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FESTSCHRIFT | MÉLANGES

EDITORIAL | ÉDITORIAL 8
Martha Langford

GUEST EDITORIAL | ÉDITORIAL INVITÉ 10
Sandra Paikowsky

A FEW WORDS | QUELQUES MOTS 14
François-Marc Gagnon

ARTICLES

William Notman's *Photographic Selections* (1863) | 17
Loren Lerner

Homer Watson and *The Pioneer Mill* | 47
Brian Foss

James Wilson Morrice at the Rialto Market in Venice | 87
Sandra Paikowsky

Sous-sol au mannequin de tailleur : un tableau témoin d'un quartier et d'une époque de Louis Muhlstock | 119
Monique Nadeau-Saumier

Paul-Émile Borduas et la *fondation* du Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal | 143
Laurier Lacroix

François-Marc Gagnon : Bibliographie | Bibliography | 167
Denis Longchamps et / and Alena Buis

REVIEWS | COMPTES RENDUS

François-Marc Gagnon. *The Codex Canadensis and the Writings of Louis Nicolas. The Natural History of the New World/Histoire Naturelle des Indes Occidentales* | 188
Ramsay Cook

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES | NOTICES BIOGRAPHIQUES 193

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES | LIGNES DIRECTRICES 196

What is a *Festschrift*? The root of the word is 'celebration' – and this is what a *Festschrift* does. In this case, the *Journal of Canadian Art History* has set out to honour the contributions of François-Marc Gagnon by offering him a collection of essays commissioned by *JCAH/AHAC*'s publisher and founding editor Sandra Paikowsky. This issue is Part II of that collection. It includes original scholarly articles, a complete bibliography of his work, and a review of his most recent publication, *The Codex Canadensis and the Writings of Louis Nicolas: The Natural History of the New World*. There is much to celebrate here in the work of a finely tuned, questioning mind applied to a variety of topics and approaches but there is also something to think about in the very nature of this endeavour.

How should scholarship be celebrated? Should a scholarly journal lend itself to this process, and if so, how should praise be balanced with critical inquiry? Institutional theorist Peter Welsh offers a model of this balance designed for museums, which throws a neighbourly light on the celebration mounted here. Using the semiotic notion of circuits, and mindful of the co-existence of different forces at work within any cultural project, Welsh looks at celebration under the rubric of 'representation'. Institutions *have been* 'celebratory' in their representation of significant figures, movements, and schools of thought. In 2005, Welsh could see that the process of representation *was becoming* 'collaborative', that is, less monolithic, less stubbornly 'on message', and more accommodating of different points of view on the object of representation. What he then hoped, what he thought that representation *could become* was 'reflexive', that is transparent about the context of production, as well as thoughtful about its limits and possibilities.[1]

No question that this *Festschrift* comes from a community that admires the work of François-Marc Gagnon. Nor should there be any doubt that friendship and collegiality have played a part in shaping this tribute. I underscore this point – I press upon it *reflexively* – because I believe that any project of representation builds on affection in all its dimensions, the most important being 'tough love'. Pick up any work listed in the Gagnon bibliography and that is what you will find: celebration, collaboration, and reflexivity. Guest editor Paikowsky and her contributors have followed this model by looking closely, contextually, and critically at works that mean something to them. (Now there's an admission.) Celebrate that.

Martha Langford

1 Peter H. Welsh, "Re-configuring Museums," *Museum Management and Curatorship* 20:2 (2005): 103–30.

Le mot allemand pour « mélanges » est *festschrift*. À la racine de ce mot il y a « célébration ». C'est ce que font les « mélanges ». Dans le cas présent, *Annales d'histoire de l'art canadien* veut rendre hommage à la contribution de François-Marc Gagnon en lui offrant une collection d'essais commandés par la fondatrice et éditrice des *Annales* et ancienne rédactrice en chef, Sandra Paikowsky. Ce numéro est la seconde partie de cette collection. Il comprend des articles savants originaux, une bibliographie complète des œuvres de François-Marc Gagnon et une recension de sa plus récente publication, *The Codex Canadensis and the Writings of Louis Nicolas. Histoire Naturelle des Indes Occidentales.* Il y a beaucoup à célébrer ici dans l'œuvre d'un esprit éveillé, curieux, qui s'attache à une variété de sujets et d'approches, mais il y a aussi matière à réfléchir sur la nature même de ce travail.

Comment célébrer l'érudition ? Une publication savante devrait-elle se plier à cet exercice et, si oui, comment établir un équilibre entre la louange et l'étude critique ? Le théoricien des institutions Peter Welsh offre un modèle d'équilibre pour les musées, qui jette une lumière sur la célébration que nous avons préparée dans ce numéro. En utilisant le concept sémiotique de circuits, et conscient de la coexistence de forces différentes à l'œuvre dans tout projet culturel, Welsh voit la célébration comme une 'représentation'. Les institutions *ont été* 'célébrantes' dans leur représentation de personnes, de mouvements et d'écoles de pensée signifiants. En 2005, Welsh pouvait voir que le processus de représentation était *en train de devenir* 'collaboratif', c'est-à-dire moins monolithique, moins fixé 'sur le message' et plus accommodant quant aux différents points de vue sur l'objet de la représentation. Ce qu'il espérait alors, ce qu'il croyait, c'est que la représentation pouvait devenir 'réflexive', c'est-à-dire transparente relativement au contexte de production, et aussi consciente de ses limites et possibilités[1].

Il va sans dire que ces mélanges viennent d'une communauté qui admire l'œuvre de François-Marc Gagnon. Et nul doute que l'amitié et la collégialité ont joué un rôle dans l'élaboration de cet hommage. Je souligne ce point – je le souligne de manière *réflexive* – parce que je crois que tout projet de représentation se construit sur l'affection dans toutes ses dimensions, la plus importante étant la 'fermeté affectueuse'. Prenez n'importe quel mot inscrit dans la bibliographie de François-Marc Gagnon et voici ce que vous trouverez : célébration, collaboration et réflexivité. La rédactrice invitée Sandra Paikowsky et les auteurs des articles ont suivi ce modèle en étudiant attentivement, de manière contextuelle et critique, des œuvres qui signifient quelque chose pour eux. (Quel aveu !) Célébrons cela.

Martha Langford

1 Peter H. Welsh, « Re-configuring Museums », *Museum Management and Curatorship* 20:2 (2005): 103–30.

This issue of the *Journal of Canadian Art History* continues a celebration of the career of François-Marc Gagnon that began in volume XXXII:1 as a tribute to his extraordinary accomplishments in all aspects of our discipline. For both issues, texts were commissioned from scholars in the field of Canadian art history whose work, one way or another, has intersected with François-Marc Gagnon's own writings, lectures and teaching. The leitmotif of the *Festschrift* has been the use of a particular work to initiate a discussion; what direction that investigation might take was the author's decision. Such freedom to hypothesize, analyze, and theorize is essential to François-Marc Gagnon's own way of thinking and it has thus been the thread that weaves together the contents of this two-part *Festschrift*.

Part I of the *Festschrift* featured a lengthy memoir by François-Marc Gagnon that revealed the surprising pathways of his career at the same time that it helped put his remarkable accomplishments in a clearer light. Part II contains his bibliography, which includes an enormous range of topics in an impressive range of publications. The listing begins with his revised and essentially rewritten magisterial *Paul-Émile Borduas*: *Life and Work* that is scheduled to appear in 2013 and ends with articles written fifty years ago. Further proof of our honoured scholar's tireless activity is Ramsay Cook's book review of François-Marc Gagnon's recently published and erudite treatment of *The Codex Canadensis and the Writings of Louis Nicolas*.

The contents of this final part of the *Festschrift* display one of the driving forces of François-Marc Gagnon's extraordinary production: that there are unlimited possibilities for looking at Canadian art. Loren Lerner's study of *Photographic Selections*, a portfolio of William Notman's images with an accompanying text by Thomas Davies King, reveals what can be defined as the Scottish subtext in what was the first art history book published in Canada. Brian Foss examines Homer Watson's *The Pioneer Mill* and the various factors that influenced Watson's choice of antiquated mill imagery, demonstrating the influence of the painter's biography and his clear understanding of rural life. My own article looks at a *pochade* of a section of the Rialto market area by James Wilson Morrice and the ways in which it discloses his visual empathy with Venice and the symbolic meanings of the site for both the painter and the painted. A similar analysis of an interior painting by Louis Muhlstock allows Monique Nadeau-Saumier to reposition the artist in the environment that was intrinsic to his life and his images. Lastly, but in its own way returning to the subject most associated with François-Marc Gagnon, is Laurier Lacroix's investigation of the twists and turns of acquiring the work of Paul-Émile Borduas for the permanent collection of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal. Although this is the

Ce numéro des *Annales d'histoire de l'art canadien* prolonge la célébration de la carrière de François-Marc Gagnon commencée dans le volume XXXII:1. Comme je l'expliquais dans mon précédent « éditorial invité », ces *Mélanges* sont un hommage à ses réalisations extraordinaires dans tous les aspects de notre discipline. Ici encore, les textes ont été commandés à des spécialistes de l'histoire de l'art canadien dont les travaux ont rejoint, d'une manière ou d'une autre, les écrits, les conférences et les cours de François-Marc Gagnon. Le leitmotiv de nos *Mélanges* est l'utilisation d'une œuvre particulière pour ouvrir la discussion ; la direction où cette recherche allait nous conduire relevait de la décision de l'auteur. Cette liberté de proposer une hypothèse, de l'analyser et de la théoriser est essentielle à la propre manière de penser de François-Marc Gagnon et a, par conséquent, été le fil conducteur qui relie le contenu des deux parties des *Mélanges*.

Dans le premier numéro de notre projet, nous avons publié un long mémoire par François-Marc Gagnon. Il aura sans doute étonné plusieurs de nos lecteurs tout en contribuant à mettre plus clairement en lumière ses remarquables réalisations. Dans le présent numéro nous publions sa bibliographie, qui s'étend sur un large éventail de sujets dans un nombre impressionnant de publications. La liste commence avec son œuvre magistrale *Paul-Émile Borduas. Biographie critique et analyse de l'œuvre*, dans une édition révisée et essentiellement réécrite qui paraît en 2013 et se termine par des articles écrits il y a cinquante ans. Par un heureux hasard, l'unique recension dans les présents *Mélanges* a été écrite par Ramsay Cook à propos de la plus récente publication de François-Marc Gagnon, un ouvrage d'érudition intitulé *The Codex Canadensis and the Writings of Louis Nicolas.*

Le contenu de cette seconde partie des *Mélanges* montre combien le nombre de manières de voir l'art canadien est illimité. L'étude du portfolio de photographies de William Notman par Loren Lerner, intitulée *Photographic Selections,* ainsi que le texte d'accompagnement par Thomas Davies King révèlent ce qui peut être défini comme le sous-texte écossais de ce qui a été le premier livre d'histoire de l'art publié au Canada. Brian Foss analyse *The Pioneer Mill* d'Homer Watson et les divers facteurs qui ont influencé Watson dans le choix de représenter d'anciens moulins, choix qui démontre l'influence de la biographie du peintre et sa bonne connaissance du monde rural. Mon propre article étudie une pochade par James Wilson Morrice d'une portion du marché du Rialto, et comment elle révèle son empathie visuelle avec Venise et le sens symbolique du lieu aussi bien pour le peintre que pour son sujet. Une analyse similaire d'une toile de Louis Muhlstock représentant un intérieur permet à Monique Nadeau-Saumier de resituer l'artiste dans un environnement intrinsèque à sa vie et à ses tableaux. Et finalement, mais par un retour, à sa

text with the most charged political content, other articles in this issue also address the public implications of cultural production.

On a personal note, this is my last editorship of an issue of the *Journal of Canadian Art History*. Over the past almost forty years, this publication has been both challenging and satisfying. Most of all, it has been fun – maybe not the most scholarly term to use, but the one that made it all worthwhile.

Sandra Paikowsky

façon, sur le sujet le plus associé à François-Marc Gagnon, Laurier Lacroix nous livre le résultat de son enquête sur les tours et détours de l'acquisition de l'œuvre de Paul-Émile Borduas pour la collection permanente du Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal. Ce texte à forte charge politique partage néanmoins avec les autres articles de ce numéro les implications publiques de la production culturelle.

Sur une note personnelle, ce numéro des *Annales d'histoire de l'art canadien* est le dernier dont je suis la rédactrice dans un avenir prévisible. Depuis près de quarante ans, cette publication a apporté des défis et des satisfactions, mais, aussi et surtout, des occasions de s'amuser. Cela ne fait peut-être pas très savant, mais c'est ce qui a rendu le travail si intéressant.

Sandra Paikowsky

Traduction : Élise Bonnette

Quand on m'a demandé quels peintres j'aimerais voir reproduits sur les couvertures de ces deux numéros des *Annales d'histoire de l'art canadien*, qui me sont offerts si gentiment en hommage à ma carrière, le premier choix s'imposait. Il fallait un Borduas. Je dois dire que le second choix m'a paru s'imposer tout autant. C'est ce qui explique qu'une œuvre de Pnina C. Gagnon, ma chère épouse pour ceux qui ne le sauraient pas déjà, paraisse sur la couverture du second numéro. Il s'agit d'un dessin fait sur une grande feuille de Fabriano posée au sol, dans la carrière abandonnée d'Atlit, en Israël, les 21, 22 et 23 avril 1979. Le dessin, qui tient quelque peu de la performance, a consisté à noter le contour de l'ombre d'une falaise au fur et à mesure de la progression du soleil. Le temps de tracer une ligne, le soleil s'était déjà déplacé et la ligne suivante ne tombait plus à la même place. L'œuvre durait le temps de couvrir de lignes successives l'ensemble du support, qu'on voit ici *in situ*. Notre ami René Payant, malheureusement décédé, avait nommé les dessins de cette série des *corpo-chrono-graphies*, pour signifier la performance physique de ce travail au sol, le temps et le graphisme impliqués dans leur production.

When I was asked what artworks I would like to have reproduced on the covers of the two issues of the *Journal of Canadian Art History* in my honour, the first choice was obvious. It had to be a Borduas. But I have to say that the second choice was just as obvious: an artwork by my wife, Pnina C. Gagnon. This is why an illustration of one of her big drawings on Fabriano paper done in the abandoned quarry of Atlit, near Haifa, Israel on April 21st, 22nd, and 23rd, 1979, graces the cover of Part II of the *Festschrift*. Executed on the spot, the work could also be seen as a kind of performance piece as the paper surface records the moving shadows caused by the sun on the large face of a nearby cliff. In the time it took to draw the contour of the shadow, the earth had already turned and the sun occupied a slightly different position in the sky at the start of the next line. Following the movement of the sun, each trace of the contour shadow occupied its own space and the work was finished when the surface was filled with lines. Our friend René Payant, who unfortunately is no longer with us, called the drawings in this series *corpo-chrono-graphies*, as a way to emphasize the components of the physical performance of the artist, of time and of tracing, inherent in their production.

François-Marc Gagnon

Pnina C. Gagnon, *Ombre d'une carrière*, Atlit, Israël, 1979, feuille de Fabriano et encre, 10 × 1,2 m. (Photo : Pnina C. Gagnon) | Pnina C. Gagnon, *Shadows of a Quarry*, Atlit, Israel, 1979, Fabriano paper and ink, 10 × 1.2 m. (Photo: Pnina C. Gagnon)

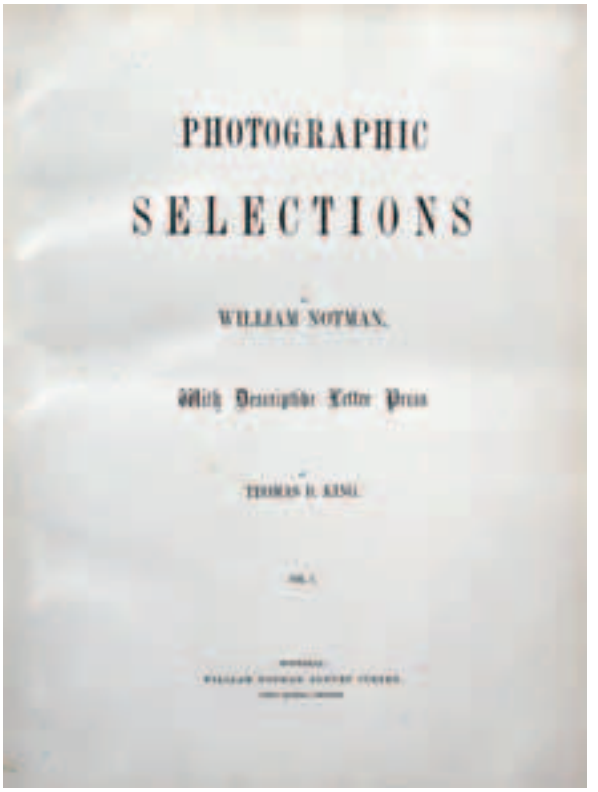
Detail, Thomas Faed, *From Dawn to Sunset*, in *Photographic Selections*. (Photo: McCord Museum, Montreal)

William Notman's *Photographic Selections* (1863)

LOREN LERNER

Over the years I have researched various portrait photographs by William Notman (1826–1891) held by the Notman Photographic Archives at the McCord Museum of Canadian History.[1] This led to an enquiry into his publishing ventures and the marketing of photography. The first of his four publications was *Photographic Selections* (Fig. 1), a portfolio published by the Montreal printer John Lovell in 1863 for approximately 360 subscribers. It was also the first art history book printed in Canada. The selection of forty-seven plates included two of his own landscape images, *Fort Chambly, near Montreal, QC, 1863* (Fig. 2) and *Road Side, Lake of Two Mountains* (Fig. 3),[2] as well as ten photographic copies of engravings after Renaissance and Baroque paintings and twenty-seven photographs of pictures by contemporary British, French and American artists, some of which came from local collectors.[3] The remaining eight images of recent British and North American paintings in Montreal collections were originally photographed by Notman.

The arrangement of the forty-six by thirty-six centimetre loose leaf portfolio was typical of the time: the albumen print is mounted on the recto side; on the facing verso, a short text ranging from a paragraph to one page in length provides a context for the image. Although Notman undoubtedly had a strong influence on the ideas and content of the text, its author was British-born Thomas Davies King (1819–1884), a Montreal connoisseur of prints, antiquities, and rare books, who probably also supplied some of the engravings to be copied for the book.[4] King introduces the artist and describes the original work, including its location and how it relates to other works of a similar convention or style. When the photograph is of an engraving, the engraver's name is given alongside glowing comments about his artistry in capturing the painting. Other comments emphasize the excellent quality of the photograph, which is defined by Notman's ability to faithfully reproduce the subject: "Those who saw the picture will exclaim, what a faithful translation! It shows the adaptability of photography to render with great exactitude, not only the painter's idea, but also his very touch, or method of handling."



1 | Title Page, William Notman and Thomas D. King, *Photographic Selections by William Notman, with Descriptive Letter Press by Thomas D. King* (Montreal: John Lovell, Printer, 1863). (Photo: McCord Museum, Montreal)

Although King does not name Notman as the artist of the two photographs taken "From Nature," he defines the pictures as works of art. He praises *Fort Chambly* for "its beauty as a composition," noting that "the picture is much assisted by the cattle which figure in the composition." Concerning *Road Side, Lake of Two Mountains*, he writes:

> If any artist who is in the habit of composing his pictures, would but take the first copse he meets with, and would carefully study and paint its trees, with their wreathed branches, "robed in their proud prosperity of leaves," and its thick leafy foreground of tangled creepers, he would be more satisfied with the picture than the best and most elaborate he ever invented. This granted, will be reason sufficient for the selection of this bit of road scenery – photographed from nature, it will be refreshing to all true lovers of landscape painting, and specially those acquainted with the works of Creswick, Hunt and Linnell – artists who are not content to compose and imagine, but who do draw from nature, and try for nature – nature in her liberty – and who feel with Wordsworth that "Nature never did betray … is full of blessings."

2 | William Notman, *Fort Chambly, near Montreal, QC, 1863*, in *Photographic Selections*. (Photo: McCord Museum, Montreal)

These sentences establish Notman as an artist who knows what to photograph and how to photograph it, so that the image resonates with the sensations of a landscape painting. At the same time King confirms Notman's knowledge of art history and his familiarity with landscape painters of the period.

In the January 1865 edition, the *Journal of Education for Upper Canada* proudly announced that *Photographic Selections* by William Notman, published two years earlier, was:

> a work that would be a credit to any London publisher. It is a reproduction of many choice engravings and paintings by means of photography, and perhaps has thus given to the art its most important function. There has never been a work published in Canada better calculated to cultivate and elevate the taste in art; because it has put within the reach of the many, faithful translations of the works of the best masters, ancient and modern. In no way can photography take a form so useful to the community, so useful to the many who have never seen and may never have the opportunity of seeing European

3 | William Notman, *Road Side, Lake of Two Mountains*, in *Photographic Selections*. (Photo: McCord Museum, Montreal)

> Galleries, as by allowing the pictures to reach them in the form of a photograph; it secures the thought of the artist, and enables art to go hand in hand with literature, the cheap pictures thus keeping pace with the cheap newspaper and cheap book.[5]

Born in Glasgow, Scotland, to a father who manufactured Paisley shawls and was a commission agent for wholesale woolen cloth, Notman was raised in a home that valued the arts. As a young man he had trained in painting and drawing and learned how to take photographs using the daguerreotype process. He entered the family business where he worked as a salesman and junior partner, but when the company slid into bankruptcy he immigrated to Lower Canada, arriving in 1856. As a Scotsman, Notman felt at home in Montreal where his countrymen were a prominent force. They led the wave of British immigrants who sought a better life in a new land and by 1861 the Montreal census records that 3,235 out of a population of 50,000 living in Montreal were natives of Scotland.[6] Although they made up only a small part of the citizenry, these skilled labourers, artisans, carpenters, tailors, bookkeepers, and large numbers of business and professional people including many teachers and clergymen, had an impact far beyond their numbers. Montreal Scots were instrumental in the building of the Lachine Canal, and were leaders in the rapid industrialization that began in the late 1840s, heading companies such as the ICR (Intercontinental Railway) and the CPR (Canadian Pacific Railway) that linked Canada from East to West. They also founded McGill University and dozens of other institutions and associations, including the Montreal General and Royal Victoria hospitals, the St. Andrew's Society of Montreal, the Beaver Club and the Black Watch of Canada.[7] A cross-section of Montreal's intellectual, commercial and cultural elite, many became Notman's clients: Sir George Alexander Drummond (1829–1910), director of the Bank of Montreal; Sir Hugh Allan (1810–1882), shipping magnate, railway promoter and financier; William Watson Ogilvie (1835–1900), owner of Royal Mill, the largest milling company in the dominion; and John William Dawson (1855–1893), geologist and principal of McGill University.

Recognizing the potential that lay in the wealth and education of Montreal's middle class, Notman established his photographic studio at No. 11 Bleury Steet in late December 1856.[8] In 1860, Notman along with Thomas King and other influential Montrealers formed the Art Association of Montreal.[9] Its stated purpose was "the encouragement of the Fine Arts by means of the establishment and maintenance, in so far as may be found practicable of a Gallery or Galleries of Art, and the establishment of a School of Design in the City of Montreal" as well as a "Museum, Library, Reading Room or other subsidiary undertaken of the like description." The first order of business of the Association was to organize an exposition of mainly European paintings from Montreal private collections for the visit of the Prince of Wales, who had recently announced a tour through British America for the following August.[10] Presented in the newly-built Crystal Palace in

downtown Montreal constructed in the Prince's honour, the exhibition was held in conjunction with industrial, manufacturing, scientific and agricultural displays and was considered a major success. For Notman it was also a professional achievement as his photographs of the Victoria Bridge were awarded a medal. Strategically, when he produced *Photographic Selections* three years later, Notman included two of his landscape photographs in the collection. Thus, the publication advertised both his professional work and the artistic possibilities inherent in photography.

The reproductions were unbound, allowing the book owners to remove the prints and frame them, an appealing option at a time when prints often decorated the walls of middle-class homes. The images could also be kept in portfolio form and, as part of the home library, serve to educate children and entertain guests.

The introduction to *Photographic Selections* defines the intentions of the publication: "In order to foster the increasing growing taste for works of art in Canada, and to meet a demand which cannot otherwise be generally supplied, consequent upon the scarcity in these provinces of choice original works of art, or even of proof engravings by the old or modern masters, the 'Photographic Selections' are published." Thus Notman positions himself as both a manufacturer of a new line of products and someone who knows about art. He and his collaborator King attempt to convey their authority "to foster the increasing growing taste for works of art in Canada" by virtue of considerable knowledge about "choice original works of art, or even of proof engravings by the old or modern masters." This statement also implies that Notman can easily respond to a "demand which cannot otherwise be generally supplied" because of his expertise as a photographer.

A review of the prints in *Photographic Selections* suggests that there is nothing unusual in the choices. Artists such as Rembrandt, Gerard Douw, Guido Reni, and others who were represented in Notman's book, were also among the examples of Old Master Dutch, Flemish, and Italian engravings and lithographs of paintings purchased by the Reverend Egerton Ryerson, Canada West's Chief Superintendent of Education on his tour of Europe, for the Educational Museum in Toronto opened in 1857.[11] Also familiar was Notman's selection of contemporary British religious art. For example, William Holman Hunt's *Light of the World* was a bestselling print found in numerous middle-class parlours because it responded to the religious sentimentalism and iconography of Victorian painting so popular during this era.[12] Genre paintings full of didactic meaning and moralizing content were also typical of this period, exemplified by Notman's choice of *The Golden Wedding* by Ludwig Knaus, *Wedding Procession at Alsace* by Gustave Brion, *The Invalid Soldier at Home* by Joseph Noel Paton and *Derby Day* by William

4 | Giovanni Battista Moroni, *Titian's Schoolmaster*, in *Photographic Selections*. (Photo: McCord Museum, Montreal)

Powell Frith. As well, the growing market of this consumer culture for landscapes and country scenes was also evident in *Photographic Selections*.[13] Four landscape paintings by English artists were found in Montreal private collections and three were by Montreal artists John Arthur Fraser (1838–1898), Robert Stuart Duncanson (1817–1872), and Charles Jones Way (1834–1919).

Photographic Selections also includes three portraits: *Shakspere* (Shakespeare) by Jacobus Houbraken, *Tennyson* by George Frederick Watts, and *Titian's Schoolmaster* by Giovanni Battista Moroni (Fig. 4). Again, this was a response to the conventions of the era. With people newly enthusiastic about having their portrait taken and convinced that phrenology could be used to analyze the faces of individuals, portraiture had once again become

5 | Joseph Noel Paton, *The Invalided Soldier at Home*, in *Photographic Selections*. (Photo: McCord Museum, Montreal)

a cultural phenomenon.[14] The inclusion of such images is also an obvious expression of Notman's self-interest as a portrait photographer.

Furthermore, it is not a coincidence that the critic and thinker John Ruskin admired many of the artists in *Photographic Selections.* Ruskin had published the first volume of *Modern Painters* in 1843, followed by four more volumes over the next sixteen years.[15] Thomas King's text on Paton's *The Invalided Soldier at Home* invokes Ruskin's combination of praise and

6 | Frederic Edwin Church, *The Heart of the Andes*, in *Photographic Selections*. (Photo: McCord Museum, Montreal)

disapproval: "the drawing is almost faultless and beyond criticism, although the colouring had some sweeping censures bestowed upon it, foremost amongst them was Ruskin's" (Fig. 5).[16] In his description of *Mercury and Argus* by J.M.W. Turner, King confirms that he has read the first volume of *Modern Painters* in its entirety when he notes that Ruskin "has eight distinct references to the 'Mercury and Argus', citing it as a glorious example of cloud-painting; as shewing the fullness and spirit of repose pervading it." Other choices in *Photographic Selections* can also be connected to Ruskin's critical approval; for example, Frederic Church's reputation was enhanced when his *Heart of the Andes*, which was shown in London in 1859 before being engraved for wide distribution, caught Ruskin's attention (Fig. 6).[17] *Sunday in the Backwoods* by Thomas Faed, exhibited that same year, also received a somewhat favourable review from the British critic (Fig. 7).[18]

Nevertheless, a closer viewing reveals something special about *Photographic Selections*, insomuch as it represents a particular view of the history of art. The evidence points to Notman not King as the decision-maker in the selection of art works and the editor of the texts. King was chosen by Notman to write the texts because he was a connoisseur of art but interestingly, his collection of paintings, drawings, and prints sold by auction upon his death in 1886 reveals that his taste was significantly different from that of Notman and overlapped only in the case of two Montreal artists,

7 | Thomas Faed, *Sunday in the Backwoods in Canada*, in *Photographic Selections*. (Photo: McCord Museum, Montreal)

Charles Jones Way and John Fraser.[19] Perhaps more importantly, Notman's admiration of the art and culture of Scotland seems to have motivated the book's references, set of presuppositions, and evaluative criteria for the choice of works reproduced. From this perspective, *Photographic Selections* can be read as a constellation of images that are connected, at times self-consciously, at other times unconsciously, by Scottish motifs or ideas. The publication reveals an adherence to a certain taste in fine arts along with attitudes and beliefs that originated in Scotland.

A Scottish bias is also evident in some of the names and places cited in the introduction to *Photographic Selections*:

> when contemplating the wondrous productions of the great battle pieces of Horace Vernet, Vandermeulen, and Wouvverman; the sea fights of Loutherbourg, Stanfield, and Vandervelde; the humors of Hogarth, Teniers, and Wilkie; the playful children of Collins, Mulready, and Webster; the animal life of Cooper, Landseer, and Potter; the landscapes of Claude, Turner, and Wilson; the historical

pictures of Cope, Lebrun, and Maclise; the dramatic compositions of Frith, Leslie, and Stothard.

It is presumed that readers will recognize a number of these artists as part of Scotland's cultural heritage. For example, the English painter Frederick Clarkson Stanfield got his start in Edinburgh, where as a young boy he was apprenticed to a heraldic painter. The English illustrator Thomas Stothard, wishing to collect material for illustrating the poems of Robert Burns, went to Scotland in 1809 to visit the locations frequented by the poet a few years previously. David Wilkie, a Scottish painter and etcher who moved to London in 1805, was known as "the Scottish Teniers" after the Flemish painter. Wilkie's *Card-Players*, composed during a visit to his native village of Fife in 1807, was considered to be reminiscent of Teniers' painting of the same title, also reproduced in *Photographic Selections*. Sir Edwin Landseer, the English animal painter, travelled to Scotland for the first time in 1824 to visit Sir Walter Scott. He fell in love with the Highlands and returned every year to draw and hunt. The career of the Irish painter Daniel Maclise, whose family came from Scotland, was launched when the print of his portrait drawing of Sir Walter Scott, done in Ireland, achieved wide acclaim.

While these artists, in one way or another, have ties to Scotland, a close look at *Photographic Selections* discloses that Notman intentionally and pervasively underscores Scotland's importance in the history of western art. Notman begins his book with *The Heart of the Andes* by the American painter Frederic Edwin Church, first exhibited between April 29 and May 23, 1859 at New York's Studio Building in the city's first "studio edifice" designed for artists.[20] The text acknowledges the fact that 12,000 viewers, an unprecedented number in the United States, came to see the single-painting exhibition. The entry for *The Heart of the Andes* ends with this statement: "F.E. Church is an artist that America may well be proud of; and Scotia may congratulate herself upon having such an engraver as Wm. Forrest." It is significant that Notman begins his book with Forrest, a Scot well known for his landscape engravings, and Church, a seventh-generation American who was a devout Presbyterian of Scottish origin.

Turning the pages of *Photographic Selections*, the reader finds that again and again Notman returns to the special meaning of Scotland and Scotland's artists. Joseph Noel Paton's *The Invalided Soldier at Home* presents a corporal in the Scots Fusilier Guards who has just returned from the Crimean War and is attended by his sweetheart and mother. His *In Memoriam*, a depiction of women and children with Scottish highlanders coming to their rescue, is dedicated to the Christian heroism of "British Ladies in India during the Mutiny of 1857." The reader learns that James Eckford Lauder, who painted *Ten Virgins*, is "a member of the Royal Scottish Academy: his works are held

8 | Thomas Faed, *From Dawn to Sunset*, in *Photographic Selections*. (Photo: McCord Museum, Montreal)

in great repute in England, he is a vigorous and self-thinking painter, and one whose selections of subjects generally indicate a lofty and original mind." In describing Thomas Faed's Canadian rural scene *Sunday in the Backwoods*, the sentimental attachment for Scotland is emphasized by quoting lines from Robert Burns' *The Cotter's Saturday Night*: "From scenes like these, old Scotia's grandeur springs / That makes her lived at home, revered abroad."

While the words of the texts were written by King, the emphasis on Scotland and things Scottish suggests that the content of the texts was strongly determined by Notman. Moreover, the texts adjacent to the paintings by Scottish artists are conspicuously more descriptive and longer than those for the others. In this excerpt from the text on *From Dawn to Sunset* (Fig. 8), the book's second painting by Faed, each person in the narrative is described:

> Firstly, there is the radiant baby in the mother's arms, smiling in her face, unconscious of the solicitude on her brow, or the sorrow that weighs upon her heart, as she raises her hand to enjoin silence upon

> the boy just returned from school, and the girl just arrived with a bottle of medicine, and with a basket containing perhaps some delicacy sent by some considerate angel to comfort and relieve the sick … Look at the calm resignation of the father … The female at the bedside is abandoning herself to that grief which words cannot utter, but which can only find utterance and relief in tears … The figures are all harmoniously grouped; they tell their story admirably: there is even thought and care bestowed upon the accessories, and there is great significance in the flickering candle against the wall, nearly burnt to its socket.

This passage reveals a determination to fully describe a scene of Scottish family life, to please readers eager to see and also read about every detail of this work.

Even when the artists are not Scottish, threads linking them to Scotland are discernible. The entry on *Farm-Yard with Horses* by the English painter George Morland also includes remarks that praise artists who have Scottish connections, such as the animal painters, George Landseer and Thomas Stothard. The piece about *Kill in a Fog* by C.H.A. Lutyens ends by mentioning one of his later pictures, an equestrian portrait of the Marquis of Ailsa, whose title derives from an island in Scotland's outer Firth of Clyde. Although the texts do not specifically say so, other artists included in the selection are connected to Scotland: Turner travelled extensively in Scotland, and Sidney Percy and Henry John Boddington also found themes in Scotland; Edward Duncan was known for his maritime subjects, including the coast of Scotland; and Rosa Bonheur visited Scotland in 1854, the year she completed the monumental painting *Horse Fair*, and where she also met Queen Victoria and began two paintings on Scottish subjects, *Highland Shepherd* (1859) and *A Scottish Raid* (1860).

To be sure, *Photographic Selections* is an unabashed compilation of images that overtly or covertly relate to Scots and Scotland. In a talk he gave to a group of young people in Montreal titled "Ruminating," Notman makes his emotional connection to his homeland abundantly clear.[21] He states his conviction that "his storehouse is like the mighty deep – a thousand rivers keep pouring in of their abundance" and how "the subtle chain of memory" draws him back to his "scotch village picturesque in the extreme." He recalls "the heather clad hills … blue curling smoke ascending from the homestead … many fishing boats lining the shore … dwellings with thick stone walls." Such memories, which he links to feelings and ideas, are "the mental food" that can be renewed when "looking on the wondrous works of nature or their similitude when placed upon the canvas by the hand of genius."

9 | Charles Jones Way, *The Falls of Shawanegan*, in *Photographic Selections*. (Photo: McCord Museum, Montreal)

In his contribution to *Transatlantic Scots*, Colin McArthur explores what he calls the "Scottish Discursive Unconscious," a range of "images, tones, rhetorical tropes, and ideological tendencies, often within utterances promulgated decades (sometimes even a century or more) apart."[22] He explains that memories of Scotland and its people rely on nostalgia and a "preexisting and hegemonic bricolage of images, narratives, sub-narratives, tones, and turns of phrase." Clearly, Notman was emotionally invested in Scotland and Scottishness and held dear a construct of memories, myths, and historical events. This includes the Romantic symbology associated with Scotland that was adopted during the nineteenth century when the Highlands, with its splendid natural scenery and historic sites, became a significant source of inspiration for poets and artists. For example, in August and September 1803, William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge made a six-week journey through the Scottish Highlands to better understand the writing of Robert Burns. Their own Romantic poetry addresses a landscape that was not pastoral with the classical tradition of rustic settings peopled by shepherds, but filled with the hills, lakes, downs, and cliffs typical of Scotland.

10 | Robert Duncanson, *City and Harbour of Quebec*, in *Photographic Selections*. (Photo: McCord Museum, Montreal)

Perhaps of more immediate interest to Notman was the emergence in mid-nineteenth-century Scotland of the "photographic tour" as a distinctive cultural art form. A well known example is *Sun Pictures in Scotland* by William Henry Fox Talbot, inventor of the calotype. Published in 1845 in London with a limited edition of 120 copies, *Sun Pictures in Scotland* was his second of two photographically illustrated books. Containing twenty-three pictures of abbey ruins, Gothic-style monuments, rivers, and rolling landscapes, the photographs, which were not accompanied by text, were taken during a tour of the sites and locations most connected with Sir Walter Scott. Notman's awareness of this new type of photographic tour likely informed his strategies for his own book. Like Fox Talbot, he included images of picturesque and historic sites; Notman chose Canadian locations, such as *The Falls of Shawanegan* by Charles Jones Way, a Montreal artist from Dartmouth, England, whose painting is described as "these wild and romantic Falls … well known to all tourists" (Fig. 9). *City and Harbour of Quebec* by Robert Duncanson, an acclaimed American artist who had lived in Montreal during the Civil War, represents another popular tourist destination with a majestic view that also played an important role in both the founding

of the French colony and the British conquest (Fig. 10). For his own photographs, Notman similarly chose views associated with Canada's early history. *Fort Chambly* is accompanied by a text that explains that the building "was erected about the year 1710, at the termination of the wars with the Iroquois Indians, and is pleasantly situated on the border of Lake Champlain, near the confluence of the River Richelieu. It has played a conspicuous part in the struggles between the English and French at the time of the Conquest of Canada, and subsequently at the time of the American Revolution." Although no mention is made of the historical significance of *The Road Side, Lake of Two Mountains* as the place where an Indian mission was built in the seventeenth century, it was probably well known to local families who were farming large tracts of land in the region.

As for Scotland's connections to European countries, Notman's inclusion of famous works by Flemish and Dutch artists, *La Devideuse* and *La Liseuse* by Gerard Douw, Teniers' *The Card Players*, and *The Supper at Emmaus* by Rembrandt is also a covert reference to the historical relationship between Scotland and the Netherlands. By the seventeenth century a trading partnership had developed in wool, textiles, and coal, and it was commonplace for Scots living and working in Holland to complete their education at the universities of Leyden or Utrecht. Scotland had strong traditions in poetry and music, but virtually no tradition in painting. As early as 1585 the Dutch painter Adrian Vanson (Vanyone) was made a burgess of Edinburgh "to be employed in his declared craft in the town and to instruct apprentices."[23] Scotland and Holland also shared social, intellectual, and religious beliefs, so much so that Dutch paintings from the seventeenth century mirrored the Calvinist Protestantism of the Scots. The belief that holiness is situated in practical, daily life, in contrast to the *otherworldly* perspective of the Catholic religion is purposefully described by the text for Rembrandt's *Supper at Emmaus*: "no theatrical effect, – on the table are the simplest utensils; the room is more like a prison than a palace, – the only light seems to emanate from Christ." Moreover, the genre paintings by Douw and Teniers can be seen to reflect the preferences of Montreal's Scottish art collectors who identified historically with the aesthetic taste of Dutch merchants.[24]

Even the Italian and French paintings in *Photographic Selections* can be seen to have a Scottish rationale. When the Union of Parliaments in 1707 led to Scotland's prosperity in the second half of the eighteenth century, many professional men embarked on a "Grand Tour" of Italy to study the monuments as classicism was considered central to Scottish culture. Acknowledging that Montreal's Scottish merchants and businessmen had an interest in things Italian, Notman selected *The School of Athens* by Raphael

and Guido Reni's *Aurora* and *Dejanira*.[25] In a long passage King explains Raphael's depiction of the "many teachers of Philosophy with their scholars … Plato and Aristotle … disputing on their doctrines." Classical art is also directly referenced in Reni's ability to combine "the freedom and grace of the Italian School with the severer practice of the ancient Greek bas-reliefs." As for *Dejanira,* King assumes that the owners of *Photographic Selections* like "all readers of Grecian mythology are acquainted with the story of Dejanira."

At the same time Scotland had earned its own reputation as a country that contributed to European art and culture. Voltaire confirms this in 1762 when he writes, "to-day rules of taste in all the arts, from the epic poem to gardening, come to us from Scotland."[26] Notman, perhaps unintentionally, affirms Scotland's relationship with France and adds to an unacknowledged history of Scottish art by including copies of *The Ploughing Field* by Bonheur, *Hemicycle du Palais des Beaux Arts* by Hippolyte Delaroche, and *Bienfaisance* by Édouard Dubufe. By the mid-eighteenth century, educated Scots had developed an interest in European art and by the nineteenth century, Scottish art historians such as Allan Hidallan Cunningham, William Bell Scott, Frederic George Stephens, and Sir William Stirling Maxwell were writing major texts on European art history.[27]

According to William Gershom Collingwood, who was a professor of fine arts at University College, Reading, Ruskin was another of these Scottish art historians.[28] Collingwood was a student of Ruskin's in 1872 and they remained in close contact. He writes in his preface to *The Life of John Ruskin* (1891) that his British teacher was above all a Scotsman: "If origin, if early training and habits of life, if tastes, and character, and associations, fix a man's nationality, then John Ruskin must be reckoned a Scotsman." As well, "the combination of shrewd common-sense and romantic sentiment; the oscillation between levity and dignity, from caustic jest to tender earnest; the restlessness, the fervour, the impetuosity – all these are the tokens of a Scotsman of parts, and were highly developed in John Ruskin." Thus the Scottish factor in Notman's work is further enhanced by the fact that several of the artists selected for *Photographic Selections*, particularly Paton and Faed, were admired by Ruskin.

