



fig. 1 Robert A. Sproule, *Vue de Québec, prise de la Pointe Lévi*, 1832, lithograph drawn on stone by W. Walton from a sketch by R.A. Sproule, 26 x 37 cm, *Québec Recueil Iconographique. A Pictorial Record; Historical Prints and Illustrations of the City of Québec, Province of Québec, Canada 1608-1875*. Charles P. De Volpi, trans., Jules Bazin, Longman Canada Ltd., 1971, pl.75.

REPRESENTATION AS COLONIAL RHETORIC

The image of 'the Native' and '*the habitant*' in the formation of colonial identities in early nineteenth-century Lower Canada

In a catalogue essay accompanying the 1992 *Painting in Quebec* exhibition, Laurier Lacroix suggests that during the period 1820-1850, the visual arts provided a "breeding ground for common practices" through which French-Canadians and British colonists could communicate.¹ According to this theory, painting and drawing were activities by which the social élite of each community could "establish a local culture, identify its components and develop the creative forces within the community." Furthermore: "painting in Lower Canada provided a meeting ground for two traditions. ...[It] was seen and appreciated by each of the ethnic groups as a means of moulding the colony to fit its own image: a double image, combining British allegiance and a need for national identity."²

However, an analysis of representations of Native people and *habitants* produced by British artists in the first half of the nineteenth century shows a quite different attitude towards national identity from that seen in the work of the leading French-Canadian painter Joseph Légaré. If nationalism is a cultural artifact, as Benedict Anderson suggests, one would expect that the characteristics of the national identity constructed by a people would reflect (and in a reciprocal movement, affect and effect) the ideology of its producers.³ Therefore, although the *practices* of British and French-Canadian artists and illustrators of this period may have been shared as Lacroix suggests, I will argue that in the case of Joseph Légaré's representations of Native people and *habitants*, the *content* specifically countered the re-presentations by the British. It would be unreasonable to claim that French-Canadian painters universally attempted to subvert the cultural identity being produced by British artists. However, I will suggest that Légaré's work may be considered as a counter-narrative which attempted to preserve the particular history and character of the French-Canadian people.

Furthermore, I will attempt to uncover the processes by which visual representations of Native people and the French-Canadian *habitants* contributed to the social construction of reality in post-Conquest Québec and suggest that these visual images did indeed participate in the creation of British colonial identity. They aided in codifying and legitimizing the social order by proposing and confirming a hierarchy, thereby visually establishing the respective place of Natives, *habitants*, immigrants and the social élite in this new colonial society. As elements in a larger field of visual discourse, which re-fashioned the spectacle of Lower Canada in terms of architecture, interior decoration, clothing fashion and impor-

ted consumer goods, art images functioned as agents in the development of colonial identity.⁴ This complemented the almost obsessive effort witnessed in travel literature to create a history of Canada as a British colony, in which Native people were represented as historical figures and the history of the French was all but erased.

Facility in drawing, sketching and watercolour painting was an accomplishment which distinguished the wealthy and genteel in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries. Since this period was the heyday of Picturesque painting, it is not surprising that so many of the early visitors to Canada made or purchased sketches, paintings and watercolours as souvenirs. Often these travelers would subsequently publish illustrated accounts of their journeys. Alternatively, the more proficient or professional illustrator-artists might have a series of sketches published in lithographic form; and although unaccompanied by text, these drawings constitute a narrative in themselves.⁵ When such early images are examined, repetitive underlying structural patterns become apparent, specifically the organization of represented territories and their inhabitants into oppositional zones.⁶ These images appear to codify and naturalize the position of Native people within the colonial social hierarchy, thereby providing a basis for the creation of colonial identity.

The visual vocabulary employed involved a manipulation of the rules of Picturesque painting (which had been used in Britain during the eighteenth century in a quest for national self-definition) and in particular, in the creation of contrast.⁷ In the late decades of the eighteenth century, contrast was defined as "the opposition and dissimilitude of figures, by which one contributes to the visibility, or effect of another."⁸ Although he did not publish his *Essay on Picturesque Beauty* until 1792, William Gilpin had popularized the Picturesque in the published accounts of his travels in Britain since the mid 1770's.⁹ The primary characteristics of the Picturesque identified by Gilpin were the qualities of variety and contrast, both of which required roughness. He contended that it was the contrast between rough and smooth which created the Picturesque: "the point lies here: to make an object in a peculiar manner Picturesque, there *must be* a proportion of *roughness*; so much at least, as to make an opposition; which in an object simply beautiful is unnecessary."¹⁰

Ideal 'rough' elements included rocks and broken ground, ruins, hovels and shacks, and gypsies and beggars. The Canadian landscape proved to be a plentiful source of Picturesque views; what the dense and apparently interminable forest lacked in variety, was more than made up for by the abundance of 'sublime' waterfalls, rocky terrain, and spectacular waterways. But by mid-nineteenth century, the term "contrast" was being applied to social as well as visual experience, hence Emerson's comment that "the steep contrasts of condition create the Picturesque in society."¹¹

The rules of the Picturesque were readily amenable to such a purpose since there was an easy correspondence between the notion of visual contrast and the already-established modes of representation of Native people. From the time of first contact, a visual opposition had been constructed between European and Amerindian. Champlain's journal and its accompanying illustrations, for instance, were structured as a running comparison between the two. Precisely because Native people were observed to lack that which signified civilization to the Europeans, they were judged inferior - as either the childlike members of an infant race akin to the Ancients or as wild, barbarous savages.¹² Such contrasting stereotypes of 'barbarous savage' and 'noble savage' have been the basis of subsequent representations of aboriginal people, and both were posited as 'primitive' in opposition to the 'civilized' European. In addition, aboriginal people and their primitive encampments were a ready substitute for the European Roman.

