we could ask how gender associations and dynamics may influence artists as they design memorials to be located in a particular landscape.

Gender can also be integrated to a greater degree within interpretive programs at heritage landscapes in general. Exploring gender dynamics at heritage landscapes associated with women's history can go beyond ensuring that women's contributions are recognized to an understanding of how relationships between women's and men's experiences influenced the course of events, and interpretation of events, within a

particular landscape. For example, at Tumacacori National Historical Park in Arizona, the interpretive program can address how gender norms and dynamics within Spanish, Anglo, and Native American cultures influenced intermarriage, land ownership, division of labor, and use of the mission landscape by women and men in addition to drawing attention to specific women who were active in this community (Cowley and Eyring 2003).

Gender is a key concept to explore within heritage landscapes due to the long cultural tradition of gendering the landscape, and recent challenges to this convention within ecofeminism and other approaches. Given the importance of gender to the story of heritage landscapes, how can more inclusion of gender be encouraged within NPS interpretive programs, so that gender is addressed to the same extent as race and class? No alternatives within the O’Keeffe study have been implemented; what options are available for interpreting the role of gender within O’Keeffe’s relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape? How can gender be further integrated into NPS interpretation within all NPS units, not just those focused on women’s history or artists? And, are there perhaps specific sources of resistance to interpreting gender on the same level as race and class within the NPS and potentially within other federal land management agencies?

Since its submittal to Congress in 1993, no action has been taken on the NPS O’Keeffe study (Brown 2004). There may be several reasons for this. Interest in preserving landscapes associated with artists has waned since the 1991 Painting and Sculpture Theme Study workshop, and funding and overall support for establishing additional federal protected areas has diminished since the early 1990s. Due to the preliminary nature of the O’Keeffe study, no public meetings were held as part of the study process (Harris 2004). It is likely that, if public meetings had been held then or were held today, that there might be considerable and understandable objection to the establishment of an additional federal presence in the region. With the current national political climate, the best hope for further preservation of the landscape associated with O’Keeffe, and for developing interpretive opportunities, may lie with the private sector--for example, Ghost Ranch Conference Center and The Georgia O’Keeffe Museum--than in trying to resurrect a federal proposal.

Since the 1992 O’Keeffe study, the establishment of The Georgia O’Keeffe Museum and The Georgia O’Keeffe Foundation’s interpretation of her Abiquiu House and Studio have accommodated much of the interest in O’Keeffe that earlier led to the NPS O’Keeffe study. The Georgia O’Keeffe Museum now owns O’Keeffe’s Ghost Ranch house, and in March 2006, responsibility for artwork that was in O’Keeffe’s private collection and for the Abiquiu House and Studio will transfer from the Foundation to The Georgia O’Keeffe Museum (Drabanski 2006). In addition to making O’Keeffe’s Ghost Ranch house available to scholars and small groups, the Museum could provide opportunities for visitors to learn about O’Keeffe’s relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape at this location within a scenario similar to the NPS O’Keeffe study contemplative site alternative, and could focus on specialized topics such as the role of gender in O’Keeffe’s relationship with this landscape (Lynes, quoted in Drabanski 2006).

Even as private institutions become more involved with NPS properties in their role as cooperating partners, efforts to enhance the consideration of gender within NPS interpretive programs need to continue. As with other changes to the way the agency interprets people’s interactions with the land, a combination of committed interest and support within the agency and strong and vocal public interest is needed. The Diversity and Women’s History initiatives resulted in national conferences on the subjects of cultural diversity and women’s history, in the addition to specific NPS units focusing on these themes, and in changes to interpretive materials at a wide range of NPS units. Adding a specific theme or program is, however, very different from integrating that theme throughout all units and all agency processes. For example, the recent addition of the NPS Ethnography Program saw professional ethnographer positions established, specific funding allocated to ethnographic studies, and establishment of a vehicle through which to support cross-cultural awareness, but enhancing the awareness of potential cultural bias and the need to consider diverse world views in all aspects of park planning and management is a more complex effort. Likewise, enhancing the understanding of how gender can influence landscape perception and use within all kinds of NPS units is a larger and more complex project than adding specific women’s history sites to the National Park System.

