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**ARCHITECTURAL POSTCARDS AND  
THE CONCEPTION OF PLACE:  
Mediating Cultural Experience**

**Carole Scheffer**

**A thesis  
in the  
Humanities Program**

**Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy at  
Concordia University  
Montreal, Quebec, Canada**

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **ARCHITECTURAL POSTCARDS AND THE CONCEPTION OF PLACE: Mediating Cultural Experience**

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Concordia University, 1999

By radically altering accessibility to architectural images, the postcard has promoted the dissemination of diverse values and ideas that both mediate and are mediated by the cultural experience of architecture and place. This symbiotic process is explored by examining different types of architectural images in postcard form, and considering how they have been used and interpreted.

Numerous cultural factors influencing the production of both the architecture and its image are discussed, highlighting how they promote particular conceptions of place. With ample illustrations, the postcard is seen as an amalgam of several functions: communication agent, propaganda vehicle, metaphor for place, object of desire and catalyst for memories. It is also the subject of individual interventions that produce the divergence between intended and received meanings and values.

Exploring the postcard's role in the conception of place, its significance, its associations, its diverse meanings and contradictions, form the core of this study.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This study is dedicated to the memory of my father Arthur Scheffer and to my mother Rose-Yvette Lafleur, the most formative influences in my life, who were never afforded the opportunities with which I have been privileged.

I would like to thank Concordia University for its support and for the congenial and stimulating educational experience I obtained from its Humanities Program in Interdisciplinary Studies.

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A number of people have provided me with assistance in my research and I am grateful for their help. They are: Michel Godin of the Bibliothèque National du Quebec in Montreal; Stephen Lyons of the Canadian Pacific Archives; Daniella Rohan in the Canadian Architecture Collection of McGill University; Anne Moffat of the Westmount Public

Library; and John Gallop, private collector, in Westmount, Quebec.

Lastly, I would like to thank my husband Charles for his support and our three children, Adrien, Sebastien and Audrey who, while being an inexhaustible source of distraction, provided all the love and stimulation that brought me to the completion of this project.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION:

#### Imaging architecture and place

From the earliest of times the architectural image has been incorporated into objects ranging from the utilitarian to the highly ornamental. It has been placed on coin faces, elaborate food troughs, ornate pottery and jewelry.<sup>1</sup> With progressive technological and social changes, the architectural image became a cultural artifact in its own right, achieving autonomy from its subservient functional uses.

This process was accelerated by developments which made reproducibility and portability possible. These features, first optimized by the postcard, radically altered the dissemination and accessibility of the architectural image, making it a vehicle for a range of values, associations and meanings. At the turn of the 21st century, within the same paradigm of reproduction and mobility, postcard images are

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph Rykwert provides several images of such ancient artifacts in The Dancing Column: On Order in Architecture (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996) 187, 261, 293, 310.

digitized and made available globally on the World-Wide-Web in a dematerialized electronic form.

My intention in this project is to expand the scope of inquiry into the role and function of the architectural postcard, taking into consideration the complexities inherent in an instrument which is an amalgam of communication agent, propaganda vehicle, metaphor for place, object of desire and catalyst for memories. Exploring the postcard's role in the conception of place, its significance, its associations, its diverse meanings and contradictions, form the core of this study.

I do this by examining different types of architectural images produced in postcard form, and consider how they have been used and interpreted, highlighting the postcard's role in mediating cultural experience. Conversely, a number of different cultural factors mediating the meaning and interpretation of the postcards themselves are investigated. In promoting particular conceptions of place, the postcard is shown to be subject to individual interventions that produce divergence between intended and received meanings and values.

This approach exposes a number of practical and theoretical dilemmas related to representation. As accessibility and mobility of the architectural image reached climactic proportions in the early twentieth century, the representation of the built world in palpable and easily comprehensible fragments created several issues of concern.

The philosophical questions concerning truth and realism, given common currency with the introduction of photographic images, became practical concerns in the representation of place.

With its implicit correlation to the material world, the postcard raises questions about what constitutes the real, what is valuable and what is authentic and truthful. Equally significant is whose vision is being represented and how has it been interpreted.

The quality of uniqueness in architecture, that Walter Benjamin described as, "the prototype of art", resided in it having its own "presence in time and space."<sup>2</sup> However, far from diminishing the "aura" of the original architecture,<sup>3</sup> the mechanically reproduced image of the world acquired new powers harnessed for the benefit of different group interests, aligning with, conflicting, or contradicting the dominant ideas that emerge about the "essence" of a place. As the architectural image proliferated on a world-wide basis, it acquired its own distinct and equally auratic attributes.

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<sup>2</sup> Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art In The Age of Mechanical Reproduction," Illuminations, Trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken, 1969) 220.

<sup>3</sup> Benjamin 221, 239, 220. Benjamin's focus on image-making in "modernity" elides the fact that techniques of reproduction and a culture of printed images existed long before. This alternate consideration is discussed by Antoine Hennion and Bruno Latour "L'art, l'aura, et la technique selon Benjamin: ou comment devenir célèbre en faisant tant d'erreurs à la foi," Cahier de médiologie No.1, (Paris: Gallimard, 1996) 234-241.

In the popular press of July 1900, the Picture Postcard Magazine wrote:

Ostensibly but a mere miniature view of some town or place of interest to the passing traveler, a picture postcard is yet capable of possessing an interest and significance undreamed of by those who have not yet troubled to look into the matter.<sup>4</sup>

This dissertation explores some of those aspects and their significance in relation to the conception of place.

### **Antecedents**

It was in 1869, with the intention of increasing postal efficiency, that the Austrian government first authorized the mailing of small "postal cards" they issued - single leaf missives of uniform size, with space on one face for written messages. Promoted as a "new means of communication", the postcard was to bring more profits to the state by increasing the volume of mail while diminishing the handling weight. At a time when no other means of long-distance communication was available, the novelty provided the public with substantial savings on letter paper and postage costs.

The postcard met with quick general acceptance, first in Austria, then throughout Europe. Private printers in Germany, Britain and France soon began to test the initial

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<sup>4</sup> Quoted by Tonie and Valmai Holt in Picture Postcards of the Golden Age (Folsom, Penn.: Deltiologist of America, 1971) 64.

restrictions postal authorities imposed limiting the placement of text and address on opposite faces. By 1872 private printers introduced an image on half of the message side of the card and by the 1890's, the image occupied the entire back face.<sup>5</sup>

Within a few years of the introduction of graphics on the card face,<sup>6</sup> the architectural image became the most popular subject matter by far. Usually one or several views of a town or city were featured on the face of the card. (Figure I-1)<sup>7</sup>

The postcard's initial appeal as a novel means of communication was rapidly surpassed by its attractiveness as an accessible object of collection. This was not a localized phenomenon; rather, postcard use and collection became an international craze, not only in continental Europe where they were first launched, but also throughout the world.

In Canada, by the early 20th century, the use of the picture postcards reached such unprecedented proportions that, like elsewhere in the world, they became a primary source of architectural imagery. Images of the built world,

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<sup>5</sup> Richard Carline, Pictures In The Post (London: Gordon Fraser, 1971) 44, 45, 52, 53.

<sup>6</sup> It is Germany during the period between 1890 to 1895 that the "Grüss Aus" or "greetings from" view cards were printed and began to circulate, establishing a graphic convention that persists to this day.

<sup>7</sup> Illustrations have been placed at the end of each chapter.

from large cities to the smallest of towns were created and widely disseminated.

As the global nature of the card phenomenon reached fever pitch at the turn of the century during the period spanning 1900 - 1915, the "Golden Age" of the postcard, basic communication needs were rapidly surpassed by the desire to acquire postcards for the pictorial information of the world they provided. Just as fifty years earlier the demand for lithographed views of cities had flourished, soon every city and town had to have the "new" postcards with views of their agglomeration. The "topographic" cards, as they are called by deltiologists or card collectors, proliferated wildly.<sup>8</sup> (Figures I-2 and 3)

Indeed millions of cards were purchased for aesthetic appreciation, for the pleasures of collection and placed in albums specifically designed for the purpose. The small cost of cards - pennies only - made them accessible to everyone. This massive circulation of architectural images affected all segments of society, across different cultures, and assumed a position of relevance and significance that resonates to this day.

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<sup>8</sup> In France, in 1900 the sale of cards had reached 52 million. Two years later the number had reached 60 million. In Germany that year there were 1.013 billion cards; the USA 679 million, England 500 million. These numbers do not include uncirculated cards bought by individuals for collection purposes only. Serge Zeyons, Les Cartes Postales: Le manuel de l'amateur (Paris: Hachette, 1979) 48.

The postcard achieved such relevance in part because it fulfilled a communication need as people became increasingly mobile. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the rapid development of more efficient means of transportation enabled mass migration of people between countries, between cities and from rural areas to new urban agglomerations. Tourism became a recognized economic force as it developed into a major industry in many countries.

The world itself was at the height of colonial expansion, with extensive links being forged between the new territories and the "mother country". Associated with these movements arose the need for people to keep "in touch". The postcard's materiality offered a sensuous rapport for both the sender and receiver, providing the touch, sights and occasionally the smells associated with places and people. The postcard enabled people to send not only brief personal communications but also images that could stand in for the places the postcards originated from or the places people wanted to be associated with.

With the view cards being produced in quantities far greater than any other subject matter, postcards became a singular source of architectural imagery for the public at large.<sup>9</sup> This convergence of architectural representation and

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<sup>9</sup> To appreciate the diverse range of subject matter, refer to card listings such as Jacques Poitras' Répertoire de la carte postale Québécoise (Longueuil: Société historique du

popular practice created a democratization of architecture as a subject matter, distinct yet intricately associated with its material referent.

With postcards available everywhere, a number of factors paradoxically contrived to make them invisible to serious scrutiny outside the popular realm. Looking at postcards as mass-produced objects, they can be regarded simply as commercial commodities. However the imagery they bear conveys values which society invests in both architecture and its representation. Society in this broad conception is a term that is not broadly inclusive. Rather it corresponds more closely to those in power whose interests are being served through the edifices that are built. However postcards have also provided the means of exercising personal agency. From the social constructivist approach that I have adopted, postcards can be understood as not merely a reflection of those diverse values, but as playing an active part in the very constitution of a world-view.

As the dissertation will advance, because the postcard is both a cultural object and a cultural practice crossing socio-cultural boundaries and definitions, it has influenced a very broad range of people from various social and

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Marigot, 1994); Joelle Neudin and Gérard Neudin, l'Officiel international des cartes Postales des collections (Paris: Éditions de l'amateur, 1974-.), and Wally Gutzman, The Canadian Picture Postcard Catalogue, 1992 (Toronto: The Unitrade Press, 1992)

aesthetic positions, serving as a design accessory, pedagogical tool, souvenir, and prized collectors' item. Its material presence and versatility enables it to figure prominently in a broad spectrum of fields while recording and expressing experiences associated with architecture and place.

Produced explicitly for consumption, ideologically imbued and commercially charged, the postcard has been used as a medium for artistic expression by the Surrealists, by proponents of the Art Nouveau movement and Bauhaus experimentations.<sup>10</sup> It has served as material evidence of historical changes; and metaphor or metonyms for the multitude of forces that situate particular events in time and space. It also serves as a literary device that hinges upon the richness of the postcard's meanings. A broad range of written works with titles such as The Postcard: from Socrates to Freud and Beyond, a philosophical exploration; The Postcard, a novel about the fragmentation of a New England farming family; and Postcard from the End of the World, a study of Sigmund Freud and 19th century child abuse, the term "postcard" is a metonym for the discursive production itself. It also acts as a common sense descriptor

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<sup>10</sup> See for example, Gerhard Kaufman, Kunst und Postkarte (Hamburg: Altonaer Museum, 1970); and Joyce Pendola, "Wish You Were Here: A Look into America's Greatest Postcard Collection," Connoisseur (June 1986) 71-75.

for the "way" of writing, brief capsules of information significant not only because of their origin but also because of the links to their destination.<sup>11</sup> The postcard also activates a process whereby the part is used to give meaning to the whole. As the card in figure I-4 would suggest, a facile characterization of postcards as simply mass-produced commercial commodities occludes the complex strata of meaning and interpretations that provide insights into the continuities that emanate from the ruptures of one fin-de-siècle to another.