In Canadian images featuring Natives, it is the hierarchy of the social order which is being established. For instance, in Robert A. Sproule's *Vue de Québec, prise de la Pointe Lévi*, c.1832 (fig.1),¹³ a small Native encampment of two birch bark tents is perched on a rocky section of riverbank. Houses have been built on the cliffs overhead, confining the tents and their occupants to the right foreground. In the middleground above the encampment, a group of soldiers has landed a small craft on the grassy part of the riverbank and is busy surveying or sightseeing with the aid of a telescope. Dominating the scene in the background are the accoutrements or signifiers of European civilization: ocean-going merchant ships, smaller sail boats, the military fort and the Québec City skyline. As well as being situated at the bottom of the social hierarchy, the Native people are divided compositionally from the colonists by a line created by the group of soldiers, their beached craft and two other boats in the river. Everything above the line is progressive and civilized to the European eye: the soldiers, the commercial shipping, the stone buildings and spires. Below the line is the primitive Other: empty water, rocky riverside and uncivilized aboriginals.

The same juxtaposition of 'primitive' against 'civilized' is apparent in James Duncan's *Montreal from the Indian Encamping Ground*, after 1830 (fig.2)¹⁴ although the Montréal skyline does not visually dominate the landscape from this viewpoint, the artist has made this occur symbolically by surrounding the encampment with a cart track, an element of 'roughness' which sweeps around to join a long horizon line abruptly punctuated by windmills, chimneys, church spires and ship masts. The Natives are relegated to a small pocket of river front and even that is being encroached upon by the busy river traffic.

James Gray's *York from Gibraltar Point*, 1828 (fig.3) provides an even more stark contrast between the primitive Natives and the civilized colonists.¹⁵ In this coloured aquatint, the Native presence has been diminished to the merely emblematic - a lone couple beside their cooking kettle and camp fire, who seem



fig. 2 James Duncan, *Montreal from the Indian Encamping Ground*, after 1830, lithograph, 26 x 37 cm, *Montreal Recueil Iconographique. A Pictorial Record; Historical Prints and Illustrations of the City of Montreal, Province of Quebec, Canada 1535-1885*, vol.1, Charles P. de Volpi, Dev-Sco Publications Ltd., Mtl., 1963, pl.92.

totally out of place in this extended view of York with its busy and expanding harbor. The Natives seem superimposed upon the scene, contained within a pall of white smoke and the intersecting trunks of the trees. It is as if Native people have been erased from the landscape, leaving only a ghostly apparition of their past. Gray's view of *Quebec from Point Levi* includes what is presumably a Native person in a blanket-coat alongside a *habitant* male. Both are positioned in the corner of the right foreground as rustic counterpoints to the modern harbour scene. In addition (as will be later discussed), the identity of these figures is somewhat ambiguous, merging the attributes of Native and *habitant*. Moreover, since Gray dedicated the prints to Sir Peregrine Maitland, Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada, the inclusion of the ghostly couple in the York view must have held particular meaning.¹⁶ At the time of publication Maitland had championed a successful experimental village for the Mississaguas on the Credit River; his aim was to remove Native people from contact with white society in order to 'civilize' and eventually assimilate them. This policy would result in the erasure of Native people from the urban social landscape; and Gray's placement of them in this view of

York may be read as a reference to the disappearing, uncivilized aboriginal people.

These images are four examples from among many which employ similar structuring devices to reveal economic and social differences.¹⁷ The territorial distinction is heightened by the representation of what marked Natives as primitive in European eyes - their clothing, habitation and tools - as opposed to the attributes of civilization signified by the colonists' European fashions, stone buildings and church spires, and advanced technology. Visitors' representations of Native people and views of the Canadian landscape may be seen as active participants in the colonial project of taking possession of the new land. By re-presenting the 'natural' (namely the landscape and the aboriginal people) through the aesthetic code of the Picturesque, the threat posed to British colonial eyes by the impenetrable forest wilderness and the 'wild and savage' Natives was neutralized and reconceptualized in familiar and safe terms. These visual representations of the social hierarchy naturalise the relations between the colonies and the colonized.

As well as suggesting that Native people were restricted to a small area of land in comparison to the aggressive expansion of colonial settlements, such



fig. 3 James Gray, York from Gibraltar Point, 1828, coloured aquatint by J. Glaedah, 29 x 54 cm, Toronto. *A Pictorial Record; Historical Prints and Illustrations of the City of Toronto, Province of Ontario, Canada 1813-1882*, Charles P. de Volpi, Dev-Sco Publications Ltd., Mtl., 1965, pl.3.

imagery supported the longstanding and commonly-held notion that aboriginal peoples were a dying race. Since the time of first contact, Europeans had recognized the deleterious effect of their presence on Native people through disease, loss of land and liquor. An American visitor, Benjamin Silliman, graphically expressed this sentiment in his 1820 travelogue: "...as nations they have sunk forever into the grave, and their dust is mingled with the fields which we cultivate... [in the older cities they are rarely seen] ...and the few who remain are miserable, blighted remnants of their ancestors, paralyzed and consumed by strong drink, squalid in poverty and filth, and sunk by oppression and contempt."¹⁸ Thus, representations of small Indian camps and their indolent occupants reinforced the concept of aboriginals as a dying and degenerate race. By naturalizing this notion, art images participated in the colonist discourse which constructed and legitimized the official policy of the British Government toward Native people.