Enhancing the understanding of the role of gender in landscape perception and use can be facilitated by a transition from mentions of gender within discussions of women's history (e.g. Cowley and Eyring 2003) to discussions focusing on gender (e.g. Cowley 2001), and then on to discussions of how multiple variables like race, cultural background, class, age, and gender, interrelate. This kind of transition is occurring within some sectors of the NPS, for example within in-depth history studies which delve into socio/cultural nuances more than basic interpretive literature (Cowley and Eyring 2003). However, this transition is occurring slowly, and is lagging behind the incorporation of race and class themes within interpretive materials. Perhaps there are specific reasons for this. Perhaps gender is directly associated with feminism--as it was for a few of the Ghost Ranch workshop participants--and so is perceived to be a concern of a particular political interest group rather than a factor that has very widespread influence. Perhaps gender is inaccurately perceived to be primarily associated with sex--as it was and still is for O'Keefe--and sex is considered inappropriate for public education programs. Whatever the case may be, it is important to explore and overcome resistances to fully recognizing and incorporating gender issues and dynamics into planning and interpretation of heritage landscapes--including landscapes associated with artists--in order to help land management agencies better reflect the balance and integration of race, class, gender, and other socio/cultural variables that is present in much related scholarship.

It is important to integrate gender into overall heritage landscape planning and interpretive approaches, and it is also important to recognize the role gender can play within individual visitor's experiences within heritage landscapes. The nature of our personal, one-on-one experience with a landscape--the type of experience that I am most curious about and that in large part motivated this dissertation--is at the heart of all the different kinds of interpretive experiences and workshops mentioned above. This personal experience of, and relationship with, a landscape, can be gendered in a number of ways. As demonstrated by workshop participants' responses, if we are interested in and/or willing to consider the landscape as gendered, we may experience the landscape as feminine or masculine, in a general sense or through anthropomorphizing landforms, trees, or other landscape features. We may gender code certain landscape features, or

have a more diffuse sense of the landscape encompassing both maleness and femaleness. We may experience a sense of communicating with the landscape, as we would with another person, or with an androgynous being. O’Keeffe’s relationship with the Ghost Ranch was gendered in that she combined elements culturally associated with femaleness and maleness in her images, and she related to the landscape very much with and through her senses and her body, a type of relationship upon which ecofeminism focuses. O’Keeffe sensualized rather than feminized or specifically gendered the landscape; however, relating her approach to ecofeminist ideas does “feminize” her relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape through this association, and “feminizes” our understanding of this relationship. And this, I maintain, is important to do. It is important to reclaim O’Keeffe’s feminine and feminist relationship with this and other landscapes by broadening our understanding of the role gender played in her work beyond discussions of sexual imagery. It is important to realize the connection between recent ecofeminist ideas of relating to the earth with a major twentieth-century artist who was a woman and to whom many of us turn for inspiration and for an example of how women can live passionately with a landscape.

At sunset I walked alone out through the red hills--I thought of you--wished you were with me but I get a keen sort of exhilaration from being alone-- . . . I walked some distance--then climbed quite high-- . . . from where I stood it seemed I could see all over this world--When the sun is just gone the color is so fine--and I like the feel of wind against me when I get up high--

(Georgia O’Keeffe, from a letter written to Cady Wells in the early 1940s)

APPENDIX A: PROGRAMS IN WHICH I PARTICIPATED - SELECTED

U.S.D.I. National Park Service O’Keeffe Study, 1990 –1992

My role: Consulting Landscape Architect
Included April 1990 Study Team Field Trip

My tours of O’Keeffe painting sites, 1993-2003

My role: tour organizer and leader
NPS groups: Cultural Resources 2000 Conference, Cultural Resource specialists and managers; Santa Fe Office Administrative Assistants group; participants of service-wide NPS Cultural Landscapes Program meeting
Academic: Professor Leslie Instone, from MIT, Australia
Art groups: Martin Boroson, and members of Temenos project Ltd., Ireland, performing arts group.
Church: 3 informal tours, total of 7 participants.