In addition to his pride in being a Scot, Notman also strongly identified himself as a British citizen. In this he was not alone. The nineteenth century was the most "British" in Scotland's history and many of Notman's Scottish contemporaries thought of themselves as patriotic Britons. This feeling of solidarity had taken centuries to develop, starting in 1603 when King James VI of Scotland inherited the English crown. For the next 100 years the kingdoms remained linked but separate, until the Act of Union in 1707. By Notman's time, there was a comfortable intermixing of artists from Scotland

11 | Robert Duncanson, *Land of the Lotus Eaters*, in *Photographic Selections*. (Photo: McCord Museum, Montreal)

and England, so much so that Scottish artists like Wilkie and Faed, who lived in London, were considered British artists. Scottish artists like Lauder who stayed at home, would receive recognition by exhibiting their paintings in London.

At the same time as Scots living in Britain were comfortable feeling both Scottish and British, those living in the colonies, like William Notman, were intent on celebrating their achievements as Scotsmen, as John MacKenzie notes in "Empire and National Identities: The Case of Scotland."[29] Although England considered Scotland to be a junior partner in the British Imperial State and most Scotsmen abroad had no argument with the British colonial enterprise, people with Scottish heritage often saw the imperial field as a place to express their distinctive identity. In large measure, the intellectual foundations of the Scottish Enlightenment and the cultural apparatus associated with empire building became key components in the construction of Scottish national identity. Notman's interest in two artists of Scottish origin probably reflects this mindset. Robert Duncanson was born to a Scottish-

12 | John Arthur Fraser, *Sunshine and Shower*, in *Photographic Selections*. (Photo: McCord Museum, Montreal)

Canadian father and a freeborn black or mulatto mother. His painting *The Lotus Eaters*, inspired by Tennyson's poem of the same title and reproduced in *Photographic Selections,* was on view at Notman's photographic studio as early as September 1863, according to the *Montreal Herald* newspaper (Fig. 11).[30] John Arthur Fraser, who was a close associate of Notman**,** was born in London, England but his father was from Portsoy, Scotland. When writing about Fraser's *Sunshine and Shower,* King notes the artist "has not had more opportunity of following a branch of art in which he would be successful" (Fig. 12). This refers to the fact that Fraser was supervisor of Notman's art department, where artists were employed to hand-colour photographs, to paint studio backdrops, and do fine retouching work.[31]

Photographic Selections reveals the two sides of Notman. The first is the Scottish merchant and manufacturer's son who was determined to become successful through creating and selling a line of photographic products. As

such, *Photographic Selections* can be seen as a trade catalogue that advertises the business of photography. Its intent was to convince customers that Notman was the best supplier of photographs that either reproduced works of art or were of themselves, works of art. From this perspective every strategy, whether it related to educating and entertaining the public, or presenting new ideas or inventing new products or processes, can be understood as an appeal for business from Montreal's middle class. During this period Notman also prepared several other books for publication. In 1864, he published *North American Scenery*, composed entirely of photographic reproductions of landscape paintings by Montreal artist Charles Jones Way.[32] He also produced a three-volume set, *Portraits of British Americans, with biographical sketches* (1865–68), in collaboration with John Fennings Taylor (1817–1882),[33] an author and public servant at the Senate of Canada who had access to the parliamentary library and was also well acquainted with many of the books' eighty-four subjects. Furthermore, Notman submitted his own photographs to local, provincial, and international exhibitions; he organized showings of paintings and his own photographs at the gallery in his studio; and he was a regular contributor to the *Philadelphia Photographer*.

The second side of Notman is the man of culture who aspires to disseminate his knowledge of art to Montrealers and to assist in developing a vibrant civic community of artists and art patrons. These ambitions can be linked to the Scottish Enlightenment of the eighteenth century. In his discussion of aesthetic taste in Scotland during this period, Andrew Hemingway writes: "In general, Scottish social thought placed refinement and the arts among the main advantages of commercial societies … The authority of aesthetic norms was linked with that of prevalent moral and political ideologies in various ways."[34] By the nineteenth century such ideas were embedded in Scotland's culture. In 1859, three years after Notman came to Montreal, Samuel Smiles, the Scottish physician-turned-journalist and publicist, defined these characteristics in the last chapter of his best-selling book *Self-Help*: "The True Gentleman" was "one whose nature has been fashioned after the highest models."[35] In nineteenth-century Scottish society, it was assumed that gentlemanly conduct would lead to rewards. Writing in the midst of the Industrial Revolution, Smiles also championed the virtue of hard work. Many pages of *Self-Help* are devoted to the tireless inventors of new machines and mechanical operations. By virtue of how hard he worked at inventing and merchandising his own photographic products, Notman unquestionably saw himself as one of these men.

Many of the subscribers listed in alphabetical order on the last pages of *Photographic Selections* were individuals from Scottish families who were "true gentlemen," like Notman, men "of like faculties and impulse." They include prominent Canadian lawyers, military men, physicians, Members of

13 | Franz Verheyden, *Fête de la Maitresse d'École*, in *Photographic Selections*. (Photo: McCord Museum, Montreal)

Parliament, publishers, merchants, bankers, manufacturers, clergy, artists, and literary men. Through nurturing his contacts with this community Notman maintained his Scottish national identity and at the same time he undoubtedly acknowledged the business benefits of these connections. Significantly, amongst the subscribers are the names of three men of Scottish origin whose Montreal homes Notman visited to photograph their paintings. Benaiah Gibb (1798–1877), co-owner of a haberdasher and tailoring company, was the son of a father by the same name who came to Canada in 1744. Although his father was born in Northumberland County, England, Gibb's heritage was Scottish. The text that accompanies *Fête de la Maitresse d'École* by Franz Verheyden in *Photographic Selections* emphasizes Gibb's "kindness" as "Vice-President of the Art Association of Montreal" and thanks him "for the privilege of photographing the original picture … The picture is full of interest, and must be acceptable to all, who, next to their love of Nature, enjoy, and can participate with the innocent amusement of children" (Fig. 13).

Dugald Lorn MacDougall (1811–1885), born in Auchdoonan (Western Isles), Scotland, was a stockbroker and capitalist who immigrated in 1840. Although *A Kill in a Fog* by C.H.A. Lutyens is described with less enthusiasm, readers learn that MacDougall "possesses several of his works" and that "the present illustration of his talent is not to be taken as an example of his powers to-day." Thomas Reynolds (1820–1859), who was born in Canada, trained as a doctor in the early 1840s in Edinburgh, then at McGill College in Montreal.[36] Reynolds' *Taken Aback* by Edward Duncan (1803–1182) is reproduced with the comment that: "The original formed one of the chief attractions among the water colour drawings exhibited at the late conversazione of the 'Art Association of Montreal'." Notman reproduced these paintings not only because the paintings were easily available, but also to demonstrate his admiration for, and acquaintanceship with, the city's art connoisseurs and patrons of culture. In fact many of these collectors were fellow members of the Art Association of Montreal as well as clients who sat for portraits at his photography studio.

When the *Journal of Education for Upper Canada* published its congratulatory announcement in 1865, it stated that the importance of *Photographic Selections* (1863) was its "reproduction of many choice engravings and paintings by means of photography." In 1860, the *Journal* had announced that initiatives undertaken by the Committee of Council for Education at the South Kensington Museum in London would soon make it possible to produce photographs of art and engravings by old masters in large quantities and to sell them at "nominal prices."[37] The *Journal* reported that arrangements had been made to photograph "a vast variety of subjects" as well as "copies of paintings, drawings, sculptures, carving, and the fine arts generally." Nearly 2,000 objects were on the list of works to be reproduced, including all the original drawings by Raphael and Michelangelo stored in museums in Great Britain and France. The intention of the South Kensington committee was to "send forth to the public reproductions of the greatest works of art of all ages – works which could not otherwise be obtained at all, and they will be issued at prices unexampled for moderation. Purchasers may obtain single pictures or the entire series … and when we consider that these are the cheapest and best photographs existing, we have the means of carrying art into the houses of the very poorest people." Publications like Notman's *Photographic Selections* were produced the same way, no matter their size or mode of presentation, regardless of whether they were purchased individually or gathered into an attractive book and embellished with complementary texts. The increased accessibility of art reproductions may explain why Notman did not continue to produce illustrated books as part of his commercial enterprise.[38] He did sell, however, individual plates at his studio.

The *Journal of Education*'s most important announcement was: "There has never been a work published in Canada better calculated to cultivate and elevate the taste in art." In fact, William Notman's *Photographic Selections* of 1863 is not only the first art history book published in Canada. Thanks to Notman's collaboration with Thomas Davies King, it is also the first to include a discussion of Canadian works of art in a survey of British and European art. Furthermore and most unusually, Notman's book, which became a keepsake in the homes of numerous subscribers, was an accurate expression of the Scottish cultural legacy and the art preferences of a Scottish-Canadian middle class that influenced life in Montreal from the 1860s into the early years of the twentieth century.

NOTES

1 For example, Loren LERNER, "William Notman's Portrait Photographs of Girls Reading from the 1860s to 1880s: A Pictorial Analysis based on Contemporary Writings," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of Canada/Cahiers de la Société bibliographique du Canada* 47, no. 1 (2009): 45–73; and "William Notman's Portrait Photographs of the Wealthy English-speaking Girls of Montreal: Representations of Informal Female Education in Relation to John Ruskin's 'Of Queens' Gardens' and Writings by and for Canadians from the 1850s to 1890s," *Historical Studies in Education* 21, no. 2 (2009): 65–87. My first mention of Notman's *Photographic Selections* can be found in "Canadian Art Publications: History and Recent Developments," *Art Libraries Journal* 8 no. 1 (Spring 1983): 4–57.

2 William NOTMAN and Thomas D. KING, *Photographic Selections by William Notman, with Descriptive Letter Press by Thomas D. King* (Montreal: John Lovell, Printer, 1863). The book is available in a limited number of libraries and on microfiche at CIHM/ICMH Microfiche series = CIHM/ICMH collection de microfiches no. 88994.

3 In the text accompanying *Aurora* by Guido [Reni], George Frothingham, who had numerous portraits taken of himself and his family by Notman, is thanked for supplying the engraving: "To the Engraver's art we are indebted for the present translation, and also to the kindness of Mr. George Frothingham, the possessor of this beautiful example of the burin of Raphael Morghen, an artist, who, by his rendering of the *Last Supper*, (Da Vinci), and of the present subject, will be immortalized as a line engraver."

4 "The Late T.D. King," *Gossip* 1, no. 16 (20 Dec. 1884): 1. "Mr. King was so well known and outlines of his life have so lately been given that we need merely say for the benefit of strangers that Mr. King was one of our best known *literateurs*, an authority on antiquarian lore, and an unrivalled art critic. His *nom de plume* was 'Rex' and so widely known that letters from England merely addressed 'Rex' Montreal have often reached him." King's reputation appears to be based on writings that he began about a decade after the publication *of Photographic Selections*. These include: "A Gossip on the Portland Vase," *Canadian Illustrated News* 9, no. 13 (28 March 1874): 194–95;

Bacon versus Shakespeare (Montreal: Lovell, 1875); A *brief chronicle of the chapel of Ste. Croix, Tadousac* [sic], *at the mouth of the River Saguenay, on the River St. Lawrence: embodied in an appeal to Canadians of all denominations for their generous support in aid of its enlargement and decoration* (Montreal: 1879). King's Shakespearean library is located in the Rare Book Collection of McGill University.

5 Anon, "Literature and Art in Montreal," *Journal of Education for Upper Canada* 18, no. 1 (January 1865): 10.

6 Heather McNabb, "Montreal's Scottish Community, 1835–65: A Preliminary Study" (Masters thesis, Concordia University, 1999), 15. McNabb provides an analysis of the census records of the City of Montreal for 1861.

7 Pierre Wilson, Heather McNabb, and Annick Poussart, "Montrealers of Scottish Origin in the 19th Century," from *The Scots, Dyed-in-the-Wool Montrealers*, exhibition text, McCord Museum, 2003–2004. Accessed 20 Dec. 2011, http://www.mccord-museum.qc.ca/en/info/pressreleases/119d.html.

8 See for example, Stanley G. Triggs, *William Notman, The Stamp of a Studio* (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario; Coach Hose Press, 1985); Roger Hall et al., *The World of William Notman: The Nineteenth Century through a Master Lens* (Boston: D.R. Godine, 1993).

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11 E. Ryerson, *Appendix to the fifteenth volume of the journals of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Canada … 26th February to the 10th June, 1857 … twentieth year of the reign of … Queen Victoria : being the 3rd session of the 5th Provincial Parliament of Canada* (Toronto: R. Campbell, [1857]. Accessed 3 Feb. 2012, http://eco.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.9_00955_15_10/3?r=0&s=1.

12 Martha Tedeschi, "'Where the Picture Cannot Go, the Engravings Penetrate': Prints and the Victorian Art," *Museum Studies* 31, no. 1 (2005): 8–19, 89–90.

13 Rachel Teukolsky, *The Literate Eye: Victorian Art Writing and Modernist Aesthetics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

14 George Combe, *Phrenology Applied to Painting and Sculpture* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, & Co., 1855).

15 John Ruskin, *Modern Painters* (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1856–1860). See Anita Grants, "Selectivity, Interpretation and Application: The Influence of John Ruskin in Canada" (phd thesis, Concordia University, Montreal, 2006) on the impact of Ruskin's writings on Canadian architecture, art education, and trends in painting.

16 In his comments on Paton's work, Ruskin wrote: "Mr. Paton has, however, a good deal yet to learn in colour." John Ruskin, "The Royal Academy," in *The Works of John Ruskin*, eds. E.T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn (London: G. Allen; New York: Longmans, Green, 1904), 35.

17 Virginia L. Wagner, "John Ruskin and Artistical Geology in America," *Winterthur Portfolio* 23 (1988): 151–67.

18 Ruskin, "Academy Notes on Prout and Hunt and Other Art Criticisms, 1855–1888," in *The Works of John Ruskin*, 310. "This will of course be a very popular picture, and deserves to be so, having every claim to our observance which kindly feeling and steady average painting can give it. It does not possess any first-rate qualities; but has no serious faults, and much gentle pathos. The figure of the healthy sister, looking up, seems to me the best."

19 *Catalogue of the rare and curious collection of etchings, engravings, drawings, watercolors, oil paintings, old china and curios of the late Thomas D. King, Esq. [microform]: to be sold by auction, at his late residence, no. 75, City Councillors Street, on Saturday afternoon, April 3rd, 1886, M. Hicks & Co., Auctioneers* (Montreal, 1886?), CIHM/ICMH Microfiche series = CIHM/ICMH collection de microfiches; no. 56359.

20 Kevin J. Avery, "*The Heart of the Andes* Exhibited: Frederic E. Church's Window on the Equatorial World," *American Art Journal* 18, no. 1 (Winter 1986): 52–72.

21 William Notman, "Ruminating," unpublished and undated manuscript, Notman Photographic Archives, McCord Museum of Canadian History.

22 Colin MacArthur, "Transatlantic Scots, Their Interlocutors, and the Scottish Discursive Unconscious," in *Transatlantic Scots*, ed. Celeste Ray (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2005), 341.

23 John Warrick, *Domestic Life in Scotland, 1488 – 1688 Lecture III – The Rise of the Burghers; A Cloth Merchant's House; and Some Decorative Arts* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1924). Accessed 3 Jan. 2012, http://www.electricscotland.com/history/domestic/domesticlife3.htm.

24 This interest in Dutch art extended to future generations and came to include paintings from a group of artists who lived and worked in The Hague between 1860 and 1890. See Alena Buis, "Ut pictura poesis: Edward Black Greenshields' Collection of Hague School Paintings" (Masters thesis, Concordia University, 2008). Greenshields, a prominent Montreal businessman and art critic, worked in the wholesale dry goods firm, S. Greenshields, Son and Company, established in 1833 by his father, John, and his grandfather, Samuel, who was a merchant from Glasgow, Scotland.

25 During the 1860s the wealthy Scots of Montreal were building large residences reminiscent of the urban palaces of the Italian Renaissance. Silvia Sorbelli explores the appeal of Renaissance art for later generations of Scottish-Canadian art collectors in Silvia Sorbelli, "Renaissance in Montreal: Collectors of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts" (Master's thesis, Concordia University, 2010).

26 P. Hume Brown, *Surveys of Scottish History* (Glasgow: James Maclehose & Sons, 1919), 112: "'It is an admirable result of the progress of the human spirit,' wrote Voltaire, 'that at the present time it is from Scotland we receive rules of taste in all the arts from the epic poem to gardening.' The words were meant ironically, but they point to what was an indisputable fact, the intellectual activity of Scotsmen in every important sphere of thought and their original contribution in each of them."

27 In fact, Maxwell, a historian of Spanish art, was the first to use photo-reproduction in an art history book in 1859, when he published a limited edition titled *Talbotype Illustrations to the Annals of the Artists of Spain.*

28 William Gershom Collingwood, *The Life of John Ruskin* (London: Methuen, 1900), 3–12.

29 John M. Mackenzie, "Empire and National Identities: The Case of Scotland," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society Sixth Series*, 8, (1998): 215–31. Recent writings on the Scottishness of the British Empire have focused on colonial administration, military service, and the crucial role Scottish emigrants played in shaping British imperial culture. Michael Fry, *The Scottish Empire* (East Linton and Edinburgh: Tuckwell Press and Birlinn, 2001); T.M. Devine and Mackenzie, eds., *Scotland and the British Empire* (London: Oxford University Press, 2011); T.M. Devine, *To the Ends of the Earth: Scotland's Global Diaspora 1750–2010* (London: Allen, 2011).

30 Allan Pringle, "Robert S. Duncanson in Montreal, 1863–1865," *American Art Journal* 17, no. 4 (Autumn 1985): 28–50.

31 In 1868 Fraser became the managing partner of Notman and Fraser in Toronto, a position he held until 1880 when he sold the business to pursue his painting career; see Triggs, *The Man and His Studio.*

32 *North American Scenery: Being Selections from C.J. Way's Studies, 1863–64* (Montreal: W. Notman, 1864); twelve mounted albumen prints of landscape scenes, photographed by William Notman, Roberts & Reinhold, Lith.

33 William Notman and Fennings Taylor, *Portraits of British Americans, with biographical* sketches, 3 vols. (Montreal: W. Notman, 1865–68).

34 Andrew Hemingway, "The 'Sociology' of Taste in the Scottish Enlightenment," *Oxford Art Journal* 12, no. 2 (1989): 3. See also Arthur Herman, *The Scottish Enlightenment*: *The Scots' Invention of the Modern World* (London: Fourth Estate, 2001).

35 Samuel Smiles, *Self-Help: with Illustrations of Character and, Conduct* (London: John Murray, 1859). Accessed 17 Sept. 2012, http://www.gutenberg.org/dirs/etext97/selfh10h.htm.

36 Paul Robertson, "The Doctor was Framed: Portrait of 19th Century Physician Joins Collection," *The Bailliewick* 10, no. 2 (June 2007): 1.

37 *Journal of Education for Upper Canada* 13, no. 2 (1860): 29.

38 Tedeschi, "Where the Picture Cannot Go," 8–12. Martha Tedeschi points out that claims regarding the uniqueness and quality of the "proofs" were a marketing device with little basis in fact.

Photographic Selections (1863) de William Notman

LOREN LERNER

Le portfolio *Photographic Selections* (1863) de William Notman (1826–1891), publié par l'imprimeur montréalais John Lovell, consiste en quarante-sept clichés de peintures de maîtres anciens et contemporains britanniques, français et nord-américains. Notman avait photographié ces peintures à partir de gravures obtenues de marchands et d'œuvres originales chez des collectionneurs montréalais. Son admiration pour l'art et la culture de l'Écosse ont inspiré l'ensemble de présuppositions et de critères d'évaluation pour le choix des œuvres reproduites dans ce portfolio. Né à Glasgow, Écosse, Notman est arrivé à Montréal en 1856. Peu après, à la fin de décembre, il installe son studio de photographie au numéro 11 de la rue Bleury. En tant qu'Écossais, Notman se sentait chez lui à Montréal où ses compatriotes occupaient une place éminente dans le domaine des affaires, de l'éducation, des professions libérales et comme leaders religieux. Bien que l'auteur des courts textes qui accompagnent les illustrations dans *Photographic Selections* ait été Thomas Davies King (1819–1884), né en Angleterre et spécialiste montréalais de gravures, d'antiquités et de livres rares, Notman a sans aucun doute exercé une forte influence sur les idées et le contenu du texte. L'introduction à *Photographic Selections* définit l'intention de la publication : « Afin de promouvoir au Canada le goût croissant pour les œuvres d'art, et répondre à une demande qui ne pourrait être satisfaite autrement à cause de la rareté, dans ces provinces, d'œuvres d'art originales de qualité, ou même de gravures par des maîtres anciens ou modernes, nous publions ces 'Photographic Selections' ». Ainsi, Notman se situe à la fois comme fabriquant d'une nouvelle ligne de produits et quelqu'un qui s'y connaît en art. Il cherche, avec King, son collaborateur, à faire savoir qu'ils peuvent avec autorité « promouvoir au Canada le goût croissant pour les œuvres d'art » en vertu de leur connaissance étendue « d'œuvres d'art originales de qualité, ou même de gravures par des maîtres anciens ou modernes ». Cette déclaration laisse aussi supposer que Notman peut facilement « répondre à une demande qui ne pourrait être satisfaite autrement » grâce à ses connaissances en tant que photographe.

Un premier examen des clichés de *Photographic Selections* suggère qu'il n'y a rien d'inhabituel dans le choix de l'art religieux contemporain britannique, les peintures de genre pleins de sens didactique et de contenu moralisateur, de paysages et de scènes rurales et de portraits. Cependant, une étude attentive révèle que Notman a intentionnellement et de manière subtile souligné l'importance de l'Écosse dans l'histoire de l'art occidental. En tournant les pages de *Photographic Selections*, le lecteur découvre que Notman revient encore et encore sur la signification spéciale de l'Écosse et des artistes écossais. Dans sa contribution à *Transatlantic Scots*, Colin McArthur explique que les souvenirs de l'Écosse et de ses habitants s'appuient sur un sentiment de nostalgie et un « bricolage préexistant et hégémonique d'images, de récits, de récits dérivés, de tons et de tours de phrase ». Notman s'était clairement investi dans tout ce qui concernait l'Écosse et la *scottishness*, et restait attaché à tout un ensemble de souvenirs, de mythes et d'événements historiques. Cela comprenait la symbolique romantique associée à l'Écosse et qui avait été adoptée au cours du XIX^e^ siècle, alors que les Highlands, avec leurs magnifiques paysages et leurs sites historiques, étaient devenus une importante source d'inspiration pour les poètes et les artistes. Mais d'intérêt plus immédiat pour Notman était l'émergence, dans l'Écosse du milieu du XIX^e^ siècle, des « tours photographiques » en tant qu'activité culturelle et artistique distincte. Un exemple bien connu est la publication de *Sun Pictures in Scotland* par William Henry Fox Talbot. Notman connaissait ce nouveau genre d'excursion photographique et s'en est probablement inspiré pour la préparation de son propre livre. Comme Fox Talbot l'avait fait pour l'Écosse, il a inclus des images de sites pittoresques et historiques du Canada par Charles Jones Way (1834–1919) et Robert Duncanson (1817–1872), ainsi que ses propres photographies de paysages associés à l'histoire du Canada. Quant aux rapports de l'Écosse avec les pays européens, l'inclusion, par Notman, d'œuvres célèbres d'artistes flamands et hollandais est une référence voilée aux rapports historiques, commerciaux et religieux entre l'Écosse et les Pays-Bas. Même dans les tableaux italiens et français que l'on retrouve dans *Photographic Selections* on peut déceler une raison d'être écossaise.

À travers tout le XVIII^e^ siècle, l'Écosse avait développé des liens plus profonds avec le continent européen que pendant toute la période antérieure, et s'était forgé la réputation d'avoir contribué à l'art et à la culture de l'Europe, à tel point que, dès le milieu du XIX^e^ siècle, les historiens de l'art écossais écrivaient des textes majeurs sur l'histoire de l'art européen. Selon William Gershom Collingwood, son professeur John Ruskin, le plus important critique d'art anglais de l'époque victorienne, était avant tout un Écossais. L'élément écossais dans l'œuvre de Notman était encore plus évident du fait que plusieurs des artistes choisis pour *Photographic Selections* étaient admirés

par Ruskin. Les fondements intellectuels des Lumières écossaises et l'appareil culturel associé à la construction d'un empire sont devenus, dans une large mesure, des éléments clés dans la construction de l'identité nationale écossaise. *Photographic Selections* révèle deux aspects de la personnalité de Notman. Le premier, c'est le marchand écossais, fils de fabricant, déterminé à réussir dans la création et la vente de produits photographiques. Ainsi, *Photographic Selections* peut être vu comme un catalogue de vente qui fait la promotion du commerce de la photographie. L'intention était de convaincre les clients que Notman était le meilleur fournisseur de photographies qui reproduisaient des œuvres d'art ou qui étaient elles-mêmes des œuvres d'art. Le second aspect est celui de Notman en tant qu'homme cultivé qui aspirait à transmettre ses connaissances en art aux Montréalais et à contribuer au développement d'une communauté civique dynamique d'artistes et de mécènes. En entretenant ses relations avec cette communauté, Notman conservait son identité nationale écossaise tout en reconnaissant indubitablement les avantages pécuniaires de ces relations.

L'accessibilité croissante aux reproductions artistiques sous forme de portfolio pourrait être la raison pour laquelle Notman n'a pas continué à produire des livres illustrés dans le cadre de son entreprise commerciale. Fait important, *Photographic Selections* de William Notman est le premier livre d'histoire de l'art publié au Canada. C'est aussi le premier à inclure l'examen d'œuvres d'art canadiennes dans une étude sur l'art britannique et européen, grâce à la collaboration de Notman avec Thomas Davies King.

Traduction : Élise Bonnette

Homer Watson and *The Pioneer Mill*[1]

BRIAN FOSS

A Story

The narrative's details are specific to a time and place, but its structure is old and clichéd: a variation on a biographical conceit common since at least the time of Vasari. A young man in a backwater village longs to be an artist but the circumstances are unfavourable. His father dies of typhus when he is only six years old, leaving a widow with five young children and a failing business. His formal education is rudimentary. The village schoolmaster reprimands him for drawing caricatures in his school notebook. He abandons the classroom at the age of eleven to take on a series of manual labour jobs.

His greatest desire is to draw and paint, but his village is too small to attract an art teacher and has never produced an artist. His family owns no works of art and so until his late teens he must teach himself by studying illustrations in books and magazines. At the age of eleven he receives a watercolour kit. Four years later a sympathetic aunt gives him his first set of oil paints. During his teenage years he risks the opprobrium of neighbours by forsaking regular paid employment to devote himself to sketching in and around his village. In this, his mother and his devoted sister support him financially. At sixteen, having largely abandoned a juvenile flirtation with portraying polar bears and other exotic subject matter, he sells a painting to a doting aunt and uncle. The subject is a boy playing with a homemade waterwheel.

Our budding artist shows his work at local fairs, where he wins occasional and modest prizes. His ambitions are fuelled, however, by a trip he makes to Toronto, the nearest large city, when he is seventeen years old. Later, at nineteen, a trustee of his father's estate arranges an advance on his inheritance. With this small but providential windfall he moves back to Toronto for several months. There he meets professional artists and views copies of Old Master paintings and casts of well-known sculptures at the

Detail, Homer Watson, *A Coming Storm in the Adirondacks*, 1879, oil on canvas, 85.7 × 118.3 cm, Coll. The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, gift of George Hague. (Photo: Denis Farley)

Museum of Natural History and Fine Arts, established in the Normal School in 1857 by Egerton Ryerson. Possibly encouraged by John Fraser and Lucius O'Brien, two of Canada's most prominent artists, the young man visits New York state from 1875 (possibly 1876) until late in 1877. His travels there are known in only the vaguest detail, but he probably sees canvases by members of the popular Hudson River School. In any case he goes sketching in the Adirondack Mountains and along the Susquehanna, Mohawk, and Hudson rivers: terrain that was central to the Hudson River aesthetic. Five decades later he will recall that during this trip a New York painter "kindly offered to teach me how to use a maul stick [sic] and spread paint on a palette."[2] This is minimal compensation for his lack of previous training.

And then, just over two years later, near the beginning of 1880, at the age of twenty-five, our youthful artist submits a painting to a national exhibition intended to showcase the best of his country's art. He almost immediately regrets his temerity, but too late; the painting is on its way from his village to the exhibition. There, he is certain, it will compare disastrously to the work of the other participants, most of whom have established reputations. "Of course I knew nothing about painting," he would later assert, "and how I got through the job of making a picture … I do not know … Any means to an end, and there was nothing of line, pattern, or design in those days; merely the feeling of sentiment."[3]

The young man is Homer Ransford Watson (1855–1936). The painting is *The Pioneer Mill* (1880; Fig. 1). The village is Doon, founded in 1834 on the Grand River in Waterloo County, near the town of Preston and today a suburb of Kitchener. The 1880 exhibition, held at the Clarendon Hotel in Ottawa, is the inaugural showing by the Canadian (soon to be the Royal Canadian) Academy of Arts, which had been founded that same year. Decades later, Watson recalled that when his unnamed American acquaintance had been teaching him how to use a mahlstick, "I got so impatient to rush back home and use all this knowledge that I could not stay in the city any longer. So home I went and commenced to paint with faith, ignorance and delight. A subject that popped into my mind was 'The Pioneer Mill'."[4] And so, after a history of disadvantages, setbacks and isolation, the culmination of the narrative – now fully recognizable as a standard parable of untutored artistic genius – can be given in Watson's own words:

> While I was working away at this picture a friend of our family wise and old in years and quite a cultivated gentleman who was a qualified lawyer engaged in manufacturing twine almost daily advised me to quit the nonsense of going in for art in a country like Canada. "Quit it and come into the office and become a business man." On

1 | Homer Watson, *The Pioneer Mill*, 1880, oil on canvas, 86 × 127 cm, Royal Collection Trust. (Photo: © HM Queen Elizabeth II)

> nearing home [some weeks after he had submitted the painting to the Canadian Academy exhibition] I saw this gentleman on the road in front of his establishment reading the Toronto Globe. Seeing me he advanced waving the paper and putting out his hand he exclaimed, "I take it all back. Go ahead and paint. Look here," and there it was in flaming headlines in the Globe, "Country boy paints picture bought by Princess Louise." So that was that … [5]

The painting did find a purchaser, although that supporter was Canada's governor-general, the Marquis of Lorne, rather than his wife, Princess Louise, as Watson incorrectly recalled. It was a gift for Lorne's mother-in-law, Queen Victoria, who hung it in Windsor Castle. There it remains to this day.[6] The purchase money was equal to Watson's previous two years of earnings. He used some of it to marry his long-time fiancée, Roxanna (Roxa) Bechtel (1855–1918) on 1 January 1881, thereby symbolically launching himself into adulthood. He was two weeks short of his twenty-sixth birthday.

Lorne was not alone in his admiration of *The Pioneer Mill*; newspaper reviewers who singled it out for comment unreservedly approved of it. For example, three days after the exhibition opened, the *Globe* described the painting as "an admirable landscape, wonderfully truthful in design, with rich but quiet colouring; rocks, water, sky and foliage are all strong and realistic." Ottawa's *Daily Free Press* considered it "a pleasant picture for the eye to dwell upon."[7] But Watson's recitation of the *Globe*'s headline, "Country Boy Paints Picture Bought by Princess Louise," sounds almost too good to be true – and in fact that's exactly what it was. The announcement of the painting's purchase in the 8 March 1880 issue occupied only part of a single paragraph in what was otherwise a long, multi-column report.[8] Contrary to Watson's romantically embroidered memory, the article's title made no reference whatsoever to him. Nor did the headlines of any other reviews, whether in the *Globe* or the *Mail* (both, Toronto) or in the newspapers of the towns near Doon. Watson may perhaps have been thinking of an image of *The Pioneer Mill* that was printed in the 1 May 1880 issue of the *Canadian Illustrated News*, almost five weeks after the Canadian Academy exhibition ended.[9] The full-page illustration was, after all, an impressive tribute to the painting's power, and its date of publication accorded with Watson's false memory of the *Globe* headline.

Also contrary to Watson's memories, none of the reviews referred to him as a "country boy." The *Canadian Spectator* did ask how it was possible that the art of painting should flourish "among men who are of humble parentage – men who have not received a classical or liberal education?" – but the reviewer was referring to Canadian artists in general. "Genius," he wrote, "fills a void which education cannot do. Among the founders of the great European schools of painting were men of humble origin, yet men upon whose heads it pleased Heaven to accumulate gifts and graces not generally bestowed upon mortals."[10] Thus, although the phrase "country boy" was not used, at least the gist of Watson's memory was accurate. That same year (1880), reviewing his comparably large oil entitled *A Coming Storm in the Adirondacks* at the Art Association of Montreal, two newspapers described him as a "genius comparatively unaided by culture" and a "back woods" figure who had enjoyed "no advantages for the study of art but those furnished by dame nature."[11] Refrains like these would become a central facet of Watson's reputation, repeated in published appraisals throughout his long life as well as after his death.[12]

However, notwithstanding having almost no formal training, and despite what his autobiographical obscurity-to-sudden-fame story claimed, Watson was certainly not an unknown upstart at the time of the opening of the first Canadian Academy exhibition. He had been elected to the Ontario Society of Artists as a draughtsman and designer two years earlier (in April 1878), first

2 | Homer Watson, *A Coming Storm in the Adirondacks*, 1879, oil on canvas, 85.7 × 118.3 cm, Coll. The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, gift of George Hague. (Photo: Denis Farley)

exhibited there the following month (three paintings that most of the Toronto newspapers considered interesting[13]), and in June changed his membership status from draughtsman and designer to painter. He exhibited with the OSA again in December, and yet again (four paintings) in May 1879. On that occasion the *Globe*, while conceding that he was "a comparatively new member of the Society and a young painter," devoted more than 500 words to him and encouragingly remarked that he was "very rapidly coming to the front in the estimation both of the public and his fellow-artists."[14] The next year – only two months after Lorne's purchase of *The Pioneer Mill* – Watson's *On the Susquehanna*, one of four paintings he would exhibit at the OSA in 1881, was bought for the Ontario art collection.

Nor did the dimensions of Watson's paintings from these early years suggest someone who was feeling his way with hesitation. He had begun producing impressively large canvases in about 1877. The modesty of *The Pioneer Mill*'s subject is thus not reflected in its size (86 × 128 cm). Its dimensions are in fact almost identical to those of two earlier canvases: *The Castellated Cliff* (1879; 88 × 126 cm; National Gallery of Canada) and *A Coming Storm in the Adirondacks* (1879; 86 × 118 cm; The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts; Fig. 2). In short, it seems unlikely that when Watson submitted

3 | Homer Watson, *The Stone Road*, 1881, oil on canvas, 91.5 × 129.8 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. (Photo: © NGC)

The Pioneer Mill to the Canadian Academy exhibition he would have been as trepidatious as he later claimed. It was, though, an enthralling story, and one that cemented his enduring reputation as a *wunderkind* of Canadian art.

Watson's importance as an artist was reinforced when, twelve months after buying *The Pioneer Mill*, Lorne purchased two more of his paintings – *An April Day* and *The Last of the Drouth* [Drought] – from the five that he showed with the Royal Canadian Academy's second annual exhibition.[15] A year later, in April 1882, he was elected to membership in the Academy, submitting *Down in the Laurentides* (1882; NGC) as his diploma picture. With the $400 from his 1881 sales to Lorne, Watson bought a two-story house originally built for Adam Ferrie, a key figure in the founding of Watson's hometown of Doon.[16] As *The Arion* newspaper (Toronto) noted in April 1881, "Mr. Homer Watson seems to have plucked up courage and taken heart from the approval his 'Old Mill' [sic] met with last year," and observed that a recent large oil was "a very honest and truthful rendering … [that] will go far to convince the sceptical mind of the average Canadian visitor to the exhibition, that it is possible for a Canadian pastoral landscape to possess beauty, and the

4 | Homer Watson, *The Old Mill and Stream*, 1879, oil on canvas, 60 × 88 cm, Collection Castle Kilbride, Baden, Ontario. (Photo: Homer Watson House & Gallery)

power to move the soul."[17] In the four years following the 1880 exhibition Watson would paint some of his most compelling, accomplished, deeply felt and magisterially individual compositions, including *The Stone Road* (1881; NGC; Fig. 3), *Down in the Laurentides*, *A Cornfield* (1883; NGC), and *Near the Close of a Stormy Day* (1884; Winnipeg Art Gallery). These were the impressive opening steps in a career that would lead to the presidency of the Canadian Art Club (1907–11) and of the RCA itself (1918–22). Cinderella stories don't get much better than this.

Yet, if Watson and others presented the success of *The Pioneer Mill* as an exemplification of the cliché of inexplicable, untrained genius, the painting derived from a rich confluence of factors. These included: broad aesthetic and cultural trends; the economic development of southern Ontario; relationships between rural and urban realities, expectations and attitudes; and the personal histories of Watson and his forebears. The remainder of this essay explores these interrelated issues.

The Omnipresent Image: Water-Wheel Mills in North American Culture

Abandoned mills driven by water wheels – especially mills powered by vertically-mounted breastshot and undershot wheels (the most stereotypically familiar types)[18] – were favourite motifs for Watson throughout the last

5 | Homer Watson, *Landscape with Mill and Cows by Moonlight*, ca. 1875–87, pen and black ink, dry brush and wash on cardboard, 11.5 × 9.5 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. (Photo: © NGC)

quarter century of the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth. Along with other types of mills, they feature in large and small canvases dated to or around 1879, the year after his return from New York (Fig. 4); there are numerous paintings from the following three decades, and several undated drawings (Fig. 5).[19] After famously showing *The Pioneer Mill* in 1880 Watson contributed similar subjects to a number of exhibitions. These included the important annual displays mounted by the Royal Canadian Academy (1884, 1886, 1887, 1888, 1890, 1897, 1898, and 1903), the 1886 London Colonial and

6 | Homer Watson, *The Pioneer Mill*, 1890, etching in dark brown on wove paper, 33.4 × 44.5 cm, plate 30.2 × 41.4 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. (Photo: © NGC)

Indian Exhibition (*The Saw Mill*), and the Toronto Industrial Exhibition in 1890 (*The Saw Mill*). Earlier, at the 1879 Toronto Industrial Exhibition, he had showed *The Haunted Mill*: "an old brown mill rapidly going to decay," according to a reviewer.[20] *The Flood Gate* (1900; NGC), arguably his best known and most frequently reproduced painting, is one of many that depict mill subjects but without actually showing buildings. In *The Flood Gate* the focus is on the pond that serviced a mill owned by Watson's grandfather.[21]

Nor did Watson limit himself to drawing and painting. In 1889–90 he experimented with printmaking, producing not only five small landscapes, but also a large etching of *The Pioneer Mill* (Fig. 6) that he made in the aftermath of seeing the painting in its home at Windsor Castle. (Once again, Lorne was instrumental in promoting Watson's career. It was he who helped the artist gain access to the room in which the painting was on display.) As the Toronto art dealer John Payne wrote to Watson in 1890, the etchings of *The Pioneer Mill* were "away ahead of the small etchings … The 'Pioneer Mill' is one of your very best subjects."[22] Unfortunately, however, the print sold badly due to a constellation of factors: John Payne's inexperience in marketing etchings, the high customs duties imposed on imported prints (Watson

had done the work in England), and a serious lack of Canadian support for the Etching Revival.[23] The poor sales had little to do with Payne's accurate evaluation of the subject's attractiveness to members of European and North American society, including the large numbers of visual artists, authors, composers, and lyricists for whom mills were a favourite theme. Although John Ruskin distrusted representations of decaying mills and other workaday architecture because of what he described as their sentimentalization of human poverty and decay,[24] many laypeople and critics saw that very sentimentalization as being integral to the appeal of the imagery. Placid wind and water mills were interpreted with striking frequency as symbols of abstract concepts: the passing of time; irreversible change; death. It was an ethos that partook of the same taste for Victorian romanticism that manifested itself in the rushing rivers, precipitous cliffs, and dramatic skies that were endemic to much of Watson's work during the second half of the nineteenth century.

In the field of romantic literature, for example, *Scribner's Monthly* did nothing unusual when in 1874, it published a lengthy poem that recalled the glory days of an antiquated grist mill, and linked the building's emotional and psychological resonance to its now deceased owner's home in heaven: "The mill's old murmuring monotone / May now steal up to his ear alone, / Bringing a breath of the Savior's Prayer – / Droning the base to the angels' air – / Hum of the Mill in the golden choir!"[25] Outdoing this cloying sentiment was not easy, but Mary Dwinell Chellis managed it in extravagant style in her novel *The Old Mill*, published in Boston in 1884. Chellis's book luxuriates in the travails of a man who, out of despair after the loss of his wife and children, closes down the family's mill, consigning it to a process of evocative decay. *'Neath the Maple by the Mill*, a song published in Toronto in about 1881, associates the titular building with the singer's wooing of his sweetheart, revealing only in the final verse that their courtship took place long ago and that the beloved is now dead and buried "'neath the maple by the mill." Such unabashedly antimodernist texts and songs continued into the twentieth century, nourished by the collapse of traditional ways beneath the onslaught of the modern world. Adeline Teskey's *Where the Sugar Maple Grows* (1901) was one of many examples; its bucolically telling subtitle was "Idylls of a Canadian Village." Modern ways were also the villains in the immensely popular 1910 song *Down by the Old Mill Stream* (in which "The old mill wheel is silent and has fallen down"), in M. Forsyth Grant's 1912 essay "The Old-time Ontario Farm" (published in the widely circulated *Canadian Magazine*), and Ontario native Wilson Pugsley MacDonald's undated poem "The Old Mill," the concluding stanzas of which describe "phantom millers [who] move in rhyme / Even as when in life, and on clear nights / You

7 | *The Aldine: The Art Journal of America* 7, no. 12 (December 1874): back cover. (Photo: Library and Archives Canada)

can behold them toiling as though time / Had never passed the Humber's silvered heights."