While lately some scholarly investigation has examined the social and historical role of the postcard, with an accompanying increased interest by institutional collectors, the postcard and its active ongoing role in society remains an embryonic area of academic exploration. With the possibility of observing its functions from different vantage points, the postcard effectively challenges disciplinary allegiances of study. However as John Tagg has observed, "mass participation does not undo the structures of cultural authority, the control of knowledge, or an adaptive, professionalized division of labor."<sup>12</sup> In exploring the multi-

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<sup>11</sup> Jacques Derrida, The Postcard: from Socrates to Freud and Beyond, Trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); E. Annie Proulx. The Postcard (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992); Larry Wolff, Postcard from the End of the World: an investigation into the mind of fin-de-siècle Vienna (England: Collins, 1989).

faceted aspects of the postcard through an interdisciplinary approach, my objective is to transcend the limitations of disciplinary-based paradigms of research. As Michèle Barrett has observed:

If we apply the same conceptual tools to a cartoon or postcard as to a Picasso, we concentrate by definition on the common features (those that our concepts can address) rather than what divides them. Although this is in itself iconoclastic, it inevitably leaves a range of important questions connected with cultural and aesthetic experience to the unchallenged pronouncements of bourgeois cultural pundits and critics.<sup>13</sup>

The role played by the postcard in the conception of place, how it mediates and is mediated by culture and its experience, requires not only the adoption of concepts that can address the features common to other forms of representation. It requires a rethinking about the very conceptualization of place and its meaning. As Clifford Geertz points out, perhaps because of the ubiquity of place and the sense of place in human life that is so difficult to free from subjectivities and occasions, immediate perceptions and instant cases, the term itself "...does not present a clear and distinct idea...Like Love and

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<sup>12</sup> John Tagg, "The Discontinuous City" in Visual Culture: Images and Interpretation. Eds. Norman Bryson, Michael Anne Holly, and Keith Moxey (Hanover and London: Wesleyan University Press, 1994) 95.

<sup>13</sup> Michèle Barrett, "Max Raphaël and the question of aesthetics," in The Politics of Pleasure. Ed. Stephen Regan (Buckingham/ Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1992) 37.

Imagination, Place makes a poor abstraction. Separated from its materializations, it has little meaning."<sup>14</sup> The postcard is such a materialization that acts as locus of meaning for the idea of place.

### **Fieldwork**

With primary sources being abundant outside official institutional collections, I chose to explore the holdings of private collectors, and of dealers serving professional collectors, in addition to the collections of several institutions. A number of postcard exchanges were visited, such as Le Salon de la carte postale de Montréal, and The Toronto Postcard Club Show,<sup>15</sup> where collectors meet to buy and sell cards. This enabled me to appreciate the vast market for postcard images that now re-circulate beyond their original context of use and collection. From late 1995, my nascent interest in postcard collecting was abetted by the immense prospects of discovery offered by the wares on display at these meeting grounds. It is through acquisitions made at these exchanges and from numerous other private vendors that my personal collection (PC) expanded. A number of these cards are used as illustrations throughout this text, in addition

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<sup>14</sup> Clifford Geertz, "Afterword" in Senses of Place. Eds. Steven Feld and Keith Basso (Santa Fe, N. M.: School of American Research Press, 1996) 259.

<sup>15</sup> Appendix A provides listings of several ongoing shows which attract a large number of collectors.

to archival sources. The meeting places also enabled me to have informal discussions with numerous collectors,<sup>16</sup> who consistently confirmed the importance of the postcard's architectural image in the formation of their own sense of place.

The institutional archives that were examined include the Westmount Public Library Collection (WPL); the Bibliothèque National du Québec in Montreal (BNQ); the Canadian Architecture Collection of McGill University (CAC); and the Canadian Center for Architecture in Montreal (CCA). In the case of the Westmount Public Library, the collection includes cards of Montreal, and the towns and cities in the province of Quebec. They are numbered and catalogued, with copies of the images made accessible to the general public.

The BNQ by far possesses the largest collection of mostly Quebec views, acquired over many years.<sup>17</sup> It also possesses images of cards from abroad which were collected in Quebec. These cards, along with several donated private collections, have been catalogued and placed in archival boxes. A large number of them have been digitized and form

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<sup>16</sup> While I had numerous discussions with many different people, Mr. John Gallop, Mme Louise Otis and Mr. Otis were particularly generous with their time, giving me access to their personal collections and their insights.

<sup>17</sup> The BNQ possesses a collection of over 27,000 postcards, which it is actively seeking to augment through purchases and donations.

part of a virtual collection which was also consulted.<sup>18</sup> As their promotional literature states, the institution considers that postcards are "...témoins fidèles de notre passée et des expressions privilégiées de notre culture."<sup>19</sup>

The variable conditions of preservation of the postcards found in these different archival centers underscores the differential values placed on the object in the broader context of institutional collection. As will be discussed below, the different investments made in the postcard as a cultural artifact depend greatly on how it is perceived within existing institutional frameworks.

Postcards have been produced with subject matter that ranges from political, religious, humorous, pornographic, artistic, to the abstract and arcane. In all the archives consulted however, the predominant subject matter of the postcards by far is the architectural image itself. The systems of classification, when existent, reflect this.

### **The theoretical framework**

This thesis casts the postcard as a cultural object embedding architectural representation in a multi-faceted communicative practice. From the outset my interest has been

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<sup>18</sup> This virtual postcard collection can be viewed at: <http://www.biblinat.gouv.qc.ca/>

<sup>19</sup> Document titled "Collecte 1999" Bibliothèque Nationale du Québec, 1999.

to expose the significant role played by architecture and its image in postcard form in shaping the very meanings of space as a concept and place as a material reality. The exploration expanded beyond my initial interest in architecture and its image as a professional architect to include other ways in which people think and act about world we are in. It meant examining how space and place emerge as ideas and physical realities, as architecture and as image in postcard form.

A conceptual tryad proposed by Henri Lefebvre in The Production of Space, "the perceived, the conceived, the lived"<sup>20</sup> provides the analytical threads woven throughout the dissertation, suggesting ways to examine how the postcard figures as cultural object associated with various cultural practices.

Lefebvre notes that the spatial practice of a society, the perceived, is revealed through the deciphering of its spaces as they affect daily routines, the urban structures, and the routes and networks that link up places in daily reality.<sup>21</sup> As users of particular parts of a city, individuals develop practices that are shaped by the physical environment that supports them. A tourist may be drawn to pass through the internal grounds of a New York City landmark such as Rockefeller Center while a hurried worker will by-pass the

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<sup>20</sup> Henri Lefebvre, The Production of Space. Trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1991) 39.

<sup>21</sup> Lefebvre 38.

area, preferring to take a short-cut to get to work. The perceived material and functional aspects of a place relate to the physical and psychic relations that people develop with different parts of a city, its physical form, and the individual motivations that spawn interaction.

The primary assumption concerning the link between the object, the postcard, and place in strictly physical terms emanates from those lived practices and relations. Frequent annotations on postcards with images marked with an "X" state: "The street we live on" or "The hotel I stayed in". More formally, a printed caption such as "Avenue des Français" on a card from Dakar or Beirut testifies to power relations that influence the manner in which a place is intended to be perceived. Complex power relations concerning geography and territory such as these were accentuated in the early twentieth century when European architectural and urban design practices were exported throughout the world, later to be returned to European and North American society as images in postcard form. However the relations that emerged from these historical constructions also testify about the movements of people and ideas over time as well as the transformations that occurred in the techniques of representation that serve in the production of knowledge of the world.

The second thread, the conceived, amounts to the representations of space as initial conceptualizations that

are instrumental in the actual production of space.<sup>22</sup> They involve the concepts behind the development of an exotic tourist resort on the ocean side, for instance; the grand hotel in the Rockies; the peaceful retirement community by the lake. The conception of place from this optic is fueled by motivations that take physical space to be a raw faceless and anonymous product to be processed and transformed into a place with individual features and a particular character. The conception of place in this sense includes the design, building and transformations of both landscapes and cityscapes.

Finally, the third thread proposed by Lefebvre concerns representational space, space as lived and experienced through its associated images and symbols, a space that the imagination seeks to change and appropriate.<sup>23</sup> This is the space that is transformed both individually and collectively into places as we come to know them and harbor feelings for. It is about space as places bearing the culturally coded symbols of a collective past as well as the marks of individual agency and resistance.

A second major theoretical concept that informs this project is that of articulation. A fixed body of research

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<sup>22</sup> Lefebvre 38, 39.

<sup>23</sup> Lefebvre 39.

necessarily results in "a moment of arbitrary closure", an "articulation" which Stuart Hall suggests is:

the form of connection that can make a unity of two different elements, under certain conditions. It is a linkage which is not necessary, determined, absolute, and essential for all time...The 'unity' which matters is a linkage between the articulated discourse and the social forces with which it can, under certain historical conditions, but need not necessarily, be connected.<sup>24</sup>

In delving into the significance of the architectural image in postcard form, I attempt to forge new links that relate concepts and issues with the ideologies that have both dominated and empowered people. It enables the juxtaposition of different views, both literally and metaphorically, revealing how the object and practices can relate to more remote theoretical formulations as well as to pragmatic or personal investments. The concept of articulation provides a way of understanding how the postcard has enabled people:

to begin to make some sense of their historical situation, without reducing those forms of intelligibility to their socio-economic or class location or social position.<sup>25</sup>

Articulation springs from a "theory of ideology which sees communicative practices in terms of what people can and do

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<sup>24</sup> Lawrence Grossberg, ed. "On Postmodernism and Articulation: an interview with Stuart Hall," Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies, Eds. David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen (London and New York: Routledge, 1996) 141.

<sup>25</sup> Grossberg, "On Postmodernism . . .," 142.

make of them."<sup>26</sup> In examining the postcard from different vantage points, as a significant part of culture, it is seen as being "... about feelings, attachments and emotions as well as concepts and ideas."<sup>27</sup> With the postcard, the intention is to expose the diversity of response and interpretations associated with the architectural images themselves and the medium that made them globally accessible. Articulation theory in this sense promotes novel interdisciplinary juxtapositions that create new insights into how the postcard functions and figures in the cultural spectrum.

The postcard has vacillated between being a mass-produced means of communication and being a purveyor of inexpensive architectural imagery for the aesthetic appreciation of millions. As a result, institutional valorization has been slow, and archives are still more vast outside the confines of official collection.

Annie Coombes has suggested that the alignment of specific objects or classes of objects with dominant institutional and cultural canons depends on the deployment of an umbrella concept which can absorb difference. Unlike

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<sup>26</sup> Lawrence Grossberg, "History, Politics and Postmodernism: Stuart Hall and Cultural Studies" in Critical Dialogues..., (1996) 153.

<sup>27</sup> Stuart Hall, ed. Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices (London: Sage Publications, 1997) 2.

other popular cultural manifestations, the postcard, with its usual "authorial" anonymity, does not align easily within Fine Arts categories such as "Photography". Cartoon animation on the other hand, is readily adopted by "Cinematographic Arts" departments within academic frameworks. The postcard, when considered, is usually subsumed under the category of "Cultural Studies". As Coombes proposes, the notion of hybridity as a cultural concept and a descriptive term is required for those objects and museum practices that do not conform to predetermined categories.<sup>28</sup> She states that as a broader phenomenon:

The meanings and values of each category shift...according to complex historical and social relations. Yet more often than not,...[they] ...demonstrate a curious resistance to addressing the implications of such contradictory categories.<sup>29</sup>

While Coombes questions aesthetic criteria used by the Western cultural establishment for evaluating material artifacts of postcolonial cultures, her observations are also pertinent to objects such as postcards, displaced within a single cultural system.

The concept of hybridity is useful not only in attempting to reposition the postcard relative to academic

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<sup>28</sup> Annie E. Coombes, "Inventing the 'Postcolonial': Hybridity and Constituency in Contemporary Curating," New Formations Vol.18 (1992) 39-52.

<sup>29</sup> Coombes 41.

concerns but also in rethinking the very idea of place as well. As Doreen Massey clearly outlines, "...places are always already hybrid."<sup>30</sup> They result in the practices that form around the perceived built environment, the conceived formulations that shape the transformations of that environment, and the symbolic and metaphorical investments that make the past of a place "as open to a multiplicity of readings as is the present."<sup>31</sup>

The ideological position that favors an essential continuity with the past in order to valorize the present actions informs many institutional practices. In an effort to preserve its "patrimoine" or cultural heritage, for example, the Quebec government has formulated policies about individual structures such as churches and chapels, monuments, old manors and houses, which are considered unique yet collectively express "national character."<sup>32</sup> With a prior valorization of architecture itself, integration and valorization of its image in various forms has ensued. The architectural images of these structures, in postcard form,

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<sup>30</sup> Doreen Massey, "Places and Their Pasts" History Workshop Journal (No 39, Spring 1995) 182-192.

<sup>31</sup> Massey 184-185.

<sup>32</sup> This is discussed by Richard Handler, "Having a Culture: The Preservation of the Quebec's Patrimoine," in Nationalism and the Politics of Culture in Quebec (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988) 140-158.

have thus come to be considered a vital part of a heritage to be preserved.<sup>33</sup>

### **The dissertation**

The confluence of cultural forces affecting the production of images, their makers and intended viewers as well as their contexts of dissemination are important to provide a foil to the postcard's role in democratizing the architectural image. Chapter Two begins with a brief historical overview of the architectural image before the postcard's introduction, beginning with the use of paper and the printing press in Europe, the medium which enabled image-making to diversify and proliferate. The objective is to highlight the different functions and attitudes that have been associated with the architectural image over time. In highlighting a cultural framework that has extensive historical precedents, the intention is to draw out the various ideological systems which influence interpretation of the mass-produced architectural image, an artifact that historically operated both in and outside of official cultural frameworks. (Figure I-5)

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<sup>33</sup> Since 1992, all postcards produced in Quebec are subject to "dépôt légal" like all other printed publications. By this regulatory process, the Bibliothèque Nationale du Québec ensures the lasting development of their postcard collection.