Watercolor Workshops held at Ghost Ranch, 2002-2003

My role: participant -observer
June 3-8, 2002, with Jan Hart
May 2003, with Pamona Hallenback.
October 2003, with Pamona Hallenback and Sylvia Falcon

Georgia O’Keeffe Museum Education Programs, Walks in the American West, 2002-2004

My role: participant-observer
July 30, 2002, with writer Rebecca Solnit.
October 8, 2002, with writer/art critic Lucy Lippard.
June 13, 2003, with writer Bill deBuys.
July 30, 2004, with writer Lesley Poling-Kempes

Ecofeminist Women’s Retreat, 2004

My role: observer, and participant
EarthMagic: A Salon and Retreat for Women Spirit-Artists
Retreat leaders: Denise Horton and Laura Lee Skauge
Location: Synergia Ranch, Santa Fe, New Mexico

The Georgia O’Keeffe Museum, Santa Fe

My role: viewer, listener, discussion participant

Exhibits:

In the American Grain: Dove, Hartley, Marin, O’Keeffe, and Stieglitz. 2004-2005.

Georgia O’Keeffe and New Mexico: A Sense of Place. 2004

Jerry Rightman docent tour of exhibit
Moments in Time: Photographs by Maria Chabot, 2004.
Georgia O'Keeffe and the Calla Lily in American Art, 1860-1940. 2002-2003.
Georgia O'Keeffe: The Artist's Landscape. Photographs by Todd Webb, 2002.
O'Keeffe's O'Keeffes: The Artist's Collection. 2002.
In Response to Place (landscape photography) 2002.
The Calla Lily: Traditional and Non-Traditional Depictions. Brett Barber. 2002.

Lectures:

Barbara Buhler Lynes, Georgia O'Keeffe and New Mexico: A Sense of Place. June 13, 2004.
Barbara Buhler Lynes and Hunter Drohojowska-Philp, Georgia O'Keeffe in a Modern Light. June 28, 2004.
H. Daniel Peck, Georgia O'Keeffe's Early Landscapes and the Fate of American Beauty. July 18, 2002.

Education Programs:

The Calla Lily: Traditional and Non-Traditional Depictions. Brett Barber. Pastel workshop. 2002
O'Keeffe Outdoors: Exploring the New Mexico Landscape in Pastels. Brett Barber. June 28, 2003

OTHER:

Carr, O'Keeffe, Kahlo: Places of Their Own. Art exhibit. Fine Arts Museum, Santa Fe. 2002.

Recursos de Santa Fe – The Desert Is No Lady Seminar. Janice Monk, facilitator. 2002

University of New Mexico class field trip to Raymond Jonson Museum. Susan Ressler, instructor. Chip Ware, Museum Director, speaker. Albuquerque. September 13, 2002.

“Reflective Collaboration.” Art exhibit, Mother Earth Goddess theme. Jasmine Stewart and Harmony West. Jean Cocteau Theatre, Santa Fe, 2002.

Biophilia lecture. Basia Irland and Gregory Cajete, speakers. Audobon Center, Santa Fe. October 3, 2002.

Rivers and Tides. Andy Goldsworthy environmental art documentary film. College of Santa Fe. October 15, 2002.

APPENDIX B: QUESTIONNAIRE USED FOR MY TOURS

O’Keeffe Trip, “experience enhancing questions”:

Before:

How would you characterize your relationship with nature? (e.g. is it more aesthetic, spiritual, scientific, conservation-oriented? Do you relate to nature more as an individual or as a member of a community? If you have a sense of “communicating” with the natural world, is it more through thinking or feeling? Do you have a sense of the natural world, or specific natural places, as independent beings – in other words, as a “character”?)

After:

As a result of your participation in today’s trip, has your relationship with nature changed or shifted in terms of any of the above concepts? Has it changed in any other ways? How do you think O’Keeffe’s relationship with nature and with the White Place and Ghost Ranch landscapes is similar and different to your relationships?

THANKS!

jc

Note: Participants were given this handout during the tour, and one participant responded.