Interest in the associational potential of old mills was not limited to popular novels, poems, and songs.[26] North American painters and illustrators also made regular use of the theme, which at least in the United States, mutated from a pre-Civil War emphasis on what has been termed an "almost daemonic omnipotence," to a post-war rusticated nostalgia.[27] (The latter connotation, growing out of the Picturesque aesthetic's formal and psychological exploitation of mills, was quite unlike the celebration of bourgeois economic prosperity that had characterised the first sustained appearance of mill imagery in European art, in seventeenth-century Holland.) During the mid- to late 1870s, *The Aldine* – a magazine noted for its many high-quality engraved reproductions and from which Watson may well have drawn much of his interest in depicting dramatic, stormy skies[28] – published nostalgia-invoking representations of small, antiquated, wheel-powered mills in reassuringly pastoral settings. One of these, issued in 1874, illustrates a poem in which the deadness of the season, the decay of the mill and the

end of human life are unambiguously conflated: "A wreck, beyond repair, the old mill seems, / A type alike of manhood and the time – / Decay o'ercreeping all his busy schemes: / Himself low buried 'neath the winter rime" (Fig. 7).[29] Other views of water-powered mills from yesteryear, prepared by American printmakers such as the prolific John Douglas Woodward, were used less to evoke death than to suggest a bygone rural simplicity that was out of step with the hurly-burly of the modern world. Woodward's engravings were included in, among other publications, the hugely popular *Picturesque America; or, The Land We Live In*. This was produced as a series of subscription 'parts' in 1872–74, and used nostalgic water-wheel imagery to counterpoint views of modern factories. "Labor mars the landscape it enters," wrote O.B. Bunce, one of *Picturesque America*'s many essayists, "but the mill seems to partake in the spirit of its surroundings, to gain a charm from woods and waters, and to give one."[30] The phenomenally popular Currier & Ives, too, revelled in subjects that presented antiquated, almost pre-industrial structures in pastoral settings. Among these are *Winter in the Country: The Old Grist Mill*, *The Old Windmill*, *The Old Mill – In Summer* and, with a title that left no doubt about the equation of water-wheel mills and drowsy bucolic wistfulness, *The Mill-dam at "Sleepy Hollow"*.

Homer Watson had ample opportunity to observe other oil painters' interest in the nostalgic possibilities of mills, and especially those mills that used water wheels to power small family businesses. Jasper Cropsey's *The Old Mill*, reproduced in *The Art Journal* in 1879,[31] was one of many examples. George Inness, described by Watson as the outstanding figure in American landscape painting, also depicted this subject. Watson may well have met the American when the two of them were in New York, Inness having relocated there from Europe in 1876. Certainly Inness's predilection for dramatic skies and his elimination of irrelevant details seem to be mirrored in the Canadian artist's imagery.[32] It may be significant that Inness produced no fewer than 25 *Approaching Storm*, *Coming Storm*, and related canvases before Watson painted his own *A Coming Storm in the Adirondacks* in 1879, and that he showed two of them in the 1878 and 1879 exhibitions of the Society of American Artists in New York.[33] At the very least, Watson could have encountered Inness's paintings during his New York sojourn of the late 1870s, perhaps at the National Academy of Design, where old mills were frequent subjects in post-1860 annual shows and where Inness enjoyed a well-publicized critical exhibition triumph in 1877. Of Inness's various mill-themed paintings from these years, *The Old Mill* (1849; Art Institute of Chicago) bears striking compositional similarities to Watson's *Pioneer Mill*, with their shared use of flowing water to divide the canvases diagonally, their placement of a mill in the centre of each picture, and the presence of human figures beneath

the trees and across the water courses from the mill buildings. Although it is unlikely that Watson would have seen the Inness painting while he was in New York, as it had been acquired by a private collector in 1849 and did not reappear in public until 1902,[34] Inness's interest in mill themes would have been known to anyone who, like Watson, was familiar with his work.

A Society in Flux

The fascination with the remnants and symbols of a disappearing past was abetted in Ontario by sea changes in the economic and social infrastructures. The province's industry at mid-century consisted for the most part of relatively small businesses, although there was already significant evidence of steam-based technology and, consequently, industrial expansion and specialization of labour.[35] Until the 1860s, however, most mills were powered by water wheels. Only about 41 of Ontario's grist mills were steam-driven in 1854 (the year before Watson was born), compared to 569 that used wheels.[36] Waterloo County alone was home to some 112 water-powered mills over the course of the century.[37] Even in 1861, when Watson was five years old, more than two dozen were operating in Waterloo Township (one of five townships comprising Waterloo County), most of them powered by the Grand River and its tributaries the Conestoga, the Nith, and the Speed.[38] Doon itself, founded in 1834 under the appropriate name of Doon Mills, had early on established its importance as a milling town thanks to the energetic Ferrie brothers, who constructed water-powered grist, barley, and other mills there.[39]

During the 1870s and 1880s, however, many wheel-driven mills had fallen or were falling into picturesque decay, among them Doon's first grist mill.[40] Those that were powered solely by water wheels accounted for about 12 per cent of all industrial establishments in Ontario in 1871.[41] Employees thrown out of work by the closure of traditional mills often found ready and more lucrative employment in the proliferating factories that increasingly consigned the small-scale mills of the mid-nineteenth century to the unrecoverable past. For example, in 1863, a grist business in the village of German Mills, midway between Doon and Berlin (the latter renamed Kitchener in 1916), became the first in Canada to employ the new gradual reduction (multi-stage grinding) technique. Patented in Canada that same year, this technique challenged the single chop, fast reduction method, which required two traditional grindstones mounted close together. Twelve years later and only a few miles further afield, at his mill at St Jacobs, also in Waterloo County, E.W.B. Snider established Ontario's first gradual reduction *rolling* mill. Rolling mills used corrugated iron cylinders (or, from the early 1880s, porcelain cylinders) instead of the grindstones that had been the defining technology

8 | Winslow Homer, *The Old Mill (The Morning Bell)*, 1871, oil on canvas, 61 × 96.8 × 2.5 cm, Yale University Art Gallery, bequest of Stephen Carlton Clark, BA 1903. (Photo: Yale University Art Gallery)

throughout the preceding decades and centuries. Rolling mills quickly proved their value: they produced whiter flour, required less supervision, were more easily maintained, did 37 per cent more work than traditional grist mills, and needed 47 per cent less power.[42] Of the six establishments named in an 1884–85 summary of flour mills in Waterloo County, only two featured millstones; the others were all large-scale commercial rolling mills.[43] Inexorably, the small wheel-driven mills lovingly chronicled by Homer Watson – buildings that had been centres of community life (marriage banns had often been posted on them, for example[44]) – were replaced by businesses that were less concerned with building relationships with local farmers than they were with acting as hubs for large geographical areas. The development of railways and the ensuing concentration in urban centres of large mills of all types additionally meant that, as Watson noted with regard to the bygone subject of his 1900 masterpiece *The Flood Gate*, "the country ponds [used to store the water that drove mill wheels] are drying up and the mills rot."[45]

The shift was usually drastic and always noteworthy. American artist Winslow Homer, for example, tracked changes in textile manufacture in his *Old Mill* of 1871 (Fig. 8). In this painting, female factory workers begin to traverse an inclined walkway that leads past an abandoned textile mill (the empty-windowed building on the left of the canvas) to arrive at a new facility just beyond the forsaken structure. The only part of the more recent

building, visible just above the roof of the abandoned one, is a bright, shiny bell, the ringing of which embodied the new tyranny of timed labour: "the most distinctive fixture and defining attribute of the new mills."[46] As an 1898 description of an idyllic picnic on the banks of Waterloo County's Grand River explained,

> It seems to me I'd like to go
> Where bells don't ring, nor whistles blow,
> Nor clocks don't strike, nor gongs don't sound,
> And I'd have stillness all around.[47]

Tellingly, although Winslow Homer's canvas is widely known as *The Morning Bell*, its original title, *The Old Mill* (under which it was first exhibited, at the Century Association in New York in 1871), gave primacy to a fast-disappearing model of community economic organisation.

The changes in technology and scale that characterized mills of all types were symptomatic of a larger phenomenon: the increasing urbanisation of the province, and concern that southern Ontario's self-identification as a society premised upon rural and small-town life was under threat in a world beset by dizzying change. During the 1850s railroad incursions by the Grand Trunk and the Great Western led to the expansion of manufacturing in Berlin, Galt, Preston, Doon, and other Waterloo County towns. An 1860s gazetteer described Berlin as lacking water power and other resources necessary for industry, but even as that judgment was being published, the foundations were being laid for a dramatic economic and population boom that led to Berlin being incorporated as a town in 1871. By then, Waterloo County had an industrial workforce of some 4,000; this was the ninth largest such population in Ontario's thirty-seven counties.[48] An 1872 observer compared the concentration of industry in Hespeler (near Doon) to that in the British industrial centre of Bradford.[49] Doon itself had a population of only 150 in 1871, but this rose to about 300 in the 1880s (when a resident could justly describe it as "a busy and prosperous village"), and to 600 by the end of the century.[50] During the 1890s the population of the federal electoral district of Waterloo North was 55 per cent rural and 45 per cent urban, while the figures for Waterloo South were 47 and 53 per cent, respectively.[51] By that time, the once bustling but now outdated Grand River canal system had been largely displaced by the urban concentration of large-scale, technology-driven industry that relied on the railways to transport raw materials and finished products alike. "The artist," according to an 1893 magazine article, "now delights to haunt its banks and transfer some of its numberless bits of enchanting scenery to his canvas or his paper."[52]

The social fabric of southern Ontario was thus in flux. But, although the confederation era placed much faith in steady progress and in the related rise of cities, that assurance was tempered by an increasing association of urban life with noise, dirt, a hectic pace, materialism, and artificiality. All of these were blamed for what were claimed to be escalating levels of stress, poor mental and physical health, and the loss of the self-reliance that rural life – trumpeted as an organic social order founded on simplicity and natural virtue – supposedly fostered and symbolised. Chronologically coincident with the fame of *The Pioneer Mill*, an 1881 book entitled *American Nervousness: Its Causes and Consequences* argued that "Americanitis" was creating neurasthenic conditions amongst urbanites in the United States, and that "a restful time away from modern civilization in a park, at a cottage, or in Canada should return the sufferer, at least temporarily, to health."[53] Despite this country's presumably bucolic nature, concerns similar to those highlighted by *American Nervousness* informed the Canada First Movement's fears for Ontario's future. Beginning in the 1870s, the movement's members championed the already fragile idea of Canada as a principally agrarian nation, and in the early twentieth century, Conservative politician George Foster was to insist (with a singular lack of prescience) that "Canada's rural population must always be preponderant" because its "robustness of morals and simplicity of life … are essential elements in any people."[54] In a related vein, nascent urban moral reform and social welfare movements were being promoted in newspapers as early as the 1880s, as the presumed dangers of urban life were in their initial days of formulation. Twenty years later they were complemented by the growth of presumably restful suburbs, the popularity of the village community ideal, and a drive toward town planning. The latter manifested itself as early as 1890 in the town of Waterloo, near to Doon, when the municipality adopted Ontario's Public Parks Act and was thus positioned to acquire land for the preservation of salutary parkland.[55]

It was under these circumstances that city dwellers became key proponents of nostalgia for an idealised rural past. The 1880s were marked by North American journalists reaching largely urban readerships (including many Canadians) through such periodicals as *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Atlantic Monthly*, and *Saturday Evening Post*. These were magazines that often espoused "a philosophy which seems in retrospect appropriate only to *Outing* and *Forest and Stream*."[56] Rural Ontario was no stranger to these developments. Previously understood and championed primarily by those who actually lived there, during the last quarter of the nineteenth century the countryside became increasingly understood in terms of its therapeutic relationship to Toronto and other burgeoning cities.[57] In this regard, railways supported the most striking travel trend to blossom during

the last three decades of the century: a fashion for rural spas and waterside resorts that catered to urbanites. Preston, next door to Doon and much noted for its mineral baths, was one such locale. But city dwellers were also cycling, hiking, and boating through non-resort areas, as well as spending time as guests on farms.[58] The Grand River was popular with large groups and single day-trippers alike, including artists both amateur and professional.[59] *Cycling* magazine in 1893 specified the attraction of the area around Doon: "A number of Toronto waifs … [who were] sent out to breathe the pure air and give a sight of green fields and woods" had "pale pinched faces" before their arrival; but when they "first caught sight of the flowers near the track at the [train] depot they ran and plucked them in the wildest glee."[60] Picnics, too, were a popular pastime along the Grand River. In the words of American art historian Angela Miller, picnics epitomised "the contradictory experience of men and women benefiting directly from economic expansion and reluctant to slow the juggernaut of progress yet concerned with maintaining a sense of continuity with the past."[61]

This reciprocal relationship between the rural and the urban also played itself out in Watson's career. The cities of Toronto, Montreal, and Ottawa were where his work was most frequently exhibited. Although many of his paintings were initially subsumed into the private collections of his friends and admirers in the towns and small cities around Doon, his most visible and acquisitive collectors tended to be urban dwellers associated with industry and high finance: figures such as R.B. Angus, George Drummond, Charles Porteous, James Ross, William Cornelius Van Horne, and, in Regina, Norman MacKenzie. Important for many such collectors was the fact that Watson's work was imbued with a Barbizon sensibility that recorded his intense visual study of rustic landscapes that he knew and loved. Most famously, Oscar Wilde, at the time of his May 1882 stop in Toronto during his tour of the United States and Canada, admired Watson's *Flying Shadows* in that year's OSA exhibition and described the artist as "Barbizon without ever having seen Barbizon" and as being "the Canadian Constable." (Significantly, the two working mills owned by Constable's father figure frequently in the work of the by then iconic British artist.[62]) "I had never heard of the Barbizon men," Watson repeatedly insisted throughout the remainder of his career. "I had never seen a picture by Constable."[63] Like those artists, however, he dedicated himself to lovingly recording a local landscape with which he was intimately familiar and then selling those paintings to powerful figures whose lives and activities were thoroughly urban, much as cosmopolitan Parisian collectors had been the driving force behind the popularity of the decidedly anti-urban Barbizon artists.[64] The same rural/urban relationship characterised the art and audience of the English artist George Clausen (1852–1944), whose

paintings Watson first saw at Goupil & Cie. in London and with whom he established a warm friendship after meeting him in 1887. Described by Watson as a devotee of truth,[65] Clausen – like his contemporaries Henry Herbert La Thangue in England and Jules Bastien-Lepage in France – espoused a rural nostalgia painted in a painstakingly realist aesthetic that was rooted in a close connection with his immediate milieu and that supplanted Jean-François Millet's imagery with a more uncritical, and therefore more palatable and "timeless," depiction of old-world country lives, infrastructures and economies.

Like the Barbizon artists, like Constable, like Clausen, and like Horatio Walker (Watson's contemporary on Île d'Orléans in Quebec), Watson's view was almost entirely of a society innocent of the heavy industry and urbanisation that were expanding throughout southern Ontario during the last decades of the nineteenth century. Indeed, he actively encouraged a meshing between his own identity and the pre-technological landscapes that he painted in such large numbers (Fig. 3). "Great landscape artists," he proclaimed in a 1900 lecture at the University of Toronto, "are no more cosmopolitan than are great patriots, and no immortal landscape has been painted which has not had as at least one of the promptings for its creation, a feeling its creator had of having roots in his native land and being a product of its soil."[66] At the same time, commentators referenced the sentimental identification of Watson's art as embodying a relationship of both negation and desire between his bucolic world and his patrons' modern urban lives. To the anonymous critic who reviewed the Royal Canadian Academy's 1892 annual exhibition for *The Week*, Watson's "romantic pastorals" exemplified why "landscapes [are] the most lastingly soothing of all pictures; they bring the tired and harassed drudge of city life back to the playgrounds of his youthful truant days, and woo the memory away from present care."[67] This rural/urban relationship reached what was perhaps its apogee of verbal expression in 1929. In that year, R.C. Reade, writing in the *Toronto Star Weekly*, adopted an aggressively anti-modern vocabulary for bringing Watson once again to the attention of Toronto readers. Reade described making a "pilgrimage" to visit "the hermit of Doon," who "lives hidden in the woods … because he has no passion for painting rubber plants and artificial palms." Appropriately enough, Watson's "sylvan retreat" (Doon: "a shrinking violet as modest as its most illustrious citizen") proved difficult for the adoring journalist to find, "even with the most detailed road directions."[68] Just five months before the cataclysmic stock market crash that would eviscerate the financial security that Watson had accumulated over the course of a career that had stretched far beyond Doon and Waterloo County, his image remained that of a recluse inhabiting an anachronistic idyll: an exemplar

for the urban populations who could not get enough of the type of imagery summarised five decades earlier in *The Pioneer Mill*.

Family and Pioneer Legacies

However, the emphasis that Watson laid on deserted and crumbling mills went beyond Victorian romanticism, beyond the psychological impact of the changes that were transforming southern Ontario's industrial infrastructure during the first two decades of his career, and beyond the relationship between rural subject matter and urban needs and expectations. Equally important was Watson's family history. The two previous generations of Watsons had been bound up with small-scale milling in Waterloo County. Their involvement appears to have led the artist to roughly base the eponymous building in *The Pioneer Mill* on a sawmill built by his grandfather James following the latter's emigration to Canada from New York state.[69] "The fondest recollections I had of the place [Doon] dwelt there [in the mill]," he wrote in an undated and fictionalised autobiographical manuscript. "A history was connected with it and the place was now a ruin."[70] Ransford Watson (James's son and Homer's father) was listed in the 1861 Canadian census as a clothier whose mill produced woollen cloth and yarn. According to the artist's most reliable biographer, the business operated by Ransford Watson was actually a combination saw and woollen mill that failed three years after his death in 1864 and was sold.[71] An uncle leased the property in 1872 and opened a sawmill and pail factory, at which the seventeen-year-old Homer worked. Sixteen years later, in 1888, the mill was sold a second time. That event, which Roxa Watson described as having made her husband "blue for three days," furnished an indication of Watson's psychological investment in the building.[72]

Small wonder, then, that many of Watson's images of mills are permeated by a sense of personal longing and loss that goes beyond generalised Victorian sentiment about the past. The titles of his paintings and drawings frequently incorporate words such as "old," "deserted," and "haunted." ("Haunted" is particularly resonant in view of Watson having witnessed the death of his older brother Jude in a milling accident when Watson himself was only twelve years old.) "Life and thought hath fled away" is the regretful inscription below another drawing of a crumbling mill (Fig. 9). Indeed, Watson's progress from the two surviving preparatory drawings for *The Pioneer Mill* to the painting itself evinces an increasing emphasis on age and disuse, as if the artist's steps toward the final painting recapitulated the decline in the family's fortunes from one generation to the next. What is surely the first of the two drawings includes two buildings, only one of which survived into the painting. The

9 | Homer Watson, *Life and Thought Hath Fled Away*, ca. 1875–87, graphite, black ink and wash on wove paper, 17.8 × 23.4 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. (Photo: © NGC)

second drawing (Fig. 10), more detailed, more highly finished, and omitting one of the two buildings, adds a male figure carrying an unidentified object (quite possibly a fishing pole) and walking along a curving path that is scarcely hinted at in the other drawing.[73] (The apparently misleading inscription on this sheet – "First drawing for Pioneer Mill" – is in the hand of Watson's sister, Phoebe, and must post-date the drawing itself by a span of years.) It is now evident, as it was not in the first drawing, that the stream is escaping a mill pond by pouring through a sluice gate and down a millrace.

The finished painting contains even more changes. The lively male figure of the second drawing has been transmogrified into an elderly man with a long white beard. Rather than carrying a pole over his shoulder, he leans upon a stick or cane for support. The tall, flourishing tree that anchors the left side of the drawing has become the corpse of a tree: a dead trunk, exposed roots, and a few remaining but lifeless branches. The roof and walls of the mill itself show the damage wrought by time, and the foliage that merely surrounds the building in the drawing now overwhelms it. The effects

10 | Homer Watson, First [sic] drawing for *The Pioneer Mill*, ca. 1878–80, graphite on wove paper, 23.6 × 30.8 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. (Photo: © NGC)

thus produced are further accentuated in Watson's subsequent etching of 1890 (Fig. 6). Here the dramatic contrasts between shades of black and white throughout the landscape and in the sky are attributable to the nature of the etching medium itself, but they also add a greater sense of oppression than is present in the painted version of a decade earlier.

A significant source of such evidence of decline, as well as of *The Pioneer Mill*'s emotional punch, can be found in the painting's title. Just as the putative model for the mill in the painting underscores Watson's subjective investment in the financial and personal losses that punctuated his family's history, so the title draws attention to his absorption in the legacy of the nineteenth-century Waterloo County pioneers in general. With a population of only about 300 in the 1880s, Doon had factories, brickyards, and other industries, but was still small enough for material evidence of its pioneers to be ubiquitous. This was accentuated by the fact that a large portion of

the population bore surnames – among them Watson and Bechtel (the family of Watson's wife) – that connected them directly with the area's early nineteenth-century history.[74] For Watson, the differences between the pioneer past and the growing modernism of the present were filled with closely felt emotional resonance.

For historian W.L. Morton, "the [nineteenth-century] Canadian fixation on the Pioneer," and the resulting centrality of such ideals as enterprise, persistence, resourcefulness, and bravery, were based on the belief that the "supreme act of history" was the taming of an unpopulated geography. In English Canada this "supreme act of history" was usually seen as a progressive one that had led to the spread of a civilisation based on pioneer values.[75] This was a frequent theme in visual art, poetry, novels, memoirs, and magazine articles and, as noted above, was ardently promoted by the Canada First Movement.[76] Over the course of the half-century beginning in 1850, hundreds of Ontario pioneer-related fiction and non-fiction publications of every type appeared on the market. They ranged in purpose, structure, and authorship from Elizabeth Hely Walshe's *Cedar Creek: From the Shanty to the Settlement; A Tale of Canadian Life* (1860), to *A Pioneer History of Elgin County: Prize-winning School Essays Published by James S. Brierley in the Southern Counties Journal* (1896). Nor was there any shortage of books with titles in the vein of *Early Pioneer Days*, or *Pioneer Sketches*, or *Pioneer Reminiscences*, and so on.[77] Poems – Alexander McLachlan's "The Emigrant" (1861) and Isabella Valancy Crawford's "Malcolm's Katie: A Love Story" (1884) are typical – epitomise a genre in which pioneers are seen as noble warriors felling trees that are described as worthy opponents: as "Caesars" (McLachlan) and "kings" (Crawford).[78] The same approach characterises a number of novels of the day, including Robert Sellar's *Gleaner Tales* (1886) and Coll McLean Sinclair's *The Dear Old Farm* (1897), as well as a range of settlers' handbooks and autobiographies, most famously those penned by Susanna Moodie and Catherine Parr Traill.[79]

In the visual arts, too, pioneer-related themes were popular. The issue of the *Canadian Illustrated News* that reproduced *The Pioneer Mill* following the painting's inclusion in the 1880 Canadian Academy exhibition, also featured a double-page illustration of a James Weston painting, *Logging Bee in Muskoka*.[80] George Agnew Reid's sizeable (107.4 × 194 cm) 1888 painting *Logging* (NGC; Fig. 11), though based on activity the artist had seen near his studio in Paris, was described by him as representing "a phase of the development of Canada which in its main aspects ended about seventy-five years ago in old Ontario, where the farms were cleared by the heaping together of the large and small logs and brush, and then burned."[81] Nine years later Reid, faced with the City of Toronto's refusal to endorse a proposal by

11 | George Agnew Reid, *Logging*, 1888, oil on canvas, 107.4 × 194 × 2.3 cm, National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa. (Photo: © NGC)

the recently founded Society of Mural Decorators to provide an extensive decorative programme in the Toronto Municipal Buildings (today the Old City Hall), contributed new mural work at no cost in an attempt to reverse that decision. Reid's donation most prominently included two large panels entitled *The Arrival of the Pioneers* and *Staking a Pioneer Farm*. He envisioned these as part of a larger mural project, *Hail to the Pioneers, Their Names and Deeds Remembered and Forgotten, We Honour Here*. Although the two panels were installed, they failed to attract the municipal support needed for more such work, and the project came to a premature conclusion. Meanwhile a number of other Ontario and Quebec artists had painted and exhibited smaller oils and watercolours on pioneer themes in numbers that are a gauge of the breadth of social interest in the subject; works such as Robert Harris's *A Meeting of the School Trustees* (1885; NGC) exploited the related, general nostalgia for nineteenth-century rural life. Outside museum settings, the Toronto Industrial Exhibition included a walk-in "pioneers" display. In 1879, the year before Watson exhibited *The Pioneer Mill*, the Industrial Exhibition included among its attractions a reconstructed log cabin, built to order on the site. The pioneer cabin would be a recurring feature of the Exhibition for years to come. In 1879, exploiting the familiar truism that pioneer values and skills were all too lacking in modern society, the *Mail* newspaper remarked that the cabin had been built by "old men … who are still capable of

12 | Homer Watson, *Pioneers Crossing a River at Sunset*, 1896, oil on canvas, 86 × 122 cm, Collection of The York Club, Toronto. (Photo: © The York Club, Toronto)

performing work which, if imposed on young men, would make them wish they never were born."[82]

Throughout his life Watson identified himself, in correspondence, speeches, and interviews, as a grandson of Waterloo County pioneers.[83] In his youth he began a novel about his grandfather James (named "Landseer" in the manuscript). In his visual art *The Pioneer Mill* was thematically linked to other similarly themed projects, including his plans for a series of paintings recording the immigration of the first Pennsylvania settlers into Waterloo County. Drawings of diverse settler themes exist in the collection of the National Gallery, and Russell Harper refers to no fewer than six canvases that he states were painted between the 1880s and the early 1900s. However, only three large oils, each at least 86 × 97 cm, are traceable in other sources: *A Land of Thrift* (private collection), *Clearing the Land* (location unknown), and *Pioneers Crossing the Grand River* (Fig. 12). The latter was the most widely seen of the series. It was exhibited in 1909 with the Royal Canadian Academy in Ottawa, and in 1910 at the Art Association of Montreal, the Canadian

National Exhibition, and the large showing of Canadian art organised by the RCA and shown in Liverpool.[84]

In keeping with his proud self-identification as a scion of a pioneering family, Watson's approach to such subjects was not one of artificial nostalgia for a distant past. Indeed, he adopted that attitude only at the very start of his career and in only one major painting: *The Death of Elaine* (1877; Art Gallery of Ontario), which shows an episode from Sir Thomas Malory's fifteenth-century epic *La Morte d'Arthur*. Having fallen in love with Launcelot, Elaine helps him back to life after his near death in a tournament, only to have him decline her love. She wastes away with despair, and Watson's painting shows her funeral barge being steered down the Thames to Camelot, King Arthur's castle, represented by the painting's fantastical background architecture. But this type of subject never reappeared in Watson's work. Instead, he avoided mythologizing earlier times with which he had no connection, and concentrated on faithful representations of subjects that fell within relatively recent memory: a trait that historian Ann C. Colley has identified as a frequent one in the work of many Victorian artists and writers.[85] Just as Watson replaced the antiquity of *The Death of Elaine* with the recent and much more personal history embedded in *The Pioneer Mill*, so he also abandoned the contrived emotionalism of the 1877 canvas in favour of an exploration of the moral tensions he felt between linked binaries: nature and progress, creation and destruction, civilisation and excess.

As Watson wrote late in his life, "My love has always been where cultivation went on to furnish a living to men who came out of the pioneer stage to a more refined rural life, where people were growing into what Canada will be more and more."[86] However, the development that followed the arrival of pioneers in southern Ontario also had a dark side: one that Ralph Connor probed in his 1901 novel *The Man from Glengarry*. In Wellington County, where European settlement had begun in about 1820, it was estimated in 1881 that the length of time between initial settlement in relentlessly treed bush, and the occupation of all the available land and the consequent need to import firewood, was a mere twenty-five years.[87] There is no reason to believe that the situation in neighbouring Waterloo County was any different. In paintings such as *Log-cutting in the Woods* (1894; Fig. 13) Watson envisioned human economic activity taking place within a natural setting of which it makes use but which it does not push beyond the bounds of sustainability. It was in 1880 – the year *The Pioneer Mill* was completed, exhibited, and sold – that the first warning was raised that the felling of woodlands along the Grand River was resulting in flooding: a new phenomenon in the area.[88] Only about a decade later, Watson's unpublished essays "A Landscape Painter's Day" and "The Village" were unequivocal

13 | Homer Watson, *Log-cutting in the Woods*, 1894, oil on canvas, 45.7 × 61 cm, Coll. The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, gift of Lord Strathcona and family. (Photo: Brian Merrett)

about how the sawmill built by James Watson had eventually undercut its own viability by destroying the trees upon which it depended. "A Landscape Painter's Day" describes its author's thoughts when, during a thunderstorm, he took shelter in the by-then abandoned mill:

> I thought of those earlier years when the mill in its vigorous life tore into sections with the giant force of its devouring saw the bodies of all the neighbouring trees. Year after year the forest was spoiled in order to furnish food for the saw. Into its depths rolled resinous timber, and gorged with such richness, a ruinous waste came about. No forests rose anew in place of those shreds. The pulse of the life of the mill became less and when the last of those cloud-cleaving pines were laid low to supply man with his needs, then the mill wrought its own death.

> The floods of water that the forests once held in their mould bore down every year with might, until at last they wreaked vengeance upon the old mill for being the agent that had loosed them to turbulent life.[89]

Although Watson took great pride in his pioneer stock, and believed firmly in the desirability of the human improvement of nature, he was also acutely aware both of the delicate need to balance progress with sustainability and of the consequences of not maintaining that balance. Nor was it a coincidence that he gave visual expression to those concerns in paintings such as *The Pioneer Mill*.

Postscript

Two decades after writing "A Landscape Painter's Day," Watson would take very public action to strike a balance between the advantages of development, and the loss of the qualities that made rural life so desirable. In 1913 he became instrumental in a successful campaign to preserve a wooded area near his home and studio: a tract threatened by population growth and the corresponding demand for more land development. As a key organiser and the president of Waterloo County Grand River Park Limited he helped raise funds to buy and preserve the forty-acre stand of trees named Cressman's Woods (rechristened Homer Watson Memorial Park in 1944), located between Doon and German Mills. The site was about to be auctioned and was expected to be purchased by the owner of a "portable sawmill."[90] These 'sawmills' consisted of large circular blades and were mass-marketed by such major retailers as Sears; they were the early twentieth century's rapacious successors to the outdated, expensive, and site-specific buildings recorded in *The Pioneer Mill*. Fittingly, the warning that Watson had tried to convey in that painting about an ultimately self-defeating relationship between civilisation and nature was marshalled by him again in 1913: this time to thwart a twentieth-century version of that same menace. The next year, however, marked the beginning of a war that would employ technology of unprecedented voraciousness to inflict devastation upon the natural and built environments of Europe. *The Pioneer Mill* became, more than ever before, a symbol of the unrecoverable past.

The years following the successful preservation of Cressman's Woods were not kind to Homer Watson. His wife Roxa died in January 1918, only ten months before the end of World War I. Deeply distressed, he began to take solace in spiritualist séances and in doctored photographs that showed him surrounded by the translucent bodies of deceased relatives and friends

14 | "Spirit" photograph of Homer Watson, 1935, silver gelatin print, 14.5 × 10 cm, Homer Watson House & Gallery, Doon. (Photo: Homer Watson House & Gallery)

(Fig. 14), much as his paintings and drawings of settler life captured a fondly recalled but increasingly ghostly pioneer history. His eclipse as a key figure in contemporary Canadian art was implicit in the rise of the Group of Seven, whose work he occasionally admired but which he criticised for proposing too narrow a definition of 'Canadian' and focusing too much on uninhabited landscapes; Watson believed that the artist should "paint where he can dominate the scene, and not be dominated by the scene." He also criticised them for applying "bill-board symbols … [and] sign writing technique" to landscape in a way "that gives quite a thrill or shall I say shock."[91] As if to emphasise his outmoded status, the Depression blighted his final years by plunging him into financial chaos from which he never recovered.

Watson's twentieth-century marginalisation had been foreshadowed at the start of the new century when, in 1902, Katherine Hale, the author

of an admiring article about a visit to his home in Doon, simultaneously gave voice to the view of Watson as a creature of the past. Hale described coming upon "a charming old stone house in the last stages of decay, enwoven in vines and orchard-set. Convinced that it is our Mecca we turn for confirmation to a respectable citizen on the sidewalk. 'Last house to the right, stranger,' he says decisively, and disappointed we drive on." Taking a different and less reverential approach, Wyly Grier had noted his friend Watson's growing alienation as an artist as early as 1895. "Ten years ago," wrote Grier, "he was frankly a realist … and now, with an increased knowledge of the vast field that has already been covered by the men of his craft, has come a hesitation, an eclecticism, a tendency to a preoccupation in questions of style, arrangement and technique, rather than that objective absorption in subject which results in a naive translation of it to the canvas." The *Montreal Daily Witness* in 1909 was more caustic: "We have seen him receding gradually through Troyon to Constable and now back of that to a hopelessly artificial style. Mr. Watson is not alone in whacking on plenty of pigment and varnish to give a sense of strength," but "there is something unreal, and on the grotesque side of unreality in Mr. Watson's pictures." The *Ottawa Journal*'s art critic was equally unfriendly in 1912: "Watson has an endeavour and style peculiarly his own, and while it is uncompromising to suggestions of pettiness or prettiness, it is one which has become mannered in its methods and somewhat harsh and unnatural in its treatment of textures."[92] Interestingly enough, Watson's escalating interest in what he took to be modern 'style' for its own sake – a development that initially coincided with his first visit to Europe (1887–90) – overlapped a move away from mills as themes in his art. He rarely exhibited such subjects after the beginning of the twentieth century, although they did not disappear entirely from his repertoire. His memorial exhibition in 1936 (he had died at the end of May that year), consisting of ninety paintings drawn entirely from his estate, included only two that took mills as their subjects.

This change in Watson's themes of choice also corresponded to the faltering popularity of pioneer themes during the twentieth century. In 1957 the Doon Pioneer Village was opened to the public. Its goal was to celebrate the settlers of Ontario and especially those of the Grand River area, commemorating a period in which (according to one proponent of the project) "men and women had purpose, perseverance, thrift and sincerity, qualities not as prevalent in our own age."[93] Ironically, the location proposed for the Village in 1954 was Cressman's Woods: a plan that was mercifully scuttled. Over the next two decades the historic site acquired large numbers of buildings and artefacts, many with little or no connection to the district around Doon or even to the pioneer era. The driving force was instead a fuzzy, generalised nostalgia for 'old things' of every description: an approach

very different from the intensely personal presentation of local scenery and architecture by which Watson had established his credibility and reputation. This historical tactic was not abandoned until the implementation of a master plan in 1979, but at the cost of redefining the Village's focus away from the pioneer era altogether. The site was renamed Doon Heritage Crossroads and from now on, would present "a typical, rural Waterloo County crossroads of 1914."[94] Nineteen-fourteen was, ironically enough, the year that definitively marked the arrival of twentieth-century modernity: a development opposed to everything for which Watson's depictions of Doon and its landmarks both stood and were valued.

What does survive (and thrive), though not as part of Doon Heritage Crossroads, is the Homer Watson House & Gallery. This, the artist's long-time home, fittingly located on Old Mill Road, functioned as the Doon School of Fine Arts from 1948 to 1966 and today serves as a museum, art school, and community centre. The gallery's 2012 summer exhibition, featuring both *The Pioneer Mill* and *The Last of the Drouth*, the Watson paintings purchased by the Marquis of Lorne in 1880 and 1881, offers a welcome opportunity to contemplate the rich aesthetic and social history that can be extrapolated from Watson's personal and professional identification with local history.

NOTES

1 This essay grows out of research that was generously supported by a Canadian Centre for the Visual Arts Fellowship at the National Gallery of Canada.

2 Homer Watson to John M. Lyle, 15 Feb. 1933. Homer Watson fonds, National Gallery of Canada Library and Archives (hereafter Homer Watson fonds, NGCLA).

3 Quoted in Jane VanEvery, *With Faith, Ignorance and Delight: Homer Watson* ([Doon]: Homer Watson Trust, 1967), 47.

4 Watson to Lyle, 15 Feb. 1933. Homer Watson fonds, NGCLA. Muriel Miller states that the painting was conceived in 1878 (Murial Miller, *Homer Watson: The Man of Doon,* revised edition [Toronto: Summerhill Press, 1988], 34). According to Watson's sister, Phoebe, *The Pioneer Mill* was painted "in the attic of our house and on the verandah" (Phoebe Watson to M. Elizabeth Becker, Toronto, 2 Jan. 1932. Homer Watson fonds, NGCLA).

5 Watson to Lyle, 15 Feb. 1933. Homer Watson fonds, NGCLA.

6 Oliver Millar, *The Victorian Pictures in the Collection of Her Majesty the Queen*, Vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 280.

7 "Academy of the Arts," *Globe*, 9 Mar. 1880; "Canadian Art," *Daily Free Press* (Ottawa), 8 Mar. 1880.

8 This has been pointed out in Gerald Noonan, *Refining the Real Canada: Homer Watson's Spiritual Landscape* (Waterloo: MLR Editions Canada, 1997), 17–18; but Noonan is incorrect in stating that the lengthy article made no reference to the purchase of the painting.

9 *Canadian Illustrated News* 21, no. 18 (1 May 1880): 285.
10 Thomas D. KING, "Fine Arts at the Capital," *Canadian Spectator* 3, no. 12 (20 Mar. 1880): 137.
11 "comparatively unaided by culture": "Art Association of Montreal: Exhibition of Works by Canadian Artists," *Montreal Gazette*, 14 Apr. 1880; "back woods": "Something To Be Proud Of," *Montreal Daily Witness*, 14 Apr. 1880.
12 For example: G.W. BINGHAM, "A Canadian Landscapist," *The Home Magazine* 7, no. 3 (September 1896): 252.
13 "Art in Toronto," *Evening Telegram*, 20 May 1878; "Ontario Society of Artists: Sixth Annual Exhibition; The Oil Paintings," *Mail* (Toronto), 20 May 1878; "Ontario Society of Artists: Sixth Annual Exhibition of Paintings and Drawings," *Globe* (Toronto), 24 May 1878. The exception was "Art in Toronto: The Ontario Artists' Exhibition," *Daily Leader* (Toronto), 23 May 1878.
14 "Ontario Society of Artists: Seventh Annual Exhibition – Second Day," *Globe*, 17 May 1879.
15 *An April Day* was purchased for his own collection, while *The Last of the Drouth* (1881) was another gift for Queen Victoria, as were four other paintings by Aaron Allan Edson, Thomas Mower Martin and Lucius O'Brien. MILLAR, *The Victorian Pictures*, 66, 184, 192–93, 280–81.
16 VANEVERY, *With Faith, Ignorance and Delight*, 17.
17 "Studio Notes," *The Arion* 1, no. 7 (April 1881): 54.
18 The breastshot wheel – the most common North American type – rotated when falling water struck it near the centre of the wheel's circumference. The undershot wheel – the oldest type, commonly used in conjunction with shallow running water – rotated when water struck the bottom of the wheel.
19 Among the paintings dated 1879 are at least three large ones: *The Grist Mill* (71 × 56 cm; private collection), *The Old Mill and Stream* (60 × 88 cm; Castle Kilbride, Baden, Ontario), and *The Old Mill* (34.0 × 60.5 cm; Homer Watson House & Gallery). Smaller oils dating from in or around 1879 include *The Grist Mill* (private collection); illustrated in "Nature Seen through a Temperament: Homer Watson, 1855–1936," *The Doon Recorder*, 5 June 1975. Mill drawings in Watson's sketchbooks (NGC Library and Archives) include 7874.1r, 7874.1v, 7874.9v, 7875.29, 7875.72, 7875.76, 7878.6, 7879.1, 7879.5, 7880.12, 7880.15, 7888.21, 7895.2, 7897.45, 7898.18, and 7898.84.
20 "The Industrial Exhibition," *Mail*, 2 Sept. 1879.
21 Watson to Arthur Lismer, 30 Sept. [1930]. Homer Watson fonds, NGCLA.
22 John Payne to Homer Watson, 2 Mar. 1890. Homer Watson fonds, NGCLA.
23 Rosemarie L. TOVELL, "Homer Watson's *The Pioneer Mill*: The Making and Marketing of a Print in the Canadian Etching Revival," *Journal of Canadian Art History* 31:2 (2011): 12–36. John Payne to Homer Watson, 2 Mar. 1890. Homer Watson fonds, NGCLA.
24 John MACARTHUR, "The Heartlessness of the Picturesque: Sympathy and Disgust in Ruskin's Aesthetics," *Assemblage* 32 (April 1997): 126–41.
25 "The Brook and the Mill: How the Brook Went to Mill," *Scribner's Monthly* 8, no. 2 (June 1874): 199–201.
26 See, *inter alia*: Susan Joan WOOD, *The Land in Canadian Prose, 1880–1945* (Ottawa: Carleton University, 1988), 169; George ALTMEYER, "Three Ideas of Nature in Canada, 1893–1914," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 11 (August 1976): 21–36; and Allan SMITH, "Farms, Forests and Cities: The Image of the Land and the Rise of the

Metropolis in Ontario, 1860–1914," in *Old Ontario: Essays in Honour of J.M.S. Careless,* ed. David Keane and Colin Read (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1990): 71–91.