Marginalization was in fact the lived reality of Native peoples in Canadian society by this time. The War of 1812 ended the rivalry between Canada and the United States and consequently eliminated the role Native people had played in military strategy. The collapse of the fur trade in Eastern Canada also obliterated the Natives' role as intermediaries and the overabundance of agricultural workers precluded their employment as wage labourers. By 1830, increased emigration from Britain and Ireland had provoked a rethinking of colonial policy regarding Native reserve lands. In 1827 Major-General H.C. Darling, Superintendent of the Indian Department, had submitted a report to Governor-in-Chief Lord Dalhousie on the role of the Indian Department in the Canadas. Darling strongly argued against a British proposal to abolish the Indian Department and to reduce the yearly tribute payments to Native tribes on the grounds that the Indians were "helpless individuals whose landed possessions (where they have any assigned to them) are daily plundered by their designing and more enlightened white brethren."¹⁹ Darling had found evidence of settlers' encroachment upon Indian land and feared that if the Indian Department were abolished it "would be the general signal to plunder and persecution."²⁰ Furthermore, he considered Native people incompetent to take over their own affairs: "It may be sufficient perhaps, on this head, to state, that as in Lower Canada, so in the Upper Province, an Indian is little better than a child."²¹ To remove the supervision of the Indian Department would be akin to wrenching the protection and guidance of a parent from a defenseless infant.

Darling's report was forwarded to London and considered as part of the evidence heard by the Select Committee on Aborigines appointed by the British Parliament. The recurrent theme of the Committee's Reports in 1836 and 1837 was that throughout the British Empire, aboriginal peoples degenerated when in contact with Europeans, who deprived them of their hunting grounds and introduced Natives to the pernicious effects of liquor.²² The Committee recognized the

oppression which had occurred, yet avowed the long-term commitment of the Crown to fair and equitable treatment of aboriginal peoples in British Colonies. In a masterpiece of colonialist discourse, the Committee concluded:

This then, appears to be the moment for the nation to declare that with all its desire to give encouragement to emigration, and to find a soil to which our surplus population may retreat, it will tolerate no scheme which implies violence or fraud in taking possession of such a territory; that it will no longer subject itself to the guilt of conniving at oppression, and that it will take upon itself the task of defending those who are too weak and too ignorant to defend themselves.²³

The Committee recommended that protection of Natives should be the duty of the Executive Government and Governor, not the local legislatures of the colonies, since these represented the interests of the settlers. Thus 'for their own good' Natives were placed outside the political realm and deprived of any position in colonial society. In Upper Canada this led to the 1839 Crown Lands Protection Act which appointed the Crown as guardian of Indian lands. Since voting rights depended upon land ownership qualifications, the Colonial government automatically disenfranchised Native peoples and removed an obstacle to British immigration.

By 1841, when Sir Richard Bonnycastle published an account of his travels in the Canadas, visual images, literary portraits and political rhetoric had regularly employed Picturesque devices to characterize the Canadian social landscape.²⁴ Bourdieu explains that this "stylistic affinity" made "each of them a metaphor of any of the others."²⁵ Viewing the Native encampment on Point Levi from a ship on the St. Lawrence, Bonnycastle gave voice to the dominant ideology:

The contrast between the solitary wretchedness of the wigwam camps, hastily formed of boughs and bark...with the splendid city, and the mass of noble vessels, of the whites, was, to me very striking and melancholy. The poor and defenseless owners of the soil seemed to have been pushed back into the lonely cove of the forest, by the arrogant intruders on their birth-rights. The extremes of civilization and barbarism were separated only by a few yards of mountain land.²⁶

While Native people were relegated to the bottom of the social hierarchy and denied active participation in contemporary colonial society, a parallel element of colonial discourse in the travel books and emigrant guides published by visitors to Canada,²⁷ repeatedly constructed Natives as historical objects. An essential ingredient of these highly formulaic accounts was a description of the aboriginal peoples before contact, contrasted with a description of the present-day European inhabitants of the colony and the condition of contemporary Native bands. Moreover, this dialectic was frequently couched in Picturesque terms, for instance, N.P. Willis, the compiler of the text for W.H. Bartlett's *Canadian Scenery*



fig. 4 W.H. Bartlett, Canoe Building at Papper's Island, 1842, lithograph, 15 x 22 cm, N.P. Willis, *Canadian Scenery Illustrated in a series of Views by W.H. Bartlett*, 2 Vols. (London: James S. Virtue, 1842), vol.1, facing p.11. (Photo: Metropolitan Toronto Reference Library)

Illustrated, published in 1842, makes it clear that he is linking the French-Canadian *habitants* with the Natives, and presents both in comparison to the British colonists "for force of contrast and interest."²⁸ Other travel texts also remarked upon this close historical communication between Natives and *habitants*, on their mingled blood and shared facility with canoes. As artists set up a comparison between 'primitive' Native society and 'civilized' European society, so did British writers when they compared what they considered to be the retardation of the colony under the old French Regime, with the rapid improvements made since the Conquest under the British administration. For example, John Lambert complained that during the *regime*, French-Canadians had no "taste for science and the polite arts" and "never possessed the least inclination or ability to emerge from the ignorance and dissipation into which they had sunk." However in 1810, after a half century of British rule, he saw evidence of "progressive improvement and prosperity in the country."²⁹