APPENDIX C: QUESTIONNAIRE USED IN THE WATERCOLOR WORKSHOPS

Questions for thinking about your relationship with nature and about Georgia O’Keeffe’s relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape

Thank you for taking the time to write down your thoughts and give them or send them to me. These questions relate to my dissertation, and will help me get a sense of the range of thoughts about nature and O’Keeffe. You don’t need to put your name on this, and I will not be quoting anyone directly (i.e. I will be quoting some of the responses, but not associating a name with the response). If you’d prefer to respond verbally, that’s fine. Jill Cowley (505) 988-6899. P.O. Box 5928, Santa Fe, NM 87502

1. How would you characterize your relationship with nature, and the Ghost Ranch landscape?
e.g. is it more aesthetic, spiritual, practical? Do you relate to nature more as an individual or as a member of a community? If you have a sense of “communicating” with the natural world, is it more through thinking or feeling? Do you have a sense of the natural world, or specific natural places, as independent beings – in other words, as a “character”? Do you experience nature, or parts of this landscape, as being “male” or “female”?
2. How do you think O’Keeffe’s relationship with (or experience of) nature and the Ghost Ranch landscape is similar and different to yours?
3. As a result of your participation in this week’s workshop, has your relationship with nature changed or shifted in terms of any of the above concepts? Has it changed in any other ways? Do you feel that you understand O’Keeffe’s life and art better for having taken this workshop?
4. How does painting this landscape influence your relationship with it? (seeing the Ghost Ranch landscape through an artists’ eyes)
5. I am especially interested in your thoughts about gender and painting the Ghost Ranch landscape, and how O’Keeffe’s relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape might be gendered. For example, do you think that O’Keeffe’s relationship with this landscape, and the way she expressed this in her painting, has specific associations with her being a woman? Do you think that gender issues were important to her during her New Mexico years? Also, in what ways do you think about this landscape as being “feminine” and/or “masculine”? Are gender issues important to you as you paint this, and other, landscapes?

THANKS! jc (October 2003)

APPENDIX D: WORKSHOP OUTLINE

O’Keeffe at Ghost Ranch Dissertation Workshop May 14-15, 2005

Objectives are indicated in underlined text, and italics are used for painting titles. Group discussion was included after all presentations and exercises.

SATURDAY MORNING

10am: Welcome, Logistics

Objectives: Establish welcome and safe environment; explain my dissertation; introduce workshop themes

--Introductions: what do you want from this workshop? What is your relationship with Ghost Ranch? with O’Keeffe?

--Overview of workshop agenda, workshop themes

--My dissertation--how I will use information from workshop, your consent / follow-up questionnaire

--ALL experiences, all creative expressions, points of view, responses are VALID

Saturday morning, 10:30 am – Gender and Gendered Landscapes

Objectives: Provide context; introduce gender and idea of landscape being gendered; encourage moving beyond female/male duality; provide theme for first outdoor creative session

O’Keeffe at Ghost Ranch:

--Ghost Ranch was O’Keeffe’s home, and artistic inspiration for over 40 years

-- Painting reference: *Summer Days* (1936) (space, object details, Faraway Nearby)

--Ghost Ranch was an inspirational landscape for O’Keeffe; the landscape was a source of energy, spirit, and motivation

--O’Keeffe quotes, including “this place fit me exactly” (NPS 1992a, 6; quoting O’Keeffe from 1934)

--O’Keeffe was attracted to Ghost Ranch because of its open space, quiet, privacy, opportunity for personal freedom, and dramatic landscapes--strong, clear landforms; bold varied colors; brilliant light and clear, dry air; huge sky; juxtaposition of seemingly endless space and far-reaching views and the clarify of form in small-scale natural elements.

--O’Keeffe painted from nature, interpreting nature through shapes and colors from inside her mind

--She saw nature through color and shape, through the beauty of balance and composition, and through aesthetic meaning and aesthetic possession, her desire to own the landscape she loved, to have it all to herself.

--O’Keeffe painted what she saw, and how she felt about what she saw

--O'Keeffe's relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape--personal, intimate, emotional, spiritual, aesthetic, physical, and practical

Gender:

- Gender, sex, and sexuality--related but not the same
- Gender associations are not limited to sexual associations
- Gender is culturally determined associations with femaleness and maleness . . . learned behavior closely related to one's sex . . . e.g. clothes, gestures, work roles . . . reinforced by daily behavior . . . roles, behaviors, and associations can change over time
- Androgyny--female and male combined/merged, or added together

Was O'Keeffe's relationship with this landscape gendered?