27 Kenneth W. Maddox, *In Search of the Picturesque: Nineteenth-century Images of Industry along the Hudson River Valley* (Annandale-on-Hudson, NY: Edith C. Blum Art Institute, Milton and Sally Avery Center for the Arts, 1983), 19.

28 J. Russell Harper, *Homer Watson, R.C.A., 1855–1936: Paintings and Drawings* (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1963), n.p.

29 *The Aldine: The Art Journal of America* 7, no. 12 (December 1874): back cover. See also: "The Old Mill," *The Aldine: A Typographic Art Journal* 6, no. 6 (June 1873): 126; and "The Old Mill," *The Aldine: The Art Journal of America* 9, no. 9 (September 1879): 278.

30 O.B. Bunce, "Scenes on the Brandywine," in *Picturesque America: or, The Land We Live In*, Part 1, ed. William Cullen Bryant (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1874), 222. Woodward's antebellum mill imagery is discussed in Sue Rainey and Roger B. Stein, *Shaping the Landscape Image, 1865–1910: John Douglas Woodward* (Charlottesville, VA: Bayly Art Museum, University of Virginia, 1997), 28–29.

31 "American Painters: Jasper F. Cropsey, Horace W. Robbins, and Wyatt Eaton," *The Art Journal*, new series, vol. 5 (1879): 77.

32 Watson is quoted in Muriel Miller Miner, *Homer Watson: The Man of Doon* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1938), 68. Harper (Harper, *Homer Watson*, n.p.) states that Watson made "several trips to the studio of George Inness." No documents supporting this statement are known, but a comparable view appears in "G. Horne Russell, President of RCA," *Montreal Gazette*, 18 Nov. 1922, where Russell remarks that Watson had for "a short time" been associated with Inness in the United States. Watson himself does not appear to have said or written anything to support this claim.

33 Inness's *The Coming Storm* (1878) was shown in the 1878 Society of American Artists exhibition and was discussed in mostly enthusiastic reviews published in March in the *New York Herald*, the *New York Mail*, the *New-York Daily Tribune*, *The Sun* (NY), the *New York Times* and *The Daily Graphic*. *A Passing Thunder Storm* (ca. 1878–79) was exhibited in the Society's 1879 exhibition and was praised by *The Aldine* and *The Daily Graphic*. If Watson did not see *Passing Thunder Storm* at the exhibition he may have had the opportunity to view it in Inness's studio, as it was part of Inness's collection until 1879. See Michael Quick, *George Inness: A Catalogue Raisonné*. Vol. 1 (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2007), 548–49, 572–73.

34 Ibid., 68.

35 Darrell A. Norris, "Migration, Pioneer Settlement, and the Life Course: The First Families of an Ontario Township," in *Canadian Papers in Rural History*, Vol. 4, ed. Donald H. Akenson (Gananoque: Langdale Press, 1984): 130–52.

36 Felicity Leung, *Grist and Flour Mills in Ontario: From Millstones to Rollers, 1780s to 1880s* (*History and Archaeology* series, no. 53) (Ottawa: National Historic Parks and Sites Branch, Parks Canada, Environment Canada, 1981), 89.

37 W.H. Breithaupt, "Waterloo County History," *Ontario Historical Society Papers and Records*, vol. 17 (1919): 43.

38 *Waterloo Township 1861* map (Waterloo Historical Society website. Accessed 23 Sept. 2011, http://www.whs.ca/watmap61.html). In 1967, Watson's niece Jane VanEvery described Doon as it existed at the time of Watson's birth as having "a sawmill, a flax mill, … a woollen mill, a gristmill" (*With Faith, Ignorance and Delight*, *op.cit.*, 8).

For more statistics on mills in Waterloo County, see: *Illustrated Atlas of the County of Waterloo* (Toronto: H. Parsell & Co., 1881); *County of Waterloo Directory 1877–1878* (Toronto: Armstrong & Co.), reprint edition (Port Elgin, ON: Ross Cumming, 1977); D.N. PANABAKER, "President's Address," *Seventeenth Annual Report of the Waterloo Historical Society* (1929): especially 104–105; and LEUNG, *Grist and Flour Mills in Ontario.*

39 J.G. NELSON and Pauline C. O'NEILL, eds., *The Grand as a Canadian Heritage River* (Waterloo: University of Waterloo, 1989), 89; "Historical Sketch of the County of Waterloo," *Historical Atlas of Waterloo and Wellington Counties, Ontario* (1881[?]), v–vi.

40 Geoffrey HAYES, *Waterloo County: An Illustrated History* (Kitchener: Waterloo Historical Society, 1997), 15.

41 G.T. BLOOMFIELD and Elizabeth BLOOMFIELD, "Water Wheels and Steam Engines: Powered Establishments of Ontario," in *Canadian Industry in 1871* (Research Report no. 2), ed. Elizabeth Bloomfield (Guelph: University of Guelph, 1989), 8. As the Bloomfields note, however, "Census data do not distinguish between the various types of water wheel [traditional overshot and undershot wheels as well as more modern breastshot wheels and turbines]" (7).

42 On the shift from traditional grindstone to gradual reduction roller milling see LEUNG, *Grist and Flour Mills in Ontario*, and LEUNG, "Grist and Flour Mills in Ontario: Their Technological Development, 1780–1880," in *Fourth Annual Agricultural History of Ontario Seminar: Proceedings,* ed. Alan A. Brookes (Guelph: University of Guelph, 1979), 6–39.

43 *Gazetteer and Directory of Waterloo County*, cited in LEUNG, *Grist and Flour Mills in Ontario*, 205–206.

44 LEUNG, *ibid*., 72.

45 Watson to Newton MacTavish, 30 April [1915–18] (Newton MacTavish Collection, North York Public Library Canadiana Collection, Toronto).

46 Nicolai CIKOVSKY, Jr, "Winslow Homer's (So-called) *Morning Bell*," *American Art Journal* 29, no. 12 (1998): 6.

47 ESSIE, "A Day with Nature," *News-Record* (Berlin), 19 Aug. 1898.

48 HAYES, *Waterloo County*, 62.

49 Elizabeth BLOOMFIELD, "Building the City on a Foundation of Factories: The Industrial Policy in Berlin, Ontario, 1870–1914," *Ontario History* 75, no. 3 (1983): 207–208; HAYES, *Waterloo County*, 62. On the parallel change in rural land use, see Owen SCOTT, "The Changing Rural Landscape in Southern Ontario," in, *Third Annual Agricultural History of Ontario Seminar: Proceedings,* ed. T.A. Crowley (Guelph: University of Guelph, 1978), 30–49.

50 "a busy and prosperous village": A.O. KUMMER, "Reminiscences of A.O. Kummer, Early Settler, Doon," *Waterloo Historical Society* 52 (1965): 63–64. Period and later sources cite different population statistics, but see especially: *Illustrated Atlas of the County of Waterloo*; *County of Waterloo Directory 1877–1878*; Elizabeth BLOOMFIELD, *Waterloo Township through Two Centuries* (Kitchener: Waterloo Historical Society, 1995); and Floreen Ellen CARTER, *Place Names of Ontario* (London, ON: Phelps Publishing Company, 1984), 316. A useful map of the architectural layout of Doon as it existed in Watson's youth and early manhood is given in Marguerite Bechtel EBY, "Doon 1867 – Before and After," *Waterloo Historical Society* annual volume 54 (1966): 36–58.

51 Hayes, *Waterloo County*, 82.

52 Thomas L.M. Tipton, "At the Mouth of the Grand," *The Canadian Magazine* 1 (1893): 350. More generally, see Nelson and O'Neill, eds., *The Grand as a Canadian Heritage River*, 87–88.

53 George Miller Beard, quoted in D.M.R. Bentley, "Charles G.D. Roberts and William Wilfred Campbell as Canadian Tour Guides," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 32, no. 2 (Summer 1997): 86.

54 Canada First and imperialist thought on rural versus urban life is examined in Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism, 1867–1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), 177–83 (Foster is quoted on 191). As in the United States, much of this thought focused on agrarianism, but the sensibility can be broadly located within a more general philosophy of rural life.

55 Paul Rutherford, "Tomorrow's Metropolis: The Urban Reform Movement in Canada," *Canadian Historical Association Papers* (1971): 203–24. See also Elizabeth Bloomfield, "City-Building Processes in Berlin/Kitchener and Waterloo 1870–1930" (PhD diss., University of Guelph, 1981), 397.

56 Peter J. Schmitt, *Back to Nature: The Arcadian Myth in Urban America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1969), xviii.

57 Smith, "Farms, Forests and Cities," 79.

58 Hayes, *Waterloo County*, 99–100; Roy I. Wolfe, "The Summer Resorts of Ontario in the Nineteenth Century," *Ontario History* 54 (September 1962): 159.

59 On the popularity of the area with artists of all kinds, see several articles in the Berlin *Daily Record*, including: "Town Topics" (24 July 1893), and "Art School" (27 Sept. 1893).

60 "Fresh Air Youngsters," *News-Record* (Berlin), 10 July 1893.

61 Angela L. Miller, "Nature's Transformations: The Meaning of the Picnic Theme in Nineteenth-century American Art," *Winterthur Portfolio* 24, no. 2/3 (Summer–Autumn 1989): 124. Doon area picnic getaways attended by 500 and 600 people are mentioned in "Doon," *Daily Record*, 1 Nov. 1894.

62 I am grateful to Douglas Schoenherr for his comments to me about the Constable family mills. For an analysis of the significance of Wilde's comments, see: Mark A. Cheetham, "Struck by Likening: Homer Watson, Jack Chambers, Gerhard Richter and the Force of Art World Analogies," in *Negotiations in a Vacant Lot: Studying the Visual in Canada*, ed. Lynda Jessup, Kirsty Robertson, and Erin Morton (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2012); and Cheetham, *Artwriting, Nation, and Cosmopolitanism in Britain: The "Englishness" of English Art Theory since the Eighteenth Century* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012).

Primary sources for Wilde's reaction to Watson's art include: "Oscar at the Gallery," *Telegram* (Toronto), 25 May 1882; "Art Decoration," *Toronto Daily Mail*, 26 May 1882; and "Oscar Wilde," *Globe*, 26 May 1882. The entirety of Oscar Wilde's Canadian tour is the subject of Kevin O'Brien, *Oscar Wilde in Canada: An Apostle for the Arts* (Toronto: Personal Library, 1982), while his views on art in Canada are discussed in detail in O'Brien, "Oscar Wilde and Canadian Artists," *Antigonish Review* 1, no. 4 (Winter 1971): 11–28.

63 Homer Watson to Harold Mortimer Lamb, 29 Mar. 1909 (undated handwritten version in Art Gallery of Greater Victoria; dated typescript in Queen's University Archives).

64 Nicholas Green, *The Spectacle of Nature: Landscape Painting and Bourgeois Culture in Nineteenth-century France* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1990).

65 Quoted in Wyly Grier, "Art Notes," *The Week* 12, no. 11 (8 Feb. 1895): 258.

66 Homer Watson, "The Methods of Some Great Landscape Painters" (1900), in Noonan, *Refining the Real Canada*, 267–68.

67 "Art Notes," *The Week* 9, no. 10 (8 Apr. 1892): 298.

68 R.C. Reade, "Hermits of Art," *Toronto Star Weekly* (4 May 1929): 3.

69 The building in *The Pioneer Mill* differs somewhat from the one depicted in Watson's drawing titled *My Grandfather's Sawmill* (Sketchbook Z, 7898.18; NGC). The artist later insisted that, "When I want to paint a picture I make a number of studies of things I want to put in the composition and when I have these done I sit down in my studio and paint as suits my fancy using the sketches where I feel they suit." (Quoted in, R.M. Fleming, "Homer Watson, Painter of Canadian Pictures," *Ottawa Journal*, 15 Nov. 1913). Watson's principal biographer suggests that the building in *The Pioneer Mill* "may have been an invention in the mind of the artist" (Muriel Miller, *Homer Watson* [1988], 34). Miller also cites a painting titled *The Watson Mill* (1886; location unknown; 146): Watson's only painting to be thus identified.

70 Homer Watson, "A Return to the Village," in Noonan, *Refining the Real Canada*, 310–11.

71 Miller, *Homer Watson* (1988), 22–23; Elizabeth Bloomfield and Linda Foster, *Families and Communities of Waterloo Township in 1861* (Guelph: Caribou Imprints, 1995), 18.

72 Roxa Watson to Susan Mohr Watson (mother) and Phoebe Watson, 5 May 1888. Homer Watson fonds, NGCLA.

73 Homer Watson, Sketchbook B, 7874.1V and 7874.1R (NGC).

74 Pioneer Waterloo County families are detailed in several sources, but see especially Elizabeth Bloomfield, *Founding Families of Waterloo Township, 1800–1830* (Guelph: Caribou Imprints, 1995).

75 W.L. Morton, ed., "Victorian Canada," *The Shield of Achilles: Aspects of Canada in the Victorian Age* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1968), 312.

76 Michael Bunce, in *The Countryside Ideal: Anglo-American Images of Landscape* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), argues that whereas the British rural landscape was valued primarily in aesthetic (often picturesque) terms, the North American ideal "has tended to value the settled rural landscape more as a symbol of agricultural progress and of bygone lifestyles" (36). Useful surveys and discussions of the pioneer motif in nineteenth-century Anglo-Ontario writing and thought include: Smith, "Farms, Forests and Cities," 71–94; Wood, *The Land in Canadian Prose*; Susan Glickman, *The Picturesque and the Sublime: A Poetics of the Canadian Landscape* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998); Carole Gerson, *A Purer Taste: The Writing and Reading of Fiction in English in Nineteenth-century Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989); and Royce MacGillivray, "Novelists and the Glengarry Pioneer," *Ontario History* 65, no. 2 (June 1973): 61–68.

77 For example: Samuel Thompson, *Reminiscences of a Canadian Pioneer for the Last Fifty Years (1833–1883)* (1884); E.M. Morphy, *A York Pioneer Looking Back, 1834–1884* (1890); James Robert Gowan, *Incidents Connected with Pioneer Life in a New Country*

(1894); Alexander SINCLAIR, *Pioneer Reminiscences* (1898); and David KENNEDY, *Incidents of Pioneer Days at Guelph and the County of Bruce* (1903).

78 GLICKMAN, *The Picturesque and the Sublime*, 47. The valorisation of pioneer themes in Victorian Canadian literature is also addressed in WOOD, *The Land in Canadian Prose*, and Carole GERSON, *A Purer Taste.*

79 GERSON, *A Purer Taste*, 98, 135. Susanna MOODIE: *Roughing It in the Bush, or, Life in Canada* (1852); *Life in the Clearings Versus the Bush* (1853); *Life in the Backwoods: A Sequel to Roughing It In the Bush* (1887). Catherine PARR TRAILL: *The Canadian Crusoes: A Tale of the Rice Lake Plains* (1853); *Pearls and Pebbles: or, Notes of an Old Naturalist* (1894).

80 *Canadian Illustrated News* 21, no. 18 (1 May 1880): 280–81.

81 George Agnew Reid, typed note dated 7 October 1941, in Reid Scrapbook 1, 132 (Edward P. Taylor Research Library and Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario). As Reid remarked in that same note, "finding a log yard near my studio in which were great logs resembling those found in Canada, I seized the opportunity to paint a Canadian picture."

82 "The Industrial Exhibition," *Mail,* 25 Sept. 1879.

83 For example: Watson to Lamb, 29 Mar. 1909, and Watson to Mrs F.J. Martin (Thamesville, Ontario), 28 Feb. 1922. Homer Watson fonds, NGCLA.

84 Watson discussed plans for the series in letters to Newton MacTavish, 21 July and 30 Oct. 1908[?] (Newton MacTavish papers, North York Public Library, Toronto). Harper's statement that various paintings were completed beginning in the 1890s (HARPER, *Homer Watson*, n.p.) contradicts the Watson/MacTavish correspondence. *A Land of Thrift*, 81.3 × 114.3 cm was exhibited at the Art Association of Montreal and at the Normal School (Toronto) in 1883 (see MILLER, *Homer Watson* [1988], 145), and was described in the *Hamilton Spectator* on 5 October 1963.

85 Ann C. COLLEY, *Nostalgia and Recollection in Victorian Culture* (New York: Palgrave, 1998), 5.

86 Watson to Lismer, 30 Sept. [1930]. Homer Watson fonds, NGCLA. This aspect of Watson's thought is considered throughout NOONAN, *Refining the Real Canada.*

87 Elizabeth WATERSTON and Douglas HOFFMAN, eds., *On Middle Ground: Landscape and Life in Wellington County 1841–1891* (Guelph: University of Guelph, 1974), 31.

88 HAYES, *Waterloo County*, 189.

89 Homer WATSON, "A Landscape Painter's Day," quoted in VANEVERY, *With Faith, Ignorance and Delight,* 61–62.

90 See especially David BROWNSTEIN, "Early Conservation Efforts in Waterloo County," *Waterloo Historical Society* annual volume 86 (1998): 17–31.

91 "Let him paint": quoted in NOONAN, *Refining the Real Canada*, 27; "or shall I say shock": Watson to Lyle, 15 Feb. 1933.

92 Katherine HALE, "The Art of Homer Watson: A Leading Canadian Landscape Artist," *The Canadian Magazine* 20, no. 2 (December 1902): 140; GRIER, "Art Notes," 259; "Art Exhibition," *Montreal Daily Witness* (26 Mar. 1904); "Annual of R.C.A. Open," *Ottawa Journal*, 28 Nov. 1912.

93 Mary TIVY, "Dreams and Nightmares: Changing Visions of the Past at Doon Pioneer Village," *Ontario History* 94, no. 1 (Spring 2002): 84.

94 Ibid., 93–94.

Homer Watson et *The Pioneer Mill*

BRIAN FOSS

L'exposition inaugurale de la Canadian Academy of Arts, tenue à Toronto en 1880, comprenait un tableau intitulé *The Pioneer Mill*, par Homer Ransford Watson, alors âgé de 25 ans. Watson était presqu'entièrement autodidacte en tant qu'artiste et, jusque là, il avait toujours vécu dans la petite ville ontarienne de Doon (aujourd'hui dans la banlieue de Kitchener), sauf pour un court séjour à Toronto et un voyage de quelques mois à travers l'État de New York. *The Pioneer Mill*, grand tableau représentant un petit moulin à scie abandonné, actionné par une roue hydraulique, a été acheté, lors de l'exposition, par le marquis de Lorne, gouverneur-général du Canada, pour en faire cadeau à sa belle-mère, la reine Victoria. Bien que Watson ait connu du succès lors d'expositions et une couverture de presse favorable dès la fin des années 1870 (réussite dont il a plus tard diminué l'ampleur afin d'établir la date d'achat de 1880 comme événement fondateur dans le développement de sa carrière), cette vente a été un événement décisif pour l'établissement de sa réputation à long terme. L'image d'un Watson non formé et isolé, profondément attaché à ses racines rurales, puisant son inspiration artistique directement et uniquement dans la nature et modèle de toutes les vertus associées à la vie à la campagne, allait, jusqu'à aujourd'hui, définir essentiellement l'artiste et son œuvre. Le présent article explore cette image en considérant les facteurs qui ont influencé Watson dans le choix de représenter un ancien moulin. Il est question de la représentation des premiers moulins dans l'art et la littérature contemporains ; du développement économique du sud de l'Ontario ; des rapports entre les réalités rurales et urbaines, des attentes et des attitudes ; et de l'histoire personnelle de Watson et de ses ancêtres.

Les vieux moulins étaient un sujet favori durant la seconde moitié du XIX^e^ siècle, non seulement de Watson, mais aussi de plusieurs artistes, illustrateurs, romanciers, poètes et mémorialistes nord-américains, qui associaient sentimentalement l'abandon et la destruction physique de ces structures au déclin d'une société antérieure fondée sur des entreprises familiales et une conception généralement sans complication de l'organisation sociale et économique. Les moulins en ruine furent donc associés à la déchéance, à

la mort, au passage du temps. En fait, la vie sociale et économique dans le sud de l'Ontario, en particulier, connaissait une évolution radicale pendant la jeunesse de Watson et les premières années de sa vie d'adulte, les années mêmes où il a peint *The Pioneer Mill*. Après avoir été le soutien des économies locales, les moulins familiales étaient remplacées à un rythme étonnant par des entreprises grandioses et plus impersonnelles, où les anciennes technologies étaient écrasées par des procédés industriels à grande échelle. Cela n'était nulle part aussi évident que dans le comté de Waterloo, où Watson vivait et travaillait. Ce boom industriel a éventuellement transformé des villages endormis en centres industriels qui employaient un grand nombre de gens, reliés les uns aux autres par une infrastructure de transport de plus en plus étendue. La croissance s'accompagnait de soucis grandissants concernant le stress, les menaces à la santé mentale et physique et la perte de l'autosuffisance, qui était largement vue comme une caractéristique de la vie rurale, et, en même temps, d'une nostalgie pour les anciennes formes de vie rurale et d'organisation économique. En opposition à ces développements, Watson et les auteurs d'articles de journaux et de revues cultivaient sa réputation d'humble fils de la terre et la renforçaient en soulignant ses origines comme petit-fils de pionniers locaux et héritier des valeurs pionnières d'autosuffisance, de simplicité et de droiture. De fait, le bâtiment représenté dans *The Pioneer Mill* s'inspire d'un moulin construit par le grand-père de Watson, et ce qu'on pourrait appeler un culte largement répandu du pionnier était lié au courant de nostalgie sociale dont le dernier quart du XIX^e^ siècle était imprégné.

L'auto-identification de Watson en tant que paysan était à double tranchant. Alors que *The Pioneer Mill* épouse une approche nostalgique au déclin et à la perte d'un mode de vie passé, ses écrits inédits révèlent qu'il était conscient que c'était l'exploitation du bois qui était en partie responsable de la ruine de sa famille, parce que la demande de bois pour le moulin familial avait eu pour conséquence d'épuiser la ressource même dont dépendait l'avenir du moulin à scie. Bien qu'il se soit fait le champion des pionniers du comté de Waterloo comme hérauts de la civilisation dans ce qui avait été un désert, et que, dans plusieurs de ses tableaux, il ait présenté une relation idyllique de dépendance mutuelle entre l'humanité et les sites qu'elle occupait, Watson reconnaissait aussi les dangers associés à la croissance d'activités civilisatrices. Ces réalités étaient pour lui d'importants aspects de *The Pioneer Mill*, qui sont devenus encore plus évidents alors que le XIX^e^ siècle a fait place au XX^e^. Les menaces à la survie de la forêt locale, suivies de la Première Guerre mondiale avec son utilisation sans précédent d'une technologie moderne létale, ont marqué *The Pioneer Mill* et Watson lui-même comme symboles d'une manière de vivre devenue irrécupérable et non viable. La

redéfinition, en 1979, de Doon Pioneer Village (inauguré en 1957) en Doon Heritage Crossroads et l'actualisation des objets exposés pour les éloigner de l'époque des pionniers et les rapprocher de 1914, ont donné le coup de grâce à la viabilité des structures sociales et économiques simples que Watson avait évoquées avec nostalgie dans *The Pioneer Mill* et dont il avait donné l'exemple dans sa propre vie.

Traduction : Élise Bonnette

1 | James Wilson Morrice, *Market Scene in Venice*, ca. 1902, oil on panel, 15 × 13 cm, Bequest of Eleanor Morrice, The Beaverbrook Art Gallery, Fredericton. (Photo: Beaverbrook Art Gallery)

James Wilson Morrice at the Rialto Market in Venice

SANDRA PAIKOWSKY

When James Wilson Morrice travelled to Venice during the last years of the nineteenth and the first decade of the twentieth century, he gave much of his time and attention to the areas around the Rialto Bridge and the Piazza San Marco. This is hardly surprising as the two sites were the most famous Venetian monuments, even to those who had never seen the city. In the late nineteenth century, Venice was undergoing renewed celebrity as travel tourism increased, catering to the enormous numbers of people who were seduced by the plethora of publications, photographs, and postcards that lured more and more visitors to the city.[1] The Rialto represented the commercial heart of Venice while San Marco symbolized the authority of the Venetian republic; both had attracted travelers and tourists for over a thousand years and Morrice was no exception. Certainly, he drew and painted various other sites: near the Public Gardens at the eastern end of the city, close to the church of San Trovaso to the south, and around Campo Santi Apostoli toward the northwest.[2] But their numbers are slim in comparison to his images of the two places that had defined Venice in fact and legend since the city's official founding in 421. The material and topographical configuration of San Marco and Rialto allowed Morrice to construct and experiment with what could be considered his archetypal image of urban Venice: an open foreground of water or forecourt of pavement against a pierced wall of buildings disposed within a carefully contained rectilinear space in a gentle grid-like composition. That said, this text will look at one painting of the Rialto[3] that largely contradicts Morrice's more familiar images of the City of Saint Mark.

Morrice's panel painting or pochade of the Campo San Giacomo di Rialto in the collection of the Beaverbrook Art Gallery (Fig. 1) celebrates what Henry James called "the summer Venice that is the visible Venice," in his collected essays, *Italian Hours* (first published in 1909). The visible city described by Morrice, however, is equally revealing of the invisible; that is to say, the inner compulsions of the painter and the complexities of his reaction to what lies beneath the appearance of things. Morrice's picture of the Rialto is a discrete Venetian image of the mundane business of living one's life, of going from one place to another, of buying and selling basic necessities, as implied by his

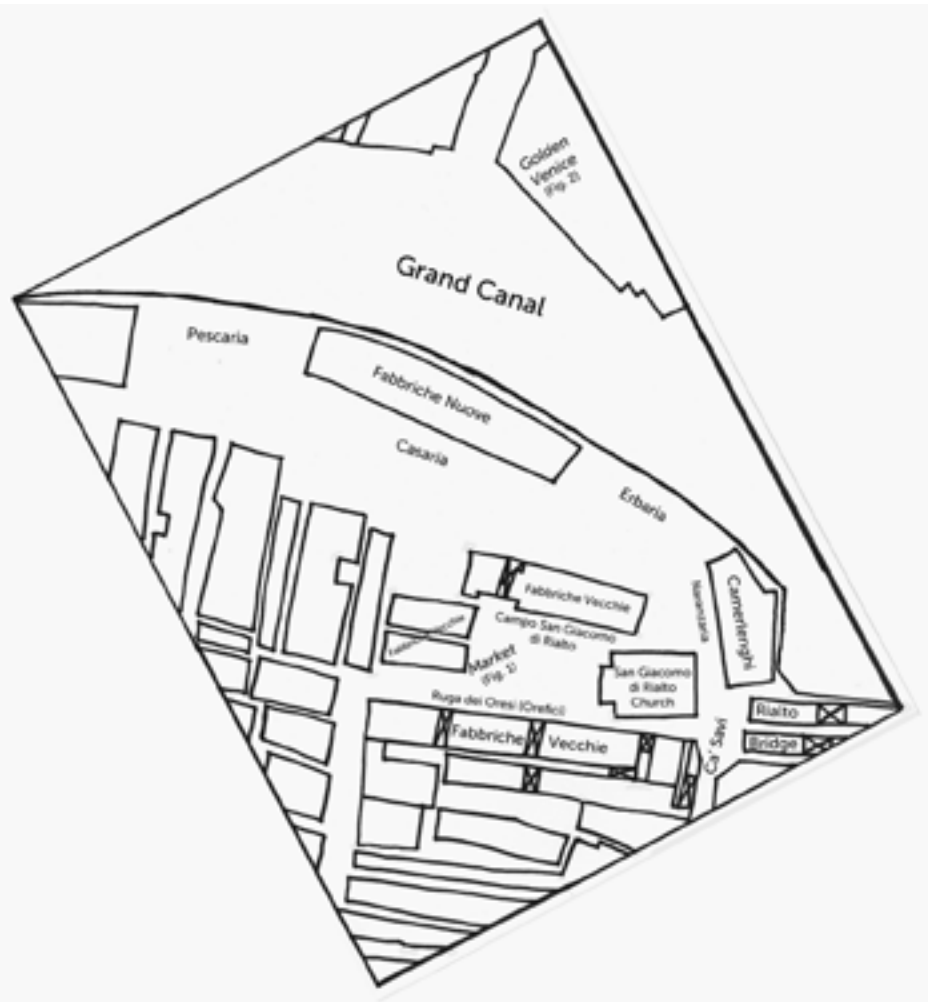
2 | James Wilson Morrice, *Golden Venice*, ca. 1903, oil on canvas, 49 × 59.8 cm, Bequest of the Estate of the Honourable Hartland de M. Molson, © McCord Museum, Montreal, M2002.139.1. (Photo: McCord Museum)

three female protagonists. But this particular site is unusual for Morrice, who preferred the sweeping views of the *palazzi* on the Grand Canal at either end of the Rialto Bridge (Fig. 2) to those of its market area.[4] The plaza or campo (Fig. 3), which is also called San Giacometto and named after the ancient church on its southern side, was ringed by food markets, shops of all sorts, warehouses, offices, banks, and housing. By the eleventh century it signified the city's commerce and for several more centuries it was the centre of local and international trade. Because the Rialto market area was the main source of what we now refer to as goods and services, it also symbolized the daily life of the city, functioning as the social as well as the economic centre of Venice for both men and women (Fig. 4). The Rialto was a "cosmopolitan emporium

3 | Naya Studio, Venezia. *S. Giacometto di Rialto e mercato dei frutti*, postcard, pre-1905, Fotocromo-Milano. (Photo: the author)

but also a centre of intellectual exchange," for writers, artists, artisans and their patrons.[5]

Morrice's relatively intimate view shows three Venetian women at one corner of the spacious campo and a small section of the arcaded two-story Fabbriche Vecchie complex of offices that frames it on three sides. The buildings, designed by Lo Scarpagnino (Antonio di Pietro Abbondi, ca. 1465–1549) and completed in 1522, were the focus of the major reconstruction project ordered by the city following the disastrous fire of 1514 that ravaged the entire area.[6] The portion of the Fabbriche Vecchie indicated in the right half of Morrice's panel was populated by small shops or *botteghini* and business was also conducted in the shaded arcade in makeshift offices. These archways led as well to the large food markets adjoining the campo



4 | Map of the Rialto, from Piero Pazzi, *Lo Stradario di Venenezia*, Vol. II (Venezia: Pazzi, 2001), 558; with author's adjustments. (Photo: Nicola Krantz)

where, as the Parisian literary and art critic Théophile Gautier commented, "Beneath [the] arcades swarms an active and noisy population, that mounts and descends, comes and goes, buys and sells, laughs and brawls."[7] Morrice's little table in front of the corner column would have been part of the network of moveable stalls, along with more permanent shops that were (and still are to some degree) intrinsic to the expansion of trade in the market after Lo Scarpagnino's reconstruction of the area. The pilaster behind the blue table has a circular bas-relief with a carving of the rampant Lion of Saint Mark with his Gospel that may possibly date from the mid-sixteenth century and was supposedly placed there in 1848 at the time of the short-lived Republic of Saint Mark during the Austrian occupation of Venice.[8] This ubiquitous

5 | Unknown photographer, *Venezia. Mercato delle Erbe*, postcard, pre-1905, V. Generi, Venezia. (Photo: the author)

symbol of the power and glory of Venice was a constant reminder of the city's unique past and a continued presence within its ever-changing urban identity.

Since the earliest days of the Rialto market, the arcades along the northwestern side of the campo were largely populated by goldsmiths and silversmiths whose famous workshops are the origin of the name of the long street at the centre of Morrice's panel: the Ruga degli Orefici or dei Oresi in Venetian dialect. In his *Italian Hours* essay on Venice, Henry James commented that "the jewellers of this celebrated precinct – they have their immemorial row – make almost as fine a show as the fruiterers." The *ruga*, which begins at the northern foot of the Rialto Bridge and continues for several blocks, was the principal commercial street of the Rialto and a counterpart to the Merceria off the Piazza San Marco. Because the Ruga degli Orefici functioned as a continuation of the bridge as well as the spine of the Fabbriche Vecchie buildings and the market, it was a favourite site of photographs and postcards of late nineteenth century Venice (Fig. 5). The portion of the street nearest the bridge was first called the Drapperia in the fourteenth century after the drapers, whose ornately crafted fabrics epitomized the Venetian textile trade – a significant part of the luxury goods

industry that had contributed so extensively to the city's wealth and still signifies Italian elegance.

The red-toned colonnaded Fabbriche Vecchie building along the left half of the Morrice image originally held the offices of the Dieci Savi, the city tax inspectors. Latterly it became and still functions today as the seat of Venice's Magistrato alle Acque. Its front façade is located on the Riva del Vin alongside the Grand Canal and can be glimpsed as a red daub in Morrice's painting, *Rialto Bridge* (Montreal Museum of Fine Arts). Some of his views of the Riva del Carbon across the canal, including his famous *Venice at the Golden Hour* (MMFA) were painted from the café in front of the Marconi Hotel, which is adjacent to the main entrance to the Ca' Dieci Savi alle Decime. The street level arcade of the Ca' Savi extends along the campo San Giacometto and is crowned by a (recently restored) frescoed vaulted ceiling, making it the second longest covered passageway in Venice after the Procuratie on the Piazza San Marco. Each of the small shops nestled between the colonnade arches and still identified by their canopies, also corresponded to the units created by the individual vaulted cells of the colonnaded passageways.

Fabbriche Vecchie is given only passing mention in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century English and Italian guidebooks to Venice. Eugenio Musati, however, paid particular attention to the arcades in an entry in his *I Monumenti di Venezia. Guida Sinottica* from 1895.[9] This may be due to the fact that the book was published to coincide with the first *Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte in Venezia* and offered a more diligent description of the lesser-known glories of Venice. In most publications, the primary tourist attraction of the campo was the church of San Giacomo di Rialto known to Venetians as San Giacometto.[10] Positioned on the opposite side of the campo from that portion of the Fabbriche Vecchie in the Morrice panel, the church was supposedly founded in the fifth century and consecrated in 1177. That Morrice visited the church can be surmised from another of his paintings of the Fabbriche Vecchie that is part of the Thomson collection and a drawing for that image in his MMFA sketchbook #18. In both instances a greater part of the buildings and a significant portion of the campo pavement are included, suggesting that his viewing point was the church's medieval wooden porch.

Travel books about Venice, on the other hand, neglected the campo and even the church in favour of mouth-watering discussion of the Rialto markets (Fig. 4): the Erbaria for fruit and vegetables, the Pescaria for fish, the Casaria for dairy products, and the Naranzaria for luxury food like oranges. Numerous writers, beginning with the chronicles of Marino Sanudo in the late fifteenth century to Henry James in his *Italian Hours* four centuries later, effusively described the dazzling shapes and colours of piled-high produce in the market, where "All one's senses indeed are vigorously attacked; the whole

6 | James Wilson Morrice, *Houses with Figures* [Campo San Stefano], ca. 1902, oil on panel, 23.5 × 34.9 cm, Gift of William J. Morrice, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal, 1943.801. (Photo: Montreal Museum of Fine Arts)

place is violently hot and bright, all odorous and noisy." That Morrice was not immune to this aspect of the market's charms is proven by his painting (private collection) of a row of docked vegetable-laden *caorline*, the utilitarian boats that he pictured alongside Jacopo Sansovino's Fabbriche Nuove, which borders the Grand Canal slightly to the east of the Rialto campo.[11]

Morrice's attraction to the Campo San Giacometto could be explained by Théophile Gautier's comment on "the old and new constructions of Scarpagnino and Sansovino. These reddened and degraded buildings, admirably toned and tinted by time and neglect, must constitute the despair of the municipality and the delight of painters."[12] While Morrice had produced other images of the enclosed space of a Venetian campo, none is quite as immediate as that of the Rialto market. His view of the Campo San Stefano (MMFA) (Fig. 6) accurately implies an area almost as large and open as that in his several paintings of the monumental Piazzetta San Marco. In comparison, his views of the *campi* in *San Giovanni Nuovo* (National Gallery

of Canada) and of San Vidal in *Red Houses, Venice* (MMFA) are more intimate because of the smaller size of the actual sites but also because of Morrice's choice of a viewing point. Nevertheless, in these works Morrice usually gave about a third of the painting surface to the pavement of the campo: as a means to frame both his architectural subject and the small figures who walk along its forecourt, and also to provide a strong horizontal movement to balance the various vertical elements.

The situation is quite different in his construction of the Rialto Market picture. Its dramatically condensed pictorial space, the sharply cropped arcade of the northerly Fabbriche Vecchie, the falsely curved façade of the Ca' Dieci Savi, and mere sliver of the campo pavement, all disrupt Morrice's usual distanced view of Venice as an unruffled and clearly laid-out urban vista. Similarly the three female figures also challenge his tendency to sometimes portray Venetian women almost as *staffage*. Here they more than hold their own within the architectural surroundings and simultaneously measure the space in terms of time and place. Their quiet dignity and aura of self-possession signify their allure: "Nothing can surpass the grace of the shawl-clad figure seen down the perspective of the long streets."[13] Needless to say, Morrice's highly tuned sensitivity to what he sees and his refined ability to turn it into a painting is as strong here as in his other images of a Venetian campo. His pictorial structure again exemplifies composition as the arrangement of unequal things, as Ruskin put it. The use of a vertical format, however, is particularly appropriate to this close-up, low view of a relatively narrow and congested architectural site. By abruptly truncating its magisterial buildings, he produces a vignette view rather than an urban portrait. This in turn makes the Fabbriche Vecchie seem less officious and more reminiscent of the types of anonymous buildings that line the network of streets leading into the campo.

As always, Morrice composes his image with a balance of directional movements that function like an invisible grid. In this pochade, however, the pictorial structure encourages and accommodates his audience rather than emphasizing the separation between the viewer and the viewed as when he uses a broad open foreground. The visual construction seems to be divided vertically in half as the solid flat corner pillars on one side play with the upward layering of punctured open doorways, arches, and windows on the other. The vertical thrust of the structural skeleton of the Ca' Savi is reinforced by the sturdy legs of the blue market table as well as by the female figures within the space. A small green wooden doorway, which marked an entrance to the covered passageway,[14] also reiterates the rectangles of the upper-storey windows as well as the large stone columns on the opposite side of the street. More subtly, the wobbly arches on the first floor of the building play with the negative shapes of the market table.

In strong counterpoint is Morrice's interweaving of the horizontal movement across the panel. Most strikingly, he has slightly adjusted the height of the entablature of the columns at the right so that it seems to continue the distinctive stringcourse of the Ca' Dieci Savi. To enhance the tensions of the composition, Morrice eliminates any references to the elegant Renaissance stone balcony with its marble fretwork to the immediate right of the corner pillar. The small daub of blue above the pillar is the only reference to the sky but it also functions as a tonal counterpoint to the low table. Throughout the image, smaller horizontal elements like the tabletop, the lines of the capitals, the iron bar on the green door, and the bottom of the pale canopy contradict and temper the verticality of the architecture and the pochade itself. The flatness and frontality of Morrice's forms give them an aura and immediacy that is reinforced through the materiality of the paint and the physicality of the panel.

Circular elements, which are so prevalent in Venetian Renaissance architecture, also soften the geometry of Morrice's grid. For example, the loops of the first-storey arches replicate the shape of the incised relief to the right as well as the women's covered heads. The large, oddly trapezoidal awnings that stretch over the Ruga degli Orefici add another organic configuration that is reiterated by the shawled figures. Similarly, the wedged dark awnings echo the tilted shape of the upper section of the Ca' Savi while the pale bright coverings refer to Morrice's design of the muted pavement of the Ruga and the corner of the campo. As so often occurs with Morrice, there are numerous subtle plays of diagonal movements as shapes and forms align themselves along intersecting axes, like the patterned ornamentation of Veneto-Gothic facades. As they traverse the surface of the panel in various directions, the diagonals also trace the multiple movements that constitute the modernist glance. The similar shapes that change in scale and their shifting movements make the image appear larger than the actual size of the panel and thus all the more persuasive as a record of daily life in Venice.

While the vertical format is true to how he actually perceived the site and accurately records the spatial sensations of the place, this upright composition suggests that Morrice was being more experimental in handling the space than is usual in his Venice views. The implied pictorial depth is quite limited and almost abrupt; the Ruga degli Orefici, which is a comparatively long and wide street for a Venetian walkway now seems to be as cropped as the adjacent buildings. The street functioned like a long thread that tied the Rialto Bridge to the Campo San Giovanni and northward to the fish market. However, the loggias of the Fabbriche Vecchie, especially those of the building on the right side of the panel, disturb the Ruga's continuity: "the architectural element of the rows of columns emerges as yet another autonomous motif that permeates the fabric … This creates a second theme

that provides cohesion for the individual moments, another red thread that makes a coherent experience of the multipartite, interwoven space possible."[15] The criss-cross rhythms in Morrice's image reveal and even exaggerate this complex relationship between the street and the arcades and shape our understanding of the site as a place and as a painting.