Since the time of first contact, European visitors had commented on the apparent indolence of the Native peoples, their agricultural ineptitude and preference for a nomadic lifestyle. Travelers now projected these qualities onto the *habitants*, repeatedly remarking on *their* idleness and lack of initiative and agricultural prowess, and their deep roots on family lands:³⁰ "The *habitants* are not a stirring, enterprizing or improving race. They tread in the steps of their fore-

fathers, following the same routine, and with difficulty adopting the most obvious improvements of modern husbandry...and have scarcely at all extended the range of their original settlement."⁵¹ This pairing of the Natives and the *habitants* is paralleled in visual representations. While British artists made use of the Picturesque principle of contrast when portraying Native people and British colonists, they often failed to make a distinction between Native people and French-Canadian *habitants* despite hostilities between the two groups. W.H. Bartlett's *Canoe Building at Papper's Island* (fig.4) for instance, is intended as a Native scene and the female figures are unambiguous. However, the men building the canoe are dressed identically to those in *Burial Place of the Voyageurs* (fig.5); and in other Bartlett scenes depicting *habitant* males, it is often unclear whether they are in fact *habitants* or Natives.⁵² European visual representations dating from the sixteenth century had established particular attributes by which to signify Native people: feather adornments, partial nakedness, leather clothing, moccasins and leggings, body paint and tattoos were some of these stereotypes. However, during the years of contact between Native people and French-Canadian settlers,

fig. 5 W.H. Bartlett, *Burial Place of the Voyageurs*, 1842, lithograph, 15 x 22 cm, N.P. Willis, *Canadian Scenery Illustrated in a series of Views by W.H. Bartlett*, 2 Vols. (London: James S. Virtue, 1842), vol. 1, facing p.108. (Photo: Metropolitan Toronto Reference Library)

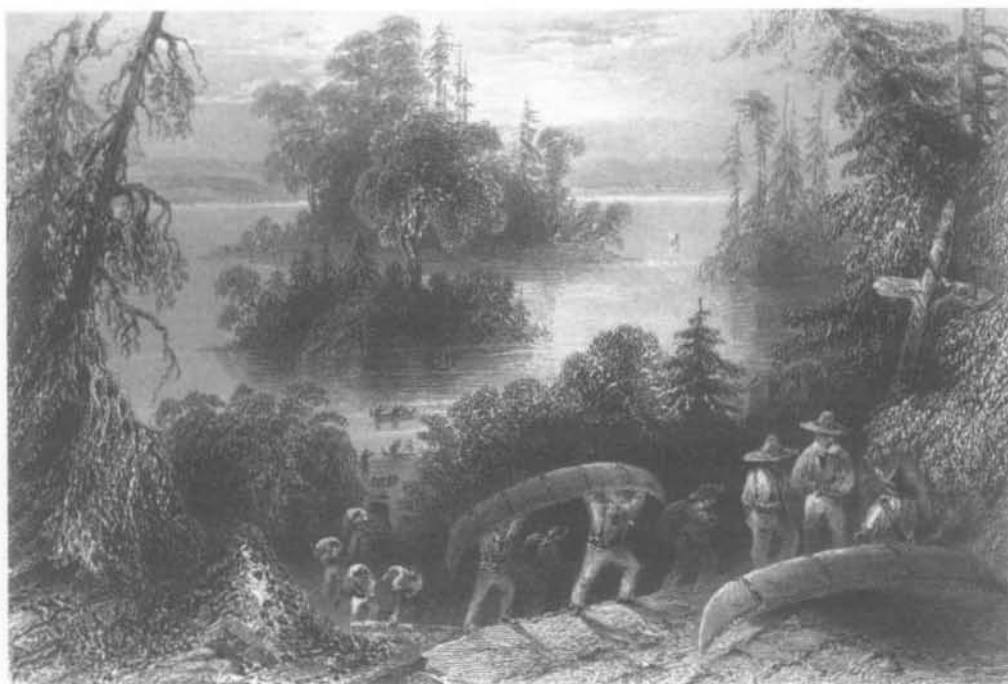




fig. 6 Millicent Mary Chaplin, *Canadian Farmer*, c.1840, water-colour, 28 x 21 cm, National Archives of Canada. (Photo: National Archives of Canada, C-866)

considerable cultural exchange had taken place between the two, so that in dress, in knowledge of the environment as well as in tools and skills, Native and *habitant* had come to look like each other...or so it seemed to the indiscriminating British eye.³³ In Mary Millicent Chaplin's costume study of c.1840, *Canadian Farmer* (fig.6), signifiers of the Native (beaded bag, powder horn) and the *habitant* (pipe, toque) are similarly conflated. By merging the identity of the aboriginal Native and the *habitant* Native, the British transformed both into foreign Others.³⁴ Implicit is the message to potential emigrants that the Canadian 'Natives,' - both types now rolled into one - are no obstacle or match for hard-working, enterprising British settlers.

Countering this narrative and using Native people for his own purposes, was Joseph Légaré, one of the foremost French-Canadian painters of his day. From the 1820's to his death in 1855, Légaré was one of the rare painters in Canada aspiring to the genre of history painting.³⁵ Native people are the subject of a significant proportion of his paintings. Like the British, he constructed Native people as historical subjects but he created a quite different history. His was a history of the French-Canadian nation and the heroic struggle of the missionaries and early settlers against the barbarity and treachery of the Iroquois. Whereas British artists drew upon the stereotype of the 'noble savage,' Légaré's *The Massacre of the Hurons by the Iroquois*, c.1828 (fig.7) evokes its parallel, the 'barbarous savage.' Similarly horrific scenes include *The Martyrdom of Fathers Brébeuf and Lalement*, 1843 (National Gallery of Canada), *Martyrdom of a Jesuit Priest*, c.1843 (Private Collection) and *Indian Scalping his Prisoner*, date unknown (Musée du Vaudreuil). Since the time of Champlain, the Hurons had been allies of the French-Canadians, while the British had made alliances with the Iroquois. An allegorical reading of Légaré's Native scenes is therefore possible, especially in light of his active support of Papineau and the anti-British *Patriote* cause. The treacherous ambush and massacre of the Hurons by the Iroquois may be read as both an episode in the his-

fig. 7 Joseph Légaré, *The Massacre of the Hurons by the Iroquois*, c.1828, oil on canvas, 63 x 84 cm, Musée du Québec. (Photo: Musée du Québec, A57204P)



tory of New France and a condemnation of the British Conquest. Similarly, the scalping scene may be read as the English defeat of the French. Thus, Légaré may be understood as presenting a nationalist visual history to augment the written history of his associate, François-Xavier Garneau.³⁶