Chapter Three explores the role played by the postcard in constructing an image of place, the physical molding of a place to suit a particular image and function. A major ideological system in which postcard use flourished consists of colonialism and the representation of empire. Postcard images are shown to be an integral part of a discourse of self-justification and superiority elaborated through the politics of domination and difference. Through a diachronic review of the vast imagery produced of occupied lands, images in postcard form can be interpreted as buttressing the imperialist discourse prevalent at the time of their production as well as supporting contrasting critical interpretations made from a postcolonial perspective. (Figures I-6 and 7)

Chapter Four explores the nexus of ambitions and realities which made postcard production an integral part of diverse promotional schemes that depended on the image of place. The emphasis is on how local constructions are produced for the consumption of others; Canada as a developing nation is the focus. Serving corporate interests that sought increased profits through tourism, and nation building governmental ambitions that fostered immigration and territorial development, the postcard propagated a conception of nationhood and worldliness that sought to be distinctive and unified. (Figure I-8)

The following chapter focuses on collection practices that resulted from the transmission of postcards begun over a century ago. It is here that certain continuities with the past are more readily apparent. Individual acts of collection are shown to form the core of later institutional collecting. In a marked contrast with theoretical conceptions of knowledge transfer, the chapter explores how the collection of postcards has influenced knowledge of architecture and place at both the lay and professional level. The diverse ways in which postcard collections have been used are indicative of the range of meanings possible with individuals of different backgrounds, education and social status. The section also discusses the differential nature of values associated with the image when viewed either as representation of architecture or as a mass-produced ephemeral object.

The broad range of meaning and significance invested in postcards are explored at the level of the individual, where frequent textual annotation hints at the rapport between the postcard and the deeply personal universes of meaning that everyday objects help construct. (Figures I-9 and 10) The personal strategies of collection are examined also, contrasting what is construed as the rational and emotional aspects of the systems of objects that are created. Emphasis here is on how the postcard contributes to generating collective memory and the formation of personal evocations.

Through a vast material archive, a rich trail of tangible evidence supports the diversity of meanings that emanate from the postcard's close rapport with place.

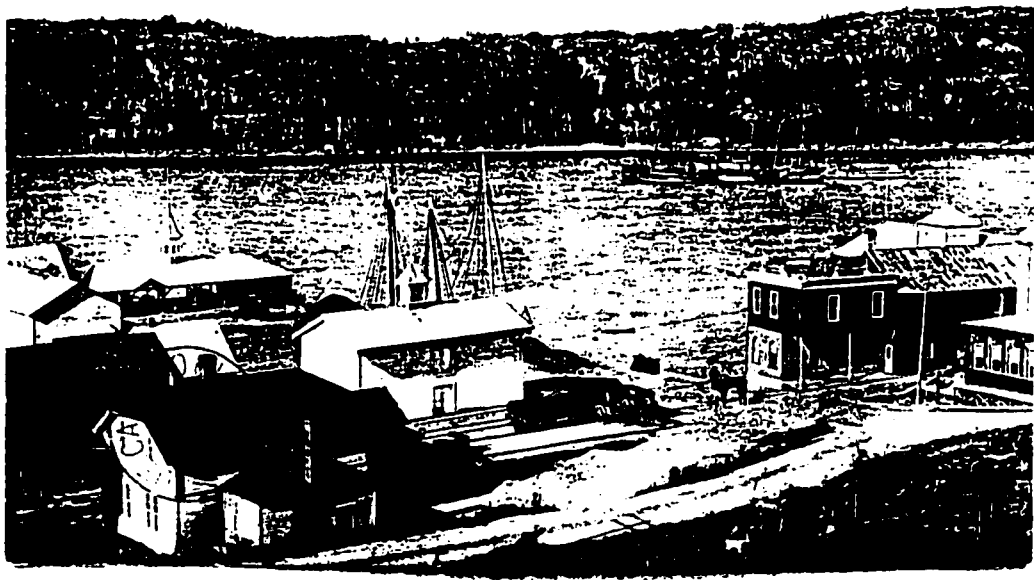
The final chapter explores the present-day status of the postcard and the archive, drawing on the technological innovations that have altered present means of communication, including the use of the postcard. Expanding beyond the previously discussed contexts, the postcard displays a resilience and persistence that enables it to infiltrate many other areas of cultural expression, adopting a symbolic or metaphorical role and becoming the shorthand meaning place. Through electronic dematerialization the postcard image has been given an after-life in the vast terrain of cyberspace.

With this development, the nature of the archive has been transformed as well. Postcard images, once accessible through controlled and limited access in single point locations, are digitized and made available globally through the Internet. The format, terminology and ideological frameworks initially associated with the postcard are seen recurring in the new media such as electronic "postcards" on the World-Wide-Web. Through this electronic transformation, the postcard continues to provide for the needs, desires, imagination and memories that align the architectural image and the postcard with the conception of place.



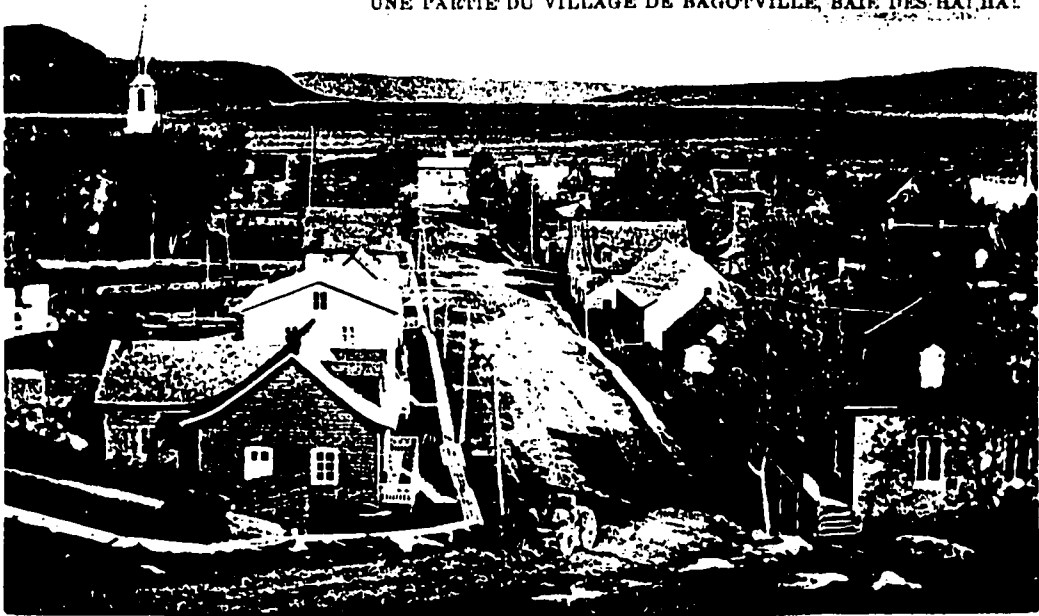
**Fig. I-1.** Postcard of the "Grüss Aus" type, for Montreal, ca. 1898. Images are permitted on text side of card only at this time. G. Blümlein. Source: BNQ.

Le Port Chicoutimi.



**Fig. I-2.** Postcard of Le Port de Chicoutimi, ca. 1907. J.A. Côté. Source: PC.

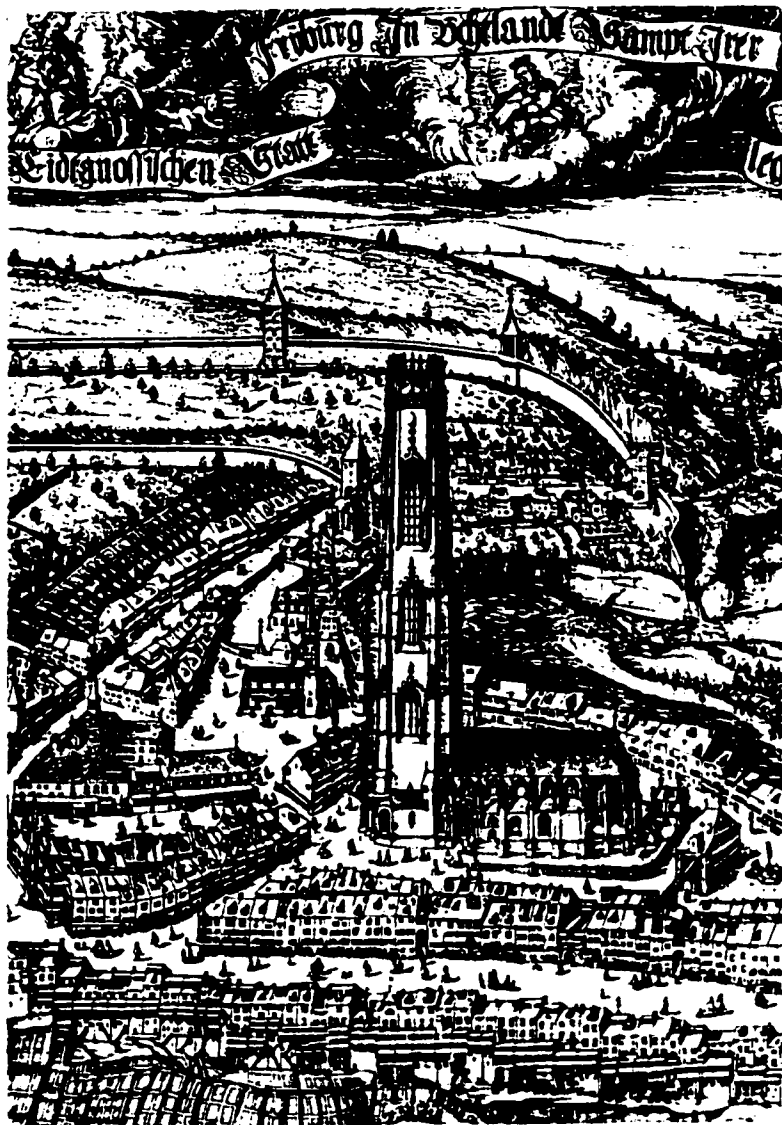
UNE PARTIE DU VILLAGE DE BAGOTVILLE, BAIE DES HAUTS



**Fig. I-3.** Postcard of the village of Bagotville, Quebec, ca. 1907. UPS Series. Source: PC.



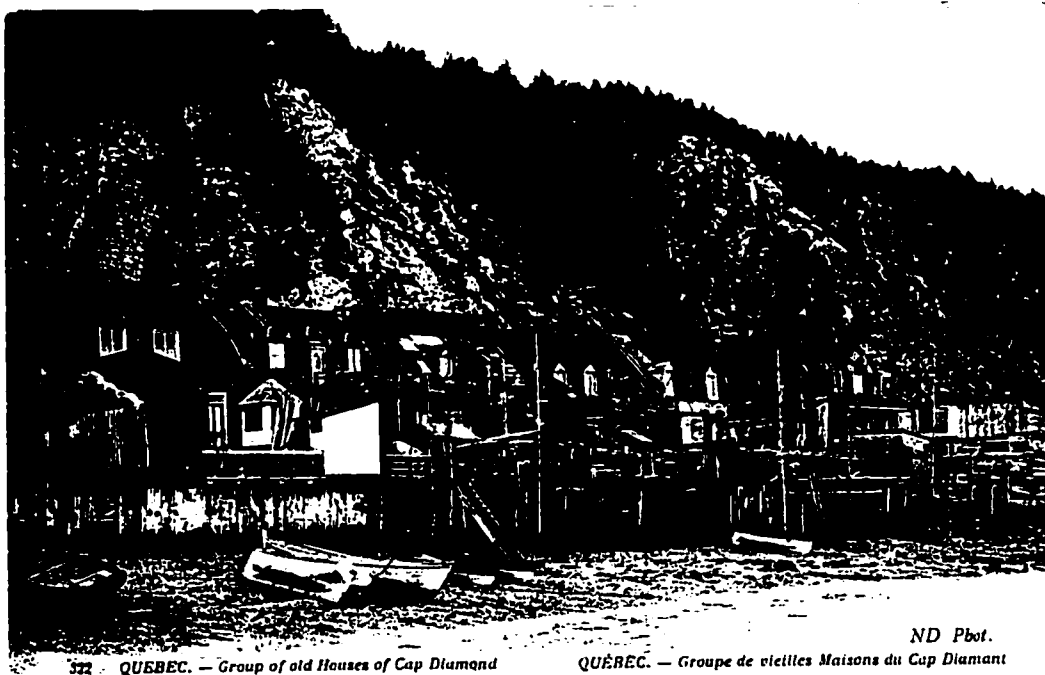
**Fig. I-4.** A good-luck postcard with multiple postcards views of Paris, within a four-leaf clover, ca 1920. Gloria 520.  
Source: PC.



**Fig. I-5.** Postcard of View of Freiburg, from a print by Martin Martini, 1606. Benedict Rast. Source: CAC/Collins Archive.