The positioning of the three female figures reiterates the topography of the site: the left figure proceeds along the Ruga toward the bridge, the middle figure marks the point of intersection between two wings of the Fabbriche Vecchie, and the third marks the perimeter of the Campo San Giacometto. Their careful placement makes the street a place of habitation, not just transition. But Morrice's compressed vertical space also keeps one's eye from wandering too far away. Certainly the topography of Venice, with its tall buildings and its assortment of *calle*, *fondamenta*, *salizada*, *ramo*, and *ruga* laid out in a bewildering maze of stone and water, often ensures a limited scanning of many sites. Morrice keeps this vista more tightly in check by constructing the image around the details of the architecture rather than the larger design of the buildings. Open skies and almost empty campi or canals that gave breathing space to the architectural facades in Morrice's other Venetian images have now vanished, replaced here by an enclosed and inhabited slice of the city. Similarly, clear summer air and luminescent dappled sunshine have displaced his usual softly hued and watery atmosphere.

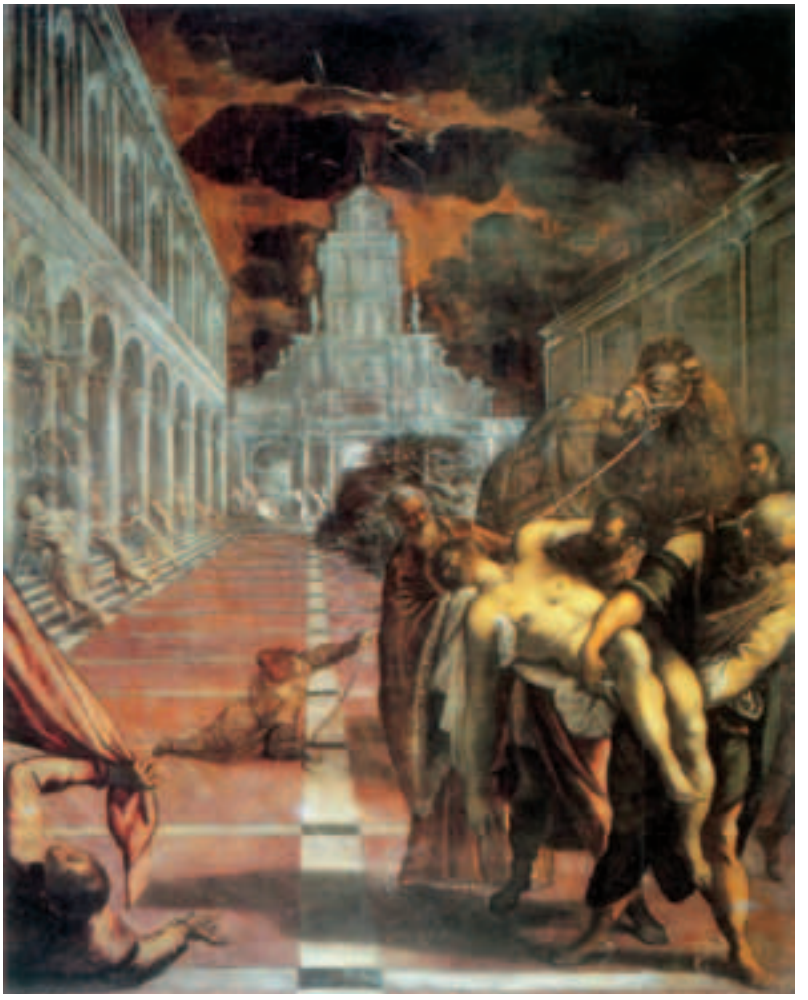
Within this small corner of the Rialto Market, the plays of colour and light connect and divide the forms within an almost abstract design. Despite the clarity of their silhouettes, the lack of any strong distinction between the boundaries of the figures and the architecture also reinforces this sense of the ambiguous and the actual. Morrice's foreshortened and filled-up space gives a sense of orderly enclosure but he also maintains the disquieting modernist preference for the fragmentary. Another paradox lies in his careful attention to constructing his image at the same time that he displays his loose, almost flimsy touch, so that paint functions as form not effect. The somewhat experimental space of this painting and its heightened colour could suggest the painting may have been done after its usual date of around 1901–1902. But because there are so few available documents, the dates of Morrice's work are often as elusive as the exact dates of his trips to Venice.

Morrice did more than one hundred paintings of Venice and filled several documented sketchbooks with drawings of the city, so it is worth considering the Rialto market pochade in terms of possible lessons learned. The most unusual compositional element here is the strong and unreciprocated diagonal sweep of the upper stories of the Ca' Dieci Savi. Morrice may have intended to suggest (rather than portray) the depth of the Ruga degli Orefici

by giving a decided axial curve to the building, with only a relatively narrow patch of pavement indicating the street. The palazzo appears to turn inward as he fabricates the optical distortions that come with a low viewpoint. Perhaps there is also a nod to the (exaggerated) foreshortened peripheral vision of a pedestrian on the Ruga. Such an aperture-like image is unusual for Morrice who preferred a less disruptive spatial arrangement in his Venetian work. However, the use of an oblique viewpoint to emphasize the immediacy of the image and the aura of the moment was popular with other foreign painters, especially Americans[16] like his friend Maurice Prendergast.[17] It was, perhaps, one way for international artists to make the streets of Venice seem more accessible and less daunting, while still acknowledging the exoticism or 'foreignness' of the place and its people. It is also possible that Morrice considered a cropped view of the buildings of the Fabbriche Vecchie as a means to soften the site and to temper its historical resonance, in the same way that he only painted partial views of St. Mark's Basilica and the adjoining Ducal Palace.

I would also like to suggest that Morrice's departure from his decidedly frontal compositions might also have been encouraged by his encounter with the paintings of Jacopo Tintoretto. One of Morrice's notebooks makes mention of the church of the Madonna dell'Orto, which holds several of Tintoretto's most magisterial paintings as well as his own tomb. His painting of the *Presentation of the Virgin at the Temple*, ca. 1552, with its famously distended curving staircase is exemplary of Tintoretto's use of an almost-Mannerist lunging pictorial space. Similarly his *Theft of the Body of Saint Mark* (Fig. 7) from a decade later with its strange illusionist arcade along the left side of the canvas exemplifies his spatial manipulations that may have affected Morrice. Commissioned by the Scuola Grande di San Marco, the painting was housed in the Marciana Library as of 1860, before going to the Accademia museum in 1920. The Gallerie dell'Accademia, which had been remodeled and modernized in 1895 and was also noted in Morrice's sketchbooks, provided easy access to Venetian painting and detailed descriptions of its holdings were to be found in every guide to the city.[18]

Then as now, Venetian churches were filled with work by Tintoretto but the most important collection, which includes over sixty of his paintings, was on two floors of the Scuola Grande di San Rocco. It would have been surprising if Morrice had not known the celebrated Scuola and even the adjacent church, which holds more Tintoretto canvases.[19] While Morrice does not attempt anything even slightly approximating the perspectival distortion that is second nature to Tintoretto, he may have found a different way of seeing the city's architecture by looking at Venetian painting. Certainly Tintoretto and other painters often modeled their biblical architectural



7 | Tintoretto, *Theft of the Body of St. Mark*, ca. 1564, oil on canvas, 421 × 306 cm, Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice. (Photo: the author)

settings on Venetian buildings.[20] If Tintoretto's images did have an effect on Morrice, they might have also influenced his intentions for the three women in the Rialto panel. Participating in a fluid curved procession, the figures in their different poses elucidate and even rationalize the distorted pictorial space. This contrasting interchange of the organic and constructed, of fact and fiction, is intrinsic to the play of fixity and flux in Tintoretto's great biblical narratives in the Scuola San Rocco.

A further factor suggesting that Morrice probably had a good look at Tintoretto is his open brushwork and the sensation that he is painting light over dark, the natural colour of the pochade, but also the formula for much of Venetian sixteenth-century painting. Another implication of his knowledge of Tintoretto, as well the paintings of the preceding generation of Venetian painters lead by Giovanni Bellini, is Morrice's use of stronger, more saturated

tones of red, blue, green, and ochre, which is so evident in all of their work from the early years of the Renaissance in Venice.[21] I am not suggesting that such painting caused Morrice to forsake his interest in French Impressionism (in its widest definition); however, it is well documented that many Parisian artists of the time developed a new admiration for Tintoretto through the numerous reproductions of his work as well as first-hand encounters.[22]

Tintoretto's 'modernity' was defined by the two-dimensionality of his planes of unbounded colour and his creation of a dynamic and unnatural space through drawing and light that defied traditional perspective. These traits may help explain why Manet, Cézanne, and Degas were so attracted to the Venetian's paintings. Furthermore, the Impressionists' notion of "painting quickly," which implies the work was rapidly painted although it actually disguised a carefully considered composition, could have found a precedent in the performative *prestezza* or "quickness" in Tintoretto's paintings that overlaid his own precisely planned compositions. Various critics including his latter-day biographer Gustave Soulier, who mentioned Morrice in his important text on painters of Venice in 1905,[23] considered Tintoretto's art as "revolutionary." In his monograph on Tintoretto, Soulier wrote that the Venetian was "the most authentic and complete precursor of our modern painters,"[24] thus reinforcing the idea of "Tintoretto the Impressionist" found in other early twentieth-century writings.

At the same time, Carpaccio, who according to Henry James signified the greatest and most faithful painter of modern life,[25] was also rediscovered because his views of Renaissance Venice showed everyday life carried out in the streets of a city that was still easily recognizable. Carpaccio's narrative images such as the Saint Ursula cycle long held by the Accademia offered innumerable models for combining people and places. His work certainly influenced Maurice Prendergast as a model for inserting groups of figures into Venetian sites and Carpaccio may also have had an effect, albeit milder, on the American's friend, James Wilson Morrice. In the August 1901 issue of *Studio International*, a description of Carpaccio's painting method of unmixed colour applied bit by bit might have also struck a chord with Morrice as it was similar to the processes of Post-Impressionism. I am not suggesting that Morrice's attention to Venetian Renaissance painting caused him to "break his brushes," to the extent that it happened (so it seems to me) when he encountered the work of Matisse in the earliest years of the twentieth century. But with at least a half a dozen visits to Venice around the turn of the century, it seems more than possible that this "man with the delicate eye" would have been stimulated and encouraged by the painting that helped make Venice the major destination for so many of Morrice's contemporaries in America, Britain, and France. Without denying other factors, I believe that it may

well have been his attention to mid-sixteenth century Venetian painting that provided Morrice with the means to move from a Whistlerian *fin-de-siècle* painter to that of a robust modernist.

Venice had a strong effect on many other foreign or *stranieri* artists and the city's popularity in art periodicals, exhibitions, and collections may even have helped make their careers. Paintings by Morrice and his non-Italian contemporaries often continued Whistler's self-publicized dictum of portraying "the Venice of the Venetians," with working-class people or *popolani* moving comfortably through the streets of Venice. Certainly many modernist foreign artists gave the city a kind of contemporary monumentality, as more prosaic buildings, narrow streets, and crooked passageways became the new visual emblems of the past in the present. But despite their advocacy of representing everyday Venetian life, foreign painters produced comparatively few views of a campo, making Morrice's image of the Campo San Giacometto all that more unusual. Campi were the center of community life as they were the forecourts of the hundreds of parish churches scattered across Venice. Margaret Lovell suggests (none too persuasively) that Americans rejected the campo as a viable subject because they "tend to be hot and airless spaces. No watery reflections or shimmering leaves break up the light and suggest respite from land-locked, man-made stone enclosures."[26] It is certain that neither Prendergast nor Morrice shared this prejudice. A marked contrast to the American concept of Venice can be seen in the paintings of a campo by Venetian painters. For example, Ettore Tito's *Campo Santa Margherita* (private collection) of 1880, Giacomo Favretto's various versions of *Campo di San Polo* in mid-decade (Fig. 8), along with Alessandro Milesi's *Ciacole*, ca. 1890 (private collection), set in the Campo SS. Giovanni e Paolo, all focus on incidents in the daily life of the Venetian poor and how they lived their lives.[27] This emphasis on people over place seems to me to be the single most important narrative difference between Venetian and foreign paintings of the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. To cite only one example, the buildings, especially the Ca' da Mosto, which are the subject of Morrice's *Golden Venice* (Fig. 2), function only as background detail in Milesi's *Pope!* (Fig. 9).

While the Rialto Bridge was a common enough subject for foreign painters and photographers, the Campo San Giacomo di Rialto and the Fabbriche Vecchie were largely ignored. Among Morrice's associates, Francis Hopkinson Smith's image of the north and easterly buildings of the Fabbriche Vecchie (private collection) is one of the few to clearly show the site. Smith pays close attention to the details of the architecture but the real subject is the glamorous women doing their daily shopping amidst the piles of produce in the same corner of the campo as painted by Morrice.[28] Maurice Prendergast's

8 | Giacomo Favretto, *Mercato di campo San Polo a Venezia in giorno di sabato* [Saturday Market in the Campo San Polo, Venice], 1883, oil on canvas, 130 × 207 cm, private collection. (Photo: the author)

well-known *Market Place Venice*, ca. 1898 (private collection), that might have been familiar to his friend Morrice, relates strongly to the most popular photographs of the area: the view from the top of the Bridge, along the Ruga and the narrowed Fabbriche Vecchie. In this case, the red ceremonial flag suspended from an unseen rope on the bridge halts the deep recession of the long street. Similar views that begin closer to the foot of the Rialto Bridge and extend the length of the Ruga and beyond were painted by the Venetian, Ferruccio Scattola at the very beginning of the twentieth century.[29] His images give more attention to the architecture than Prendergast's and also show greater empathy with the *popolani* or *minore veneziani* than bestowed by most foreign painters, perhaps because they represented Scattola's own world.

Foreigners' views of the Rialto area were typified by saccharine and sentimental paintings of happy, healthy *popolani* lounging around the market – a stereotypical imagery that was beloved by the Paris and London salons and wildly popular with collectors, and eagerly reproduced in numerous art magazines. This romantic portrayal of Venetians was also promoted in books by local and foreign writers and in countless photographs and illustrations, all of which were essential to the booming tourist industry.

For example, the noted historian Pompeo Molmenti wrote, "The artistic sovereignty of Venice has loving subjects everywhere. From all parts of the world artists come to study the peculiar habits of her merry, witty people, and to enjoy the pleasant life, where the streets adorned with incomparable artistic beauties offer as smiling an aspect as the humble byways with their crumbling walls, or the canals with their green watery paths."[30]

While Venetian painters may include part of the Rialto area in their pictures, the site is usually only a backdrop to their representation of the difficult and often desperate lives of the majority of the *minore veneziani* – a subject that was seemingly of no overriding interest to foreign artists. Whistler's etchings and those of the Duveneck boys certainly focus on the *popolani*, but their images did not truly portray social and economic conditions, even though they give due diligence to the architecture of the poorer parts of Venice.[31] On the other hand, Tito's *Old Fishmarket*, 1893 (Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderne, Rome), for example, portrays a gondolier who is unemployed because, with the introduction of the *vaporetto* a decade earlier, the waterbus had become the main means of cheap transport of residents and tourists along the Grand Canal. Milesi's *Pope!* (private collection) (Fig. 9) of 1897 is similarly set at the Rialto market and the abject poverty of its protagonists may also reflect the undercurrent of social protest supported by more progressive Venetian citizens through the later nineteenth and beginning of the next century. Foreign artists could see these paintings relatively easily in Venetian (and international) exhibitions and in artists' studios. However, it is an open question whether visiting painters truly understood that depicting tattered clothes and humble settings described the reality of contemporary Venetian life for most of its people; and that the *popolani* were not merely symbols of an exotic ancient society that had somehow managed to survive and adapt to the modern age.[32]

Morrice's portrayal of the Campo San Giacomo di Rialto has no overt commentary about the city or its inhabitants, nor does his approach really stray beyond that of the carefully distanced observer. The meaning of its content could be defined by modernism, where the apparent casualness of his image, its overriding sense of the familiar, the accessibility of the subject, and the directness of its content, give the Rialto pochade its startling intimacy and its celebration of the momentary. Although his off-hand elegance is essential to his means of composing and exemplary of his modernist sensibility and the aesthetic of the period, it is quite possible that intentionally or not, he was mindful of the documenting of Venice in the plethora of photographs and illustrations circulating at the time.[33] This is only to suggest that documentary photographs by Venetians such as Carlo Ponti, Carlo Naya, Tomaso Filippi, and especially Ferdinando Ongania, whose *Calli e Canali in Venezia* was

9 | Alessandro Milesi, *Pope!* [Daddy!], 1897, oil and tempera on canvas, 151 × 189 cm, private collection. (Photo: the author)

published in English in 1899 with a preface by Ruskin, were widely available and presumably could have been of value to Morrice as an *aide-mémoire* at the very least.[34]

Photographs of the Rialto – the bridge, the campo, and the market – were available in every form of print media including advertisements. One of the most popular themes was working-class women gathered at the numerous small stalls in the campo and adjoining market areas; many others show the jumble of shops and people crowded along the Ruga degli Orefici. However, Morrice's rejection of the anecdotal or the directive narrative that was current in many Venetian photographs and postcards aimed at tourists, suggests he may have been better attuned to the sensibility of foreign photographers like Alvin Langdon Coburn, James Craig Annan, or Alfred Stieglitz, who shared his own somewhat tempered view of the city and its inhabitants.

Nevertheless, every photographer – foreign or Venetian – seemed entranced by shawled *popolani* women and they were as much a part of the allure of Venice as its canals and the buildings.

The fringed black or gray *scialle* or *siàl* in Venetian, was made of cotton or wool and was the most common covering for *popolane* until the end of World War I.[35] Younger and unmarried poor women often wore patterned and coloured shawls, but most likely these were made from reused materials. Venetian upper-class women were usually dressed in the same high-fashion French designs as their tourist-sisters, making it difficult to differentiate between these two groups based on costume alone. Such fashionable women do appear in Morrice's images of the Piazza and Piazzetta San Marco as well as the Grand Canal, but they are outnumbered overall by his shawled figures. Morrice often used the motif of cloaked women traversing the streets and arcades of Venice, but his pochade of the Rialto market is a rare example of a distinct group of three *popolane* who seem neither completely anonymous nor a kind of afterthought. Their identity is expressed through their connected poses – walking, standing, and sitting – as they progress from the Ruga degli Orefici to the Campo San Giacometto. The figures' weight and gravity as well as their dignity and demeanor put them on an equal footing with the imposing architecture in a lyrical combination of motion and stillness, of bustle and quiet.

The women have a commanding presence in the painting: two of them face the viewer (and the artist) and while the third is in profile, she is the central figure of the pochade in several ways. Positioned on the main vertical axis and closest to the viewer, her dominance is enhanced by the fullness and colour of her shawl. She is also the compositional link between the other two figures as Morrice places her head on the same level as the woman on the left but their differences maintain their separation. On the right side of the panel, a different sort of play of stance and scale connects the standing and seated figures. The two-dimensionality of the brightly cloaked body of the central figure, with its loose triangular forms, is reinforced by the flatness of the adjacent corner pillar as well as the enclosing canopy that echoes the shape of her shawl. At the same time, the tones of her long black skirt are repeated in the more modest dress of the other women. Because of his careful composing, the women have a candour and ease that exemplifies the placidity and detachment of modernist narrative in which nothing seems to happen. Morrice's intentional denial of anything that might suggest a specific story is further implied by the unidentified merchandise sold by the woman seated at the blue table – although the daubs of yellow ochre suggest that they might be brass objects like moulds and measurers or pots and pans.

Because of the nonchalance of his narrative, Morrice seems to synthesize Whistler's projection of "an unembellished Venetian life in compositions

of [relatively] stark simplicity."[36] While this theme of observed daily life is essential to notions of the nineteenth-century Baudelairean *flâneur*, there is also the suggestion here of parallel lives. Morrice is a witness to their shopping and at the same time he is also noticed by two of the women simply because they share his line of sight. Similarly, all three women are absorbed in their own tasks, just as he is absorbed in painting his pochade. This in turn leads to modernist notions of visually representing self-contemplation as an expression of the inner life of the painted, as well as that of the painter. In these two colliding worlds Morrice's Venetian women navigate their way through the city, just as he charts his way through his Venice pictures.[37] However, and perhaps more importantly, the physical and psychological distance that allows Morrice to observe and be observed by Venetian women, defines his own identity as a traveler, as a foreigner, and as an outsider.

Unlike many of his contemporaries – residents or foreigners – Morrice was not interested in picturesque impoverished girls in romanticized settings. His friend Maurice Prendergast also looked at women in Venice with the distanced view of *stranieri,* but he tended to see them more as idealized creatures with a great deal of charm and even glamour. He pictured the women, both Venetians and visitors, in Carpaccio-like large groupings moving about a *campo* or as part of a procession parading over bridges or along a *riva.*[38] Although Morrice did a few images of people gathered together on the Piazzetta in the evening, he tended to focus closely on only one group of revelers and the women are never as stereotypically comely as those by Prendergast. In a way, Morrice's more pragmatic images of *popolane* are somewhat closer in handling and attitude (but not necessarily subject) to those of Walter Sickert[39] than Prendergast's "celebrated Venetian woman notable for her fringed shawl, wrapped closely around her shapely figure."[40] Morrice's approach to picturing women is also decidedly different from the artificialities in many of John Singer Sargent's images of beautiful and enigmatic *minore* Venetian women.[41]

So who are the women in Morrice's Rialto pochade? The simplest answer is that they represented the many anonymous *popolane* who defined the economic, social, and cultural spheres of the area in and around the market. The walking and seated figures may be wives and mothers whose domestic responsibilities were unceasing: "dalla messa alla mensa" (from the church mass to the meal), while the standing woman is likely an unmarried servant because of her bright shawl. Yet nothing in their rendering suggests that Morrice considered them within the broadest definition of portraiture.[42] In modernist terms, the three *popolane* are more of a metaphor for women rather than a likeness of particular people. For his own reasons, he decided upon three female figures and then pictorially reinvented them on the panel. The physical and psychological distance between the painter and the painted

10 | Unknown photographer, *Tipi veneziani*, postcard, sent 1902, N.P.G. Diffida. (Photo: the author)

further symbolizes that he knew nothing about them except their social class, and that seems to have been largely a matter of their costume. In many ways, the anonymity of Morrice's women reflects the attitudes of the outsider whether in art or literature.

Popolane were a favourite preoccupation of foreign illustrators and writers and almost every travel book on Venice devotes long passages to constructing and imposing an identity onto these constantly observed but seemingly exotic women (Fig. 10). One of the few *stranieri* authors to mention *minore veneziane* shopping at the Rialto market, the French writer Charles Yiarte commented that they came from "the different quarters of Venice … and from every corner of the town." But he then divides them into two contrasting groups: girls decked out in "coloured handkerchiefs … jewellery of delicately-worked gold … bright glass beads … or glass balls; while, wrapped in old gray shawls and showing only their wrinkled profiles and silver locks, [are] the old women of the Rialto."[43] The simpler characterization by the British author

and critic Arthur Symons almost describes Morrice's figures: "Venetian women are rarely pretty, often charming, generally handsome. And all of them, without exception, walk splendidly."[44] Henry [Henrietta] Perl however, criticized this limited view of *minore* women: "Many able Italian critics … are of the opinion that artists of the present day do not sufficiently study the women of Venice" and goes on rather contradictorily to say that there are really two kinds of young women, blonds or brunettes: "These peculiar types are of very great importance to the general effect of any Venetian scene, and must therefore be taken fully into account in any study of the local colouring of the place. They do not exactly give the whole scheme of colour, but they give the tone to every picture which can truly be styled Venetian."[45]

As mentioned earlier, the shawl was a constant motif in the visual and literary representation of poor Venetian women: "that most graceful of garments,"[46] which lends "grace and distinction to the wearer."[47] In Morrice's images of Venetian women, the *scialle* becomes a metaphor for the disguised body, but they wear their cloaks with the same poise as the upper class carried their parasols and he often painted the two classes of women co-existing easily within the same picture. In his pochade of the Rialto area, the shawl could be seen as a visual sign of the paradox between their immediacy and their anonymity, which also represents a woman's position in Venetian society. However, by the beginning of the twentieth century the *siàl* had become a symbol of working women's (slowly) growing economic empowerment and emancipation.[48] The poorest of the poor, they were a formidable presence in the city. Women were the largest percentage of the population, partly because of enormous immigration of girls from the countryside who came to Venice to work as servants. They married relatively late, largely due to their responsibilities to their own families and a lack of money for dowries. They also had fewer children than elsewhere and this may help explain why their mortality rate was comparatively lower than Venetian popolani men.

Despite advancing modernization within Venice's social, political, and cultural spheres, enormous economic problems that began with health and housing continue to plague the city long after Italian unification in 1866; and the *popolane* were emblematic of and sometimes blamed for these difficulties. To add further insult to injury, poor women (and men) were regularly accused of moral corruption and a life of impropriety, supposedly preferring hardship to hard work. Their children were also considered ill-fated because it was assumed that their mothers were irresponsible and slatternly. Ironically, this condemnation of an improvident lower class became the source of those numerous pictures adored by wealthy art collectors in which healthy, carefree, and fun-loving Venetians of all ages lounge around the Rialto

11 | Henry Woods, *At the Foot of the Rialto Bridge*, 1881, oil on canvas, 71 × 98 cm, private collection. (Photo: http://www.the-athenaeum.org)

market, as seen in Henry Woods, *At the Foot of the Rialto Bridge*, 1881 (private collection) (Fig. 11). In reality, as well as carrying out their onerous duties as wives and mothers, lower class women had worked for generations as servants of all sorts: domestics, waitresses, seamstresses, sellers of water, food, clothes, and other basic commodities (Fig. 12), along with prostitution and the equally dishonourable job of modeling at the Accademia museum art school. As witnessed by the numerous photographs of Venice in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, poor women were a constant presence in every sector of the city, providing the goods and services that allowed Venice to function. Thus, the presence of three closely-knit *popolane* in Morrice's image of a corner of the Campo San Giacometto is not an invention but a confirmation of the public place of *minore veneziane* women.

As the nineteenth century progressed, more working women became involved with trades but their meager wages still meant continued poverty. Slight improvements in schooling and specialized workshops led to more employment (but little increase in pay) in old *mestieri* like lace-making, dress-

12 | Unknown photographer, *Milkseller*, from *Venezia. Una storia per immagini*, vol. 1, 1866-1915 (Venezia e Mestre: La Nuova, 2007), 35, fig. 39. (Photo: the author)

making, embroidery, and bead-working that were often carried out at home. Women could work by themselves or more likely in groups seated near a doorway in a *calle* – a subject that became a favourite theme for some foreign artists, but not Morrice.[49] When new industries developed and transportation improved, local women moved to the factories as tobacco workers, match makers, textile workers, watchmakers, or glass beaders.[50] However the working lives of thousands of Venetian women, who were seasonal helpers, worked in a family *bottega*, held unclassified jobs, or carried out piecemeal artisanal work at home, remain unaccounted for and their stories go completely unheard.

At the end of the nineteenth century, the fight for improved working conditions gained force largely because of the liberals and socialists in government, but especially because of nascent unions, women's organizations, and progressive groups such as the Circolo di cultura etico sociale of Jewish men and women. The dark fringed shawl, which had once been regarded as an outward sign of a woman's lower class and her ill-fortune, now became a symbol of women's battles for better wages, reduced hours, improved lighting in the factories, adherence to labour laws, and protection from employers. In numerous political demonstrations and workers' strikes, wearing a shawl became a badge of pride rather than of poverty. In the 1904–1905 electoral campaign, writers wrote about female protestors with raised fists and tattered black shawls at rallies throughout the city. Not surprisingly, such women were scorned by the bourgeoisie who had invented the saying: "Co se slonga la franza, se scurta la virtu / e le pute d'un tempo no le se trova piu;" or,

"When the fringe becomes longer, virtue becomes shorter / And the girls of yesteryear are found no longer."[51] The woman seated at the sturdy blue table and surrounded by her ochre-coloured wares in Morrice's Rialto pochade was undoubtedly one of those thousands of *popolane* who barely earned subsistence wages from menial jobs, but who were essential to Venice's economy and the daily needs of its citizens. Morrice's other two women are less identifiable, but their carriage and custom could hint that their shawls are perhaps more than mere clothing, even if the painter was probably unaware of its political meaning.

Morrice's pochade suggests an intersection of public and private life. The site is so tied to the tourist's idea of Venice that Morrice could gently manipulate the architecture for his own purposes without denying its historical authenticity. But it is this realization of the Fabbriche Vecchie, the campo, and the women that signifies his private response – to that place and at that moment. Like foreign painters before and after him, Morrice had to reinvent Venice to suit his own temperament and the panel became the public solution to a private enquiry. In this alluring pochade, Morrice addresses the physical presence of the Rialto as a means to formulate the metaphysical space of Venice. In the reciprocity between painter and painted, observer and observed that constitutes art, he has constructed an urban image that encompasses the long narrative of Venice and his own distillation of that story. Morrice's pochade of Campo San Giacomo di Rialto can be regarded as "the size of your hand but artistically as large as a continent."[52] But the painting is also a cipher of his empathy with the city and his possible suspicion that Venice "has the ambivalent beauty of an adventure that is immersed in a life without roots, like a blossom floating in the sea … offering our soul no home but only an adventure."[53]

NOTES

1 The most comprehensive English-language discussion of the period relevant to this article is Margaret Plant, *Venice: Fragile City 1797–1997* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), chapters 5–7.

2 See David McTavish, *Canadian Artists in Venice 1830–1930* (Kingston, on: Agnes Etherington Art Centre, 1984), 18–25, 34–35. Sandra Paikowsky, "James Wilson Morrice in Venice. The Campiello delle Ancore," *Journal of Canadian Art History/ Annales d'histoire de l'art canadien* xxvi (2005): 56–79, discusses an image near the Public Gardens.

3 There are countless histories of the Rialto area and its individual buildings on the internet in addition to especially, Richard Goy, *Venice: The City and its Architecture*

(London: Phaidon, 1999), 94–101. Legend has it that Rio Alto was the original name of the city. A description of the Campo San Giacomo di Rialto can also be found in Marina Crivellari Bizio, *Campi Veneziani* (Venezia: Filippi Editore, 2003), 71–75. Unfortunately the Rialto market is in danger of being closed down by the municipal government and more stalls disappear each year.

4 See Paikowsky, "The Campiello delle Ancore," for a discussion of a different Venetian market subject. Morrice made images showing market stalls and outdoor markets in various countries throughout his career.

5 Deborah Howard, *Venice Disputed: Marc' Antonio Barbaro and Venetian Architecture 1550–1600* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 152. The spelling of place names in Venice constantly varies; for example the campo and church may be cited as "de Rialto" or "di Rialto."

6 The project also included the construction of the city treasury offices known as the Camerlenghi and the nearby church of San Giovanni Elemosinario. The ancient church of San Giacomo di Rialto, on the fourth and southern side of the campo, was left untouched by the fire.

7 Théophile Gautier, "The Grand Canal," translated and reprinted in Esther Singleton, *Venice as Seen and Described by Famous Writers* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1905), 80. The essay was originally written in 1852.

8 As part of their subjugation of Venice, the Austrians had destroyed numerous stone relief carvings of the Lion of St. Mark.

9 Entry, "Fabbriche Vecchie di Rialto," 66. Musatti's book was published by Ferdinando Ongania (1842–1911) a famous Venetian photographer and one of the civic leaders who, like the art historian and writer Pompeo Molmenti (1819–1894), was determined to make visitors more aware of sites other than the Piazza San Marco and the Rialto Bridge. An important recent study of Molmenti's contribution is Giuseppe Pavanello, ed., *L'Enigma della modernità: Venezia nell' età di Pompeo Molmenti* (Venezia: Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti, 2006). Among Ongania's best-known books today are *Calli e Canali in Venezia* of 1890, which was published in English in 1899 and his monumental study of the Basilica di San Marco, published in installments from 1881 to 1893. The museum of the church was reopened in summer 2011 with an installation dedicated to Ongania. Numerous books on the history of Venice by Musatti (1844–1928) include *La Donna in Venezia* (1891), which is enjoying a new celebrity. The exhibition, now better known as the Biennale, initiated a wave of illustrated publications on the city in expectation of a new boom in tourism.

10 In his writings on Venice, John Ruskin dismissed the church as "picturesque" but "grievously restored" and he had little if anything to say about its surroundings. The National Gallery of Canada has a Canaletto painting of the church, ca. 1740–60. His *Campo di Rialto,* ca. 1760, is in the Gemäldegalerie, Berlin.

11 The Fabbriche Nuove was designed by Jacopo Sansovino in the mid-1550s as the final phase of Lo Scarpagnino's original commission. Although the gondola predominates in Morrice's images of Venice, he also painted the more prosaic transport boats like the *caorlina* and the *batela* that plied the Lagoon.

12 Gautier, "The Grand Canal," 79–80.

13 Dorothy and Mortimer Menpes, *Venice* (London: A&C Black, 1904), 144.

14 The green doorway is consistent with the (now open) path that begins at the western end of the Sottoportego del Banco Giro behind the corner column in the pochade,

then crosses the arcade of the Ca' Savi to the Ramo Quarto del Paragon and ends at the Campo Rialto Nuovo, the place that once housed the confraternity (*scuola*) of the Orefici.

15 Alban Janson and Thorsten Bürklin, *Scenes. Interaction with Architectural Space: The Campi of Venice* (Basel: Brikhauser, 2002), 124.

16 On American artists in Venice, see Margaretta Lovell, A *Visitable Past: Views of Venice by American Artists 1860–1915* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989) and her earlier *Venice: The American View 1860–1920* (San Francisco: The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, 1985). Another standard text is Julian Halsby, *Venice. The Artist's Vision: A guide to British and American painters* (London: Unicorn Press, 1990).

17 See Nancy Mowll Matthews with Elizabeth Kennedy, *Prendergast in Italy* (London and New York: Merrell, 2009). Despite its title, most of this excellent study is concerned with Venice. Other Americans such as Childe Hassam and Joseph Pennell treated the Rialto market with similar modernist strategies.

18 Mary Knight Potter, *The Art of the Venice Academy* (Boston: L.C. Page, 1905) is one of many English-language examples, of which John Ruskin, *Guide To The Principal Pictures In The Academy Of Fine Arts At Venice* (first published 1877) led the pack. Ruskin is noted in a Morrice sketchbook. Since its inception, the Accademia collection has only contained Venetian art; at the beginning of the twentieth century, the museum displayed three Tintoretto paintings.

19 Morrice could have also seen Tintoretto paintings in Paris and especially in London where there were important collections by the 1890s.

20 In *The Theft of the Body of St. Mark*, for example, the Palazzo Ducale and the Piazzetta were a stand-in for buildings in Alexandria.

21 Other well-known painters include Palma il Vecchio, Vincenzo Catena, Cima da Conegliano, Rocco Marconi, and Lorenzo Lotto whose works were held in the Accademia and in poorly lit churches across Venice.

22 See for example, Anna Lepschy, *Tintoretto Observed: A Documentary Survey of Critical Reactions from the 16th to the 20th Century* (Ravenna: Longo, 1983).

23 Gustave Soulier, "Les Peintres de Venise," *L'art décoratif,* janvier 1905; for Morrice, see pages, 25, 28, 32, *in passim*. In terms of its scope, his overview of foreign painters is unmatched by any book on the subject.

24 Soulier, *Le Tintoret: Biographie critique* (Paris: H. Laurens, 1911), 130–31.

25 See for example, Marina Coslovi, "Henry James and Vittor Carpaccio: The Horizontal and the Vertical," *RSA Journal* 15–16 (2004–2005): 31–44. James also considered Delacroix to be like Tintoretto: "one of the slightest of colourists, until you begin to conceive he is one of the greatest," in his 1872 *Atlantic Monthly* article, "French Pictures in Boston," republished in Henry James, *The Painter's Eye: Notes and Essay on the Pictorial Arts*, ed. John Sweeney (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), 48.

26 Lovell, *A Visitable Past*, 66–7.

27 Recent publications on nineteenth and early twentieth-century Venetian painting include: Falvia Scotton, *Dalle maschere alle machine: Pittura veneziana 1896–1914* (Venezia: Marsilio, 2002); Giuseppe Pavanello and Nico Stringa, *Ottocento Veneto: Il Trionfo dell colore* (Treviso: Canova, 2004); Enzo Savoia, *Vita a Venezia*: *Colore e sentimento nella pittura veneta dell'800* (Milano: Bottegantica, 2010); Myriam Zerbi, *Ottocento Veneziano* (Torino: Umberto Allemandi, 2010); Isabella Reale and

Myriam Zerbi, *Paesaggi d'Acqua: Luci e riflessi nella pittura veneziana, dell'Ottocento* (Torino: Umberto Allemandi, 2011); and Myriam Zerbi and Luisa Turchi, *Nobilità del lavoro: Arti e mestieri nella pittura veneta tra Ottocento e Novecento* (Torino: Umberto Allemandi, 2012). The classic contemporary study of the long nineteenth century is Giuseppe Pavanello and Giandomenico Romanelli, *Venezia nell'Ottocento: Imagini e mito* (Milano: Electra, 1983).

28 Smith's watercolour *Venice – In the Fruit Market* is reproduced in colour in F. Hopkinson Smith, "The Parthenon by Way of Papendrecht," *Scribner's Magazine* 45, no.4 (April 1909): 395. This image can also be found on the internet but with the title of Smith's article, not the work itself. An illustration of his watercolour, *A Fruit Stall*, showing a more distanced view of the same corner as Morrice's Campo di Rialto, is found in William Howells, *Venetian Life* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1892), vol. 1, facing p. 134, and other editions.

29 Scattola's painting *Rialto* was reproduced in Gustave Soulier, "Les Peintres de Venise," 24.

30 Pompeo Molmenti, quoted in *Rosen's Illustrated Guide: Venice* (Venice: S. Rosen, 1906), 117.

31 Among the many texts on Whistler's Venetian work, see: Eric Denker, *Whistler and his Circle in Venice* (London: Merrell, 2003) along with Alastair Grieve, *Whistler's Venice* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000) and Margaret MacDonald, *Palaces in the Night: Whistler in Venice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

32 Robert Upstone, *Sickert in Venice* (London: Scala, 2009), 37, comments that in the 1890s, Venice was a destination for "a kind of artistic ethnographic tourism" that was defined by "a pursuit of unusual and unspoilt folk society apparently unaffected by the modern."

33 It would have been impossible for Morrice to be unfamiliar with the vast number of photographs and reproductions produced for the Venice tourist industry. Photographic images were a common part of a painter's apparatus as an *aide-mémoire* and could have been an asset to Morrice when he worked on his Venice canvases in his Paris studio. Photographs could also stimulate ideas for a painting.

34 For an overview see: Dorothea Ritter, *Venice in Old Photographs 1841–1920* (London: Calmann and King, 1994) and various publications by Italo Zannier. Ongania first published *Calli e Canali* in 1891 and the book of 200 plates has been reprinted in various editions and in various formats.

35 A discussion of Venetian costume during the period relevant to this article is found in Doretta Davanzo Poli, "Moda, tessuti, merletti a Venezia nel primo Novecento," in *Modigliani a Venezia, tra Livorno e Parigi* (Venezia: Biblioteca nazionale marciana, 2005), 173–78. Also see her history of Venetian clothing, *Abiti antichi e moderni dei Veneziani* (Vicenza: Nera Pozza, 2002).

36 MacDonald, *Palaces in the Night*, 23.

37 For a comparative discussion of one of his Canadian paintings that focuses on female figures, see Paikowsky, "James Wilson Morrice's *Return from School*: A Modernist Image of Quebec Children," in *Depicting Canada's Children,* ed. Loren Lerner (Waterloo, on: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2009), 347–64.

38 See Matthews, *Prendergast in Italy*; while he showed locals and tourists together in his watercolours, his monotypes only depicted Italian women and mainly *popolane*.

39 See Upstone, *Sickert in Venice*. Sickert's Venetian portraits and figures are decidedly less numerous than his architectural views.

40 Matthews, *Prendergast in Italy*, 106. Both Morrice and Prendergast's sketchbooks include similar drawings of shawled Venetian women.

41 Recent monographs on Sargent in Venice include Richard Ormond and Elaine Kilmurray, *John Singer Sargent: Venetian Figures and Landscapes 1898–1913* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009) and William Adelson, ed., *Sargent's Venice* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006).

42 On the changing visual representation of Italian women, see Francesca Cagianelli and Dario Matteoni, *La Belle Époque: Arte in Italia 1880–1915* (Milano: Silvana Editoriale, 2008).

43 Charles Yriarte, *Venice. Its History, Art, Industries and Modern Life* (Philadelphia: Henry T. Coates, 1896), 169. He also described differences between women in each of Venice's six districts in his chapter "Types of the People." In Horatio Brown, *Life on the Lagoons* (London: Rivington, Percival, 1884), the author makes similar comparisons, especially in the chapter titled "Home."

44 Arthur Symons, "Venice" in *Cities* (London: J.M. Dent, 1905), 79. He also characterized types of woman in the different *sestieri*.

45 Henry Perl, *Venezia* (London: Sampson, Low, Marston, 1894), 77–78. Symons states that they walk "superbly" partly because of their "heelless slippers," but Perl suggests it may be more a combination of their clothing and "the constant climbing down of the sloping bridges." Lonsdale and Laura Ragg, *Things Seen in Venice* (London: Seeley, Service, 1912), 141, commented that Venetian women were "far less beautiful than those of many other parts of Italy … But they carry themselves well."

46 Horatio Brown, *In and Around Venice* (New York: Charles Scribner's, 1905), 27.

47 Ragg, *Things Seen in Venice*, 141.

48 For much of my discussion on *popolane*, I have relied on Maria Teresa Sega, "Lavoratrici," in *Storia di Venezia: L'Ottocento e il Novecento*, vol. II, eds. Mario Isnenghi and Stuart Woolf (Roma: Edizioni Treccani, 2002), especially 803–54, and Tiziana Plebani, ed., *Storia di Venezia citta delle donne* (Venezia: Marsilio, 2008).