Moreover, in contrast to the English artists, Légaré carefully distinguished between *habitant* and Native figures, even when the figures were used compositionally as staffage to indicate scale in Picturesque landscapes, as occurs in *The Chaudière Falls*, date unknown (Private collection).³⁷ In this oil painting, Légaré depicts the waterfall and its base from a viewpoint within the forest. Like the British artists, Légaré also represents the social hierarchy, but it is the French-Canadian hierarchy of clergy and social elite, *habitant* colonists and Native people. However, he chooses to present them in a horizontal arrangement rather than the bottom-to-top, vertical hierarchy more common in British representations. Moreover, Légaré seems to invoke the symbolism of light and its relationship to Christian salvation rather than the symbolism of position and secular station. He paints the elite in full sunlight on a point at the base of the falls, the colonists in partial shade at the edge of the trees and the Natives lost in the shaded undergrowth. His depiction of aboriginal people includes bows and arrows, body paint and feathers, while the dress, context and activity of his *habitant* figures identifies them unequivocally as French-Canadian farmers. In fact, few of Légaré's paintings depict both *habitant* and Native together. In the face of the threat of French Canadians being overwhelmed and lost within the union of Upper and Lower Canada, the nationalists struggled to preserve their separate language, culture and religion. Whereas British artists merged and confused the image of the contemporary Native and *habitant*, seeing them *both* as Other, Légaré distinguished between the two and purposefully reconstructed the stereotype of the 'barbarous savage' in order to highlight the distinct culture and heroic history of the French-Canadian nation.³⁸

It seems, therefore, that Laurier Lacroix is correct in suggesting that both the French and the British elite saw painting as a means of establishing their identities, and in doing so, both sought to represent Native peoples as historical figures. But it is by no means clear that a "double image" was created, or that this was accomplished without conflict, either in the art images or within the artistic and literary community.³⁹ Although, from our present day perspective, it would be cheering to see the arts as a possible bridge between the 'two solitudes,' the reality of the situation in the early part of the nineteenth century does not offer a particularly promising prototype.

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Notes

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1 Laurier LACROIX, "Yesterday's Standard, Today's Fragment: Element of Esthetics in Quebec, 1820-1850," *Painting in Quebec 1820-1850*, ed. M. Béland (Québec: Musée du Québec, 1992), 60-75.

2 LACROIX, *Painting in Quebec*, 70. Lacroix is perhaps deliberately ambiguous here; the context of his remarks suggests that he sees the French-Canadian élite and the British élite as constructing two separate national identities, yet he conceives of the visual arts as a means of communication and coexistence. He does not consider the possibility of conflict between these two conceptions of national identity, for as he admits, his viewpoint may be influenced by the contemporary political situation in Québec, "which acknowledges differences and yet aspires to greater harmony."

3 Benedict ANDERSON, *Imagined Communities, Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983), 13.

4 The British brought with them a distinctly different style. Jean-Pierre Hardy and Thierry Ruddel have spearheaded a whole range of studies on the history and culture of Québécois society, many of which have been published in the *Material History Bulletin*. Topics covered include domestic interiors, clothing and the textile industry, consumer goods and imports. These studies could provide the basis for an examination of the changes introduced by the British.

5 Travel guides with illustrations abound from this period. They include: George HERIOT, *Travels through the Canadas* (London: R. Phillips, 1807); John LAMBERT, *Travels through Canada and the United States in the years 1806, 1807 and 1808* (London: R. Phillips, 1810); George BOURNE, *The Picture of Quebec* (Québec: D. & J. Smillie, 1829); James Patterson COCKBURN, *Quebec and its Environs being a picturesque guide to the stranger* ([Québec?]: T. Cary, 1831); Alfred HAWKINS, *Picture of Quebec with Historical Recollections* (Québec: Neilson & Cowan, 1834). Numerous examples of lithographic print series are provided in F. St. George SPENDLOVE, *The Face of Early Canada, Pictures of Canada which have helped to make history* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1958).

6 This observation is based upon a study of images of Native people and *habitants* drawn from the collections of the National Archives of Canada (NAC), Ottawa, the Canadiana Collection of the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto (ROM), the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto and the John Ross Robertson Collection at the Metropolitan Toronto Library. Images published in secondary sources were also considered. Also see, Gillian POULTER, *Visual Representations of Native Peoples in Quebec: 1760-1840*, M.A. Thesis, York University, 1992.

7 Malcolm ANDREWS, *The Search for the Picturesque: Landscape Aesthetics and Tourism in Britain 1760-1800* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1989), 4; and Jeremy BLACK, "Ideology, History, Xenophobia and the World of Print in Eighteenth-Century England," in *Culture, Politics and Society in Britain 1660-1800*, ed. Jeremy Black and Jeremy Gregory (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 1991), 184-216.

8 Thomas SHERIDAN, *A General Dictionary of the English Language 1780*, vol. 1. Facsimile edition by R.C. Alston (Menston, Eng.: Scolar Press, 1967).