--Painting references: *Red and Yellow Cliffs* (1940); *Pedernal and Red Hills* (1936); *From the Faraway Nearby* (1937) (fig. 19)

--O'Keeffe's life and work combined traditional and nontraditional gender roles and attitudes toward the land:

- she was both independent, and mentored by a very strong male figure (Steiglitz)
- she demonstrated that moving west, taking this independent and vulnerable path was acceptable for women
- she felt affection, personal connection, and sense of ownership with the land
- she named landscapes (My Backyard, The White Place, The Black Place); naming is often associated with men (e.g. explorers)
- she collected rocks and other objects and brought them back to the house to add to her domestic environment; caring for domestic environment is often associated with women

Nature as female is a strong gender association within Western culture; this association genders the landscape:

- Anglo-American exploration and settlement of the west – land as mother/virgin
- Ubiquitous use of “Mother Earth”
- Mary Austin portrayed the earth / landscape as a strong female entity, with voice and volition, having a different relationship with each person: “The earth is not wanton to give up all her best to every comer, but keeps a sweet, separate intimacy for each” (Austin 1974, xvi)

My dissertation focus is on gender associations within art / aesthetics (form, color, shape, texture) and within relationship with the landscape (how we relate to the landscape, mind/body, communication, intimacy)

Classroom Exercise:

Objectives: Warm-up for drawing/painting/writing; participants explore their own gender associations with forms, shapes, and words

Draw basic geometric shapes--point, line, point, circle, square, triangle, oval--then draw your own shapes and/or words.

Were O’Keeffe’s images of Ghost Ranch gendered?

--Painting references: *Two Calla Lilies in Pink* (1928), *City Night* (1926), *Pederal and Red Hills* (1936); *From the Faraway Nearby* (1937) (fig. 19)

--Compare early flower image and New York building image, which were both gendered by critics, with Ghost Ranch landscape image

OUTDOOR CREATIVE SESSION

Saturday Morning, 11:00 am

participants chose location (fig. 48)

Objectives: Warm-up, participants become familiar with the Ghost Ranch landscape, exploring gender, including especially how it feels to portray the landscape as male.

Exercises:

--Try painting/writing about landscape as if it were a) a female entity; b) a male entity; c) an androgynous entity

--Try painting/writing the landscape as a self-portrait

--Try exploring the androgynous or “in-between” place in addition to identifying elements as female or male

Questions:

--Are you aware of your own gender during these exercises?

--What images/words do you come up with? How do you feel doing this, especially as you portray the landscape as a male entity?

LUNCH

SATURDAY AFTERNOON

1:00 pm

Share images / writing from morning creative session

Objectives: participants share ideas and creative work from the first on-site creative session, and compare it with O’Keeffe’s experience of the Ghost Ranch landscape.

Discussion questions:

--What location(s) did you chose, and why?

--Describe your experience

--How do you relate to the idea of the landscape being gendered?

--How did it feel to portray the landscape as female, male, and androgynous?

--In what ways are your images/writing similar to and different from O’Keeffe’s? from other participants?

NOTE: At this point in the workshop, five participants broke off from the larger group to participate in a one-hour Ghost Ranch sponsored driving tour of the area around O’Keeffe’s Ghost Ranch house (but not including her house), including several specific painting sites. I gave an introduction to the Landscape and Body theme before they left so these five would know the focus for the afternoon creative session.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON

2 pm: Landscape as Gendered

Objectives: Give participants not going on the driving tour more background on landscape as gendered, more time to discuss O’Keeffe’s relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape, and more time to compare gendered and ungendered statements about landscape.

O’Keeffe quotes from Chapter 2, e.g.: “A little way out beyond my kitchen window at the Ranch is a V shape in the red hills. I passed the V many times--sometimes stopping to look as it spoke to me quietly. I one day carried my canvas out and made a drawing of it. The shapes of the drawing were so simple that it scarcely seemed worthwhile to both with it further. But I did a painting--just the arms of two red hills reaching out to the sky and holding it” (O’Keeffe 1976, opposite plate 85). Painting reference: *Red Hills and Sky* (1945) (fig. 21)

--Question: In what ways do these quotes indicate whether O’Keeffe gendered the landscape, and how?