49 Sargent's gentle images of bead stringers, for example, do not suggest at all that these *popolane* were among the most politically active women. In addition to the sources cited directly above, see Luisa Accati, et al., *Perle e Impiraperle un lavoro di donne a Venezia tra '800 e '900* (Venezia: Arsenale, 1990).

50 The need to carry workers from Castello in the eastern part of Venice to the factories in the western and southern parts of Venice was a major reason for the development of the *vaporetto*. Giovanni Stucky threatened to close his flour mill (now a Hilton hotel), which had opened in 1895 on the Giudecca, if a steamboat route was not put into operation. In the census of 1901, over 1,000 women worked in tobacco factories while five times as many were in full-time domestic service.

51 I wish to thank Dr. Frederick Lauritzen for his translations and his friendship. The Italian wording is: "Quando si allunga la frangia, si accorcia la virtu e le ragazze di un tempo non le se ritrova piu." The image of politicized shawled women goes back to the Risorgimento, a half-century earlier.

52 I have appropriated Charles Lang Freer's well-known comment on Whistler's panels.

53 Georg Simmel, "Venice," *Theory, Culture & Society* 24, nos. 7-8 (2007): 46.

James Wilson Morrice et le marché du Rialto à Venise

SANDRA PAIKOWSKY

La peinture sur panneau, ou pochade, d'un coin du Campo San Giacomo di Rialto, v. 1902, par Morrice, qui fait partie de la collection de la Galerie d'art Beaverbrook, est en contradiction avec sa représentation la plus connue de la ville de saint Marc. Il abandonne ici ce qui pourrait être considéré comme une vue archétypale de la Venise urbaine : un premier plan représentant la mer ou une avant-cour pavée, devant un mur d'édifices percés d'ouvertures, disposés dans un espace rectiligne soigneusement délimité par une composition formant une sorte de grille. Il se concentre sur un seul coin du vaste *campo* et n'offre qu'une vue partielle des deux étages d'arcades des Fabbriche Vecchie, édifices à bureaux dessinés par Lo Scarpagnino (Antonio di Pietro Abbondi, v. 1465–1549) et terminés en 1522, qui encadrent trois côtés de la place. Les arcades des Fabbriche Vecchie que l'on voit dans la moitié droite du panneau de Morrice étaient remplies de petites boutiques ou *botteghini*. La petite table devant la colonne d'angle aurait fait partie d'un ensemble d'échoppes mobiles et de boutiques plus permanentes qui constituaient une partie intrinsèque de l'économie du marché et de la ville depuis ses lointaines origines. Le long du côté gauche du panneau, on voit une tranche de l'édifice connu sous le nom de Ca' Dieci Savi alle Decime, qui a déjà abrité les bureaux des collecteurs d'impôts de la ville et qui est toujours utilisé aujourd'hui par le magistrat des eaux. Entre ces deux sections des Fabbriche Vecchie passe la Ruga degli Orefici, ainsi nommée à cause des boutiques d'orfèvres qui la bordaient, qui a toujours été la route principale qui mène au Rialto et, plus tard, un sujet favori des peintres et photographes vénitiens et étrangers.

L'espace pictural dramatiquement condensé, l'arcade nettement découpée de la partie nord des Fabbriche Vecchie, la façade faussement incurvée du palais des Dieci Savi et le pavé tronqué du campo, tout cela bouleverse les vues habituelles où Morrice représente Venise comme un panorama tranquille et soigneusement disposé. De la même manière, les trois figures féminines s'opposent aussi à sa tendance à représenter parfois les Vénitiennes presque comme des accessoires. Ici, leurs poses élégantes élucident soigneusement et même rationalisent l'espace pictural déformé. Je présume que cette distance de Morrice par rapport à ses compositions habituelles, nettes et rectilignes,

aurait pu être inspirée par sa rencontre directe avec les peintures du Tintoret dans des églises, des confréries et la Galerie de l'Académie. La manière du Tintoret d'arranger des groupes de figures pourrait aussi avoir influencé les mouvements des figures féminines de Morrice qui se déploient en une courbe harmonieuse. Il a été démontré qu'au début du XX^e^ siècle, les artistes et critiques parisiens considéraient le Tintoret comme « le précurseur le plus authentique et achevé de nos peintres modernes », et il était souvent qualifié de proto-impressionniste. De même, l'apparente négligence de l'image, un sentiment prévalent de familiarité, l'accessibilité du sujet et le caractère direct du contenu pourraient être dus à sa connaissance des célèbres photographes de Venise tells Ponti, Naya et Ongania, mais aussi aux images modernistes de Coburn et de Stieglitz.

La présence de femmes du peuple, ou *popolane*, enveloppées dans un châle et déambulant dans les rues de la ville, est un motif fréquent dans les représentations de Venise. Dans ce tableau, le caractère distinctif de leur identité vient du rythme des rapports entre leurs différentes attitudes – marchant, debout et assise – dans leur progression le long de la Ruga degli Orefici vers le Campo di Rialto. Deux d'entre elles font face au spectateur (dans la ligne de visée de l'artiste) et bien que la troisième soit vue de profil, elle est la figure centrale de la pochade. Placée sur le principal axe vertical et le plus près du spectateur, elle domine du fait de l'ampleur et de la couleur de son châle qui suggèrent qu'elle n'est pas mariée et qu'elle est plus jeune que les autres. Elle est aussi le lien compositionnel entre les deux autres figures, mais les différences de tailles et d'attitudes préservent leur séparation et leur individualité. De plus, les trois femmes sont absorbées dans leurs tâches respectives, tout comme Morrice est absorbé par la peinture de sa pochade. Cela conduit en retour aux modernistes qui affirment que la représentation visuelle de la contemplation de soi est l'expression de la vie intérieure du sujet aussi bien que du peintre. La distance physique et psychologique qui permet à Morrice d'observer les Vénitiennes et d'être observé par elles, définit sa propre identité de voyageur et d'étranger.

Contrairement à plusieurs de ses contemporains – résidents ou étrangers – Morrice n'était pas intéressé à peindre de jeunes paysannes pittoresques dans des décors idylliques. Cependant, les trois femmes du Rialto semblent faire référence au calme naturel et à la dignité innée des *popolane* des toiles de Favretto, de Nono ou de Tito, artistes dont il aurait pu facilement voir les œuvres à Venise. Les femmes, dans la pochade du Rialto de Morrice, représentent simplement ces *popolane* anonymes qui définissaient la sphère économique, sociale et culturelle du quartier qui entoure le marché. Leurs châles, ou *scialle,* deviennent une métaphore picturale du corps dissimulé, mais elles les portent avec le même aplomb que les bourgeoises, leurs parasols.

Dans les toiles de Morrice, le châle pourrait être vu comme un signe visuel du paradoxe entre leur immédiateté et leur anonymat, et aussi de leur place dans la société vénitienne. Cependant, au début du XX^e^ siècle, le *scialle* allait devenir le symbole de la lente prise de pouvoir économique par les femmes et, probablement à l'insu de Morrice, un signe de leur agitation politique.

Les figures et l'architecture évoquent l'espace physique du Campo San Giacomo di Rialto, tout comme Morrice a formulé l'espace métaphysique de Venise et, en combinant les deux sphères, l'ambiguïté devient clarté et ce qui est perçu devient expérience.

Traduction : Élise Bonnette

Sous-sol au mannequin de tailleur : un tableau témoin d'un quartier et d'une époque de Louis Muhlstock

MONIQUE NADEAU-SAUMIER

Silent shuttered
Condemned buildings
Waiting for the
Speculating demolishers.
Poème dans le style haïku, Louis Muhlstock, v. 1980[1].

Durant la décennie 1935–45, le peintre Louis Muhlstock (1904–2001) aborde une série de tableaux ayant pour sujet les quartiers pauvres du centre-ville de Montréal qui lui sont déjà familiers. Né en 1904, à Narajov, Galicie[2], Louis Muhlstock et sa famille vont rejoindre le père à Montréal en 1911, lors d'une des plus importantes vagues d'immigrants juifs venus de l'Europe centrale et orientale au Québec[3]. Après un séjour de trois ans à Paris, de 1928 à 1931, où il a poursuivi sa formation artistique, le jeune artiste s'est de nouveau intégré à sa collectivité et il travaille à partir des réalités de son époque. Il installe son chevalet dans les ruelles Grubert et Leduc[4], grouillantes de vie durant son enfance, mais presque désertées dans ces années de crise économique. Pour expliquer ce choix, Muhlstock dira : « These subjects were the areas that I know best, places I remembered from childhood, lanes as yet unpaved and badly neglected[5] ».

Peintres dans la ville

Dans son ouvrage : *Peintres juifs de Montréal Témoins de leur époque 1930–1948,* Esther Trépanier affirme que les premières représentations des arrière-cours et des ruelles sont nées sous le pinceau des peintres juifs de Montréal car ils ont été les premiers à s'intéresser à leur environnement immédiat[6], comme ce fut le cas pour Louis Muhlstock, Alexander Bercovitch (1891–1951), Sam Borenstein (1908–1969), Jack Beder (1910–1987) et Harry Mayerovitch (1919–2004), pour ne nommer que les plus importants. Voyons une intéressante description du vieux quartier juif, délimité par la rue Hutchison

Détail, Louis Muhlstock, *Sous-sol au mannequin de tailleur*, v. 1940, huile sur toile, 63,8 × 76,4 cm, Collection Miller, Edmonton. (Photo : auteur)

1 | Louis Muhlstock, *Avenue Duluth*, n.d., fusain sur papier, 19 × 28 cm, succession Louis Muhlstock. (Photo : Succession Louis Muhlstock)

et l'avenue du Parc à l'ouest, les rues Saint-Denis à l'est et Sherbrooke au sud et la voie du Canadien Pacifique au nord[7].

> Le quartier comptait surtout des maisons à deux logements, car les immeubles en hauteur de New York et de Chicago ne se voyaient pas encore à Montréal. L'indépendance et l'autonomie que procuraient ces petites habitations l'emportaient, selon Ames, sur les loyers élevés et les inconvénients des quartiers résidentiels à faible densité. En réalité, 10% de tous les logements ouvraient sur l'arrière. « Le logement de fond de cour typique, écrivait Ames, est soit un ancien cottage en bois comme ceux des habitants ou une maison à étage recouverte de briques usagées et à laquelle on a accès par un escalier bancal en bois ou des balcons[8] ».

C'est par intérêt pour les lieux où ils ont grandi que ces artistes les choisissent comme sujet. Muhlstock explique cette préférence : « These

2 | Louis Muhlstock, *Rue Saint-Dominique*, 1934, huile sur toile, 80,1 × 67 cm, succession Louis Muhlstock. (Photo : Succession Louis Muhlstock)

subjects were all in Montreal … They included people and the streets of Montreal and the lanes of Montreal, the slum parts of the city, around the harbor and the Mount Royal, these were the areas that I frequented[9] ». Comme le décrit si bien Esther Trépanier « les artistes comme Muhlstock, Beder et Borenstein, quand ils abordent les représentations de la ville en considérant prioritairement les rapports dynamiques entre ses formes, ses couleurs et sa géométrie, incluent rarement la figure humaine dans leurs tableaux ». Puis, elle fait le constat suivant « C'est d'ailleurs curieux, si on

3 | Louis Muhlstock, *Ruelle Leduc*, v. 1940, huile sur toile, 76,7 × 66,1 cm, Collection Browns, Montréal. (Photo : auteur)

considère que les rues et les quartiers qu'ils dépeignent étaient populeux et certainement grouillants d'activité durant le jour[10] ». Toutefois, il existe dans le Fonds Muhlstock un petit croquis au fusain, réalisé durant les années 30, peu après le retour à Montréal du jeune artiste. Il s'agit d'une intersection de l'avenue Duluth, croquée sur le vif, qui témoigne de l'achalandage que connaissait alors cette rue bordée des boutiques de petits commerçants du quartier[11]. (Fig. 1)

Cette esquisse est une exception car la présence humaine est rare dans les nombreuses représentations des ruelles et arrière-cours, lieux familiers que Muhlstock fréquentait durant son enfance et qu'il parcoure à nouveau dans la décennie 30–40, au plus fort de la crise économique.

Généralement, comme dans ce tableau de 1934, *Rue Saint-Dominique* (Fig. 2), un personnage solitaire apparaît parfois dans les rues et les ruelles désertes, pour accentuer la désolation des lieux ou pour en donner l'échelle.

On doit cependant souligner une autre exception où les figures humaines sont représentées dans les lieux qu'ils habitent. Il s'agit du tableau *Ruelle Leduc* (Fig. 3) où l'on voit plusieurs femmes bavardant sur le pas des portes et accoudées aux fenêtres. Interrogé sur cette rare inclusion de personnages dans ses tableaux de l'époque, Louis Muhlstock a raconté que les familles locataires de ces taudis dans la ruelle Leduc étaient bénéficiaires de ce qu'on appelait à l'époque les « secours directs », et qu'elles n'avaient d'autre choix que de rester oisives à la maison par crainte d'une visite de l'inspecteur municipal[12].

Les pièces vides des taudis désaffectés

Seul, parmi ses compatriotes juifs qui ont aussi choisi de peindre les quartiers défavorisés où la plupart d'entre eux ont grandi, Louis Muhlstock va s'aventurer dans les pièces vides des taudis abandonnés. Consciente de cette particularité, Esther Trépanier consacre un encart de quelques pages « Les taudis de Louis Muhlstock », dans le chapitre « La ville » de *Peintres juifs de Montréal Témoins de leur époque 1930–1948*[13]. Elle qualifie ces œuvres de « magnifiques essais sur la représentation de l'espace, sur la rigueur de la composition, sur les possibles découpes de la lumière », ajoutant en conclusion « ces tableaux apparaissent comme exemplaires d'une approche qui conjugue un travail d'exploration formelle avec une dimension sociohistorique particulière[14] ».

Cette dimension sociohistorique particulière s'explique sans doute par les souvenirs d'une enfance passée dans le ghetto juif. Muhlstock les connaissait bien ces taudis, lui et sa famille en avaient habité un semblable, dans un sous-sol de la rue Saint-Dominique, après leur arrivée à Montréal en 1911. Lorsqu'il parcoure à nouveau les lieux de son enfance, Muhlstock réalise que les humbles maisons qui l'abritaient, lui et ses compatriotes, ainsi que de nombreuses familles de Canadiens français fuyant la campagne pour l'espoir d'un travail en ville, semblent encore plus délabrées que dans son souvenir. Ces logements insalubres, ouvrant sur des allées de terre battue, étaient devenus impropres à l'occupation humaine :

> Triste conséquence de leurs faibles revenus, la plupart des soutiens de famille étaient dans l'impossibilité d'acheter même la plus modeste des maisons. Montréal était donc une ville de locataires. Plus de 80% des Montréalais habitaient des logements loués et l'absentéisme des propriétaires était de règle. Cela explique sans doute le piteux état de plusieurs de ces logis. On peut même dire que durant les trois premières décennies du vingtième siècle, la métropole se distinguait par la multiplication de ses taudis « instantanés » […] À ce chapitre,

les conditions s'étaient détériorées avec l'immigration croissante en provenance d'Europe et des régions rurales du Québec[15].

Durant ses promenades dans le centre-sud de Montréal, Louis Muhlstock découvre une maison abandonnée, au coin des rues Saint-Norbert et Saint-Dominique, à deux pas des lieux de son enfance montréalaise. Dans les années 1930, la rue Saint-Norbert, parallèle à la rue Sherbrooke au sud, reliait la rue Hôtel-de-ville à la rue Saint-Laurent et marquait la limite nord du ghetto juif de Montréal. À l'époque, cette maison faisait face à l'arrière du complexe Bon Pasteur, rue Sherbrooke, décrit comme « Convent & Female Refuge[16] ». Au coin nord opposé, sur la rue Saint-Dominique, se trouvait une brasserie, Ekers Brewery, filiale de la National Breweries Limited[17]. Cette maison et son environnement immédiat ont servi de sujet pour plusieurs tableaux de Muhlstock, dont *Couvent et brasserie,* réalisé depuis une fenêtre ouverte à l'étage de cette maison abandonnée, reproduit à la page 3 dans *Le Canada,* du vendredi 6 novembre 1942. Nous connaissons un autre tableau, propriété d'un collectionneur en Angleterre, qui présente une vue intérieure d'une pièce située au rez-de-chaussée de la même maison. C'est dans ce décor que Louis Muhlstock va réaliser l'œuvre la plus touchante parmi l'importante série des taudis abandonnés qu'il a peints durant ces années de crise économique.

Le tableau *Sous-sol au mannequin de tailleur* (Fig. 4) est imbu d'une luminosité toute particulière, la fenêtre, seule échappée dans cet intérieur clos sur lui-même, conserve sa fonction naturelle de source de lumière extérieure sans pour autant ouvrir sur un quelconque horizon. Il s'agît en fait d'un soupirail, dont la lumière est diffusée dans toute la toile, comme si elle filtrait au travers des murs. Muhlstock aligne le rectangle de la porte avec le haut du cadre de sa toile jouant ainsi sur le contraste entre les deux dimensions du tableau et la tridimensionnalité de la représentation. Ainsi cadrée, la porte réaffirme la dimension illusionniste de la peinture, entraînant le spectateur à l'intérieur de ces deux pièces et refermant sur lui l'espace pictural. La fenêtre, également parallèle à la surface de la toile, se révèle être un motif géométrique plat, qui n'offre finalement que peu d'issue à ces lieux renfermés sur eux-mêmes. Fixées par un axe vertical et horizontal, les couleurs du tableau sont associées à celles de la fenêtre et de la plinthe. Les murs mêmes, si on les observe attentivement, sont pleins de nuances.

Cet intérieur diaphane est organisé en rectangles plats de différentes couleurs, disposés parallèlement à la surface du tableau et alignés sur le cadre selon une grille strictement verticale et horizontale. Le jeu de ces rectangles pâles – murs, fenêtre et parquet – contrasté par les lambris sombres aux

4 | Louis Muhlstock, *Sous-sol au mannequin de tailleur*, v. 1940, huile sur toile, 63,8 × 76,4 cm, Collection Miller, Edmonton. (Photo : auteur)

premier et deuxième plans, crée une tension qui attire et retient le regard. La rigueur géométrique du tableau est allégée par les lignes courbes d'un mannequin de tailleur, placé près de la fenêtre. Sur le mur de gauche, une grande lézarde dans la surface abimée du plâtre reprend en couleurs claires, comme dans un jeu négatif/positif, les formes de la sombre silhouette. La présence de ce vestige oublié d'un atelier de confection, dont la forme et les cerceaux en crinoline évoquent une figure féminine, confère à la scène une grande mélancolie. Nous connaissons plusieurs tableaux d'intérieurs de taudis vides que Muhlstock réalisa durant la même période. Pour n'en nommer que quelques-uns, *Logement de deux pièces, ruelle Grubert,* v. 1940–41, MNBAQ, et *Chambres vides,* 1938, Art Gallery of Alberta, Edmonton (Fig. 5).

5 | Louis Muhlstock, *Chambres vides*, 1938, huile sur toile, 76,3 × 63,5 cm, Art Gallery of Alberta, Edmonton. (Photo: Art Gallery of Alberta)

Rare exception dans la série des maisons abandonnées, le tableau *Chambres vides* n'a pas été réalisé à partir des taudis du centre-sud de Montréal. Muhlstock, qui peignait souvent dans les sous-bois du mont Royal à cette époque, découvre cette maison inhabitée et, selon toute évidence, vouée à la démolition, tout près du parc Mont-Royal, entre le chemin de la Côte-des-neiges et la rue McGregor, où d'importants immeubles d'habitation furent érigées à partir des années 1930[18]. L'œuvre présente une enfilade de pièces tapissées de papiers peints défraichis qui débouche sur la porte ouverte d'un balcon d'où l'on aperçoit le feuillage vert de grands arbres. Seule, parmi les représentations de pièces vides des maisons désaffectées, cette maison présente une vue sur l'extérieur. Ce n'est pas le cas pour *Sous-sol au mannequin de tailleur*, car le soupirail ne fait que transmettre la lumière sans ouvrir sur l'extérieur. Tout comme cet autre tableau, *Chambre au sous-sol, maison condamnée, rue Saint-Norbert* (Fig. 6), réalisé dans les mêmes pièces, où la fenêtre du sous-sol laisse à peine filtrer du dehors quelques taches de couleurs. Au sujet de ce dernier tableau, l'historien de l'art, Christopher Varley, a fait le commentaire suivant :

6 | Louis Muhlstock, *Chambre au sous-sol, maison condamnée, rue Saint-Norbert*, v. 1938–40, huile sur toile, 64 × 70,6 cm, Succession Louis Muhlstock. (Photo : Succession Louis Muhlstock)

Muhlstock's *Goupil Lane* was one of an extended series of city scenes that he painted in the late thirties. Among these are a number of abandoned houses, the compositional flimsiness of which adds to the pathos of the depictions. Empathizing with the house's sad end, Muhlstock added a budding plant to the foreground of *Basement Room, Condemned Building, St. Norbert Street.* The innocence of this gesture, and the beauty of the painting itself, are genuinely touching. Although Muhlstock has not always been as successful at fusing his romantic, pantheist feelings with accomplished painting, he was unquestionably one of the most talented members of the [Contemporary Arts] Society[19].

Toutes ces représentations de pièces vides se distinguent par une approche formelle très structurée dans la représentation de l'espace, compositions rigoureuses allégées par les traces de peinture écaillée, par les vestiges de papiers peints, et même, comme dans le tableau *Chambre au sous-sol, maison condamnée, rue Saint-Norbert*, par cette plante verte que l'artiste introduit dans ce décor sordide, en signe de vie et d'espoir. Ces toiles de Muhlstock représentant des intérieurs de taudis abandonnés par leurs anciens occupants sont sans équivalent dans la peinture québécoise et canadienne durant les années de crise économique. Parlant de ces tableaux, Muhlstock a raconté : « When I painted these empty rooms, I painted silence and decay. I was very moved and disturbed that people were allowed to live in such surroundings and I think I expressed it through my colour. Although the people were never introduced in these paintings, there were traces of their having been there[20] ».

Il ne fait nul doute que, parmi les nombreuses toiles représentant des pièces vides peintes par Muhlstock au plus fort de la crise économique, c'est dans *Sous-sol au mannequin de tailleur* que la présence des anciens occupants est le plus fortement ressentie. Ce mannequin a-t'il été laissé derrière délibérément ou oublié dans une évacuation forcée et rapide ? Poète et travailleuse sociale, Dorothy Livesay (1909–1996) a fréquenté Louis Muhlstock à Montréal dans les années 1933–34. Comme de nombreux compatriotes juifs, Muhlstock était impliqué dans les mouvements montréalais de la gauche socialiste que fréquentait aussi Livesay. Commentant la situation des sans-emploi durant la crise économique, elle raconte :

> The unemployed were completely without recourse. They were evicted from their homes, their water and heat was cut off, they were given the meagrest amount of food and so on. That life was one of great despair […] it was heart-breaking to see people who had nothing. Just at the time when I came to Montreal there had been a very great unemployed demonstration over an eviction, and since I had seen other evictions as well, I wrote a poem about it[21].

***Jour de déménagement, Évincement,* Montréal, v. 1930, McCord**

Cette photographie (Fig. 7), prise vers la même époque, montre les pauvres possessions de gens chassés de leur logis et jetés à la rue. Les occupants du sous-sol de la rue Saint-Norbert avaient-ils connu le même sort que celui décrit par Livesay ? Cela expliquerait sans doute l'abandon du mannequin, mais quoiqu'il en soit, en choisissant de présenter dans sa toile cette silhouette féminine, trace laissée par les anciens occupants, Muhlstock s'inscrit dans une longue tradition de l'histoire de l'art occidental.

7 | Anonyme, *Jour de déménagement (?), Évincement (?)*, Montréal, v. 1930, Musée McCord, Montréal, MP-1978.107.150. (Photo : Musée McCord)

La femme à la fenêtre

Placée près du soupirail, cette forme humaine évoque le thème de la femme à la fenêtre, sujet fréquemment traité par le grand maître néerlandais Johannes Vermeer (1632–1675) en de multiples variantes. Femme lisant une lettre, ou se parant de bijoux, quelquefois vaquant à des occupations domestiques ou de commerce. Toutes ces femmes sont situées dans un intérieur clos et ordonné que la fenêtre ouvre sur le vaste et turbulent monde extérieur, souvent évoqué par une carte géographique au mur. Dans ce sous-sol de la rue Saint-Norbert, la silhouette féminine du mannequin, dénuée de toute anecdote, est évocatrice de la condition humaine, au même titre que les femmes vermeeriennes absorbées dans leurs pensées dans le monde clos d'un intérieur hollandais. La femme à la fenêtre est un thème qui fut aussi exploité par Caspar David Friedrich (1774–1840), peintre romantique allemand du début du XIX^e^ siècle comme dans le tableau *Woman at the*

Window, 1822 (Nationalgalerie, Berlin). S'agit-il ici de représenter simplement une femme à la fenêtre – en l'occurrence la femme de l'artiste – penchée sur le monde extérieur depuis une pièce sombre et dénuée de tout ornement ? Cette silhouette vue de dos, seule, immobile, semble enfermée dans son intérieur domestique. À travers une petite ouverture dans les volets fermés qui bloquent la grande fenêtre, elle jette un regard au loin vers des promesses d'évasion qui ne lui sont pas accessibles. Tout dans ce tableau évoque une grande mélancolie et ce sentiment nous renvoie à l'œuvre de Muhlstock qui est imbue de cette même atmosphère.

Les conditions sociales et économiques

Alors que le mannequin évoque la femme à la fenêtre des œuvres citées plus haut, la portée symbolique de ce vestige d'un atelier dans *Sous-sol au mannequin de tailleur / Basement with Tailor's Dummy* est par ailleurs beaucoup plus vaste. Elle nous renvoie à une réalité vécue par la communauté juive de Montréal dans les années marquées par le nombre croissant des ressortissants de l'Europe centrale et de l'Europe de l'Est. Dans son analyse « Bases économiques et structure sociale 1931–1971 », Alexandra Szacka décrit cette réalité :

> On peut également constater un autre phénomène intéressant concernant les Juifs québécois et canadiens, soit leur concentration dans certains types d'industrie. Ainsi, en 1931, près d'un quart d'entre eux étaient employés dans l'industrie du vêtement et des produits du textile. Malheureusement, ces données sont fournies sans distinction de fonction de sorte que la catégorie que nous venons de mentionner peut comprendre aussi bien les cadres que les ouvriers spécialisés ou semi-spécialisés[22].

Les conditions de travail dans l'industrie du vêtement et la rémunération des ouvriers et des ouvrières étaient devenues encore plus pénibles durant la crise économique. Szacka poursuit « On ne peut passer sous silence l'engagement des immigrants juifs dans le mouvement ouvrier. Concentrés massivement dans l'industrie du vêtement; où les conditions de travail furent particulièrement difficiles, et forts aussi de leur expérience politique européenne, les Juifs canadiens et québécois s'engagèrent massivement dans le mouvement ouvrier[23] ». En 1934, une grève générale est déclenchée à Montréal par les ouvriers de la confection. On peut lire dans la feuille volante imprimée avec texte en français et en yiddish (en anglais au verso) : A BAS LES SWEATSHOPS : LONGUE VIE À L'INTERNATIONAL LADIES

GARMENT WORKERS UNION[24]. Cette grève générale aura laissé des séquelles importantes, congédiements, perte de revenus, pauvreté, chômage, dans une période où une grande partie de la population ouvrière de Montréal est à la recherche d'un emploi et, souvent, d'un logis.

C'est dans ce contexte qu'il faut situer le mannequin de tailleur abandonné qui a retenu l'attention de Muhlstock, toujours très sensible aux conditions précaires de ses compatriotes, comme de ses voisins canadiens-français. Nous ne saurons jamais ce que ce mannequin représentait pour les locataires du sous-sol de la rue Saint-Norbert. Est-ce l'indice que ce lieu abritait une petite industrie artisanale, « cottage industry » ? S'agissait-il d'un revenu d'appoint pour la femme de la famille, ce genre de mannequin étant surtout utilisé par les couturières ? Quoi qu'il en soit, force est de constater que de telles initiatives de survie furent malheureusement vouées à l'échec et que ce mannequin n'avait plus aucune valeur pour les anciens occupants de l'appartement au sous-sol de cette maison condamnée qui l'abandonnèrent à leur départ. On peut conclure en affirmant que Muhlstock s'est fait l'interprète de ces lieux désaffectés en leur donnant une nouvelle dimension. Il a déclaré : « What intrigued me was the feeling of rooms that had been lived in. To try and express the silence of a room was something that I wanted very much to arrive at, and at the same time to play with shapes on canvas, to create a composition and to play with structures and textures[25] ».

Les expositions

Il est difficile de dater avec précision les œuvres de cette série de chambres vides qui occupa Muhlstock durant plusieurs années. En consultant la liste des expositions auxquelles il participa dès son retour de France en 1931, on constate que les premières mentions de tels sujets remontent à 1937[26]. En effet, dans une exposition présentée en novembre 1937, à l'édifice Sun Life de Montréal, on trouve aux numéros de catalogue 38x et 39 deux titres, *Haunted House* et *Deserted House,* huiles sur toile. Deux ans plus tard, en mai 1939, dans une exposition à Ottawa, Muhlstock présente à nouveau *Haunted House*[27]. Selon les titres des œuvres de Muhlstock dans les nombreuses expositions auxquelles il participe régulièrement à la fin des années trente, on remarque que les ruelles et les maisons abandonnées y figurent de plus en plus souvent. En voici quelques exemples, *Empty Rooms in a Basement,* à la Art Gallery of Toronto, août/septembre, 1939, quelques mois plus tard, au même endroit, *Goupil Lane, Leduc Lane, Convent and Brewery, Empty Rooms,* et *Empty Room*[28].

Toutefois, ce sera dans les expositions de la Société d'art contemporain, fondée en 1939 par John Lyman[29], auxquelles Louis Muhlstock participe

avec assiduité dès le début, que l'on retrouve le plus fréquemment ses représentations de ruelles, d'arrière-cours et de pièces vides dans des maisons abandonnées. De 1940 à 1946, Muhlstock expose des œuvres portant les titres suivants : *Empty Rooms ; Plant in Empty Room ; Empty Rooms with Lilac Twig ; Brewery and Convent ; Empty Room in a Basement ; Basement ; Basement (Green Room) ; St. Norbert Street ; Empty Rooms (Amber) ; Basement (Gorki Room) ; Maison abandonnée*[30]. Ce n'est qu'en 1946, lors de la 63e exposition du printemps à l'Art Association of Montréal que Louis Muhlstock présente, au numéro 185x du catalogue, une œuvre qui porte le titre *Basement with Tailor's Dummy*[31]. Il apparaît évident qu'il s'agit de notre tableau. Est-ce la première fois que l'artiste le présente dans une exposition à Montréal ? Le formulaire qu'un artiste devait remplir et contient la clause suivante : « [works] which have not been publicly exhibited in Montreal[32] ».

Le tableau qui nous occupe aurait peut-être été présenté auparavant, à Ottawa ou à Toronto, sous un autre titre, comme *Empty Room in a Basement,* ou encore, *Empty Rooms.*

Sans aucun doute, l'œuvre exposée à la AAM en 1946 fait partie de la série de toiles que Muhlstock exécuta à partir de cette maison abandonnée de la rue Saint-Norbert qu'il explora dans les années 1939–40. Durant nos nombreuses rencontres sur une vingtaine d'années, nous avons eu souvent l'occasion de discuter avec Muhlstock de cette série de taudis abandonnés. À notre demande, il a situé avec précision l'endroit où la plupart furent réalisés dans la ville. C'est ainsi qu'il a confirmé que *Sous-sol au mannequin de tailleur* fait partie de la série de toiles qu'il réalisa à partir de cette maison abandonnée de la rue Saint-Norbert. Si l'on se réfère à la clause citée dans le formulaire concernant l'exposition du printemps de l'Art Association of Montreal, il nous semble assez étonnant que Muhlstock, qui expose très fréquemment au début des années quarante, ait attendu six ans avant de présenter à Montréal l'une des œuvres les plus fortes sur les plans esthétique et social parmi la série de pièces vides dans des maisons abandonnées qu'il réalisa durant la crise économique. D'autant plus que la critique montréalaise s'était montrée très ouverte et réceptive à ce témoignage engagé de Muhlstock sur les conditions déplorables des logements où vivaient encore de nombreux concitoyens. Parmi les commentaires publiés à l'époque, voyons ce qu'écrit Marcel Parizeau, dans *Le Canada,* 4 mars 1941 : « Muhlstock expose une grande composition ; une cour dans un quartier vieux de Montréal, avec palissade, pans de brique et bicoques à toits plats ; ce peintre sent très fortement la poésie dangereuse même de la solitude et du silence ; il les rend tangibles et physiques, et les revalorise. C'est comme une longue injustice enfin réparée[33] ». L'année suivante, toujours dans *Le Canada,* sous le titre

« Muhlstock peintre mélancolique de sujets pacifiques », Maurice Huot commente une exposition individuelle de Muhlstock à la Galerie des Arts[34].

> Beaucoup de tableaux de l'exposition sont consacrés à des scènes montréalaises, notons parmi celles-ci, « Rue S.-Norbert », « Couvent et Brasserie », « Rue S.-Urbain » et « Sous-bois dans la montagne » […] Dans d'autres tableaux tels que « Plante dans une chambre vide », « Sous-Sol », il se dégage une atmosphère d'abandon et de mélancolie ou simplement de tranquillité dont l'auteur semble avoir eu une impression très vive. Ici les tons sont plus sobres et s'associent à la volonté d'expression de l'auteur tout en respectant l'objectivité des lieux[35].

Commentant la même exposition, Robert Élie, critique d'art à *La Presse* sous le pseudonyme de Pierre Daniel écrit : « Muhlstock nous introduit dans un monde tout différent. Ce peintre sensible cherche son inspiration dans la nature. Il se plait particulièrement à peindre ces rues sordides de Montréal, ces taudis brûlés par la lumière et l'air prennent ainsi, à certaines heures, l'aspect de ruines somptueuses[36] ». Ce qualificatif « ruines somptueuses » est bien choisi. En effet, dans ce taudis brûlé par la lumière et l'air, Muhlstock, par l'harmonie des couleurs et la distribution des formes, a réussi à créer l'impression d'une atmosphère sereine qui transcende la triste réalité du sujet.

La première reproduction connue de *Sous-sol au mannequin de tailleur* fut publiée dans la rotogravure de *La Patrie du Dimanche,* 6 août 1961, sous le titre *Chambre vide* (1945), dans un article signé Manuel Maître. La date de 1945 pour ce tableau est sûrement erronée. Présentée dans l'exposition itinérante réalisée en 1995 par le Musée du Québec, la toile, *Sous-sol au mannequin de tailleur*, est signée, mais non datée, ce qui est assez fréquent chez Muhlstock. On pourrait peut-être en déduire que, sachant qu'il allait proposer cette œuvre pour l'exposition du printemps de 1946, Muhlstock aurait voulu laissé croire qu'elle était de facture récente.

Une nouvelle époque, de nouveaux sujets

Puis, alors qu'avec la Deuxième Guerre mondiale les effets de la crise économique s'estompent peu à peu, Muhlstock va délaisser ces représentations de taudis pour s'intéresser au visage plus attrayant de la ville. Son atelier de la rue Sainte-Famille, où il s'est installé au milieu des années trente, lui offre de magnifiques points de vue sur l'extérieur qu'il décrit avec bonheur dans plusieurs toiles des années quarante. *Vue depuis ma fenêtre, Jour gris, Place Sainte-Famille, View from my window* (Fig. 8) autant de tableaux où

8 | Louis Muhlstock, *View from my window*, v. 1940, huile sur toile, 65,5 × 76,2 cm, Succession Louis Muhlstock. (Photo : Succession Louis Muhlstock)

Louis Muhlstock exploite une thématique qui, selon plusieurs auteurs, est devenue, au XX^e siècle, une icône de l'art moderne[37].

En 1941, Louis Muhlstock participe à la conférence de Kingston qui donnera naissance à la Fédération des artistes canadiens[38]. Cette association se donne comme buts principaux de définir le rôle des artistes dans la société et de promouvoir un art engagé dans le contexte social, surtout à l'époque des bouleversements qu'amène la Deuxième Guerre mondiale. Le gouvernement canadien, qui n'avait rien fait pour soutenir les artistes durant la crise économique, appuie la Fédération et encourage les artistes à produire des œuvres qui glorifient l'effort de guerre, cause populaire et politiquement rentable. De sa propre initiative et sans commande officielle, Muhlstock

fréquente les chantiers maritimes de la Canadian Vickers et les usines de la United Shipyards de Montréal, où il dessine les ouvriers qui y travaillent, la plupart anonymes, mais dont il inscrit parfois le nom ou le numéro de matricule. Ce qui intéresse Muhlstock, c'est de valoriser le travail du soudeur caché derrière son masque, du riveur accroupi dans une position difficile, de l'ouvrière à qui on confie les tâches les plus monotones, du tout jeune apprenti dont c'est le premier emploi, et enfin, du vieux manœuvre relégué aux menus travaux de routine à cause de son âge.

Ces humbles modèles qui triment dans des usines de munitions et d'armement s'inscrivent dans la lignée de ceux que Muhlstock a fait connaître au public montréalais au plus fort de la crise économique. Composée surtout d'habitants de quartiers défavorisés, enfants, chômeurs, immigrants, noirs, et sans-abris vivant dans les parcs, cette galerie de portraits, présentée une première fois à l'Art Association of Montreal en novembre 1935, a permis au public de découvrir le talent du jeune artiste et de susciter les commentaires élogieux de la critique d'art montréalaise. C'est ainsi que le poète et critique d'art Hector de Saint-Denys Garneau écrira à propos de ces portraits « Talent dont le registre chatoyant, qui s'étend de la plus subtile sensibilité jusqu'à la vigueur, promet un alliage d'une complexité bien pleine […] On a l'impression que l'évolution intime et la forme artistique marchent de front chez M. Muhlstock, et cela donne à ses œuvres une rare sincérité, une valeur de témoignage humain : la matière d'une vie y est engagée[39] ». Quartiers défavorisés, taudis abandonnés, petites gens laissés pour compte, ouvriers d'usine, tous sujets traités avec empathie par un peintre de grand talent, témoignent de la sincérité, de la valeur d'un témoignage humain auquel Louis Muhlstock a consacré la majeure partie de sa longue vie.

NOTES

1 Vers les débuts des années quatre-vingt, alors que sa vue diminuait et qu'il s'adonnait de moins en moins à la peinture, Louis Muhlstock se mit à rédiger de petits poèmes dans le style japonais haïku. Il les considérait comme des esquisses, au même titre que les dessins rapides qui l'avaient occupé une bonne partie de sa vie. Muhlstock les conservait précieusement dans une boîte de métal et demandait parfois à ses visiteurs d'en lire quelques-uns.

2 Aujourd'hui Narayiv, Ukraine.

3 « La population juive du Québec a crû de façon régulière jusqu'à la dernière décennie du XIX^e^ siècle et, à l'aube du XX^e^ siècle, elle enregistra un *boom* tout à fait exceptionnel, passant de 7,607 personne en 1901 à 30,648 en 1911 ». Alexandra Szacka « Immigration et démographie », dans Pierre Anctil et Gary Caldwell,

Juifs et réalités juives au Québec, chapitre 4, p. 97, Institut québécois de recherche sur la culture, IQRC, Québec, 1984.

4 Situées entre les rues de Montigny et Ontario, à l'est de la rue Saint-Dominique, les ruelles Leduc et Grubert ont été rasées pour faire place aux Habitations Jeanne-Mance lors des rénovations urbaines de 1957.

5 Entrevue de l'auteure avec Muhlstock, enregistrée à son atelier de la rue Sainte-Famille, le 16 février 1984.

6 Esther Trépanier, *Peintres juifs de Montréal Témoins de leur époque 1930–1948,* Montréal, Les Éditions de l'homme, 2008, p. 39.

7 Szacka, « Immigration et démographie », p. 110.

8 Terry Copp, *Classe ouvrière et pauvreté : Les conditions de vie des travailleurs montréalais 1897–1929*, Boréal Express, Montréal, 1978, p. 22.

9 Entrevue de l'auteure avec Muhlstock, *op. cit.*

10 Trépanier, *Peintres juifs de Montréal Témoins de leur époque 1930–1948,* p. 77–78.

11 Au début des années trente, la famille Muhlstock quitte le sombre logement de la rue Saint-Dominique qui l'a abritée depuis son arrivée au Québec pour un appartement ensoleillé, situé plus haut sur la même rue, près de l'avenue Duluth. Louis qualifiait à la blague ce nouveau logis de « Upper St. Dominique ».

12 Sorte de précurseur du bien-être social, ce programme d'aide fut mis sur pied dans les années trente pour pallier les problèmes créés par la crise économique. Subventionnée à la fois par les gouvernements provincial et municipal, l'aide financière est accordée pour une première fois à des gens aptes à travailler, mais non sans beaucoup de contrôle. Un fonctionnaire pouvait arriver inopinément en tout temps pour vérifier l'emploi du temps de ces mères de famille, les maigres revenus leur étant accordés pouvaient être retirés si elles n'étaient pas à la maison, sous prétexte qu'elles auraient trouvé une quelconque occupation rémunérée. En référence : Paul-André Linteau, René Durocher, Jean-Claude Robert, et François Ricard, *Histoire du Québec contemporain Le Québec depuis 1930, tome II,* Montréal, Boréal, 1986, p. 75–83.