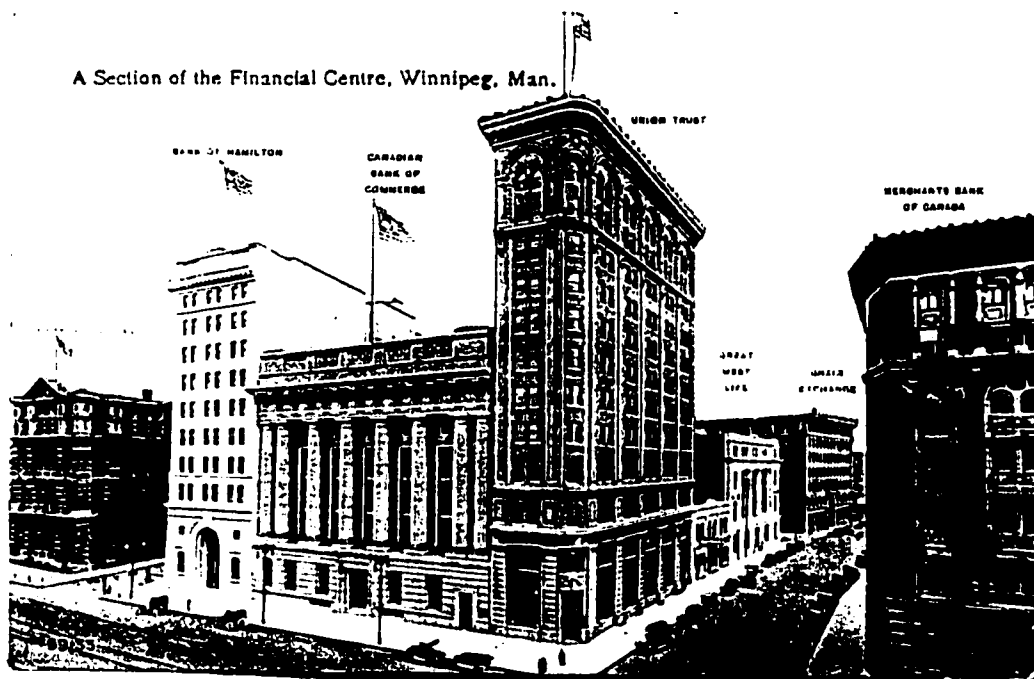
**Fig. I-6.** Postcard of Biskra - La Rue Berthe. Tunisia, ca. 1915. Lévy et Neurdein. Source: PC.



322. QUÉBEC. — Group of old Houses of Cap Diamant

ND Pbot.  
QUÉBEC. — Groupe de vieilles Maisons du Cap Diamant

**Fig. I-7.** Postcard of Québec: Groupe of old houses of "Cap Diamant" below the "Haute Ville" of Quebec City. Neurdein.  
Source: J. Gallop.



**Fig. I-8.** Postcard of the Financial Centre Winnipeg, Manitoba, ca. 1940. Valentine & Sons. Source: PC.

Peanuts

By Charles M. Schulz



**Fig. I-9.** Peanuts cartoon, by Charles M. Schulz. Source: Montreal Gazette, October 18, 1997.

# Bus-driver hailed a hero in life and fiery death

Canadian Press

FOX CREEK, Alta. - A Greyhound bus driver, called a hero for thinking of his passengers even as he perished in flames after a horrendous crash, was just as selfless during his life, his friends and colleagues say.

Claes Dahlqvist, 49, of Edmonton, always put the feelings of other people ahead of his own, they said.

The veteran driver was killed about 3:30 a.m. Saturday in an explosive crash with a pickup truck on an isolated stretch of highway near this town about 200 kilometres northwest of Edmonton.

Three other people also died in the fiery collision - two bus-passengers and the driver of the pickup, who was alone in the truck. Twenty-seven passengers were injured - some seriously.



Claes Dahlqvist died in flames

They praised Dahlqvist who, despite being trapped in the flaming wreckage, urged his charges to save themselves.

"The driver was telling everybody to get out and he was stuck there. That was tragic," said Darryl

Watkins, 22, a passenger from Turner Valley, Alta., who helped several others to safety.

Colleagues described Dahlqvist as a devoted family man and a gentleman.

"He was always, always nice," said dispatcher Paul Leahy, who was his friend for 15 years.

"He never complained. He came, he smiled, told a couple jokes and did his job."

He said Dahlqvist's wife, Pat, is taking her husband's death hard, but it is his 10-year-old son who is suffering the most.

"He spent most of his time with his family. When he got off the job, he couldn't wait to get home and take his son to Boy Scouts," said a fellow bus driver, who asked his name not be used.

"I feel proud of him and we can't even tell him," Roger Pike, Greyhound's vice president for Western Canada, said yesterday. "He's been a hero, there's no doubt about it."

Most passengers were from Alberta and northeastern British Columbia. One was from Japan.

The pickup was carrying a tank of diesel fuel that ruptured on impact. Both vehicles were consumed in the inferno that resulted, leaving only their



WALTER TYCHONOWICZ, CP

A woman displays a postcard on which she penned her thoughts after failing in her attempt to rescue a fellow bus-passenger during a fiery head-on crash Saturday near Fox Creek, Alta. The woman did not want her name used.

scorched frames.

The four victims were burned beyond recognition. Their remains were shipped to the medical examiner's office where they will be identified using dental records, RCMP said yesterday.

Police have said the pickup was in the wrong lane. Yesterday, they were still investigating the crash.

They believe the pickup driver was a man in his 20s.

There were other tales of bravery under hellish conditions. There were numerous accounts of heroic passengers plunging back into the flames - with some getting their clothes burned from their backs - to free their fellow travellers.

"I believe there are guardian angels. It's God's grace," survivor Don Paul, 19, said as he left the hospital with a broken nose and blood staining the front of his black leather jacket.

"I could hear people screaming and burning. It was a nightmare."

Paul witnessed a young female passenger unsuccessfully try to save a woman.

"She got burns on her scalp trying to save this woman who was in flames," Paul said. "She really tried her best, it just didn't happen."

The unidentified young woman later wrote down her feelings on the back of postcard revealing her pain and her fears she should have done more.

**Fig. I-10.** Photo of an unidentified woman showing a postcard on which she penned her thoughts. Source: Montreal Gazette, April 21, 1997.

## CHAPTER II

### THE ARCHITECTURAL IMAGE OVER TIME:

#### Views from the past

Referring to representational space, the space lived through its associated images and symbols, Henri Lefebvre posits that it is essentially qualitative, fluid and dynamic. To apply this distinction more generally, he says:

We should have to study not only the history of space, but also the history of representations, along with that of their relationships - with each other, with practice, and with ideology.<sup>1</sup>

This chapter provides a brief historical overview of some of those relationships and practices associated with representational space developed by means of the architectural image. It highlights how technological developments made image reproducibility and dissemination possible, taking the architectural image from a closed private sphere to the public domain. Through this process, architectural and urban views became increasingly available for a wider range uses, and were integrated into diverse cultural practices.

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<sup>1</sup> Lefebvre 42.

Before the postcard's time, the architectural image existed as a commodity, as information, as an expression of dominion over the land, as a symbol of solidity and stability, as a vehicle for promoting myths of place, as well as a means to access one's own personal world of thoughts and feelings. However, stratifications and exclusions have operated in many of the different sectors where the architectural image figured in the past. Over time a confluence of forces and ideological systems alter the significance of these architectural images, producing ironies, parallels and contrasts when considered with those later mass-produced in postcard form.

### **The early images of Place**

The question of accessibility to imagery is difficult to ascertain in the early days of printing since little of what would have been considered popular ephemera remains.<sup>2</sup> A number of early fifteenth century books that have been preserved were published as narrative accounts of pilgrims' journeys to

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<sup>2</sup> According to Arthur Hind the making of small devotional prints, single cuts with religious subjects which were distributed by convents to pilgrims, was an important use of early wood-cutting and engraving, of which little is extant. A History of Woodcut (New York: Dover Publications, 1963) 107. Also as Margaret Miles discusses, images were considered aids to religious instruction to the largely illiterate flock and formed a integral part of early Christian liturgy. Image as Insight: Visual Understanding in Western Christianity and Secular Culture (Boston: Beacon Press, 1985) 54.

the Holy Land, documenting with text and images the long tradition of oral reportage about travels and places. The architectural image was introduced at this time as an accessory to text and intended to convey a generic sense of the distant places, with no expectation of realistic fidelity.<sup>3</sup>

The early travel book titled Peregrinations in Terram Sanctum, written in 1486, included numerous wood-cut prints drafted by Erhard Reuwich which feature large aerial views or panoramas of seven cities.<sup>4</sup> This book became very popular and was reprinted in thirteen separate editions - an early "best-seller" of sorts made possible by shipping the printing blocks to several different cities in Europe. In 1493 these same blocks were adapted for the printing of the Nuremberg Chronicle, a sort of encyclopedia of world history and geography, which included views of several foreign cities and numerous Germanic towns.<sup>5</sup> (Figure II-1)

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<sup>3</sup> Many bird-eye views served as general maps of particular areas. Imaginary and conventionalized imagery appears alongside realistic representations. As P. D. Harvey points out, pictures of towns, castles, forests in many cases merely marked the presence of a particular type of settlement or landscape. The History of Topographical Maps: Symbols, Pictures and Surveys (London: Thames and Hudson, 1980) 65.

<sup>4</sup> W. Turner Berry and H. Edmund Poole, The Annals of Printing (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966) 59.

<sup>5</sup> Hyatt A. Mayor, Prints and People (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1971) 43-44.

Other books of a more arcane subject matter such as the Hypnerotomachia Poliphili, published in 1499 by Aldus in Venice, includes illustrations of building interiors, architectural ruins, as well as graphic symbols with inscriptions to elaborate a story as an allegorical dream based in a city of Antiquity. The book was later translated into French and published by Kerver in 1546 under the title Discours du Songe de Poliphile. The illustrations for the French version were redrawn closely following the original but embellished, undoubtedly to make the edition more appealing.<sup>6</sup> While the book drew the attention of some courts and academies of Europe, accessibility and readership remained limited to a small elite.

These and other early hand-bound books incorporating images were not available in public libraries as we know them today. They were possessed and controlled by groups such as the clergy, the educated nobility and the growing merchant class accustomed to travel and the exchange of goods and ideas. Mobility and dissemination of the ever increasing number of images was conditional on the possession and control of books, and having access to the still relatively limited manual production of single-leaf block prints.

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<sup>6</sup> David Bland, A History of Book Illustration (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969) 104, 170.

Compilations of prints such as The German Single Leaf Woodcut: 1500-1550<sup>7</sup> and The Illustrated Bartsch<sup>8</sup> include numerous illustrations of town views featuring battle scenes and village squares in full activity as well as images depicted churches and monasteries, the major structures in and around various towns and villages at that time.<sup>9</sup> According to Walter Strauss, the woodcuts "were produced for the general public, unlike the illustrations for books. The survival of these prints is evidence of their popularity and wide distribution."<sup>10</sup>

While images such as these circulated outside closed circles as never previously possible, it is nevertheless dubious that they were accessible to all segments of society, including the peasants and laborers still living in feudal conditions. More likely they were acquired and preserved by people who possessed the financial means and opportunities to

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<sup>7</sup> Max Geisberg, The German Single-leaf Woodcut: 1500-1550 Ed. Walter S. Strauss (New York: Hacker Books, 1974)

<sup>8</sup> Catherine Levesque, ed. The Illustrated Bartsch. Netherlandish Artists 6 (New York: Abaris Books, 1986) Section 0608.

<sup>9</sup> A detailed study of a early sixteenth century bird's-eye view of Venice reveals the high cost and still very restricted access to city views. This particular view was part of a princely collection of works of art that included several framed city views.(441) Juergen Schulz, "Jacopo de'Barbari's View of Venice: Map Marking, City Views, and Moralized Geography Before the Year 1500," The Art Bulletin 60 (1978) 425-473.

<sup>10</sup> Geisberg vii.

travel and make discretionary purchases of images, many having obvious religious inferences and others featuring more secular subject matter.

It is during the period between 1540 to 1650 that print publishers and print sellers in Northern Europe became organized to meet the growing popular demand for imagery, creating a commercial market for images. It is suggested that "middle-men" such as Antonio Lafrery, who published images of Italian archeological subjects, were responsible for substantial exchanges by running and distributing numerous unnumbered editions.<sup>11</sup> This was achieved when more efficient printing techniques were developed during the fifteenth century and paper became widely available. Previously a rare imported commodity, paper became more readily available as numerous paper mills were setup in Europe.<sup>12</sup> At a time when the printing press became an agent of change,<sup>13</sup> not only did text become more accessible, but images as well. Indeed it has been argued that the printed illustration, not the printed word, is the reason why the

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<sup>11</sup> Hind, A History of Engraving, 118-119.

<sup>12</sup> As shown in dated maps through their text, numerous mills were set up to supply the ever-increasing demand for paper used in the mechanical reproduction of text and images in books and other printed materials. Berry and Poole, 1966.

<sup>13</sup> Elizabeth Eisenstein develops this thesis in The Printing Press as Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early Modern Europe Vol. 1 & 2. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979)

printing press in the West proved to be such an instrument of change.<sup>14</sup> With a paper medium, printed architectural images became cultural artifacts and commodities distinct from the buildings and places they referred to.