--To O’Keeffe, the landscape was both nurturing and threatening at the same time-- beauty and terror co-existed

--O’Keeffe’s writings and paintings indicate that, while she certainly sensualized the landscape, she did not necessarily consider the land to be specifically female or reminiscent of a female (or male) body. She considered the Ghost Ranch landscape as home, as place where she felt she fit the most, a landscape that felt comfortable and nurturing to her, as an artist and as a woman. For her, women and femaleness were not special and rarified aspects of nature, but were part of the whole of the landscape and her environment. The landscape and her approach to it were not “ungendered”, but more gender-balanced, and gendered in some subtle and non-traditional ways.

--O’Keeffe used the terms “wideness and wonder of the world” and “The Faraway Nearby” to express how she felt about the landscape. These are expressions that convey excitement, wonder, affection, and intimacy but which do not necessarily gender the landscape.

Compare with critics’ quotes, e.g. more gendered statements, like: “She is still an exponent of the feminine mind, but she has gathered new strength in the desert country of the southwest . . .” (Moore 1930) and less gendered statements, like: “Her work remains at once sensual and ascetic, highly emotional, lucid, and distilled” (USA 1945).

Painting references: *My Backyard* (1937) (fig. 29), *Red Hill and White Shell* (1938) (fig. 30), *The Grey Hills* (1942) (fig. 24), *Black Place III* (1944) (fig. 25).

Question: Why did many critics insist on a gendered interpretation of the New Mexico landscape, and O’Keeffe’s images of this landscape?

2:30 pm: Landscape as “body”

Objectives: Introduce landscape as body concept; compare O’Keeffe quotes and red hill painting images with critics’ responses to these images; establish theme for afternoon outdoor creative session.

--Seeing and portraying the landscape as the body of a woman is a common outgrowth of the association between the earth and the female.

--The association between landscape and female body is one of a number of possible associations that can be made (e.g. landscape can also be associated with a male or animal body)

--Feeling the landscape with the body and knowing the landscape through the body are related ideas

O’Keeffe quotes and images, e.g.: “My center does not come from my mind--it feels like a plot of warm moist well tilled earth with the sun shining hot on it” (Coward et al. eds. 1987, 217), and “it is so bare--with a sort of ages old feeling of death on it--still it is warm and soft and I love it with my skin” (Coward et al. eds. 1987, 243)

Painting references: *Red Hills with Pedernal* (1936) (fig.14), *Stump in Red Hills* (1940) (fig. 32), *Red and Orange Hills* (1938), *Red Hill and Bones* (1941), *Near Abiquiu* (1941).

Question: Compare O’Keeffe’s writing and her images. How do they compare in terms of giving the sense that she felt/knew the landscape through her body? that she gendered the landscape?

Comparison image: Gary Hamel’s *Convergence* (1992) (fig. 57)

Compare with critics’ quotes: more gendered statements e.g. Hills as “breast-like” (Gibbs 1946, 2), and, less gendered, like “. . . the area’s luscious, mound-like terrain as something erotically human” (Rosen 1990), and hills as “every shifting bodyshapes of an androgynous earth (Dijkstra 1998).

--O’Keeffe wrote about the hills more in terms of shapes and her emotional and sensory responses to the hills, and the critics definitely compared the red hill shapes with the human, and primarily female, body.

--The red hills area at Ghost Ranch is highly charged with associations with O’Keeffe’s emotional and aesthetic investment in the landscape, and with critics’ inferences about O’Keeffe’s experience.

Saturday afternoon, 3 pm

CREATIVE SESSION

Location: Red Hills area (figs. 48, 49)

Objectives: Participants focus more on red hills as landscape elements associated with O’Keeffe and the landscape-as-body concept than as interesting visual objects to paint.

Exercises:

- Try painting/writing landscape as a female, male and/or androgynous entity, and try painting/writing the landscape as a self-portrait, or portrait of someone you know
- Try portraying the landscape as a body (female, male, androgynous human/animal); have FUN (e.g. draw funny animals, worms, dinosaurs)
- Try painting the landscape as you would a life drawing model, e.g. gesture drawings
- Try copying an O’Keeffe image of a red hill, then do your own image

Questions:

- How do you feel as you paint/write the red hills as a body?