13 Trépanier, *Peintres juifs de Montréal Témoins de leur époque 1930–1948,* p. 68–73.

14 *Ibid.,* p. 68.

15 Copp, *Classe ouvrière et pauvreté*, p. 77.

16 Chas. E. (Charles Edward) Goad, *Insurance plan of city of Montreal,* St. Norbert Street, vol. 1, 1918, revised in 1939, Microfilms, Documents cartographiques, Archives de la Ville de Montréal.

17 De nos jours, la rue Saint-Norbert est un endroit de résidence très prisé à cause de sa proximité avec le centre ville. Une partie de l'ancien couvent abrite de beaux condominiums. Rénovée en 1985, la chapelle historique du Bon-Pasteur est devenue une petite salle de concert très appréciée.

18 Dont, entre autres, l'immeuble de prestige *The Gleneagle*, qui domine la ville depuis la rue McDougall.

19 Christopher Varley, *The Contemporary Arts Society / La Société d'art contemporain, Montréal 1939–1948,* catalogue d'exposition, Edmonton Art Gallery, 1980, p. 18.

20 Entrevue de l'auteure avec Muhlstock, *op. cit*.

21 Dorothy Livesay, *Right hand, left hand,* "Montreal 1933–1934", Press Porcepic, Don Mills, ON, 1977, p. 87.

22 Alexandra Szacka, « Bases économiques et structure sociale 1931–1971 », dans Anctil et Caldwell, *Juifs et réalités juives au Québec,* chapitre 5, p. 126.

23 Alexandra Szacka « Antécédents idéologiques de la communauté ashkénaze québécoise », dans Anctil et Caldwell, *Juifs et réalités juives au Québec,* chapitre 6, p. 163.

24 Feuille reproduite à la page 142 dans Anctil et Caldwell, *Juifs et réalités juives au Québec. Ibid.*

25 Entrevue de Muhlstock avec Laurence Sabbath, « Louis Muhlstock Artist in Action Series: 1 », *Canadian Art 69,* vol. xvii, nº 4 (July 69), p. 216–23.

26 Je dois remercier la succession de Louis Muhlstock qui a mis à ma disposition la liste de toutes les expositions, individuelles et de groupe, auxquelles Muhlstock a participé durant sa longue carrière. Réalisée en 2007 par Dominique Gélinas, M.A. muséologie, à partir des archives de Louis Muhlstock et accessible sur support électronique, cette liste est un outil indispensable à la recherche sur Louis Muhlstock.

27 Il s'agit de l'exposition *Les confrères artistes,* présentée en mai 1939 dans les locaux de la troupe de théâtre Le caveau, à Ottawa. Il est possible que le tableau dans l'exposition d'Ottawa soit *Haunted House,* huile sur toile, 1938, qui a pour sujet une pièce vide dans une maison abandonnée. Cette œuvre fait aujourd'hui partie de la collection permanente du Museum London, Ontario.

28 Présentée à l'Art Gallery of Toronto (aujourd'hui ago-Musée des beaux-arts de l'Ontario) sous le titre *Four Artists Exhibition,* l'exposition réunissait, en plus de Louis Muhlstock, André Biéler, Henri Masson et Philip Surrey.

29 En fondant la Société d'art contemporain, le peintre montréalais John Lyman cherchait à promouvoir la diffusion d'un art vivant et progressif, délaissant les lieux communs de la glorification rurale et des pins rabougris du Bouclier canadien. Pour Muhlstock, et de nombreux autres peintres juifs, les expositions de la sac seront l'occasion de présenter des scènes de leur environnement immédiat, soit les quartiers défavorisés de Montréal.

30 Ces années sont une période faste pour Muhlstock qui participe à de nombreuses expositions, notamment à Montréal, Toronto, Ottawa, Québec, Winnipeg, Edmonton, Wolfville, et New-York.

31 La Société d'art contemporain, grâce aux contacts de John Lyman avec les dirigeants de l'Art Association, dont son cousin Cleveland Morgan, avait réussi à mettre sur pied un deuxième jury parallèle pour la sélection des œuvres présentées à la Spring Exhibition. En 1946, les membres du *Jury II* étaient Paul-Émile Borduas, Fritz Brandtner et Marian Scott. Les artistes pouvaient choisir d'inscrire leurs œuvres dans l'un où l'autre des jurys. Nul doute que Muhlstock choisit de présenter son tableau au *Jury II,* sur lequel il avait lui-même siégé en 1945.

32 Voir les formulaires : 55th Annual Spring Exhibition, 1938 et 63rd Annual Spring Exhibition, 1946. Source : Archives du Musée des beaux-arts de Montréal.

33 Marcel Parizeau, « Le Contemporary Art Society », *Le Canada*, 4 mai 1941.

34 Il s'agit de l'Art Association of Montreal que plusieurs critiques d'art francophones à l'époque appellent Galerie des Arts.

35 Maurice Huot, *Le Canada,* 6 novembre 1942. Deux des œuvres présentées dans l'exposition, *Rue St-Urbain* et *Couvent et Brasserie*, sont reproduites dans l'article.

36 Pierre Daniel, « Eveleigh et L. Muhlstock », *La Presse*, 7 novembre 1942, p. 34.

37 Voir, entre autres, Shirley Neilsen Blum, *Matisse Chambres avec vue,* Paris, Éditions du Chêne, Hachette, 2010.

38 Louis Muhlstock a toujours conservé une brochure illustrée sur l'Université Queen's – lieu de la conférence de juin 1941 – dans laquelle il a inséré des feuillets distribués aux artistes participants, ainsi que de petits croquis réalisés par lui et par d'autres artistes présents à la conférence. Fonds Louis Muhlstock, nº accession, 2004.14372.1.

39 Hector de Saint-Denys Garneau (Chronique des beaux-arts [II] : Louis Muhlstock), *La Relève,* deuxième série, cahier cinq, janvier 1936.

Basement with Tailor's Dummy: Louis Muhlstock's Testament to a Time and a Place

MONIQUE NADEAU-SAUMIER

This visual analysis of the painting *Basement with Tailor's Dummy*, ca. 1940 by Louis Muhlstock (1904–2001) allows for a parallel survey of the social, cultural, and historical climate of Montreal during the Depression. After his return from three years of art studies in Paris in the early thirties, the young artist was much concerned with the deplorable living conditions that prevailed at the time in what is commonly known as the McGill or the Jewish ghetto. In her recent book, *Jewish Painters of Montreal*, Esther Trépanier explains that these artists were the first to depict their immediate environment, giving priority to the visual dynamics of form, colour, and composition, although there was comparatively little attention to the human presence. About his own paintings of the period, Muhlstock said: "These subjects were all in Montreal … They included people and the streets and lanes of Montreal, the slum parts of the city, around the harbour and the Mount Royal, these were the areas that I frequented."

After arriving in Montreal from Narajov, Galicia in 1911, Louis and his family had lived in a dark basement apartment on St-Dominique Street. Among his Montreal contemporaries, Muhlstock was the only one to investigate the abandoned and condemned houses in the neighbourhood and to set up his easel in those empty rooms in buildings declared unfit for human habitation. The resulting series of paintings by Muhlstock has no equivalent in Canadian painting of the 1930s. During his walks through the Jewish ghetto, Muhlstock discovered an abandoned house on the corner of St-Norbert and St-Dominique streets. At the time, it faced the Bon Pasteur complex, and was described in Goad's *Atlas of Montreal* as "Convent & Female Refuge." Muhlstock painted several versions of the interior of this house, the most important being *Basement with Tailor's Dummy*, the subject of this article.

Bathed in a warm embracing light that denies its sordid setting, the painting shows two rooms in the basement of the house. While the window is the source of illumination, it offers no view on the outside world and enhances the claustrophobic atmosphere of the room. Positioned near the window is a tailor's dummy, whose curvilinear silhouette contrasts with

the rigid geometry of the rooms and enunciates the play of architectonic and organic shapes within the image. Similar visual tensions are evident in his other works of the time such as *Two Room Apartment, Grubert Lane, Montréal/Logement de deux pièces, ruelle Grubert*, ca. 1940–41, MNBAQ, or *Chambre au sous-sol, maison condamnée, rue Saint-Norbert*, ca. 1938–40, Estate of Louis Muhlstock, for example. Muhlstock has explained his attraction to such subjects: "When I painted these empty rooms, I painted silence and decay. I was very moved and disturbed that people were allowed to live in such surroundings and I think I expressed it through my colour. Although the people were never introduced in these paintings, there were traces of their having been there."

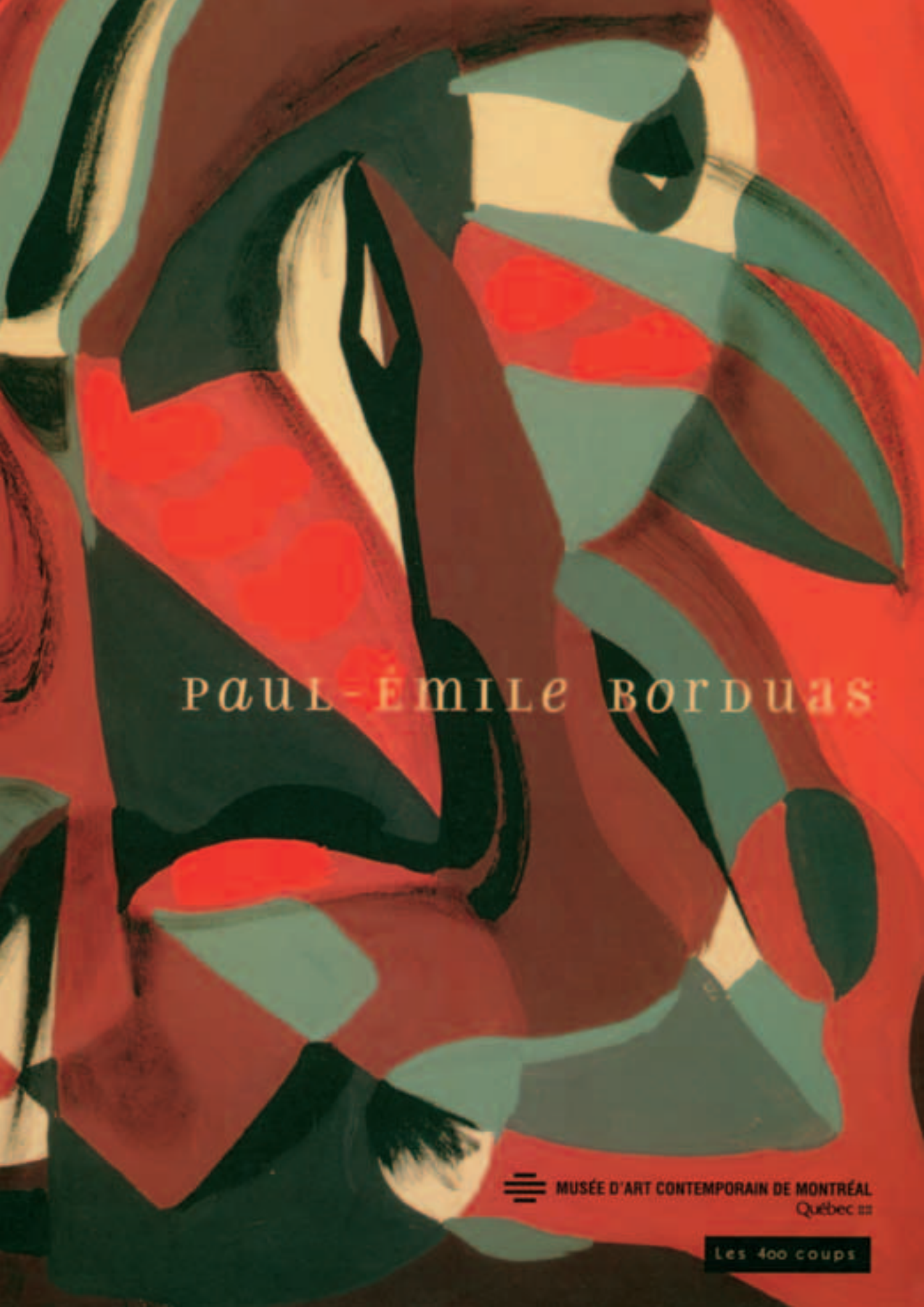
Such traces of the former habitants are obvious in *Basement with Tailor's Dummy*, but the image leaves many questions unanswered. Certainly, evictions were a daily fact for hundred of Montrealers during the Depression. To quote the social worker and poet Dorothy Livesay: "The unemployed were completely without recourse. They were evicted from their homes, their water and heat was cut off, they were given the meagrest amount of food and so on. That life was one of great despair." Was this the fate of the former occupants of the basement rooms on St-Norbert? Why was the mannequin left behind?

The mannequin in Muhlstock's painting is obviously a female figure and refers to the visual tradition of images of women by a window as exemplified by Johannes Vermeer and Caspar David Friedrich, for example. But Muhlstock's tailor's dummy has socio-political ties to the history of the Jewish community of Montreal following the great migrations from Central and Eastern Europe. Large numbers of immigrants were employed in the local textile and clothing industries, where working conditions became increasingly horrific during the Depression. In 1934, workers in Montreal's clothing manufacture declared a strike, which unfortunately resulted in their loss of jobs and income, at a time when so many Montreal workers were also looking for work and lodgings.

Louis Muhlstock's important series of empty rooms are difficult to date with precision. The subject is often mentioned under such different titles as *Haunted House*, *Deserted House*, *Empty rooms* in references and documents relating to the numerous exhibitions that included his work in the 1930s and '40s in Montreal, Ottawa, and Toronto. As newspapers attest, the critical reception of these paintings was highly positive. Although it may have been shown earlier and with a different title, *Basement with Tailor's Dummy* is listed for the first time in the 1946 Spring Exhibition at the Art Association of Montreal.

As economic conditions improved at the onset of the World War Two, Louis Muhlstock began painting a more attractive and positive image of Montreal. Inspired by the surroundings of his studio on Ste-Famille Street, he painted an important series of views from a window in different moods and seasons. During the war years, he produced a superb series of workers that he sketched in the shipyards and munitions plants of Montreal. Over his long career, Muhlstock maintained his interest in the ordinary people and places of Montreal – labourers and the unemployed, dark backyards and sunny lanes were all treated with equal attention and empathy. As the poet, writer and art critic, Hector de Saint-Denys Garneau, wrote in 1936, Muhlstock's evolved visual sensibility and his deeply felt humanity are "the very substance of his art and life."

Translation: the author



MUSÉE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN DE MONTRÉAL
Québec

Les 400 coups

Paul-Émile Borduas et la *fondation* du Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal

LAURIER LACROIX

Le phénomène des acquisitions massives par les musées est un sujet qui m'intéresse depuis l'acquisition de la collection Lavalin par le Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal (MACM) en 1992[1]. Ce mode d'acquisition sert de cadre de référence pour cet article afin d'examiner la constitution du discours de l'histoire de l'art tel que formulé par le musée[2]. Comment les professionnels actifs dans un milieu muséologique contribuent-ils aux propositions interprétatives de l'art ? De quelle façon leur contribution rejoint-elle celle formulée dans le milieu académique[3] ? Le parallélisme entre le développement des musées et la professionnalisation de la discipline de l'histoire de l'art au Québec, au milieu des années 1960, suggère que cette piste est fertile et que, réciproquement, les historiens et les conservateurs ont contribué à échafauder une histoire commune autour des artistes qui deviendront les figures mythiques de l'art au Québec.

Les acquisitions en nombre, plus encore que les acquisitions d'œuvres individuelles – à moins qu'elles ne soient tout à fait exceptionnelles –, marquent la spécificité d'une collection et, comme on l'a souvent écrit, l'identité d'un musée. C'est la collection qui permet de distinguer les institutions muséales, et la nature des œuvres conservées contribue à définir leur caractère propre. Ce qui va de soi pour le Louvre ou le British Museum se remarque, à une autre échelle, dans les institutions canadiennes, que l'on pense aux œuvres du Groupe des Sept au Musée des beaux-arts du Canada et à la McMichael Canadian Art Collection ; au fonds James Wilson Morrice du Musée des beaux-arts de Montréal ou à la collection de bronzes d'Alfred Laliberté au Musée national des beaux-arts du Québec. Ces groupes d'œuvres donnent une couleur particulière au lieu qui les détient, les expose et les interprète.

L'hypothèse posée ici va plus loin et suggère que l'acquisition, en 1973, du fonds Paul-Émile Borduas par le MACM[4] constitue le véritable acte de naissance de l'institution, le geste fondateur de ce musée, huit ans après son inauguration. Comment et dans quelles circonstances le musée a-t-il procédé à

Détail, *Paul-Émile Borduas*, Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, Éditions Les 400 coups, 1998. (Photo : auteur)

cette acquisition et quelle place le musée a-t-il consacré à cette collection, ou, devrais-je dire, comment cette collection a-t-elle consacré la place du musée ? Ma réponse à ces questions suggère que ce sont ces œuvres qui auraient permis à l'institution de vraiment acquérir une stature, une crédibilité et une personnalité face à son mandat.

Avant 1973, un musée sans orientation définie

Le MACM, faut-il le rappeler, est inauguré en 1965 dans un local de la Place Ville-Marie, avant d'emménager au Château Dufresne. Ce logement, mis à la disposition du ministère des Affaires culturelles par la Ville de Montréal, est temporaire, car, dès ce moment, on prévoit que le musée occuperait dès que possible un pavillon de l'Expo 67, possiblement le pavillon du Québec[5]. Yves Robillard a retracé la tortueuse origine de l'institution, de 1963 à 1965, dans un manuscrit encore inédit[6]. On y apprend que le musée s'inspire de ceux qui ont été mis sur pied par les collectionneurs et les artistes au XIX[e] siècle et qui prennent la forme de salles d'exposition destinées à servir les intérêts de leurs membres actifs[7]. Les créateurs y montrent leur production courante et les collectionneurs leurs plus belles prises. Cependant la genèse du projet de Montréal est entourée de discussions de divers ordres (politique, financier, administratif) qui amènent à inaugurer l'institution en mars 1965 avec une exposition Georges Rouault, organisée par le Musée national d'art moderne de Paris. Le choix de l'artiste, décédé en 1958, n'ira pas sans causer un certain désintéressement de la part du milieu qui avait soutenu sa création, mais qui ne peut toutefois pas faire l'économie d'un tel outil de diffusion[8]. Ce n'est qu'en 1968 que le Musée emménage à la Cité du Havre dans un ancien pavillon de l'Exposition universelle.

L'évolution du développement des collections du MACM a été mise en lumière par Jocelyne Connolly qui, dans son mémoire intitulé « Le Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, décideurs et morphologie socio-esthétiques de la collection (1964–1991) » (UQAM, 1992), a démontré comment l'évolution des choix des acquisitions est directement liée à la composition des comités et aux goûts esthétiques des personnes et des groupes responsables du musée[9]. L'étude du directorat de Guy Robert, de juin 1964 à février 1966, puis de celui de Gilles Hénault, de mars 1966 à mars 1971, qui sera suivi de celui de Henri Barras, de mars 1971 à décembre 1972, montre que le MACM est à la recherche d'un mandat et d'une identité qui lui soient propres.

Entre 1964 et 1966, le musée collectionne surtout grâce aux dons des artistes (100 000$ ont été investis principalement dans la rénovation du Château Dufresne), et 90% des œuvres acquises – surtout des estampes – sont produites entre 1959 et 1964. C'est dire que l'institution sert une actualité immédiate dans un secteur privilégié qui jouit alors d'une grande popularité.

Guy Robert sélectionne également les œuvres de l'abstraction lyrique qui se développe à Paris, et 59 % des œuvres acquises sont européennes.

Dans un article sur le nouveau musée d'art moderne de Montréal, Guy Robert avait identifié la date de 1900 comme étant le moment charnière pour la production des œuvres à présenter au public et à acquérir par le Musée[10]. Cependant, ni lui, ni Gilles Hénault n'ont disposé des budgets qui leur auraient permis de réaliser ce programme. Selon Connolly, la place de l'abstraction gestuelle est confirmée sous le mandat de Hénault avec l'acquisition de quelques œuvres du groupe Cobra, mais la forte présence de la sculpture (soit 14 % des acquisitions, 51 œuvres sur 416) caractériserait le directorat de Hénault. En 1969, une lettre de ce dernier adressée à madame Gabrielle Borduas indiquant l'intention du musée d'acquérir certaines toiles de l'artiste demeure sans suite.

C'est sous le mandat d'Henri Barras, en 1972, que le Musée réussit à faire débloquer le budget qui permet d'acquérir la collection Lortie, ce qui rendra impossible tout autre achat pour les trois prochaines années[11]. La collection Gisèle et Gérard Lortie comprend 104 œuvres d'artistes québécois, renforçant les tendances de l'abstraction gestuelle et géométrique déjà visibles dans la collection[12]. Parmi ces œuvres figurent 12 Borduas et des toiles de Riopelle, Barbeau et Ferron.

En 1973, au moment où Fernande Saint-Martin accède à la direction, le musée conserve 1 041 œuvres, dont 40 % sont des estampes et plus de 30 % sont des productions d'artistes étrangers[13]. Si Hénault et Barras ont tenté de rétablir la représentation des créateurs québécois, qui deviennent alors majoritaires, ceux-ci représentent plusieurs tendances esthétiques, au fil de l'actualité artistique, sans véritable orientation de la part du Musée. La collection Lortie apporte des œuvres importantes dans le contexte du développement de la contemporanéité au Québec. Même si ses balises sont larges, elle propose un nœud autour duquel peut se définir le collectionnement et l'identité du Musée. C'est dans ce contexte que se situe l'acquisition de la collection Borduas par la Corporation des musées nationaux du Canada et sa cession au MACM.

1972, le gouvernement fédéral acquiert la collection de Gabrielle Borduas

Le jeudi 25 mai 1972, la Corporation des Musées nationaux du Canada annonce en grande pompe, lors d'une cérémonie tenue au MACM sous l'égide de Gérard Pelletier, secrétaire d'État responsable de la Corporation, et de Claire Kirkland-Casgrain, ministre des Affaires culturelles, l'acquisition des archives (3 000 documents[14]) et 71 œuvres de Borduas, soit 46 toiles, 4 aquarelles et 21 esquisses à l'encre réalisées sur des paquets de cigarettes *Gitanes*[15]. Lors de la conférence de presse, on déclare que l'ensemble sera

remis éventuellement à un musée au Québec[16], selon un accord « dont les modalités n'ont pas encore été définies[17] ». Le communiqué de presse annonce que « les Musées du Québec deviendraient en quelque sorte les fiduciaires de la collection, la Province s'engageant à en assurer la conservation et l'utilisation […] Le gouvernement du Québec, qui a participé aux discussions précédant l'achat des œuvres de Borduas, doit indiquer bientôt comment les Musées du Québec entendent utiliser la collection acquise par les Musées nationaux[18] ».

Comment ces œuvres étaient-elles disponibles et pourquoi le gouvernement fédéral a-t-il voulu s'en rendre propriétaire ? Après le décès de Borduas, à Paris, le 22 février 1960, le fonds d'atelier de l'artiste peut regagner Beloeil, via Amsterdam. Une exposition est organisée, en décembre 1960, au Stedelijk Museum par Wilhem Sandberg avec la collaboration de Charles Delloye[19]. De là, les œuvres rejoignent la famille à Beloeil. Evan H. Turner, directeur du Musée des beaux-arts de Montréal présente à son tour, en janvier 1962, une exposition majeure qui comprend 128 œuvres, exposition qui voyage à Ottawa et Toronto[20]. Plusieurs emprunts sont alors faits à la famille Borduas. Certaines de leurs pièces sont également prêtées à différentes expositions de groupe, nationales et internationales. Ainsi, une petite exposition monographique circule aux États-Unis (Manchester, Hanover, Dartmouth), en 1967, et une autre est présentée à la galerie de La Sauvegarde, à Montréal, la même année. Quelques chercheurs, dont Bernard Teyssèdre et François-Marc Gagnon, développent leur recherche sur Borduas[21]. Pour sa part, Guy Robert publie une monographie sur l'artiste en mai 1972[22].

Des raisons d'ordre personnel et un désir de conservation des archives et du fonds d'atelier de l'artiste incitent madame Gabrielle Borduas à se départir des œuvres qu'elle a reçues en héritage[23]. Le MACM a misé sur la collection Lortie et ne dispose pas des ressources financières nécessaires pour acquérir ce fonds. C'est du gouvernement fédéral que viendra la solution. Ce dénouement peut surprendre, compte tenu de la récupération « canadienne » qu'elle suppose de *Refus global* et de la figure de Borduas, déjà perçu comme l'une des figures annonciatrices de la Révolution tranquille[24]. Comment Borduas pourrait-il devenir une cause défendue par le gouvernement libéral fédéral qui semble mépriser le Québec et ses dirigeants[25] ? Pourquoi le gouvernement fédéral achète-t-il une collection d'œuvres de Borduas pour ensuite les remettre à un musée provincial ? Le gouvernement de Trudeau n'était pas particulièrement porté vers la décentralisation des pouvoirs envers les provinces et, dans ce cas particulier, cela semble une ingérence indue du gouvernement fédéral dans le secteur culturel, domaine qui a toujours été perçu comme la chasse gardée du gouvernement provincial.

Je n'ai pas réussi à identifier précisément par quel filon s'est installée l'idée que la Corporation des musées nationaux, qui est sous la direction

du Secrétariat d'État, a acquis cet ensemble d'œuvres et de documents pour les remettre au MACM. Plusieurs personnes sont susceptibles d'être intervenues comme alliés objectives du gouvernement fédéral, permettant que l'acquisition soit jugée comme possible, souhaitable, réalisable et couronnée de succès. Des hauts fonctionnaires et des politiciens ont fréquenté la famille de Borduas avant 1948. Ils connaissent ainsi Gabrielle Borduas et sont en mesure d'intervenir. Certes, l'influence de Guy Viau, décédé en 1971, ne peut plus se manifester. Du premier ministre Pierre-Elliott Trudeau, en passant par plusieurs hauts fonctionnaires, tel Robert Élie, la famille Borduas dispose de plusieurs entrées au cabinet, dont celle du ministre responsable, Gérard Pelletier, qui fut un lecteur attentif de *Refus global* à l'automne de 1948, alors qu'il était journaliste au *Devoir*[26]. Ses positions furent d'ailleurs prises à parti par cinq signataires du manifeste : Jean Paul et Françoise Riopelle, Maurice Perron, Madeleine Arbour et Pierre Gauvreau[27].

Pelletier, qui a œuvré dans les mouvements de jeunesse catholique, a, comme il le déclare, une sympathie pour l'essentiel du message de *Refus global*, mais il dénonce le climat d'athéisme et ce qu'il croît être le rejet des valeurs chrétiennes, tel que prôné par le manifeste.

> Nous acceptons en grande partie votre critique des institutions sociales : l'exploitation du pauvre par le riche, l'utilisation de la peur, la prétention moderne de tout régler par la seule raison, l'intellectualisme néfaste, la désincarnation d'une certaine pensée contemporaine, l'absurdité des guerres, l'exploitation intéressée de certaines vérités religieuses. Non seulement nous acceptons cette critique, mais nous l'avions maintes fois formulée nous-même, nous continuons de le faire à chaque semaine[28]. Et la sympathie que nous ressentons pour vous, c'est là-dessus qu'elle se base, car nous refusons nous aussi toutes mystifications.
>
> […] Nous avons nous aussi « la foi en l'avenir et en la collectivité future ». Mais nous avons foi en Dieu, dont le nom n'apparaît pas une seule fois et dont la Présence n'est pas évoquée dans votre manifeste[29].

C'est le même Pelletier qui, en octobre 1960, dans *Cité Libre*, à la suite d'un échange épistolaire avec Jacques Ferron, reconnaissait la fin de l'unanimité en matière d'idéologie politique et de pensée religieuse au Québec[30].

Devenu député, puis secrétaire d'État, Pelletier pilote l'application de la loi de la Corporation des musées nationaux déposée par Judy LaMarsh et adoptée le 1er avril 1968[31]. Pour sa part, la loi sur les musées nationaux (16 Elizabeth II, chap. 21) réunit les quatre institutions nationales (Galerie nationale, Musée national de l'Homme, Musée national des sciences naturelles et Musée national des sciences et de la technologie).

Ce n'est que le 28 mars 1972, deux mois avant la déclaration confirmant l'acquisition de la collection Borduas, qu'on annonce une modification à cette loi, lui donnant plus de moyens en mettant sur pied le Réseau canadien d'information sur le patrimoine, l'Institut canadien de conservation et la Commission canadienne d'examen des exportations des biens culturels. Ainsi, la loi prévoit un fonds d'urgence

> destiné à l'achat d'objets qui se rattachent de façon particulière au patrimoine national, et risquent de passer entre des mains étrangères.
>
> Pour faire face à des situations d'urgence, il est parfois souhaitable, pour agir rapidement, de mettre les fonds engagés sous la responsabilité directe des Musées nationaux du Canada […] Les objets acquis au moyen de ce fonds ne s'ajoutent pas nécessairement aux collections des Musées nationaux du Canada […] Dans certains cas, il se peut que l'on accorde aux établissements les ressources nécessaires pour qu'ils puissent acheter eux-mêmes et sous les mêmes conditions les pièces désignées[32].

Fin mai 1972, à peine deux ans après 1970 et son célèbre mois d'octobre, et dans le contexte d'une montée sans précédent du nationalisme, le secrétariat d'État annonce qu'il s'est porté acquéreur de la collection Borduas[33]. L'ensemble est d'abord présenté à la Galerie nationale du Canada, du 1er au 27 août 1972, et Henri Barras, directeur intérimaire du MACM, souhaite le recevoir le plus rapidement possible, afin de consacrer une salle permanente de toutes les œuvres appartenant au Musée[34]. Barras venait d'organiser, en décembre 1971, l'exposition *Borduas et les automatistes : Montréal 1942–1955* aux Galeries nationales du Grand Palais à Paris (2 décembre 1971–16 janvier 1972) (fig. 1), cherchant à positionner le MACM comme le défenseur de la peinture de Borduas et des automatistes[35]. Si, pour le directeur, le Musée est propriétaire des œuvres achetées par la Corporation des musées nationaux du Canada, la cession de propriété entre Ottawa et Québec n'est cependant pas encore intervenue.

En effet, la Corporation, qui souhaite que les œuvres soient conservées dans les meilleures conditions possibles, demande à ce que le Musée améliore l'environnement physique de ses installations (contrôle de la température et de l'humidité, surveillance électronique, gardiennage) et nomme une personne responsable pour s'occuper des archives[36].

1973, quelle place pour la collection Borduas ?

Le 9 février 1973, Jean S. Boggs, directrice de la Galerie Nationale du Canada (GNC), écrit à la nouvelle directrice du MACM, Fernande Saint-Martin, afin

1 | *Borduas et les automatistes Montreal : 1942–1955*, Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, 1971. (Photo : auteur)

de lui proposer une exposition de la collection Borduas – exposition qui pourrait devenir itinérante – et d'utiliser cet événement pour forcer la main au gouvernement afin de régler les problèmes d'espace et d'entreposage qui semblent encore faire défaut pour la conclusion du transfert de la collection[37]. Un accord intervient entre les deux directrices sur la tenue d'une exposition itinérante, organisée par la GNC, dont la première présentation aura lieu à Montréal[38] (fig. 2). Entretemps, le secrétaire d'État, J. Hugh Faulkner, déclare au ministre François Cloutier qu'il souhaite aller de l'avant avec l'intention de Gérard Pelletier de remettre la collection au MACM, et un comité de travail est constitué[39].

La donation semble avoir été ratifiée de façon officieuse entre les fonctionnaires impliqués dans ce transfert, puisqu'aucun document n'atteste du changement de propriété entre les deux gouvernements. Un communiqué de presse paru à l'occasion de l'inauguration de l'exposition *Borduas (New*

2 | L'affiche-dépliant de l'exposition, *La collection Borduas*, Galerie nationale du Canada, 1973. (Photo : auteur)

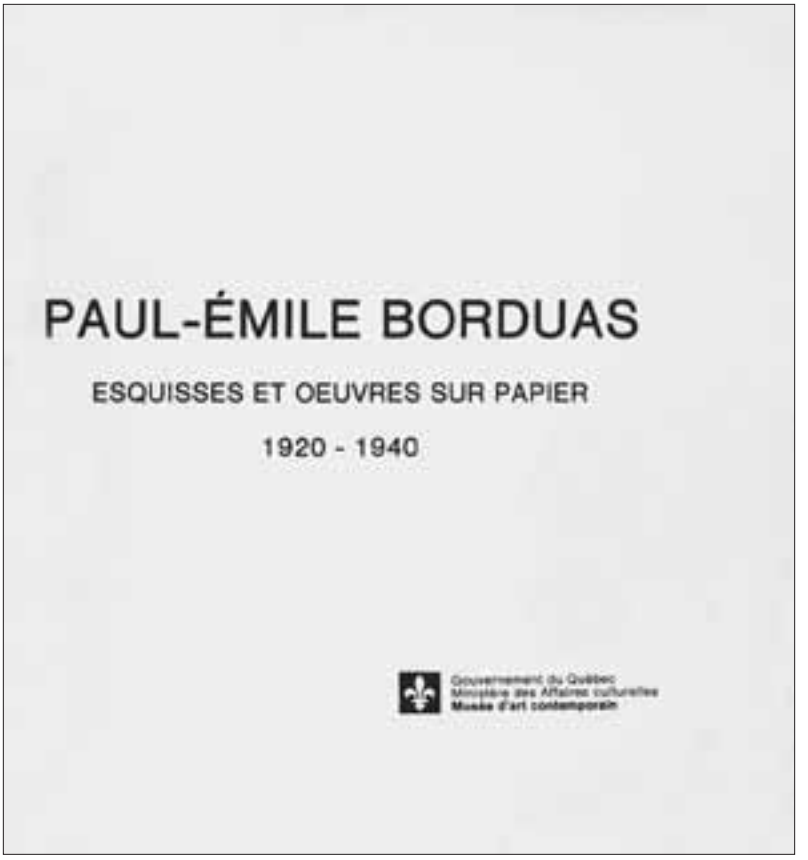
York – Paris) déclare que : « Le 23 mars 1973, dans le cadre de sa nouvelle politique fédérale des musées, le Secrétariat d'Etat, par l'entremise de la Corporation des musées nationaux, cédait au Québec, par acte de donation, la collection « Borduas » qui, jusqu'au moment de son achat par le gouvernement fédéral en 1972, appartenait à la famille de Paul-Émile Borduas[40] ». Dans son allocution lors du vernissage, le ministre Faulkner annonce : « En donnant cette collection au Musée d'art contemporain et la faisant circuler dans les autres musées, par l'entremise de la Galerie nationale, le gouvernement fédéral souhaite que l'œuvre de Paul-Émile Borduas puisse être mieux admirée et appréciée de tout le peuple canadien[41] ».

Du 4 octobre au 25 novembre 1973, le MACM montre sa nouvelle possession lors d'une exposition intitulée *Borduas (New York Paris)*[42]. On annonce alors la création d'une salle permanente consacrée à Borduas[43]. L'affiche-dépliant qui tient lieu de catalogue comprend la liste des œuvres et mentionne le don[44]. Un riche programme public permet d'entendre les points de vue de quatre spécialistes : l'écrivain et professeur Jean-Éthier Blais, le sociologue Marcel Rioux, l'écrivain et cinéaste Jacques Godbout, en plus de François-Marc Gagnon.

3 | *La collection Borduas du Musée d'art contemporain*, Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, 1976. (Photo : auteur)

Suite à cette présentation montréalaise, l'exposition est mise en circulation à partir du modèle des tournées régionales de la Galerie nationale du Canada[45]. L'itinéraire comprend Sackville, Halifax, Sherbrooke, Saskatoon, London et Kingston. La tournée permet de montrer l'acquisition, tout en épuisant à peu près le circuit canadien (hormis Toronto et Vancouver) de mise en valeur de la collection et la valeur d'échange que représente cet ensemble.

Au retour de l'itinérance, le MACM inaugure, le 7 septembre 1975, la salle Borduas. Le carton d'invitation spécifie que la « collection Borduas est désormais installée en permanence selon des accrochages thématiques ». On y présente, jusqu'au 1er juillet 1976, 28 œuvres, nombre maximum que



4 | *Paul-Émile Borduas : esquisses et oeuvres sur papier, 1920–1940*, Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, 1977. (Photo : auteur)

semble pouvoir accueillir la salle. Le Musée compte alors 77 œuvres de l'artiste. Borduas devient la figure de proue de l'institution, qui diffuse cette acquisition avec la publication, en 1976, de *La collection Paul-Émile Borduas du Musée d'art contemporain* (fig. 3)[46].

Cet espace n'est pas exclusif à Borduas, mais on y accroche ses œuvres en rotation, ce qui fait de cet artiste un axe autour duquel s'articulent les autres expositions. Au cours des années et jusqu'en 1985, le musée y présente plus de dix accrochages différents consolidant ainsi la place de l'artiste dans l'histoire de l'art. Du 21 avril au 22 mai 1977, ce sont les dessins de jeunesse appartenant à Renée Borduas[47] (fig. 4). Du 9 novembre 1978 au 14 janvier 1979, le musée souligne le *Trentenaire du Refus global* et on y présente huit Borduas. Lui succède, du 18 janvier au 22 juillet 1979, l'exposition *Exposition de la période new yorkaise et parisienne de Paul-Émile Borduas*[48].

À l'été 1979 (du 21 juin au 2 juillet), le MACM organise l'exposition *Borduas à St-Hilaire*, présentée au manoir Rouville-Campbell de cette municipalité. Une gouache, 13 huiles et les 21 dessins à l'encre de la « collection » Borduas sont prêtés, et l'on publie même une brochure pour cette occasion qui permet

5 | *Paul-Émile Borduas et la peinture abstraite : œuvres picturales, de 1943 à 1960*, Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, 1983. (Photo : auteur)

de présenter l'artiste dans son village natal. Cette manifestation est doublée de l'exposition *Paul Émile Borduas : la période parisienne (1955–1960),* accrochée au MACM du 24 juillet au 2 septembre 1979.

À l'automne 1979[49], l'artiste retrouve les cimaises du MACM dans l'exposition *Paul-Émile Borduas, New York – Paris (1953–1960).* En 1980, du 10 août au 2 septembre, on présente cette fois 21 « *sans titre* » *de Paul Émile Borduas*, œuvres qui portent sur la dernière partie de sa carrière. Du 18 décembre 1980 au 25 janvier 1981, sous le titre générique *La collection Borduas du Musée d'art contemporain*, on retrouve une sélection d'œuvres. Du 17 juillet

6 | *Paul-Émile Borduas*, Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, Éditions Les 400 coups, 1998. (Photo : auteur)

au 6 septembre 1981, les tableaux sont regroupés sous le titre *Paul-Émile Borduas : collection permanente 1950–1955*.

Du 14 janvier au 21 février 1982, *Paul-Émile Borduas : diffusion de l'œuvre* fournit l'occasion au conservateur Pierre Landry de souligner les différentes formes de diffusion empruntées par Borduas pour la présentation de ses œuvres de 1942 à 1960[50]. En 1984 (30 août – 30 septembre) se tient l'exposition *La collection Borduas du Musée d'art contemporain : œuvres picturales de 1943 à 1960* qui donne lieu à la publication d'un autre catalogue (fig. 5).

En 1982–83, sous le directorat d'André Ménard, neuf ans après l'acquisition et sept ans après le dépôt au MACM, le Musée organise une mise en circulation des œuvres à Bruxelles et à New York. *Paul-Émile Borduas et la peinture abstraite 1942–1960* marque, en quelque sorte, la sortie des salles et la fin de la présentation à peu près continue de la collection au musée, sis à la Cité du Havre[51].

Depuis 1985, date d'arrivée du directorat de Marcel Brisebois, on n'a présenté la collection qu'une fois, en 1998, pour le cinquantenaire du *Refus global* (fig. 6)[52]. La collection Borduas faisait cependant l'objet d'une salle permanente depuis son inauguration en 1992, sur le site de la Place des arts. Bien que de petite taille, l'accrochage dense et un cabinet contenant la documentation offrait un panorama de la pensée et de la production de l'artiste. Celle-ci fut démantelée en 2009, lors de l'exposition rétrospective de Claude Tousignant, et n'a pas été remontée depuis. En 2004, une exposition regroupant 29 œuvres sur papier fut présentée en France (fig. 7). L'exposition *La Question de l'abstraction*, inaugurée le 12 avril 2012 et qui sera présentée jusqu'en 2016, montre quelques œuvres de Borduas dans un face à face avec celles de Jean Paul Riopelle.

Borduas, fondateur posthume du MACM

En 1992, Jocelyne Connolly écrivait :

> L'œuvre de Borduas, le protagoniste de la mutation formelle la plus significative pour le futur historique de l'art au Québec (du moins jusqu'à maintenant), même s'il acquiert le statut de la modernité dans une collection d'art contemporain, semble appréhendé en tant que matériau historique, paradigme, schème ou modèle formel d'une histoire de l'art contemporain encore jeune. Ni à ce moment dans les années 1970, ni encore dans les années 1990, l'histoire ne distancie des fondements automatistes, et cela au point de négliger les autres prémices […] Borduas s'avère donc l'artiste le plus hautement représenté dans la collection du MACM avec 97 œuvres. Une telle concentration cautionne également l'idée d'apposer une marque à une collection. Celle du Musée se constitue, en partie par les œuvres de Borduas et de Dumouchel, dont le nombre le plus important est acquis au cours de la direction de Fernande Saint-Martin[53].