Until this period, very few images were disseminated and collected beyond the walls of monastic libraries and regal quarters. The printing press enabled a proliferation of images, which could then be used in different locations and social contexts, increasing interest in its acquisition and use. As Stuart Ewen points out, in the early days of printing when images and things once connoted one's place within an immutable network of social relations, with the increasingly mobile commercial world that emerged, images became property that marked individual autonomous achievement, gradually becoming a form of social currency.<sup>15</sup> Possession of images became a sign that one had "arrived", providing the prosperous with an "iconography of prestige."<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> As Samuel Y. Edgerton Jr. explains, this was due to the notion that images appeared "rational" because of the graphic adherence to set geometric principles. "The Renaissance Artist as Quantifier," in The Perception of Pictures. Vol. II, Ed. Margaret A. Hagan (New York: Academic Press, 1980) 190. While I concur with the initial position, the attraction to illustrations and their meaning to individuals cannot, as I will argue later with the postcard, cannot be explained on a strictly "rational" basis.

<sup>15</sup> Stuart Ewen, All Consuming Images: The Politics of Style in Contemporary Culture (New York: Basic Books, 1988) 29.

<sup>16</sup> Ewen 28, 30.

Publishers recognized the growing market of individuals wanting to possess images for personal needs and desires. When available in single leaf, prints intended for individual ownership could, according to Hyatt Mayor, be collected and used decoratively by affixing to walls with tacks or wax, prior to the development of clear flat glass.<sup>17</sup>

As metal-plate techniques supplanted the wood-cut method in the latter part of the fifteenth century, the printing of a significantly larger number of images was possible. The architectural image became an integral component in the representation of diverse subject matter, serving either as focal point, back-drop or as visual frame for different figurative subjects. (Figure II-3)

The growing influx of Holy Land pilgrims passing through cities such as Rome during the Renaissance expanded the market for architectural images, particularly those of a topographical nature - individual buildings and bird's-eye views of cities collected as pilgrimage certificates or souvenirs of places visited. While narratives of experience as formulated by the early travelogue type of books such as the Peregrinations in Terram Sanctum were dependent on textual literacy for accessibility, souvenir images were more readily accessible as mnemonic representations.

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<sup>17</sup> Mayor 88.

From ancient Greek times, architecture and building elements were used to develop skills for rhetoric by structuring memory with a locus of "mental images" constructed from imaginary tectonic systems and sequences.<sup>18</sup> While instruction in the art of memory may not have been widespread, the associative potential of a physical image of a place is undeniable.

In other areas accessibility of the architectural image was abetted by association with legal or religious documents such as the marriage charters produced in France, confraternity images, pilgrimage certificates, and political flyers. Sixteenth and seventeenth century Christian marriage ceremonies for instance featured a ritual whereby both ring and vows in the physical form of a charter, were blessed and exchange hands.<sup>19</sup> The standard printed charters, which contained both text and images, were signed and remitted to the couple as documentary proof of their marital vows. These legal documents, featuring images of major figures of Christian iconography, many in a built setting or framed with architectural elements, were then brought into the domestic

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<sup>18</sup> Frances Yates, The Art of Memory [1966] (London: Pimlico, 1994) 22-23.

<sup>19</sup> Roger Chartier, "From Ritual to the Hearth: Marriage Charters in Seventeenth-Century Lyons," in The Culture of Print: Power and Uses of Print in Early Modern Europe Ed. Roger Chartier, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989) 174-190.

sphere. Referring to this type of document Roger Chartier states, "A piece of printed matter not destined for "reading" and of plural intentions and uses...was an object closely associated with the life of its possessor."<sup>20</sup> Through a process of association with important events in one's lifetime, the architectural image in this context acquired evocative values beyond the mercantile or didactic.

Part of the compelling attraction of the "miniature" views of localities representing distant places or one's immediate surroundings undoubtedly included the fact that they could be held in the hand, transported or displayed, enabling sites to be "revisited" at will. As Susan Stewart posits, an image of the built world provides a basic pleasure with a continuing fascination because it:

...reduces the public, the monumental, and the three-dimensional into the miniature, that which can be enveloped by the body, or in the two-dimensional representation, that which can be appropriated within the privatized view of the individual subject.<sup>21</sup>

As representational spaces, the miniature views also provided the viewer with the focal points of a place, the village church, the graveyard, the halls and fields, the square and belfry which, as interpretations of larger cosmological

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<sup>20</sup> Chartier 175.

<sup>21</sup> Susan Stewart, On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection. (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984) 138-139.

representations,<sup>22</sup> provide the interconnections that give meaning to lived experiences.

### **Issues related to images**

With wider use, potential meaning and impact of images could never be confined to the strictly personal domain. As suggested by Roger Chartier, the print objects' "...festive, ritual, cultic, civic and pedagogic uses were by definition collective ..."<sup>23</sup> Within the social context of the time, images and controversy were never far apart. Conflicting religious, social and political imperatives closely associated with the production and dissemination of images raised concerns and became issues affecting different spiritual and intellectual authorities throughout the ages.

As early as in the eight century, with the emergence of the Iconoclastic movement initiated by the Byzantine Emperor Leo III, attempts were made to abolish images, pictures or any material likeness to sacred personages, things or events in order to prevent idolatry.<sup>24</sup> Representation of religious figures and holy places in the form of mosaics, wall

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<sup>22</sup> Lefebvre 45.

<sup>23</sup> Chartier 1.

<sup>24</sup> This religious prohibition of iconic representation seemed to align the Christian position more closely with Muslim and Judaic practices at that time. The move was resented by both the masses and the Papal establishment in Rome who opposed secular interference in what was considered a Church matter. W.G. Cannon, A History of Christianity in the Middle Ages (New York: Abington Press, 1960) 105-106.

paintings, and sculptures<sup>25</sup> was considered capable of deeply influencing people. In 727 AD, expressing his position against Iconoclasm, John Damascene drew on neo-Platonic doctrine to write his First Oration in Defense of the Images, where he argued that veneration paid to images was "not to the object as such but rather to the original they represent."<sup>26</sup>

As these disputes concerning the nature of images and their potential impact and meaning within a religious frame of reference continued into the Middle Ages, scholastic philosophers such as Thomas Aquinas formulated distinctions between venerating icons and worshipping idols, highlighting the differences between representation and fetishism.<sup>27</sup> As late as 1904, the sale of postcards with images of mosques such as the Hagga Sophia in Istanbul, as well as imperial palaces and gardens, were banned by the Sultan of Turkey on the grounds that they constituted religious blasphemy.<sup>28</sup> This concern about the role and the effect of images was to remain

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<sup>25</sup> While clearly not in the "realist" tradition that later forms of representations such as photography and film epitomize, prohibition of medieval representations was sought because they were nevertheless considered too real and seductive.

<sup>26</sup> Cannon 105-106.

<sup>27</sup> Martin Jay, Downcast Eyes The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth Century Thought (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994) 44.

<sup>28</sup> Richard Carline, Pictures In The Post (London: Gordon Fraser, 1971) 67.

controversial, later expanding from a moral and religious consideration into the secular realm. In the early twentieth century, the concern is echoed by Walter Benjamin: "Where in the new does the boundary run between reality and appearance?"<sup>29</sup>

As graphic conventions changed during the Renaissance period, mathematically calculated perspective representations of architecture became more closely allied with the idea of accessing Truth based on a model of visual perception. Just as architectural design sought to instill order and harmony in the built environment by using classical elements within a strict canon of mathematical proportion and geometry inspired by Platonic doctrine,<sup>30</sup> so too did the new perspective practices and resulting visual representations. In seeking to reproduce graphically what was understood as being the product of vision, a picture in the mind, as obtained by looking through a transparent window, representation techniques followed similar codification. In his seminal work Della Pictura Renaissance architect Alberti wrote: "As

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<sup>29</sup> Quoted by Susan Buck-Morss, The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991) 92. Similar charges about truth and appearance in the late twentieth century are made by Jean Baudrillard in Simulations (New York: Semiotext(e), 1983)

<sup>30</sup> Rudolf Wittkower, Architectural Principles in the Age of Humanism (New York and London: W.W. Norton, 1961) 8, 16.

painting aims to represent things seen, let us note how in fact things are seen."<sup>31</sup>

At the time of Alberti and his Della Pictura in 1435, imaging practices consisted mostly of painting, frescos, and mosaics. By the time of Descartes and his Dioptrics of 1637, the proliferation of prints and etchings expanded the boundaries and limitations of representation, posing new challenges for representational practices and associated theory.

In attempting to sort out the dynamics of sensation, perception and reason in lived experience, Descartes also examined the challenge posed by the perception of depictions produced with material images judged to be realistic or "like Nature" and their relation to truth. He states:

...very often the perfection of an image depends on its not resembling the object as it might. For instance, engravings, which consist merely of a little ink spread over paper, represent to us forests, towns, men and even battles and tempests. And yet, out of an unlimited number of different qualities that they lead us to conceive the objects, there is not one in respect of which they actually resemble [the objects] except shape. Even this is a very imperfect resemblance: on a flat surface, they represent objects variously convex or concave; and again, according to the rules of perspective, they often represent circles by ovals rather than by other circles,

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<sup>31</sup> Alberti's treatise proceeds to advise how a grid or veil placed in front of the painter will assist in producing a representation that is nearer the truth. Leon Battista Alberti, On Painting Trans. Cecil Grayson (London: Penguin Books, 1991) 64. (*italics added*)

and squares by diamonds rather than by other squares. Thus very often, in order to be more perfect qua images, and to represent object[s] better, it is necessary for engravings not to resemble [them].<sup>32</sup>

While Alberti expressed concern about truthful depiction and the techniques to achieve it, he also conceded that some license may be exercised in overlooking or correcting certain defects while still maintaining the likeness. From a Platonic viewpoint, he considered superficial adjustments to be acceptable because the "true" inner likeness or essence of the object was not affected.<sup>33</sup> However he considered aspects of perception based on "impressions" or "appearances", as in a dynamic lived situation, to be irrational and incomplete. They were to have no place in depiction because subjective impressions suggested an inability to act rationally and harmoniously.<sup>34</sup> Accordingly, from this position, the symbolic or impressionistic are considered irreconcilable with the strict conventions of his static perspective model. For Descartes on the other hand, images are judged in relation to perfection of representation rather than as being truthful in nature. The need to master the parameters of visual representation are considered paramount in developing a sense

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<sup>32</sup> René Descartes, Dioptrics quoted by Joel Snyder, "Picturing Vision" in Critical Inquiry 6, Spring (1980) 499.

<sup>33</sup> Alberti 76.

<sup>34</sup> Snyder 515, 516.

of control over the constantly changing dynamic of lived experience.

The need for visual control is one that remained a preoccupation for a long time. The nineteenth century author Gustave Flaubert wrote about his impressions of the Cairo that he visited, and describes his feelings of distress in trying to comprehend a "... city refusing to compose itself as a picture."<sup>35</sup> The sensory chaos and visual turmoil he experienced while walking the unfamiliar streets challenged his expectations and sense of control. These expectations included the converse to the notion of truth discussed above, namely the idea that reality must conform to an image, a very salient Western concern found in present reflections about city views and the postcard.

In the secular realm, the paradigm of visual access to "Truth" has buttressed power relations in various segments of society where architectural images are produced and collected in association with distinct political and commercial objectives. This is most apparent with the collection of architectural images within two distinct and opposing sites - the "official" collection, and the "popular" one. As outlined by James Clifford, for the individual, collection embodies "the hierarchies of value, exclusions, rule governed

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<sup>35</sup> Quoted by Timothy Mitchell, Colonising Egypt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) 21-22.

territories of the self."<sup>36</sup> Similar systemic hierarchies of value, exclusions and rule-governed territories are involved in broader political or commercial contexts, although serving different objectives.

In 17th century France for instance, under the reign of Louis XIV, a collection called the "Cabinet du Roi" was formed in order to create, by means of engraving and etchings, a record of all monumental architecture, art and design.<sup>37</sup> Numerous engravers were commissioned for this regal mandate, many being architects who engraved their own architectural designs. Later named the "Cabinet des Estampes" in the Bibliothèque Nationale, it became a repository of architectural plates and prints still maintained today as the "Chalcographie du Louvre."

A less known group of images, which contributed to the development of the king's "Cabinet" is the large private collection bequeath to Louis XIV by Roger de Gaignières. Roger de Gaignières was a private citizen, who out of personal interest, traveled France and England in the late 17th century and recorded views of towns, monuments, tombstones, local dress, portraits, armories, and seals.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> James Clifford, "On Collecting Art and Culture" in Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Culture Ed. Russel Ferguson, Martha Gever, Trinh T. Min-ha, and Cornel West (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990) 143.

<sup>37</sup> Arthur Hind, A History of Engraving & Etching (New York: Dover Publications, 1963) 198.

Collected throughout his lifetime, the books, prints and drawings which he amassed featured a rich array of images of various "châteaux", churches and aerial town views which constituted an archive that was well appreciated by the nobility and intelligentsia of his day. As reported by Germain Brice, a contemporary of de Gaignières, "Les personnes les plus illustres de ce royaume sont souvent venues voir ce grand amas de singularitez instructives. Ce cabinet a été donné au Roy en l'année 1711."<sup>39</sup> While it was a curiosity that appealed to the illustrious and noble, it remained inaccessible to others.