9 William GILPIN, *Three Essays: on Picturesque Beauty; on Picturesque Travel; and on Sketching Landscape: to which is added a poem, on Landscape Painting*. (London, 1792). All references herein are to the facsimile edition (Westmead, Eng.: Gregg International Publ., 1972).

10 GILPIN, *Three Essays*, 25.

- 11 Ralph Waldo EMERSON, *English Traits, Manners*, WKS (Bohn) II, 51, cited in *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989).
- 12 This attitude existed from early contact. See Olive P. DICKASON, *The Myth of the Savage and the Beginnings of French Colonialism in the Americas* (Edmonton: Univ. of Alberta Press, 1984); François-Marc GAGNON & Denise PETEL, *Hommes effarables et bestes sauvages, Images du Nouveau-Monde d'après les voyages de Jacques Cartier* (Montréal: Boréal Express, 1986) and Cornelius JAENEN, *Friend and Foe, Aspects of French-Amerindian Cultural Contact in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Historical Sites Branch, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, 1976).
- 13 One of a series of four sketches of Québec lithographed by W. Walton in London for Adolphus Bourne of Montréal.
- 14 One of five views of Montréal published c.1850. Like the Sproule set, each view shows a different aspect of the city of Montréal and its inhabitants.
- 15 This print was one of a series of seven coloured aquatints of views of Canada, which were engraved by Joshua Gleadah and J. Ryall of London from drawings by James Gray.
- 16 House of Commons, British Sessional Papers (BSP), 1834, vol. XLIV, Papers Relative to the Aboriginal Tribes in British Possessions. Report of H.C. Darling, dated 24 July 1828, 22-31 (overscribed 360-369), 27 (365).
- 17 Some further examples are: Henry William Barnard's *Wigwam at Point Levi Near Quebec*, 1838, watercolour, ROM; *Quebec from Point Levi*, date unknown, watercolour, ROM; and *Squaws at the Indian Village of Lorette near Quebec*, 1838, watercolour, ROM; Bainbrigge's *Quebec and mouth of the River St. Charles from Point Levi*, c.1836, watercolour, NAC C-11912; *Isle of St. Helens from Montreal*, c.1836, watercolour, NAC C-11900; Millicent Mary Chaplin's *Explanade, Quebec*, 1839, watercolour, NAC C-855; Sproule's *The Port of Montreal*, c.1830, watercolour, McCord Museum; Whitmore's *Ice Cone at Montmorency Falls, Quebec*, 1836, watercolour, NAC-40377; Légaré's *Quebec City at Sunset*, c.1835, oil on cardboard pasted on canvas, Musée du Québec.
- 18 Benjamin SILLIMAN, *Remarks made on a short tour between Hartford and Quebec in the autumn of 1819* (New Haven, 1820), 347.
- 19 BSP, 1834, vol. XLIV, 22 (360).
- 20 BSP, 1834, vol. XLIV, 26 (364).
- 21 BSP, 1834, vol. XLIV, 30 (368).
- 22 BSP, 1836, vol. VII, 1; BSP, 1837, vol. VII, 1.
- 23 BSP, 1837, vol. VII, 75.
- 24 Sir Richard H. BONNYCASTLE, *The Canadas in 1841*, 2 Vols. (London: Henry Colburn, 1841).
- 25 Pierre BOURDIEU, *Distinction, A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, Trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1984), 173.
- 26 BONNYCASTLE, *The Canadas*, vol. II, 169.
- 27 For a discussion of the conventions which structured these accounts, see Charles L. BATTEN Jr., *Pleasurable Instruction: Form and Convention in Eighteenth-Century Travel Literature* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1978).
- 28 N.P. WILLIS, *Canadian Scenery Illustrated in a series of Views by W.H. Bartlett*, 2 Vols. (London: James S. Virtue, 1842), vol. 1, 38. All references herein are to the facsimile edition (London: Peter Martin Associates, 1967).
- 29 LAMBERT, *Travels through Canada*, 321.

30 This is discussed by DICKASON and JAENEN and others. For an account which is particularly sensitive to visual stereotypes, see François-Marc GAGNON, *Ces hommes dit sauvages. L'histoire d'un préjugé qui remonte aux premiers découvreurs du Canada* (Québec: Éditions Libre Expression, 1984).

31 WILLIS, *Canadian Scenery*, vol. 1, 99.

32 Other works which contain ambiguous figures are illustrated in WILLIS, *Canadian Scenery*, vol. 1. They include: *Les Marches Naturelles*; *Lake of the Two Mountains*; *Fish Market, Toronto*; *River of Cedars*, *River St. Lawrence*; *The St. Lawrence, at Montreal*; and *The Three Rivers*.

33 A more detailed discussion of this point is presented in POULTER, *Visual Representations*, 58-67.

34 My understanding of the role of the Other in colonialist discourse, and of colonialism itself, is indebted to the writings of Edward W. Said.

35 John R. PORTER, *The Works of Joseph Légaré 1795-1855*, Catalogue raisonné (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1978).

36 F.-X. GARNEAU, *Historie du Canada, depuis sa découverte jusqu'à nos jours* (Québec: N. Aubin, 1845). See also François-Marc GAGNON, "The hidden image of early French Canadian nationalism: a parable," *Artscanada*, December/January 1979-80, 11-14. In this article Gagnon discusses the symbolism of the native figure in Légaré's *Paysage au monument à Wolfe* (c.1840). My discussion of the image of the native standing-in for the French Canadian people runs along parallel lines to those he has suggested.