Pour sa part, la conservatrice Josée Belisle notait au sujet de la collection Borduas donnée par la Corporation des musées nationaux du Canada : « Ramenées de l'atelier parisien où elles se trouvaient, ces œuvres sont,

7 | *La magie des signes : œuvres sur papier de la Collection Borduas du Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal*, Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, 2004. (Photo : auteur)

rétrospectivement, investies d'une dimension symbolique posthume, testamentaire[54] ».

C'est sur ce type de testament *involontaire* que s'appuient très souvent les musées pour remplir leur mission. J'ajouterais que le MACM a acquis, grâce au gouvernement fédéral, les moyens d'assurer son identité et de confirmer, par un ensemble d'œuvres cohérent et complet, la présence de Borduas comme figure fondatrice de l'art moderne au Québec. Le développement de la collection au MACM est lent, irrégulier et chaotique, et le musée, qui n'est

pas encore un musée d'État, cherche alors sa voie. L'arrivée de la collection Lortie, et surtout du fonds Borduas va confirmer l'autorité de la place de Borduas et de l'automatisme dans la peinture contemporaine au Québec et fournir une caution à cette histoire de l'art qui s'écrit au quotidien. La volonté exprimée de créer une salle permanente pour la collection Borduas indique le rôle central que l'on souhaitait faire jouer à cette figure dans le circuit du musée et dans le récit de l'histoire de l'art au Québec. Ce qui est particulier, c'est que ce soit l'État fédéral qui soit intervenu dans l'écriture de cette histoire de l'art. S'agissait-il de la part des responsables d'un geste compensatoire face à l'histoire moderne et récente du Québec ou, plus simplement, d'une autre forme de la mise en application des ressources de la Corporation des musées nationaux ? Geste idéologique ou geste politique, il n'en demeure pas moins que sans cet achat, la position centrale de Borduas dans le discours de l'histoire de l'art en aurait sans doute été profondément modifiée. La contribution du milieu académique au cours des années 1970 et 1980 a été soutenue par le Musée qui, par sa collection et son exposition des œuvres de Borduas a pu asseoir sa légitimité et sa crédibilité comme agent dynamique de la diffusion de l'art contemporain.

NOTES

1 Laurier LACROIX, « La collection Lavalin : un cadeau de Grecs au Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal qui laisse craindre le pire », *Le Devoir*, 11 juil. 1992, p. B-14 ; « À cheval donné … ou la collection Lavalin au Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal », *ETC Montréal*, 15 nov. 1992–15 fév. 1993, p. 15–18 ; « Musées et collections. Impact des acquisitions massives », *Musées et collections. Impact des collections massives*, série Conférences + Colloques, Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, 1995, p. 49–58.

2 Une première version de ce texte a été présentée au Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal le 30 septembre 2000 dans le cadre du colloque *François-Marc Gagnon, Un professeur épormyable*, organisé par Johanne Lamoureux et Lise Lamarche. Cette présentation résulte d'une recherche subventionnée par le Conseil de recherche en sciences humaines du Canada (1999–2002) et qui avait pour titre *La fiction de l'histoire*. Je remercie mes collègues du groupe de recherche, Johanne Lamoureux (Université de Montréal) et Olivier Asselin (alors à l'Université Concordia). Que France Levesque qui agissait à titre d'assistante de recherche reçoive l'expression de toute ma gratitude, de même que Lucette Bouchard, le personnel de la Médiathèque et Anne-Marie Zeppetelli, archiviste des collections.

3 Les actes du colloque *The Two Art Histories: The Museum and the University*, Charles W. HAXTHAUSEN éd., Williamstown, Sterling and Francine Clark Institute, Yale University Press, 2002, portent sur cette vaste question.

4 Bien que le musée n'ait pris le nom de Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal qu'en 1983, alors qu'il devient un musée d'État, j'ai choisi d'utiliser le nom actuel plutôt que celui de Musée d'art contemporain qui signale ses 20 premières années d'existence.

5 QBAnQ, Ministère de la culture, boîte 1976.00.066/111, filière 53.21. Un « Projet de Musée d'art moderne à Montréal », daté du 5 novembre 1963, définit les orientations *utopiques* du futur musée situé sur le site d'Expo 67. Il prévoit 4 sections regroupant 15 salles : Les maîtres de l'époque 1900–1940 (3 salles, 30 tableaux), Les grands noms de l'époque 1940–1960 (5 salles, 46 tableaux), Peintres américains et canadiens-anglais (2 salles, 23 tableaux), Peintres du Québec (5 salles, 64 tableaux), ainsi que 5 salles pour des expositions spéciales pour un total de 27 600 pieds carrés. Un budget couvrant la période 1964–1965 à 1973–1974 identifie la somme de 1 200 000 $ pour la collection de base et 700 000 $ pour les acquisitions courantes.

6 UQAM, Bibliothèque des arts, Collections spéciales, Fonds Yves Robillard. Le manuscrit porte la date du 17 mars 1965. Une histoire du MACM a été commandée par Marcel Brisebois à Stéphane Baillairgeon et Stéphane Aquin, au moment où il en était le directeur. Ce manuscrit inédit n'est pas disponible.

7 Vera ZOLBERG, « The Art Institute of Chicago : The Sociology of a Cultural Organization », thèse, département de sociologie, The University of Chicago, 1974.

8 Le site internet de la Médiathèque du MACM, http://media.macm.org/f/prod/expo/index.html (24 octobre 2011), fournit un historique des expositions présentées et constitue un outil de recherche utile pour documenter les activités de l'institution.

9 On pourra consulter également : Jocelyne CONNOLLY, « Le Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal : décideurs et tendances socio-esthétiques de la collection », *Journal of Canadian Art History / Annales d'histoire de l'art canadien*, vol. XVI, nº 1 (1994), p. 30–60.

10 Bill BANTEY, « New Museum in October », *The Montreal Gazette*, 5 juin 1964, cité dans UQAM, Bibliothèque des arts, Collections spéciales, Fonds Yves Robillard, p. 7.

11 QBAnQ, Ministère de la culture, boîte 1976.00.066/111, filière 53.1. La collection Lortie, au coût de 110 000 $, a été payée en trois versements annuels au cours des années financières 1971–1972 à 1973–1974.

12 La collection Lortie a fait l'objet d'une exposition en mars 1972 au MACM. Les Lortie avaient offert en don, en 1960, au Musée des beaux-arts de Montréal, *L'Étoile noire* (1957) de Borduas.

13 CONNOLLY, *Le Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, décideurs et morphologie socio-esthétiques de la collection (1964–1991)*, p. 101–102, 124–28.

14 Un inventaire du fonds d'archives est alors préparé par un jeune conservateur de la Galerie nationale du Canada, Pierre Théberge. Ce fonds d'archives sera déposé au MACM en novembre 1973. Archives du MACM (AMACM), Copie d'une lettre de Fernande Saint-Martin à Pierre Théberge, 2 nov. 1973.

15 Ce nombre d'œuvres est augmenté en 1973, alors que l'on décompte 75 œuvres, dont 3 gouaches de 1942, ainsi que 46 toiles, dont *L'Éternelle Amérique* (1946), *Le Carnaval des objets délaissés* (1949), *Pâques* (1954), plusieurs compositions en noir et blanc des années 1958 et 1959 (entre autres, les numéros *25*, *37*, *38*, *39*, *61* et *64*), 4 aquarelles et 21 esquisses en noir et blanc (sur support de paquets de cigarettes *Gitanes*). (Voir affiche/dépliant de la Galerie nationale du Canada, 1973). De même, le communiqué de presse de l'exposition inaugurée au MACM, le 7 sept. 1975, fait état d'environ 12 000 pièces d'archives qui, entretemps, ont été classées et cataloguées.

16 « Le gouvernement du Québec, qui a participé aux discussions précédant l'achat des œuvres de Borduas, doit indiquer bientôt comment les Musées du Québec entendent utiliser la collection acquise par les Musées nationaux. Selon Madame Casgrain, le Musée d'Art Contemporain sera le dépositaire de la collection ». « Les Musées nationaux du Canada acquièrent 71 œuvres de Borduas », *La Presse*, 26 mai 1972, p. A-8. « Ce sont en effet les musées du Québec – et plus précisément le Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal – qui deviennent en quelque sorte les « dépositaires » de la collection, selon un accord « dont les modalités n'ont pas encore été définies », a précisé M. Pelletier ». Gilles CONSTANTINEAU, « Les Musées nationaux acquièrent 70 Borduas au coût de $250 000 », *Le Devoir*, 26 mai 1972, p. 6. Voir également « La collection Borduas achetée par le gouvernement Trudeau », *L'Action* (Québec), 21 août 1972, p. 7.

17 Gilles CONSTANTINEAU, « Les Musées nationaux acquièrent 70 Borduas au coût de $250 000 », *Le Devoir*, 26 mai 1972, p. 6.

18 AMACM, Secrétariat d'État, communiqué de presse (5-2572F) en date du 25 mai 1972. L'appellation Musées du Québec ne renvoie à aucun organisme ayant un statut juridique. À ce jour, aucun document n'a été retracé permettant de faire état des démarches entreprises par les deux niveaux de gouvernement avant l'acquisition. François Cloutier, ministre des Affaires culturelles du 12 mai 1970 au 2 fév. 1972, mentionne, dans une lettre, qu'il a travaillé avec Gérard Pelletier à cette acquisition (AMACM. Copie d'une lettre de Cloutier à J. Hugh Faulkner, secrétaire d'État, 26 avr. 1973). Je remercie M. Bekoin Kouakou Paul, archiviste BAC, pour les recherches qu'il a menées dans les archives administratives de la Corporation des Musées canadiens (RG 132) à l'été 2008.

19 Au décès de l'artiste, le critique et animateur culturel Charles Delloye, ami de Borduas, tente de diffuser son œuvre en France et en Europe. Face à l'insistance de Gabrielle Borduas, conseillée par Robert Élie, les œuvres sont rapatriées en 1962. Voir Ninon GAUTHIER, « Charles Delloye et la promotion des automatistes en Europe », *Les automatistes à Paris, Actes d'un colloque*, Montréal, Éditions Les 400 coups, 2000, p. 150 et s. Delloye publie « L'exposition Borduas à Amsterdam », dans *Vie des Arts*, n° 22, printemps 1961, p. 48–49.

20 Cette exposition est documentée par le catalogue *Paul-Émile Borduas 1905–1960*, Montréal, Musée des beaux-arts de Montréal, 1962. La publication bilingue comprend, entre autres, une chronologie de Borduas, un texte de John LYMAN, « Borduas and the Contemporary Arts Society », un de Guy VIAU, « La démarche du peintre », des extraits du *Refus global* et les réponses de Borduas à un questionnaire soumis par Jean-René OSTIGUY et publié dans *Le Devoir* des 9 et 11 juin 1956 dans la chronique de Noël Lajoie.

21 Bernard TESSEYDRE a écrit un premier article : « Borduas, *Sous le vent de l'île* », *Bulletin de la Galerie nationale du Canada*, vol. 6, n° 2, 1968, p. 22–33. On doit à François-Marc Gagnon de nombreux articles et communications sur Borduas et surtout l'importante étude monographique, *Borduas biographie critique et analyse de l'œuvre*, Montréal, Fides, 1978.

22 Guy ROBERT, *Borduas*, Montréal, Presses de l'Université du Québec, 1972.

23 Renée Borduas, la fille de l'artiste, a choisi de conserver les œuvres dont elle était propriétaire. Un ensemble de 23 tableaux lui appartenant sera acquis par le Musée

des beaux-arts de Montréal en 1997. *Collage*, Musée des beaux-arts de Montréal, hiver 1997–1998.

24 Je n'ai pas retracé d'opinions écrites commentant la teneur politique de ce geste. Seul, le communiqué annonçant la tenue d'une exposition à la Galerie Nationale du Canada, tirée de la récente acquisition, mentionne : « De tous les peintres canadiens, Borduas peut être considéré comme le plus grand des expressionnistes abstraits, et, au Québec, il est devenu une figure presque légendaire de la "révolution tranquille" ». AMACM. Communiqué de presse, « La Collection familiale Paul-Émile Borduas achetée par le gouvernement canadien », 1er août 1972.

25 Le gouvernement de Pierre Trudeau, au pouvoir depuis 1968, est réélu le 30 octobre 1972 et forme un gouvernement minoritaire. Au Québec, le premier ministre Robert Bourassa dirige la province depuis le 29 avril 1970. Il fait face à la crise d'octobre en demandant au gouvernement fédéral l'imposition de la loi sur les mesures de guerre. La question de la place du français en éducation polarise les points de vue au début des années 1970. Les deux gouvernements s'affrontent au sujet des relations fédérales-provinciales et du pouvoir à accorder aux provinces.

26 Gérard PELLETIER publie plusieurs textes dans *Le Devoir* en réaction à la publication du manifeste : « Deux âges, deux manières », 28 sept. 1948 ; « Notre réponse aux surréalistes », 13 nov. 1948 ; « L'impossible dialogue », 20 nov. 1948.

27 Voir les deux lettres ouvertes signées des cinq artistes : « Les surréalistes nous écrivent », *Le Devoir*, 13 nov. 1948 et « L'impossible dialogue », *Le Devoir*, 20 nov. 1948.

28 Gérard Pelletier évoque sans doute ses articles dans *Le Devoir* et ses textes dans l'hebdomadaire *Le Travail*, organe de la Confédération des travailleurs catholiques du Canada.

29 « Notre réponse aux surréalistes », *Le Devoir*, 13 nov. 1948.

30 Gérard PELLETIER, « Feu l'unanimité », *Cité libre*, nº 30, oct. 1960, p. 8–15.

31 Gérard Pelletier est secrétaire d'État de juillet 1968 à novembre 1972.

32 *La Politique nationale des musées; un programme pour les musées canadiens*, Ottawa, 1973. Ce passage est repris dans le discours du Secrétaire d'État, J. Hugh Faulkner, lors de l'inauguration de l'exposition Borduas au MACM, le 4 oct. 1973 (AMACM).

33 AMACM. Secrétariat d'État, communiqué de presse (5-2572F) en date du 25 mai 1972.

34 AMACM. Copie d'une lettre d'Henri Barras à Guy Frégault, sous-ministre, MAC, 16 juin 1972.

35 Le MACM ne prêtait alors que 3 des 34 Borduas qui faisaient partie de cette vaste exposition.

36 AMACM. Copie d'une lettre d'Henri Barras à Guy Frégault, sous-ministre, MAC, 17 août 1972. Le 12 sept. 1972, Barras prépare une lettre pour le sous-ministre Frégault à l'intention de Gérard Pelletier, indiquant que ces problèmes ont été résolus.

37 AMACM. Lettre de Jean S. Boggs à Fernande Saint-Martin, 9 fév. 1973. Il semble que le fait que la collection appartienne à la Corporation des musées nationaux pose des problèmes légaux en ce qui a trait à son transfert à une instance provinciale.

38 AMACM. Copie d'une lettre de Fernande Saint-Martin à Jean S. Boggs, 8 mars 1973.

39 AMACM. Lettre de J. Hugh Faulkner à François Cloutier, 19 mars 1973.

40 AMACM. Communiqué de presse, Exposition Borduas, 3 oct. 1973.

41 AMACM. Adresse de l'Hon. J. Hugh Faulkner, Secrétaire d'État au Musée d'art contemporain, Montréal, 9 p.m., 4 oct. 1973.

42 Exposition inaugurée par Hugh Faulkner, secrétaire d'État, François Cloutier, ministre des Affaires culturelles et Fernande Saint-Martin, directrice du MACM. Dans sa lettre de remerciement à la directrice, le ministre écrira : « Il m'est particulièrement agréable de savoir que l'un des joyaux de notre patrimoine artistique est désormais à sa place, à la fois abrité et disponible dans votre beau musée ». AMACM. Lettre de l'Hon. J. Hugh Faulkner à Fernande Saint-Martin, 5 oct. 1973.

43 AMACM. Le communiqué de presse du 3 oct. précise : « Le Musée d'Art contemporain consacrera une salle complète à la collection "Borduas" ainsi qu'une partie de sa bibliothèque où un personnel spécialisé verra à répertorier les documents écrits et visuels pour ainsi faciliter leur accès auprès du public ». Jacques THÉRIAULT, « Le MAC inaugure sa salle Borduas », *Le Devoir*, 11 sept. 1975, p. 10.

44 Le texte de présentation signé Lise Perrault précise en introduction : « La collection de Borduas : une exposition d'œuvres acquises par le gouvernement fédéral pour le Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, et présentées en tournée par la Galerie nationale du Canada ».

45 Ce n'est qu'à partir de 1976 que le MACM mettra en vigueur un programme d'expositions itinérantes. Auparavant, il collabore à l'occasion avec le Musée du Québec et envoie de façon ponctuelle quelques expositions à l'étranger dans le cadre de missions politiques.

46 Cette publication a été l'objet d'une réédition, légèrement augmentée, en 1979.

47 Son fonds de dessins de Borduas réalisés entre 1920 et 1940 est l'objet d'une exposition comprenant 101 œuvres et intitulée *Paul-Émile Borduas : esquisses et œuvres sur papier, 1920–1940,* tenue au MACM du 21 avril au 22 mai 1977. Elle était organisée par les étudiants d'histoire de l'art de l'Université de Montréal dans le séminaire de muséologie de Pierre W. Desjardins. Une publication accompagne la manifestation avec des textes signés par les étudiants, dont Lucie Dorais, Lise Dubois, Monique Gauthier et Maurice Piché. Ce fonds de dessins (123 lots) sera en partie dispersé lors d'une vente publique (Hôtel des encans, 23 avril 1994).

48 Le site de la Médiathèque du MACM signale que cette exposition se termine le 22 avr. 1979. Cependant, un communiqué de presse conservé aux AMACM et daté du 10 mai 1979 signale que l'exposition se terminera le 22 juillet.

49 Il y a confusion sur les dates de cette exposition. Alors que le site internet de la Médiathèque du MACM mentionne qu'elle se tient du 27 sept. au 10 mars 1980, le communiqué de presse écrit, pour sa part, du 4 oct. au 16 déc. 1980.

50 Ces expositions sont, à l'occasion, accompagnées de publications : *La collection Borduas du Musée d'art contemporain*, 1976, avec des textes de Louise LETOCHA « Borduas et la fonction sociale de l'art », et Françoise CLOUTIER-COURNOYER « Espace cosmique et matière dans l'œuvre de Borduas ». Le propos de mon article ne permet pas d'analyser la teneur de ces nombreux textes, rédigés pour la plupart par le personnel du Musée. Si l'institution a permis un accès public quasi continu à l'œuvre de Borduas depuis le milieu des années 1970, l'interprétation de son œuvre s'est faite essentiellement par des membres de la communauté universitaire (ex. François-Marc Gagnon, André G. Bourassa, Gilles Lapointe).

Les œuvres de Borduas furent également intégrées dans plusieurs expositions de groupe portant sur le surréalisme, l'automatisme et l'art des années 1940 et 1950. Elles

furent également sollicitées pour de nombreux prêts, devenant une des principales cartes de visite du Musée.

51 En 2004, le Musée présentait à l'Orangerie du domaine de Madame Élisabeth à Versailles l'exposition *La magie des signes : œuvres sur papier de la collection Borduas du Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal*. Un catalogue fut publié à cette occasion.

52 Cette exposition donne lieu à la publication de la monographie *Paul-Émile Borduas* aux Éditions Les 400 coups.

53 Connolly, *Le Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal, décideurs et morphologie socio-esthétiques de la collection (1964–1991)*, p. 167. La figure d'Albert Dumouchel (1916–1971) se construit comme celle du « père » de l'estampe moderne au Québec. Étant donné le nombre important de gravures dans la collection du macm, son rôle doit être souligné.

54 Josée Belisle, « Un précieux trésor en réserve : La collection Borduas du Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal », *Paul-Émile Borduas et l'épopée automatiste*, Montréal, Musée d'art contemporain, Éditions Les 400 coups, 1998, p. 9.

Paul-Émile Borduas and the *Foundation* of the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal

LAURIER LACROIX

The hypothesis underlying this article is that the 1973 acquisition by the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal (MACM) of the Fonds Paul-Émile Borduas (1905–1960) constituted the foundational act of the museum, which had opened in 1965. The institution, initiated by a group of collectors and artists and ratified by the Ministère des Affaires culturelles, had not hitherto clearly established either its parameters or its mission. Its holdings (90% of which were prints) had for the most part been received as gifts from Quebec artists, and the acquisition budget was used principally to purchase examples of French Lyrical Abstraction.

In 1972 the museum acquired the collection of Gérard and Gisèle Lortie, which consisted of 104 works by Quebec artists dating mostly from the 1940s and 1950s. This initial corpus helped to determine the time frame of the "contemporaneity" the museum would be defending – the preceding thirty years, which had seen the foundation of the Contemporary Arts Society and the development of Automatisme and the movements that followed. It was against this backdrop that the Borduas collection was acquired by the National Museums of Canada Corporation (NMC) and transferred to the MACM.

On June 25, 1972, the NMC, represented by Secretary of State Gérard Pelletier, announced that it had just acquired the Borduas archives (12,000 documents), together with forty-six canvases, three gouaches, four watercolours, and twenty-one ink sketches by the artist. This collection had belonged to Borduas's widow, and she was eager to ensure its protection and accessibility.

The federal government had become the owner of this priceless collection under the terms of the National Museums Act (1 April 1968), which had been modified three months before the acquisition of the Fonds Borduas was announced. On 28 March 1972, an emergency purchase fund had been created to ensure that "objects which because of their quality, age, historical interest or rarity, could be classified as national treasures … be retained in Canada." ("A New Policy for Museums," notes for an address by the Secretary of State,

The Hon. Gérard Pelletier, Calgary, 28 March 1972, in *Canadian Museums Association Gazette* 16:2 [April 1972]). As elaborated in *The National Museum Policy: A Programme for Canadian Museums* (1973), the required funds were under the direct responsibility of the National Museums of Canada, through the objects acquired by means of this fund were not necessarily to become part of National Museums of Canada collections. The modification to the Act seems to have been made with this purchase specifically in mind.

It was in a context of growing nationalism, following the events of October 1970, that the federal government made a gesture that was at once symbolic and political: the protection of the work and image of Borduas – seen at the time as the founding father of the Quiet Revolution – and the subsequent transfer of a vital part of this heritage to Quebec.

Management of the collection now owned by the NMC was entrusted to the National Gallery of Canada, which catalogued the works, classified the archives, and held an exhibition in its spaces in August 1972. Responsibility for transfer of the Fonds from Ottawa to Montreal was assumed by the directors of the two museums, Jean S. Boggs and Fernande Saint-Martin. The NMC was not willing to hand over the collection unless the MACM (then located at the Cité du Hâvre) could provide the physical conditions necessary to its proper conservation. Although the plan to give the Fonds Borduas to the MACM was mentioned on a number of occasions, there is no document attesting to the collection's official transfer. With the appointment of new ministers and government officials, and administrative changes within the organizations responsible, discussions petered out.

An exhibition of part of the collection shown in Montreal in October and November 1973 travelled subsequently to six other cities across Canada. On its return to Montreal in 1975, the MACM announced the inauguration of a "permanent Borduas gallery" that would also include works by other artists. Ten different hangings focusing on Borduas works – either drawn from the Fonds or acquired otherwise – were presented in this space. In addition, the Museum organized a number of travelling exhibitions featuring Borduas's work (some international), thereby making the artist its principal ambassador.

Following the move to its Place des arts location in 1992, the MACM installed a small gallery devoted to Borduas that remained in place until 2009. The idea of "permanence" seems to be interpreted somewhat loosely, so as to allow for various compromises.

Through the number of works in its collection, their representativeness, their placement within in the museum space, and the frequency of their presentation, the MACM has succeeded in establishing Borduas permanently as a founder of modernity and the central figure of Quebec contemporaneity.

A corollary of this enterprise is that it was Borduas (thanks to the collaboration of a federal Liberal government) who determined the museum's orientation and gave it credibility as an organization, allowing it ultimately to define and assert itself as a national institution.

Translation: Judith Terry

Gabor Szilasi, *François-Marc Gagnon*, 2012, photographie en noir et blanc | black and white photograph. (Photo : Gabor Szilasi)

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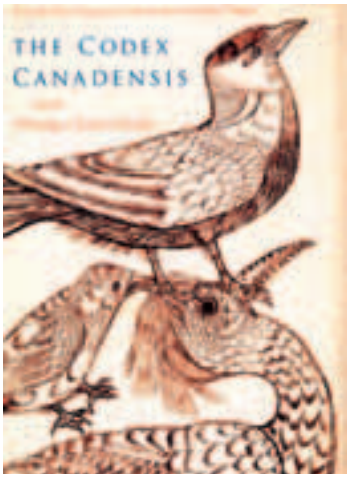

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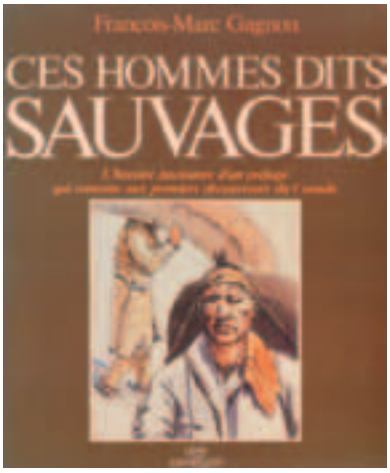

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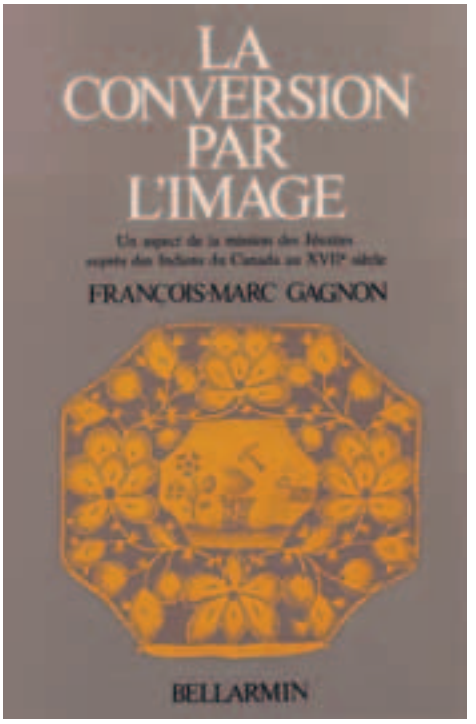

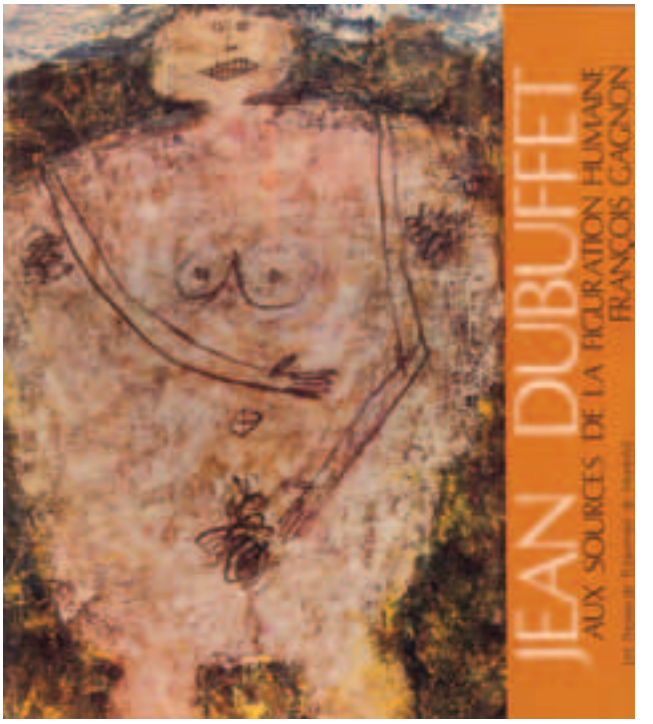

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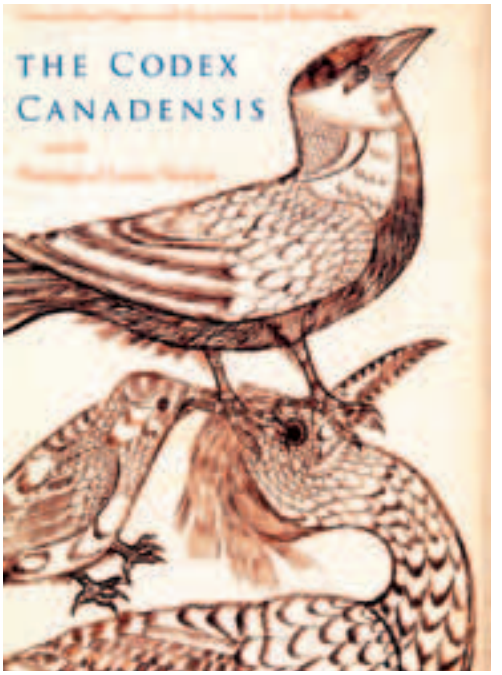

The Codex Canadensis and the Writings of Louis Nicolas. The Natural History of the New World/Histoire Naturelle des Indes Occidentales

EDITED AND INTRODUCED BY FRANÇOIS-MARC GAGNON, WITH NANCY SENIOR AND RÉAL OUELLET; FOREWORD BY DUANE KING

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555 p.

Ramsay Cook

Anyone interested in the history of New France, Jesuit missions, seventeenth-century natural history, the natural history and ethnology of early Canada and, not least of all, Canadian art, should rejoice at the publication, at long last, of Louis Nicolas' *Codex Canadensis and the Writings of Louis Nicolas*. Indeed, it should be a double celebration since McGill-Queen's University Press has issued a magnificent edition with a superbly edited text accompanied by excellent reproductions of Louis Nicolas' beautiful drawings, all printed on fine paper. Even the binding, end papers, and dust jacket are of the first quality. So let me begin by raising a glass to Father Louis Nicolas, in absentia, to François-Marc Gagnon for his erudite, imaginative introduction, Nancy Senior for her lucid translation, Réal Ouellet for modernizing the original seventeenth-century French text, the scientists who assisted in ensuring the accuracy of identifications, and of course, the publisher. This remarkable book deserves recognition as a major Canadian publishing event; as Peter King of the Gilcrease Museum writes, it will make Nicolas' works "better known and appreciated as a true international treasure" (xiii).

This volume analyses and explains the relationship between these two documents, which have been reunited for the first time in approximately three hundred and fifty years. The original drawings, which have come to be known as the *Codex Canadensis*, have been held by the Gilcrease Museum in Tulsa Oklahoma (where I examined and fell in love with them about twenty-five years ago), since Thomas Gilcrease purchased them for his museum of the American Indian. Gilcrease was a member of the Muskogee Nation whose oil-rich portion of a sub-divided reserve

allowed him to rise from poverty to plenty and thus fulfill his dream of establishing a museum collection worthy of the traditions of the first Americans. His success was astounding but it also bankrupted him. The museum was saved when a referendum authorized Tulsa to assume his debts in return for ownership. As the oil royalties continued to flow, he repaid the city although the museum remains a city-operated treasure. Where the *Codex* resided in the previous two hundred and fifty years remains a something of a mystery. It may once have been housed in the library of Louis XIV; there is a royal stamp on the leather binding but that may have been added later. Its whereabouts remain murky until a Paris antique bookseller published a facsimile edition of 100 copies in 1930. It was there that the manuscript originally known as "*Les raretés des Indes*" acquired the title of *Codex canadiensis*.[1] It then passed through the hands of various collectors until a wealthy enough buyer, fittingly an American Indian, brought it to Tulsa. A second reproduction was issued by the radical separatist publisher *parti pris* in 1981; confusingly organized and poorly printed, it was erroneously titled *Codex du Nord Américain Québec 1701*.

In those two editions, and at the Gilcrease Museum, the author/artist of the *Codex* was identified as Charles Bécard, Sieur de Grandville, in the belief that Bécard was the only inhabitant of New France in the late seventeenth century capable of drawing the two maps at the beginning of the manuscript. This claim was undermined by, among others, the historian André Vachon (1974) and the anthropologist Anne-Marie Sioui (1979), who demonstrated that the artist was Father Louis Nicolas, a Jesuit missionary who lived in New France in the mid-1660s. Exhaustive research for this new edition adds important new biographical facts but, unfortunately, details related to his interest in and knowledge of natural history remain meager.

The history of the written manuscript of the "*Histoire naturelle*" is somewhat clearer. The unsigned manuscript was held by a jurist in Lyon until 1689 and then housed in the library of the Congrégation de l'Oratoire until it was transferred to the Bibliothèque nationale de Paris after the Revolution. The Public Archives of Canada made a copy in the mid-twentieth century and began work on a typewritten version. After years of speculation and research concerning the possible relation between the *Codex,* the "*Histoire naturelle*" and Nicolas' other work, the *grammaire algonquine,* François-Marc Gagnon has been able to demonstrate conclusively that the two natural history documents, despite discrepancies and differences in contents, are the work of the same author. Nevertheless, he cautions against assuming that Nicolas intended that the two be published together and Gagnon offers some thoughtful comments on what "publishing" might have meant in seventeenth-century France. He also observes that the "*Histoire*" may be unfinished since it does not include a separate discussion of the drawings of native people, which are among the most

intriguing in the *Codex*. However, the "*Histoire*" does not completely ignore the native people: Gagnon brings together comments scattered through the text to demonstrate the great ethnological value of the "*Histoire*." His suggestion that the "*Histoire*" does not discuss the native people separately because they were not judged to be part of nature is questionable. Many other documents of the time treat natives and flora and fauna together as part of natural history, e.g., Nicolas Deny's *Description and Natural History of Acadia.*

Another remarkable piece of historical detective work is Gagnon's demonstration that Nicolas was not a proto-impressionist who worked *en plein air*. Instead, he often copied illustrations he found in libraries. His native people, for example, are drawn from images found in François Du Creux's *History of Canada* (1664). Animals often follow the illustrations in the works of other natural historians including the sixteenth-century Swiss, Konrad Gesner. These sources probably explain the unicorn drawing which Nicolas said was known to live near the Red Sea. Those who denied the creature's existence, he insisted, had not travelled enough! As for plants and trees, Nicolas could find many new world examples growing in, for example, the Jardin des Plantes in Paris. Here Gagnon combines the eye of the art historian with an extraordinary command both of natural history and its history. Who else would know that in the Middle Ages, Albertus Magnus, correctly identified Father Nicolas' "frogs with tails" as late stage tadpoles, soon to be roaring bull frogs! It is not surprising that Gagnon knows everything there is to be known about the amazing beaver for he is the author of the erudite *Images du castor canadien XVI^e^–XVIII^e^ siècles* (1994). Nevertheless, he is now able to add Louis Nicolas to those who questioned the belief that Canada's national animal would castrate himself in order to avoid capture by his enemies.

Gagnon's ability to piece together fragmentary evidence about the sources of Nicolas' art and the relationship of the *Codex* and the "*Histoire*" are just two examples of his brilliance as an historian of early Canada. His analysis of the contents of these two documents demonstrates his scholarship and imaginative understanding of so many aspects of seventeenth-century history and natural history. Gagnon's overall approach to natural history is taken from Michel Foucault's *Les mots et les choses* (*The Order of Things*). Foucault argues that the seventeenth century witnessed the transformation of natural history from a preoccupation with discovering how nature might serve man to an attempt to view nature objectively and thus to reveal the order of nature. A wonderful example of the earlier, utilitarian view is found in Nicolas' admiring description of the firefly, which concludes: "If fifteen or twenty of these fireflies are put in a glass bottle, they serve as a candle for a week" (372). Foucault's *épistémè* is helpful as long as it doesn't get in the way of the evidence; as Gagnon writes, "Nicolas appears to be

attached to the old approach to natural history even if he was from time to time also attracted by the new" (30).

The *Codex* opens with two detailed maps and three drawings of the symbols of French royalty to whom Nicolas paid homage. (He sent Louis XIV a chipmunk, but failed to find cages large enough to include two bears!) Near the end it includes a representation of one of Jacques Cartier's ships, and of Cartier and a woman whom some believe was the navigator's wife. Gagnon suggests that she is a religious figure. In between, Nicolas' drawings of the natural world follow a system of classification that was, of course, pre-Linnaean. "He starts with analogies and thinks that one has to group similar things together" (54). His natural world was divided into Native people, trees and plants, animals, birds, and fish. Within these categories he ordered his subjects, roughly, from the small to the large (like Pliny rather than Aristotle who reversed the order), alphabetically, and with animals and birds divided between land and water. Gagnon not only explains the classification clearly but in one instance, the longnose gar, he even provides his own drawing.

Nicolas' drawings are marvelous works of art. Most of them present recognizable species, detailed in a fashion that often emphasizes the unique or special characteristics that are necessary for positive identification. The artist's imagination reveals a man with a deep and sympathetic vision of nature and the native people. Represented with their canoes and their fishing gear, several of these figures are coloured, a delicate red being added to the usual brown ink. When the artist calls the native people "*sauvaiges*," he means little more than poor, this is not a racial designation, a point made more generally of this period by Gagnon and Denise Petel in their *Hommes effarables et bestes sauvaiges* (1986). Still, Gagnon makes it plain that Nicolas believed that "the Other" was different, inferior in religion and behaviour when he cites remarks such as "the Indians hate what Europeans like" (79) and prefer bear grease to wine!

Nicolas exhibited a special interest in birds, drawing superb tanagers, finches, chickadees, sparrows, swallows, magpies, partridges, owls, various waterfowl, and many more. Most of the translations of Nicolas' bird nomenclature retain his names, though on Plate LI the barn owl is the *autre chouette* not the *chatuant.* Nor is it clear why "*la nuit*" is dropped from the translation on Plate LII. Surely it is intended to explain that the "Coucoucouou" (probably a Great Grey Owl) calls at night. Finally, the French, and sometimes early English observers, named the Canada Goose an "*outarde*" (a designation still used in Quebec) or bustard – a species that does not exist in North America. It is somewhat confusing that in the translation of the "*Histoire*" "*outarde*" is "bustard" a few times (359, 367, 369) and subsequently left as "*outarde*." These relatively minor complaints detract

little from Nancy Senior's accurate and readable translation, an achievement that Anglophone readers will appreciate. Francophone readers are equally well served by Réal Ouellet's expertly modernized seventeenth-century text.

A final word about the "*Histoire naturelle*," especially some comments on the animals. It has long been known that the beaver fascinated early European visitors and not just fur traders. It was often was given near-human talents as a builder of houses and dams. Nicolas Denis described the clever animal as a hod carrier. Father Nicolas concurred, but it was the moose, to which he devoted nearly five printed pages, that especially won his favour. Every detail is almost lovingly examined. As usual, the emphasis is placed on the uses man makes of the animal: "All of the flesh of the beast, generally speaking, is good and digests easily" (335), and, "The vanity of even the most curious ladies could be satisfied by buying beautiful bracelets made from the moose's four feet … Epileptics could also use the bracelet [as a cure]" (337). Most importantly, the moose provides the natives with food and medicine and for merchants "great riches, for they get these rare and beautiful skins, and even the whole animal, from the Indian hunters for almost nothing" (339). Like some other Jesuit missionaries, perhaps Father Nicolas' eye for profitable trade was sharper than his talent for the saving of souls.

Every reader of the *Codex Canadensis* and the *Natural History of the New World* will enjoy the visual and intellectual pleasures of Louis Nicolas' art and natural history. They will also agree with François-Marc Gagnon's conclusion that "these works are unique for their age (ca. 1675) and for the richness of their content. They are extraordinary early records of new world natural history" (83).

NOTE

1 On page 189, I have spelled the title "Codex Canadiensis," but elsewhere I have used the newly adopted title "Codex Canadensis." Both are correct since they refer to two different publications, the one under review and the 1930 facsimile.

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art publications and print culture originated with *Art and Architecture in Canada: A Bibliography and Guide to the Literature* (with Mary Williamson, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991). Publications in which her writings on photographs from McCord's Notman Photographic Archives have appeared include: *Historical Studies in Education* (2009), *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of Canada/Cahiers de la Société bibliographique du Canada* (2009), and *Jeunesse: Young People, Texts* (2011).

MONIQUE NADEAU-SAUMIER PhD, histoire de l'art, UQAM, a enseigné l'histoire de l'art et de l'architecture au Canada, les arts décoratifs et la muséologie à l'Université Bishop's durant quinze ans, tout en assumant le poste de directrice administrative du Centre de recherche des Cantons de l'Est à la même université. Son mémoire de maîtrise en histoire de l'art à l'Université Concordia était consacré au peintre Louis Muhlstock (1904–2001). Elle a collaboré à plusieurs expositions individuelles sur cet artiste, entre autres aux Galeries d'art des Universités Concordia et Bishop's, au Centre Saidye-Bronfman et au Musée des beaux-arts de Sherbrooke. Elle a été commissaire de l'exposition itinérante *Muhlstock,* produite et mise en circulation par le Musée du Québec en 1995–96.

SANDRA PAIKOWSKY recently retired from the Art History Department of Concordia University. She is the First Distinguished Scholar at the Gail & Stephen Jarislowsky Institute for Studies in Canadian Art at Concordia. A founder of the *Journal of Canadian Art History/Annales d'histoire de l'art canadien,* she remains its Publisher and member of its etorial board. She was a co-editor of *The Visual Arts in Canada: The Twentieth Century* (2010) and author of the chapter "Modernist Representational Painting before 1950." Her other recent publications include an online history of the Maritime Art Association, "James Wilson Morrice's *Return from School*: A Modernist Image of Quebec Children," in *Depicting Canada's Children* (2009), *John Fox: Refiguration* (2010), "The Girls and the Grid: Montreal Women Abstract Painters in the 1950s and Early 60s" in *Rethinking Professionalism. Women and Art in Canada, 1850–1970* (2012), and "John Fox: The Sketchbook Drawings from the Early 1970s to the Mid 1980s" in *John Fox. Abstractions* (2012).

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