In Italy, an institution with similar motives for recording built monuments considered national treasures was begun by the Roman Vatican in 1738 when the Pope Clement XII acquired the entire printed stock of a merchant family who had been print dealers in Rome for several generations.<sup>40</sup> Known as "La Regia Calcografia", it holds a vast number of architectural images including the engravings of G.B. Piranesi, an engraver trained as an architect but better known for his imaginative depictions of the carceral realms and monuments of Antiquity as archeological ruin.

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<sup>38</sup> Françoise Bonnin, "François-Roger de Gaignière et les chefs-d'œuvre en péril au grand siècle," Médecine de France. No. 169, Paris (MCMLXVI) 17-32.

<sup>39</sup> Bonnin 24.

<sup>40</sup> Hind, A History of Engraving & Etching, 198.

Elevating the architectural print to the level of royal and papal concern through official collection conferred a greater material and political value to possession of images. As interest in their ownership and control became a matter of state concern, a new value became entrenched in the images. Control of architectural images connoted a form of knowledge and power over the built environment. Not only was the built form a part of cultural heritage, but so was its representation. As architectural prints became a tangible expression of sovereignty over the land and its buildings, the power to control and safeguard cultural objects such as buildings was extended to include possession and control of those image collections.

Architectural images were also produced for more prosaic purposes and made to fulfill basic pedagogical needs from the Renaissance onward. Numerous construction "how-to" books were printed specifically for the instruction of architects and builders, expanding information beyond the confines and control of the building trade guilds.<sup>41</sup> Knowledge about ancient building practices was made available through the reproduction of illustrations originally drawn by Vitruvius, an architect who worked under the reign of the Roman emperor

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<sup>41</sup> Albums featuring architectural drawings such as Villard de Honecourt's (ca. 1250) were very rare at that time, and intended mostly for the masonry trade. J.-M. Savignat, Dessin et architecture du Moyen âge au XVIII. (Paris: École National Supérieure des Beaux-Art, 1983) 23-38.

Augustus (27 B.C.- A.D. 14). Accompanied by the contemporary architectural illustrations and the interpretive commentary, several different sixteenth century writers such as Serlio, Vignola, Palladio published books which aimed at instructing specific groups of people in the art of building.<sup>42</sup>

In England a book written and illustrated by John Shute in 1563 is credited by The Oxford Dictionary as being the first to even use the words architect and architecture in his impressively titled work, The First and Chief Grounds of Architecture Used in all the ancient and famous monuments with a farther and more ample discourse upon the same than hitherto hath been set out by any other.<sup>43</sup> These books served to promote stable values provided by a concise design canon and were vital in extending the means to reproduce classical architectural imagery. Although intended for a specialized group, the publications nevertheless contributed to the wide dissemination of the canonical five orders used for architectural design over the next centuries, influencing Western architectural tastes with meticulously documented and prescribed building principles. As illustrated books valued for their "knowledge content" they have been deemed seminal to architectural practice for many centuries, conveying

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<sup>42</sup> Mayor 238-240.

<sup>43</sup> Berry and Poole 95.

authority and refinement associated with the Classical architectural canon they depict.

Other scholarly works compiled from a historical or archeological viewpoint contributed to the dissemination of architectural images in broader intellectual circles. With renewed interest in Classicism, the ambition to trace the roots of architectural design led to new cultural pilgrimages to ancient Greek ruins. The publication of works such as The Antiquities of Athens by English archeologists Stuart and Revett<sup>44</sup> revived interest in classicism while the more global ambition of Fischer von Erlach led to the 1721 German publication of a comprehensive survey of world architecture.<sup>45</sup> This work included architectural images of great diversity, with unusual structures such as Chinese pagodas, images that fueled bourgeois demand for the exotic in garden and country pavilions throughout Europe. Other series of other books and prints issued during the mid-eighteenth century promoted possession of images of the rare and strange as a means of expressing and displaying good taste and refinement.<sup>46</sup> As part of a larger cultural phenomenon defined by Edward Saïd as Orientalism,<sup>47</sup> this transmission of printed architectural

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<sup>44</sup> Peter Collins, Changing Ideals in Modern Architecture: 1750-1950 (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1965) 64.

<sup>45</sup> Mayor 242.

<sup>46</sup> Timothy Clayton, The English Print: 1688-1802 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997) 138-140.

representations created a demand for the adoption of stylistic fragments culled from the exotic images experienced through armchair travel.

While the value of the printed architectural image was established in institutions of culture and of learning by the early 18th century, a number of other practices developed outside the boundaries of official control and scrutiny. These are the popular practices that involved printed architectural images that precede the advent and popularity of the postcard.

One such practice involves the use of architectural imagery on playing cards (Figure II-5) and later the "billets de visite" or visiting cards. (Figure II-6) The great demand and popularity of playing cards undoubtedly led the Segnoria of Venice in 1441, to forbid the importation of foreign printed pictures and playing cards in order to protect the local trades from foreign competition.<sup>48</sup> With the playing cards being assigned new communication functions, they were often left after a visit with local acquaintances or in some cases brought back from foreign travels. They also came to be used for transmitting messages in an unofficial manner by writing on the backside.

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<sup>47</sup> Edward W. Saïd, Orientalism (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978) 2.

<sup>48</sup> Hind, A History of Engraving, 20-21.

In France, as early as 1777, the Almanach de la Petite Poste de Paris records that messages on a wide range of topics were sent through the post on engraved cards with annotations left exposed to the eyes of everyone.<sup>49</sup> A number of these cards were printed playing cards annotated by the sender on the reverse side of the image. While their use remained quite limited in France, cards with open messages were nevertheless banned during the French revolution. Concerned with the riddance of all the practices of the Ancien Régime, they recognized the political implications of uncontrolled communication and transmission of imagery.<sup>50</sup>

In Italy, where an extensive printing tradition existed, visiting cards were made with elaborately printed classical images or Piranesian architectural ruins as well as contemporary city views.<sup>51</sup> By the mid-18th century visiting cards were being produced in the approximate size of playing cards and bearing a space for a signature or in later productions, with the engraving of a person's name.

In Austria, Germany, and England, the private use of cartes de visite persisted alongside that of sending greeting cards for special occasions such as Christmas, Valentine's Day, and birthdays. Envelopes and personal stationery became

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<sup>49</sup> Carline 25.

<sup>50</sup> Zeyons 22.

<sup>51</sup> Frank Staff, The Picture Postcard and Its Origin (New York: Frederic A. Praeger, 1966) 10.

adorned with small vistas, caricatures, and graphic ornament in early Victorian times.<sup>52</sup> People sent cards as a mark of civilized behavior, from polite social acknowledgments to effusive expressions of personal thoughts and feelings.

Numerous commercial printing practices featuring the architectural image vied for their own distinct position in the marketplace. As figure II-7 illustrates, many merchants and producers used printed views of their storefront or their factory building on correspondence paper or bills as well as paper bags, wrappers and packing boxes, and advertising cards.<sup>53</sup>

In England several companies competed for both the domestic and export business that flourished with the increasing demand for printed images of all types. Catalogues of stock images such as that produced by the E.S. and A. Robinson & Company of Bristol provided a vast array for commercial use, including stock architectural and city views of Canadian cities, many derived from the dated prints originating from other sources.<sup>54</sup> (Figure II-8)

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<sup>52</sup> Carline 32-36.

<sup>53</sup> E.S. & A. Robinson (Firm), Art for Commerce, Illustrations and Designs in Stock at E.S. & A. Robinson, Printers, Bristol in the 1880's (London: Scolar Press, 1973)

<sup>54</sup> The Bristol print published in the 1880's is taken from an older engraving by R. Wallis in Canadian Scenery published in London, 1839-1842. By 1852 views engraved by Whitfield show the city as more developed than the Wallis view used by Robinson. Refer to Charles P. de Volpi and P.S.

While these commercial images surfaced and circulated according to the dictates of business use, their utilitarian nature prevented them from becoming obvious objects of admiration and collection. Used in order to develop company recognition, commercially printed images also served the advertising function of product recall by association. The repetition of images, consisting mostly of fixed views that changed little over extended periods of time, was more important to create a sense of stability than actual resemblance with the changing face of the built world. The simplified architectural view became a positive factor, reinforcing a particular commercial or corporate identity.

In nineteenth century America, where urban development was in rapid expansion, printed views of towns and cities became in great demand for a variety of other purposes.<sup>55</sup> While almost any aspect of a nation's life - real or imagined - could be represented in pictorial form, the views of towns and cities were the single most popular category. According to John Reps, the views were a democratic art form in that they reflected conditions in urban places of all types throughout the country, ranging from small hamlets and

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Winkworth, Montréal: Recueil Iconographique, 1535-1885. Vol 1 (Montreal: Dev-Sco Publications, 1963)

<sup>55</sup> John W. Reps, Views and Viewmakers of Urban America, Lithographs of Towns and Cities in the United States and Canada, 1825-1925 (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1984) 3-6.

villages with no more than a hundred or so houses, to the largest metropolitan centers of population.

These urban views proved to be useful for towns to attract industry or immigrants who did not necessarily understand the language but could grasp the message conveyed by the lithographed city view. The orderly graphic representations suggested vitality and development implying that urban services, job possibilities and growing markets were available. Reps points out, "Because most of these prints reached the market tainted with commercialism of this sort, art critics have generally ignored them as beneath serious attention."<sup>56</sup> This is in spite of the highly refined graphic skills required to make the very detailed "aerial" views that were very popular. In the case of Montreal, one such view looking south over the city from Mount Royal became a highly popular representation of the city. (Figure II-9)

The birds-eye view of towns offered a grand vista not possible in the everyday at that time. Prints were bought from resident or itinerant artists on a subscription basis. Orders were taken after advertising in local newspapers. One such view of St. Louis, Michigan, was priced at \$2.00 in 1870,<sup>57</sup> a very large sum at the time, making acquisition

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<sup>56</sup> Reps 4.

<sup>57</sup> Reps 59.

inaccessible for economic reasons to a large segment of society.

The views nevertheless proved useful for promotion by municipal governments or simply for the ornamental purposes of the well-heeled. Newspapers of eastern maritime Canada referred to views in this context, saying there was "No better means of advertising our city or for showing the 'good folk' at home the sort of place we live in..." and that the urban aerial view was:

...a valuable picture for ornament as well as for reference and the changes constantly taking place will make it an interesting relic of today to those that live in the future.<sup>58</sup>

Later as photography became a mode of representation closely associated with technological progress, photographers and stereograph editors sought to foster and fill demand with images of antiquity, castles, cathedrals, public buildings and monuments.<sup>59</sup> According to William Darrah "Enthusiasm for formal gardens, topiary, and architecture knew few bounds" during the Victorian period. Stereography, an innovation in photographic practice begun in the 1850's, rapidly became a bourgeois passion that could be indulged with a special viewing apparatus. Once simpler hand-held viewing devices

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<sup>58</sup> Halifax Evening Reporter & Daily & Tri-Weekly Times, 20 August, 1878; Charlottetown Daily Examiner, 9 August, 1878. Quoted in Reps, 61.

<sup>59</sup> William C. Darrah, The World of Stereographs (Gettysberg: Darrah Publishing, 1977) 17.

were developed for viewing the stereographic representations, its popularity greatly increased throughout Europe and America.<sup>60</sup>

In the late nineteenth century, the postal innovation which combined images with brief written messages through the medium of the postcard resulted in an unprecedented dissemination of architectural imagery, outdistancing stereography with its global infiltration. Unlike the stereograph the postcard went beyond the class-based confines of the parlour or personal library to become a phenomenon achieving a high public accessibility, a market penetration having no direct correlation to economic, social or geographic position. Postcards became widely available in general stores, pharmacies, train stations, in specialty shops, or as they became known in England and Canada, Tuck shops.<sup>61</sup>

The postcard phenomenon fostered an ever-increasing speculation and interest in the world beyond one's immediate boundaries of familiarity. The systematic production of views of every town, village or hamlet itself fueled the fascination for representations of the built environment. Demand could be satisfied with a variety of views as readily

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<sup>60</sup> Darrah 3-5.

<sup>61</sup> This is a name adopted from the prolific British publisher R. & S. Tuck's, who in 1906 advertised as "postcard's 'par excellence', the most welcome, artistic and up-to-date". Carline 65.

available as common currency. On August 19, 1909 an anonymous journalist wrote in the Montreal weekly "l'Album Universel" about how ubiquitous and vital the postcard had become in Quebec:

Par ces temps de villégiature, la carte postale est souveraine. On ne s'écrit plus! On s'envoie des images. L'impression que l'on recueille de telle ville visitée, de telle construction admirée, on la trouve imprimée chez le marchand du coin, dans les gares, les bateaux, partout. Plus d'effort! Même aujourd'hui on ne se donne plus la peine de visiter ni la ville ni le monument. Aussitôt débarqué, le voyageur pressé fait sa provision de cartes qu'il enverra à ses parents et amis...<sup>62</sup>

As the postcard became available everywhere to anyone, it acquired differential values and meanings. The most salient however is the manner in which it achieved a "common sense" meaning denoting place while promoting the different views, both the of physical environment and of the ideologies that frame them.