5:30 – DINNER

SATURDAY EVENING

sunset and the moon (optional session)

Location: cabin on entrance road (fig. 48)

Objectives: Provide opportunity for a comparative experience, from a different viewpoint of the Ghost Ranch landscape, talking about the moon rather than a landscape type or landscape feature, have a more informal group social experience.

O’Keeffe and the moon

--The moon was important to O’Keeffe, it was present in many paintings, the moon was one of her companions

--O’Keeffe quotes

--O’Keeffe observed the color and shape of the moon; the moon was a constant presence in her life at Ghost Ranch – a companion; O’Keeffe’s writings do not indicate that she used the moon as a female symbol

--historical context--moon myths/associations, in different cultures

--moon as female (inconstant, association with menstrual cycle) – as female symbol in feminist and goddess art

--moon as male (man in the moon, male “explorers”)

--Painting references: *Ladder to the Moon* (1958) (fig. 22), *Pelvis with Moon* (1943) (fig. 5)

Question: What are your associations with the moon?

SUNDAY MORNING

9 am: Discussion of Saturday pm creative session

Objectives: Help participants integrate their experience at the red hills area with workshop themes and ideas; give them an opportunity to share and receive feedback on their creative expressions.

Discussion questions –

--For you, were the red hills gendered in any way? If so, how? Do you think this is communicated in your images/writing?

--Did you experience the red hills as bodies--female, male, or neither/both? If so, in what ways?

--Are O'Keeffe's red hill paintings gendered? How do you think this is communicated in her images? What do you think of the notion that she sensualized rather than gendered the landscape?

--If you do gender the landscape, are the red hills gendered differently than the red cliffs and mesas? (i.e. different scale, more horizontal vs. vertical)

--Do you think whether or not you gender the landscape (and how) relates to whether you are female or male? If so, in what ways?

Sunday morning, 10 am: Ecofeminism / Communication / Intimacy

Objectives: Shift emphasis from landscape as gendered and how form/shape/color in our images relate to gendering the landscape, towards more exploration of our inner experience of relationship with the landscape; introduce ecofeminist concepts and associations between ecofeminism and O'Keeffe; establish theme for today's outdoor creative session.

Ecofeminism

--Introduction to ecofeminist thought, the different areas of emphasis within ecofeminism

--Being open to the possibility of reimagining our relationship with nature, and that being open to the possibility of two-way communication with nature/landscape can influence our concern for conservation

--I focus on literary / expressive ecofeminism

--Many ecofeminists experience the landscape as alive, human/female, strongly female, and erotic in the broad sense of actively alive, burgeoning, creative; "eros" is the voice of imagination, creativity, life force energy, and the capacity for touch and joy

--Terry Tempest Williams's "erotic landscape" refers to being in relation with the earth/landscape, in a sensual and not necessarily sexual way. Quotes from *Red* (Williams 2001).

Ecofeminist writer/artist quotes related to landscape and body, e.g. Gretal Erlich (1991) – "the elusive shapes of summer – the hipbones and elbows of a mountains' body, or a lover's . . .", and Maggie Remington (2000-2003) "lying on the earth . . . (I) feel . . . our connection to mother earth . . ."

--Painting references: Remington's *Upper Colona, Ouray, Colorado* (2005) (fig. 64) and *Laguna Santa Maria Del Oro; Nayarit, Mexico: Full Moon* (2005) (fig. 65)

Ecofeminism and communication with nature / landscape / animals

--Through language, talking, body sensations, imagination / spiritual experiences

--Emphasis on two-way communication

--one-way is talking/relating to

--two-way is expecting and getting a "response" (feeling like the landscape is talking back to you)

--ecofeminist association with relating to earth in a closer, more respectful way

--E.g. Le Guin and Silko stories

--two-way communication develops intimacy with the landscape

Compare ecofeminist writing with O’Keeffe quotes, e.g. “. . . –but the Mountain calls one and the desert – and the sagebrush – the country seems to call one in a way that one has to answer it . . . (Cowart et al. eds. 1987, 200), and “My antelope friend appeared and stalked all around the house . . . “ (O’Keeffe 1938, 4).

--Painting references: *Ram’s Head with Hollyhock* (1935) (fig. 20); *Pelvis III* (1944); *Pelvis with Moon* (1943)

How is O’Keeffe communicating with and relating to landscape? Is it two-way? How do her paintings communicate with the landscape?