37 *Chaudière Falls*, oil on canvas, 55 x 85 cm is held in a private collection in London, Eng. The work is reproduced in PORTER, *The Works of Joseph Légaré*, 83, pl. 61.

38 Donald B. SMITH suggests a similar idea in relation to historical writings, in *Le Sauvage: The Native People in Quebec Historical Writing on the Heroic Period (1534-1663) of New France*, Mercury Series (Ottawa: National Museum of Man, 1974); and Bruce G. TRIGGER, "The Historians' Indian: Native Americans in Canadian Historical Writing from Charlevoix to the Present," *Out of the Background: Readings on Canadian Native History*, ed. Robin Fisher and Kenneth Coates (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1988).

39 Karen Stanworth's analysis of the 1829 merger of the Literary and Historical Society of Quebec, and the Society for the Encouragement of the Sciences and the Arts in Canada, suggests that members of the British élite shrewdly and purposefully attempted to absorb, and thereby silence, the francophone voice in Québec's professional and cultural community. Stanworth suggests that the timing of this merger, which came during a period of growing conflict between "the 'Canadian Party' which dominated the elected House of Assembly...[and] the appointed members of the Legislative and Executive Councils, the majority of whom were of the 'English Party'" was no coincidence. Karen STANWORTH, "The Politics of Display: A 'literary and historical' definition of Quebec in 1830s British North America," *Art Apart: Artifacts, Institutions and Ideology in England and North America from 1800 to the present*, ed. Marcia Pointon (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 1994), also presented at UAAC Conference, Windsor, Ont., November 1993.

LA REPRÉSENTATION VUE COMME DISCOURS COLONIAL

L'image du «sauvage» et de «l'habitant» dans la genèse des identités coloniales au début du XIX^e siècle

Contrairement à l'opinion exprimée récemment par Laurier Lacroix, que les arts visuels ont été «le lieu de l'établissement d'un discours commun» par lequel les canadiens-français et les colonisateurs britanniques ont pu communiquer, mon analyse des représentations d'autochtones et d'*habitants* par des artistes britanniques du Bas-Canada, dans la première moitié du XIX^e siècle, montre, à l'égard de l'identité nationale, une attitude bien différente de celle du peintre canadien-français de premier plan, Joseph Légaré¹. Bien que les artistes et illustrateurs britanniques et canadiens-français aient traité des même *sujets*, comme le suggère Laurier Lacroix, je voudrais démontrer, dans le présent article, que l'oeuvre de Légaré s'oppose nettement par *contenu* aux représentations britanniques.

Les artistes professionnels ou amateurs qui visitaient le Canada, pendant les premières décennies du XIX^e, rapportaient souvent, comme souvenirs, des dessins, des tableaux ou des aquarelles qu'ils avaient achetés ou exécutés. En examinant ces illustrations d'époque, on découvre les *leitmotive* structuraux sous-jacents, et plus particulièrement, l'organisation des territoires représentés et de leurs habitants en zones opposées. Ces représentations semblent codifier et situer la place des autochtones à l'intérieur de la hiérarchie sociale coloniale, et fournir les bases d'une identité colonial.

Le vocabulaire visuel employé comporte l'utilisation des règles du style «pittoresque», particulièrement dans la création de contrastes. Le pittoresque s'accordait facilement au propos par une sorte de correspondance naturelle entre la notion de contraste visuel et une opposition traditionnelle, remontant à Champlain, dans la façon de représenter les Amérindiens et les Européens. De plus, les autochtones étaient généralement représentés, ou bien comme des «enfants», issus d'une race primitive mais noble, ou bien comme des sauvages, cruels et barbares. Ce sont ces stéréotypes opposés de «Sauvage barbare» et de «bon Sauvage» qui ont servi de base aux représentations subséquentes des peuples aborigènes. L'un et l'autre étaient définis comme «primitifs» par rapport aux Européens «civilisés».

La hiérarchie sociale est établie dans l'oeuvre de Robert A. Sproule *Vue de Québec, prise de la Pointe Lévi*, vers 1832 (fig.1). Le campement amérindien perché

sur une falaise rocheuse surplombant la rivière, se juxtapose aux nombreux symboles de la civilisation européenne, au second et à l'arrière-plan. La partie supérieure représente, pour les Européens, le progrès et la civilisation: les militaires, le commerce maritime, les maisons de pierre et les clochers. Au-dessous se trouve l'*Autre* primitif: l'eau tranquille, la rive escarpée, les autochtones sauvages.

La juxtaposition du «primitif» et du «civilisé» est aussi apparente dans *Montreal from the Indian Encamping Ground* de James Duncan, postérieur à 1830 (fig.2), et dans *York from Gibraltar Point* de James Gray, datant de 1828 (fig.3). Dans la première oeuvre, les autochtones sont relégués dans un enfoncement au bord de la rivière envahie par un trafic intense. Dans la deuxième, la présence autochtone, n'est plus que symbolique, soulignant l'opinion prévalente que les peuples indigènes constituaient une race éteinte. Les autochtones y sont comme effacés du paysage, n'y laissant qu'une faible trace de leur passé.

La marginalisation était en fait la réalité vécue par les peuples autochtones dans la société canadienne de l'époque. Après la guerre de 1812, ils avaient cessé de jouer un rôle stratégique dans les relations anglo-américaines, la traite de la fourrure avait disparu dans l'Est, et un trop grand nombre d'ouvriers agricoles ainsi que l'immigration provenant des Îles Britanniques les excluaient du travail agricole rémunéré. Durant les années 1830, un *Select Committee on Aborigines* nommé par le parlement britannique entendit des rapports de tous les coins de l'Empire. Afin de «protéger» les aborigènes, le Comité recommandait de les placer sous la supervision du gouvernement exécutif et du Gouverneur, et non sous celle des législatures des colonies, car celles-ci représentaient les intérêts des colons. Ainsi, «pour leur propre bien» les autochtones furent exclus de la vie politique et privés de toute fonction dans la société coloniale.