This chapter related how architectural images emerged from the limited and closed private sphere to the more open public domain. The overt mimetic qualities of architectural and urban views gave many the means to acquire information about the world without physical travel. Images also provided the means to disseminate concepts that buttressed practices

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<sup>62</sup> Anonymous journalist in l'Album Universel, a Montreal weekly, quoted in Poitras, 45.

associated with the built environment. In the process of developing practical representational uses, architectural images rapidly assumed a material value and currency as a commodity.

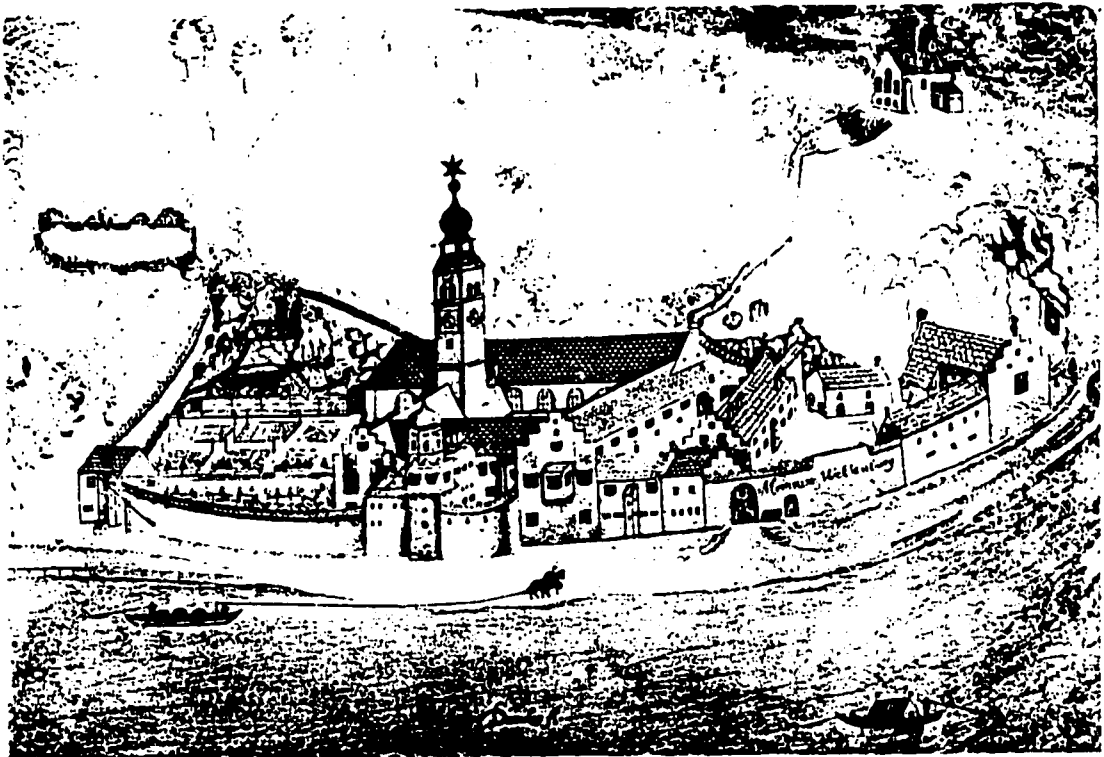
However, the material object itself also acquired more abstract qualities through its capacity to signify both physical and metaphorical place. Images became a substrate for a variety of the symbolic and metonymic investments. They gave various groups a means to make statements about the formation of knowledge, institutional power, class divisions, and the physical struggles and contestations over land - issues deeply suffused by the various ideological formations that frame representation. For individuals, images became a means for articulating "...the intricate strengths and fragilities that connect places to social imagination and practice, to memory and desire, to dwelling and movement."<sup>63</sup> It is in the context of this rich inheritance that the postcard flourished. In different contexts however, the architectural image acquired the attributes that could both comply and conflict with conceptions of place in sites of contestation. This aspect is explored in the following chapter.

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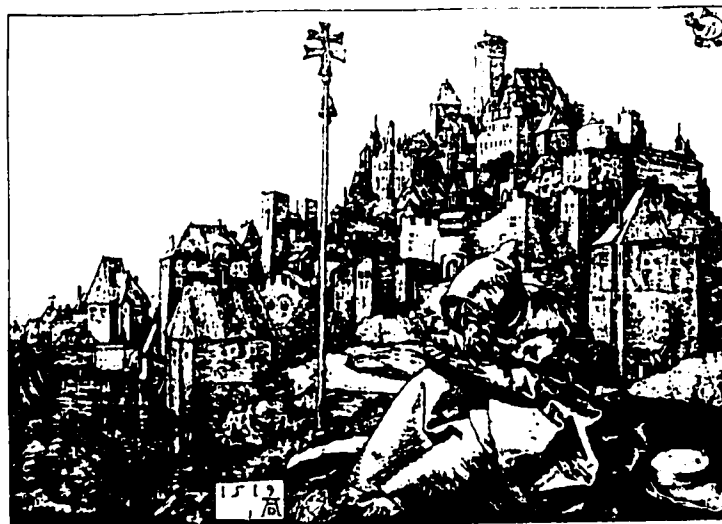
<sup>63</sup> Steven Feld and Keith H. Basso, "Introduction", Senses of Place (Santa Fe, N.M.: School of American Research Press, 1996) 8.



**Fig II-1.** Woodcut view of Venice 1493 (Koberger) from Nuremberg Chronicle. Source: Mayor 44.



**Fig. II-2.** Wood-cut print in postcard form showing view of a Benedictine monastery near Weltenburg, ca. 1600. Source: CAC/ Collins Archive.



**Fig. II-3.** Albrecht Dürer: Engraving "St. Anthony before the Town", 1519. Source: Hind 76.

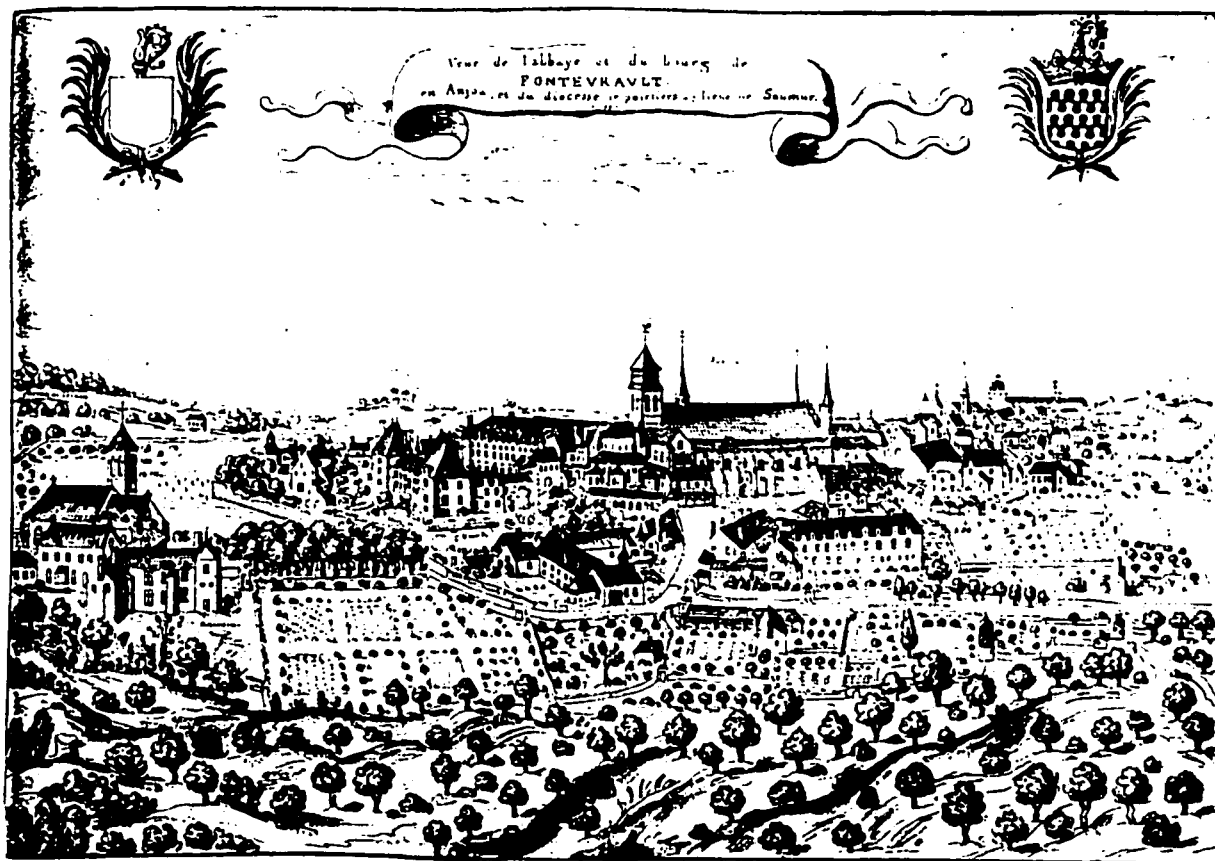
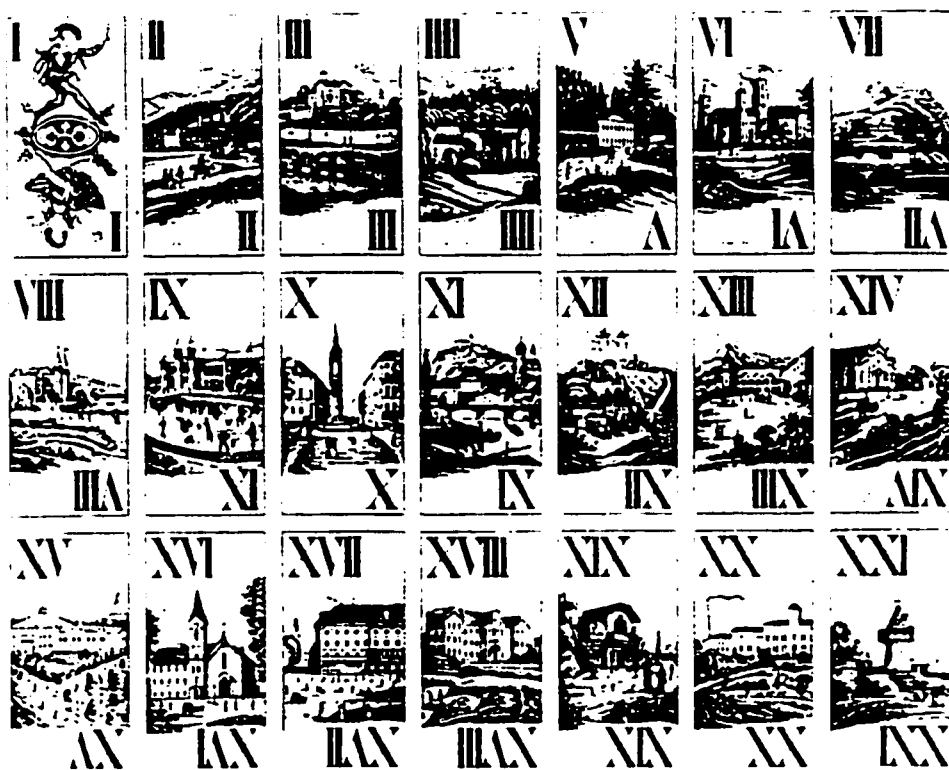


Fig. II-4. Print of Château et Bourg de Fontevault, 1699.  
Cabinet des Estampes. Source: Bonnin 19.