Intimacy as “closeness”

--Through familiarity with person or place; through affection for, understanding of the landscape

--“Aesthetic” intimacy--through close observation, close-up vs distant view images

--How we interact with the landscape - through the body/senses as well as the mind, through observation, movement, painting/writing

--Loving it with your eyes

Sunday morning, 11 am

CREATIVE SESSION

Location: start of Box Canyon Trail (figs. 48, 50)

Objectives: Participants explore how they relate to ecofeminism and the three relationship aspects, especially communication and intimacy.

Exercises:

--Try writing a “conversation” with the landscape

--Try sitting/ walking/ meditating/ drawing/ writing/ painting (different ways of interacting with the landscape)

--Try painting/writing the very-close-up compared with the very-far-away. How does this influence how you communicate with the landscape? With how intimate you feel?

--Try painting/writing from the “inside” of yourself (ideas emerge from yourself), and then from the “outside” (letting the environment make suggestions)

Sunday afternoon, 3 pm - Sharing/Discussion

Objectives: Give participants the opportunity to share their creative work, to further integrate their on-site experiences with the ideas on gender and ecofeminism and their own ideas about relating to the landscape, to discuss any ideas or questions they had about this or other creative sessions or other aspects of the workshop, and to share their overall response to the workshop.

Discussion questions:

--Did you / do you have a sense of the Ghost Ranch landscape--or elements within the landscape--as beings with which you can communicate? Is this reflected in your images or writing? Did the communication feel one-way or two-way?

--If you do have a sense of communication with the landscape, how important is

it that the landscape “speaks” back to you, that the communication is “two-way”?
--Do you think anthropomorphizing the landscape is different or similar to communicating with the landscape?
--Do you feel intimate with the landscape? How? What influences or encourages this? Does intimacy feel gendered--e.g. with different places? through body/senses compared with through the mind?
--How was your sense of intimacy with this landscape different from yesterday?
--As you get to know this landscape better, do you have a sense of knowing it through your body?
--How do you think ecofeminism thought and O’Keeffe’s approach to landscape are similar and different?

Sunday afternoon, 4 pm - Closing

Objectives: Hand out questionnaire, opportunity for closing comments

Closing quote: “Georgia O’Keeffe’s regard for nature seems virtually pantheistic. She lays hold of things with an intensely passionate understanding; loves the sky, the wind, the solitary places and what grows therein, as she might love a person” (Hunter 1932)

Closing questions (included on questionnaire)

--How has this workshop, and ideas about gender and the three relationship aspects, influenced your understanding of O’Keeffe? Your relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape?
--How do you feel now about the role of gender--is it important to you as you paint/write within the landscape? Did your ideas and feelings on gender develop or change during the workshop?
--Do you think O’Keeffe’s relationship with this landscape was gendered? If so, how?
--Do you think O’Keeffe shared some ecofeminist approaches? If so, how?
--What do you think about relating recent theories to O’Keeffe’s relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape?

APPENDIX E: WORKSHOP QUESTIONNAIRE

POST-WORKSHOP QUESTIONNAIRE O’Keeffe and Ghost Ranch, May 14-15, 2005

Thank you for taking the time to respond to this questionnaire after the workshop. While I welcome your response at any time, a response by the end of May 2005 would be most useful to me. Please sign below if you are okay with me using your responses in my dissertation. Let me know if it’s okay for me to use your name, or whether you prefer to remain anonymous.

1. Did the exploration of gender and ideas from ecofeminism during the workshop make a difference to your experience of the Ghost Ranch landscape, and to your understanding of Georgia O’Keeffe’s relationship with this landscape? If so, how, and how much? If not (and this is fine . . .), why do you think gender/ecofeminist ideas are not important for you?
2. Do you think O’Keeffe’s relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape was gendered? If so, how? If not, why not?
3. Do you think O’Keeffe shared some ideas/approaches with ecofeminism? If so, which/how? If not, why not?
4. How do you think your relationship with the Ghost Ranch landscape, and the images/writings you created, compare with O’Keeffe’s? Compare with ecofeminists?

Signature _____ date _____
(your signature indicates permission for me to use your questionnaire responses in my dissertation)

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