Je suggère que les représentations visuelles des premiers habitants et du paysage canadien peuvent être considérées comme un élément actif du projet colonial de prise de possession du nouveau pays. En représentant la «nature» (c'est-à-dire le paysage et les peuples aborigènes) selon le code esthétique du «pittoresque», la menace que représentaient, aux yeux des colons britanniques, la forêt sauvage et impénétrable et les autochtones «sauvages et barbares» était neutralisée et re-conceptualisée en termes familiers et sécurisants. De même, en rendant visible la hiérarchie sociale, les images normalisaient les relations entre le colonisateur et le colonisé.

En même temps que les autochtones étaient relégués au bas de l'échelle sociale et se voyaient refuser toute participation active dans la société coloniale du temps, un élément parallèle du discours colonial les représentaient constamment comme des objets historiques dans les récits de voyage et les guides pour émigrants publiés par des voyageurs de passage au Canada. Ces derniers aussi les voyaient en termes de contraste entre «civilisé» et «primitif» mais ils notaient également les rapprochements historiques entre les autochtones et les *habitants*. Des

caractéristiques généralement attribuées aux autochtones étaient projetées sur les *habitants*: leur oisiveté apparente, leur inaptitude à l'agriculture et leur refus de changer leur mode de vie traditionnel. Cette association des autochtones et des *habitants* trouve un parallèle dans les représentations visuelles. Alors que les artistes britanniques demeurent fidèles au principe «pittoresque» des contrastes en traçant le portrait des autochtones et des colons britanniques, ils négligent souvent d'établir une distinction entre les autochtones et les *habitants* canadiens-français. Ainsi, *Canoe Building at Papper's Island*, de W.H. Bartlett, 1842 (fig.4), prétend représenter une scène de la vie autochtone et les figures féminines ne laissent aucun doute à cet égard. Cependant les hommes qui construisent le canoë sont vêtus de la même façon que ceux qu'on voit dans *Burial Place of the Voyageur*, 1842 (fig.5). De la même manière, dans d'autres oeuvres de Bartlett, il est difficile de savoir si les figures masculines représentent des autochtones ou des *habitants*. Dans *Canadian Farmer*, étude de costumes par Mary Millicent Chaplin, vers 1840, les signifiants de l'Amérindien (sac perlé, corne à poudre, mocassins et jambières) et de l'*habitant* (pipe, bonnet, ceinture fléchée) sont pareillement combinés. En confondant l'identité de l'autochtone et de l'*habitant*, les Britanniques en ont fait des «Autres» étrangers. Le message implicite aux émigrants est que les «indigènes» du Canada - les deux types fondus en un seul - ne sont ni un obstacle ni une concurrence pour des colons britanniques travailleurs et entrepreneurs.

Joseph Légaré, pour sa part, s'oppose à ce discours et utilise les autochtones à ses propres fins. Lui aussi les situe comme sujets historiques mais l'histoire qu'il raconte est différente de celle des Britanniques. Elle est celle du peuple canadien-français et des luttes héroïques des missionnaires et des premiers colons contre la barbarie et la perfidie des Iroquois. Alors que les artistes britanniques utilisent le stéréotype du «bon Sauvage», Légaré, dans *Le massacre des Hurons par les Iroquois*, vers 1828 (fig.7), évoque l'image parallèle du «Sauvage barbare». Depuis Champlain, les Hurons étaient les alliés des Canadiens-français, alors que les Britanniques avaient conclu des alliances avec les Iroquois. Il devient alors possible de voir des allégories dans les scènes de la vie indigène de Légaré, surtout à la lumière de son soutien actif à la cause de Papineau et des Patriotes anti-britanniques. L'embuscade perfide et le massacre des Hurons par les Iroquois peuvent être interprétés à la fois comme un épisode de l'histoire de la Nouvelle-France et comme une condamnation de la conquête britannique. De plus, Légaré note soigneusement les différences entre les autochtones et les *habitants*: les représentations des premiers montrent les arcs et les flèches, la peinture de guerre et les plumes plutôt que leur façon de se vêtir à l'époque, alors que l'habillement, le contexte et les activités des *habitants* les identifient clairement comme des paysans canadiens-français. Alors que les artistes britanniques confondent les images de l'autochtone contemporain et de l'*habitant*, les voyant tous deux comme l'*Autre*, Légaré les différencie et reproduit à dessin le stéréotype du «Sauvage barbare», afin

de souligner la culture distincte et l'histoire héroïque de la nation canadienne-française.

Il semble, par conséquent, que Laurier Lacroix ait raison de suggérer que les élites françaises et britanniques sont toutes deux vu la peinture comme un moyen d'établir leur identité propre et, ce faisant, elles ont cherché à représenter les peuples autochtones comme des figures historiques. Mais il n'est pas évident que cela ait été fait sans conflit. Bien que, dans la perspective actuelle, il serait réconfortant de voir les arts comme un pont entre les deux solitudes, la situation réelle, dans la première partie du XIX^e siècle, n'offre pas de prototype particulièrement prometteur.

1 Laurier LACROIX, «Entre la norme et le fragment: éléments pour une esthétique de la période 1830-1850 au Québec,» *La Peinture au Québec 1820-1850*, M. Béland éd., Musée du Québec, Québec, 1992, p.70.

Traduction: Élise Bonnette