**Fig. II-5.** Austrian playing cards, ca. 1860. Source: Keller 226.



**Fig. II-6.** Italian "cartes de visite", ca. 1770-80. Source: Staff 9, 10.



**Fig.II-7.** Advertisement on carte-de-visite "Louis Photographie, in Paris. Source: PC.

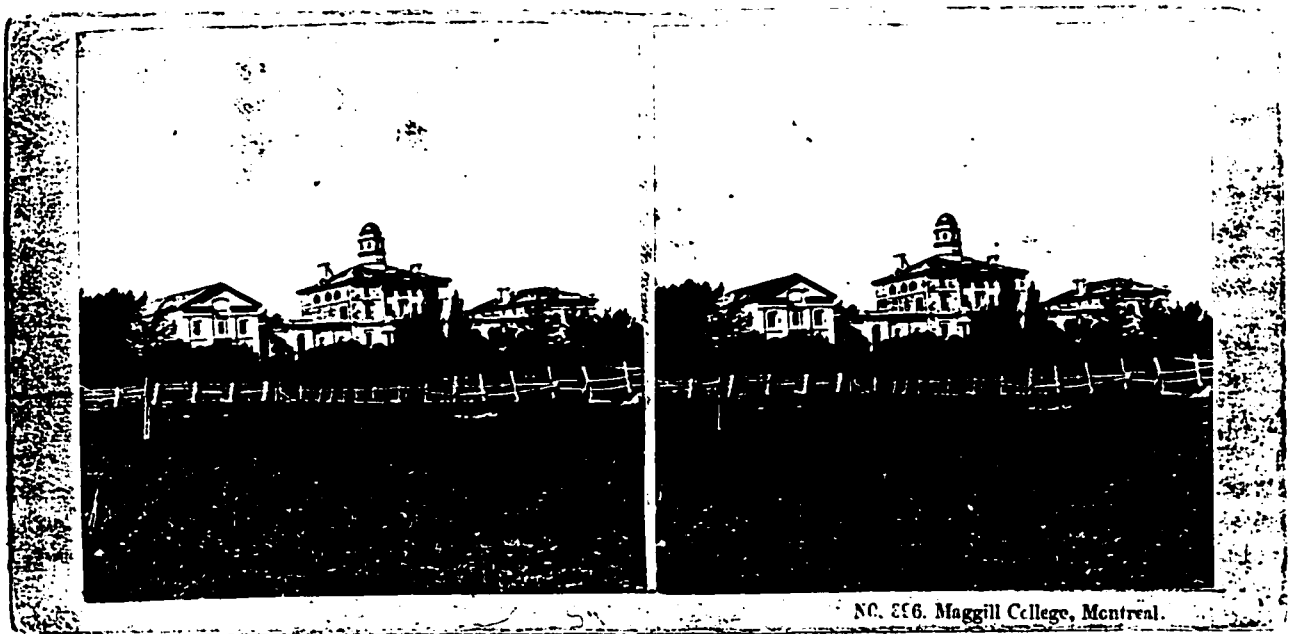


**MONTREAL.**  
 MONTREAL STANDS ON AN ISLAND IN THE GREAT RIVER ST. LAWRENCE, ABOUT 100 MILES ABOVE QUEBEC. THE CITY IS JOINED TO THE MAIN-LAND BY THE CELEBRATED VICTORIA BRIDGE. ALTHOUGH SITUATED 500 MILES FROM THE MOUTH OF THE RIVER, THE WATERS HERE ARE TWO MILES WIDE, AND SUFFICIENT FOR VESSELS OF 600 OR 700 TONS BURDEN.

**Fig.II-8.** Stock commercial catalogue view of Montreal available in the 1880's. Source: Robinson 72.



**Fig. II-9.** View of Montreal by A. Kollner, 1851. Source: Repts 103.



**Fig. II-10.** Stereoscopic view of Magill (sic) College, Montreal, ca. 1870. Kilburn Brothers, No. 396. Source: PC.

### **CHAPTER III**

#### **ARCHITECTURAL IMAGES AND CONSTRUCTS OF DIFFERENCE: Contrasting conceptions of place**

Initially produced to satisfy continental European postal concerns, the postcard became a vehicle of communication that exported throughout the world, values and attitudes instrumental in the conception of place. Within a system of world-wide dissemination, postcard images became agents of promotion and persuasion not only for colonial practices which sought to shape different lands according to the image of the occupiers but also to the diachronic revision of those images within a postcolonial paradigm.

How the postcard functions as a discourse, as a way of promoting a uni-dimensional conception of place, will be explored by examining several different geographic and temporal contexts in which postcards were issued. The emphasis is on representations made and interpreted as "foreign" by the dominant consumers. Images produced under British and French regimes are scrutinized as part of the massive colonial enterprise that reached global proportions. Contemporary postcolonial commentaries serve as a counterpoint to those views produced from the outside,

looking in. These accounts expose the temporal and contextual nature of meaning as derived from the postcard representations.

### **Creating a market for images**

From its inception as a communication medium, the postcard rapidly became a consumer product that crossed borders on a global scale with tremendous success, achieving worldwide penetration. First mass-produced in Europe, its very broad acceptance and adoption may in part be attributed to initial international cooperation aimed at facilitating global communication.

Negotiations between countries led to the standardization of the postcard. Card dimensions, placement of written text, rates to be charged as well as routes and means of delivery were considered. The agreements were rapidly established under the auspices General Postal Union, later the Universal Postal Union,<sup>1</sup> a governing body organized and seated in Europe. At a time when the European colonial reach was global, the great public enthusiasm for picture postcards created further international pressures for agreement and conformity in those countries not yet members of the Union.

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<sup>1</sup> Alan Steinhart, The Postal History of the Postcard in Canada: 1871-1911 (Toronto: Mission Press, 1979) 13-18.

In Canada regulations governing internal issuance of cards were stipulated in the federal government's Official Postal Guide. Initially, unillustrated cards were printed and sold exclusively by the Canadian Postal Service, and sent at a cost half the letter rate.<sup>2</sup> After a few years of ever increasing circulation, Canadian postal authorities were faced with growing competition from postcards produced by foreign private publishers, many featuring various images and advertisements.<sup>3</sup> Germany, Austria and France, having well established printing traditions, produced the earliest of these. Postcards featuring the Eiffel Tower, for instance, had been issued "en masse" during the 1889 Paris "Exposition Universelle". Americans eager to emulate this wild success produced similar images of the buildings of the Chicago "World Columbian Exposition" of 1893.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> For destination countries not members of the Universal Postal Union, the full letter rate applied. In 1892 for instance, Cape Colony, Natal, New Zealand, Fiji Islands, Australia were added to the growing group of countries to which postcards could be sent for 2 cents each. However Canadians could still not send cards to countries such as Abyssinia, Arabia, Bechuanaland, Sarawak and Transvaal unless they paid the full letter rate in effect at the time. Steinhart 26.

<sup>3</sup> Aline Ripert et Claude Frère, La carte postale: son histoire, sa fonction sociale. (Lyons: Presses Universitaires de Lyons, 1983) 26, 39.

<sup>4</sup> Dorothy B. Ryan, Picture Postcards in the United States, 1893-1918 (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1982) 34-36.

The Postal Service, unable to satisfy the emerging market demand and maintain control of the ever-increasing volume of mail, chose to gradually relinquish its exclusive monopoly. In January 1895, the Official Postal Guide stipulated that foreign "Private Postcards", if received duly prepaid, would be accepted and delivered in Canada. It also became possible, for the first time, for this same type of illustrated card to be sent from within Canada with the proper postage.<sup>5</sup> Three years later, in 1898, it was decreed that the Post Office Department has:

...issued a card the face of which may be used for advertisements, illustrations, etc....The sender of a Private Post card may use the face of the card for advertisements, illustrations, etc. under the same regulations as apply to the special Post Cards above referred to.<sup>6</sup>

Following a worldwide trend, this shift in Canadian policy enabled picture postcards to become an attractive and interesting means of written communication, featuring images of their points of mailing. Of the millions of postcards that were produced, many were used simply as an expedient means of correspondence; many more were valued and kept for the imagery they provided at a time when other print media such as newspapers and magazines were still almost entirely text.

The impact of the cross-cultural consumption of postcard images at the time of their production was without doubt

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<sup>5</sup> Steinhart 28.

<sup>6</sup> Steinhart 37.

highly varied and diverse.<sup>7</sup> What remained consistent and uniform for many years however, was an international image-mania which developed in the early twentieth century. Very quickly the postcard asserted itself outside the economic and practical framework in which it was initially conceived. Its multi-faceted attractiveness soon propelled it to the position of prime purveyor of images of the world, becoming the first inexpensive mass-produced source of architectural imagery to be globally disseminated and broadly accessible in the marketplace.

By the year 1900, the postcard had overwhelmingly dethroned the stereograph as source of imagery by offering an ever-increasing range of images for a fraction of the price.<sup>8</sup> The commodification of the architectural image at this point fueled a process, generally assumed in advertising today, in which conceptions of the world are shaped and altered through image-based representations. It also affected the way architecture is conceived and designed: with the intent of achieving photogenic qualities that could be put to use in various media. In the process, the architecture itself and

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<sup>7</sup> The reception and transformation of goods across cultures are often unpredictable. A discussion of the various paradigms that are used to explain the effects of global exchanges as well as the culturally based creation of meaning and significance is found in Cross-Cultural Consumption: Global Markets, Local Realities. Ed. David Howes (London and New York: Routledge, 1996)

<sup>8</sup> Poitras 31.

its image became, as Beatriz Colomina has argued, a form of mass media.<sup>9</sup> The postcard became complicit in the process.

With the whole world as a seemingly inexhaustible source of imagery, postcard production underwent exponential growth as various companies sought to profit from the sudden worldwide mania. Entire industries emerged to satisfy the demand for postcards, both for communication purposes and for the expanding interest in the collection of both local and "exotic" images of the world.<sup>10</sup> In addition, a whole range of associated printed materials were developed with the publication of almanacs, newsletters and bulletins analyzing and promoting postcard production, enabling consumers to be informed of the latest developments as they embraced this new source images.

Postcards were frequently sold in blocks or series in conjunction with chronicles of tourist explorations and the forays of various missions. Magazines such as Le Touriste, printed by a travel agency in Montreal circa 1907, promoted travel by boat or rail throughout the world. Advertisers included Le Directeur des Missions d'Afrique (Figure III-1), seeking subscriptions for a monthly magazine which featured first-person reports from missionaries in Africa. Within the same space is an advertisement for the sale of postcards,

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<sup>9</sup> Beatriz Colomina, Privacy and Publicity: Modern Architecture as Mass Media (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996)

<sup>10</sup> Ripert 41-42.

available in blocks of fifty different subjects, for less than a penny a card.<sup>11</sup>

For many, curiosity in the appearance of foreign lands provided the basic incentive for the purchase and exchange of postcards. In most instances, these images provided people with their first tangible glimpses of the world beyond their immediate field of familiarity. Promoted with no specific class or social barriers to accessibility, postcard images became available to all for pennies at every street-corner or shop, in both the city and the country. Note in Figure III-2, small town Cookshire, Quebec has its main street pharmacy with postcards for purchase featured in its windows.

Everyone could partake in the consumption of images, as senders, as receivers, and as collectors, including those who could neither read nor sign their names. A number of postcards, marked with an X only on the correspondence space, were probably addressed by another person who could write. Before the telephone became widely available, the postcard was a more inclusive medium of communication than letter correspondence, which required more sophisticated writing

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<sup>11</sup> The extensive and systematic photography of colonial West Africa is examined by David Prochaska with "Fantasia of the Photothèque: French Postcard Views of Colonial Senegal" in African Arts 24 (1991) 40-47, 98 and more generally by Christraud M. Geary "Different Visions? Postcards from Africa by European and African Photographers and Sponsors," in Delivering Views: Distant Cultures in Early Postcards. Christraud M. Geary and Virginia-Lee Webb, eds. (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1998) 147-177.

skills. With postcards the image functioned in the place of words.

To foster and facilitate correspondence, international postcard registers were formed for collectors who wished to exchange cards "with anyone-anywhere" in the world. In 1906 for instance, Messrs. Raphaël Tuck and Sons began the Tuck Postcard Exchange Register for collectors of their cards. This register alone had over two thousand members world-wide.<sup>12</sup> In the United States some clubs such as the Postcard Union of America claimed a membership of 10,000.<sup>13</sup>

The excitement and growth of postcard exchanges can be understood as analogous to the electronic World-Wide-Web and internet chat-rooms of today, nearly a century apart. The registers provided forums for the exchange of ideas and images. Through the extensive postcard exchange networks managed by these international clubs and societies, specific requests for building types and subject were fielded and links between people and images were made through by mail.<sup>14</sup> Frequently the exchanges were of a more local nature, from one city to another nearby, as figure III-3 indicates.

As postcard clubs competed for membership, they sought to wield influence. Far from being passive consumers of a new

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<sup>12</sup> Tonie Holt and Valmai Holt, Picture Postcard Artists (London and New York: Longman, 1984) 4.

<sup>13</sup> Ryan 23-24.

product foisted upon the marketplace, the members of various clubs actively lobbied card producers in order to influence production of subject matter which was of interest to them, making requests for such topics as train stations, hotels, post-office buildings or schools.<sup>15</sup>

At the dawn of the twentieth century, this new means of communication acquired a very positive social significance. It came to be considered by some as, "...a symbol of a world-wide movement towards progress and friendship."<sup>16</sup> While the international consensus suggested harmony and accord, more significant at the individual level was the excitement this innovation created in providing images of the world as personal mail. With imagery frequently depicting the latest architectural developments or views juxtaposing old architectural forms and new building styles and technologies, the changing face of towns and cities could be interpreted by many, as a movement towards modernity. By signifying innovation and providing users with a modern "savoir-faire", the postcard's mantle of progress cloaked a myriad of forces active in the production of architecture and the transformation of space.

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<sup>15</sup> "Les collectionneurs, en effet, se comportent en véritable groupe de pression auprès des éditeurs, orientant même le choix des séries et des thèmes d'illustrations, ne ménageant ni les critiques ni les approbations." Ripert 28.

<sup>16</sup> Carline 57.

## Marketing the creation

As photography became the prime means of image production for the postcard, publishers retained numerous European and American photographers as correspondents in order to satisfy the ever growing market of image-consumers. Photographers were dispatched to the farthest reaches of extensive colonialist empires with the mandate to provide images for local and foreign markets. Each expedition produced an extensive series of photographs of buildings and views which were then printed in postcard form in millions of copies.<sup>17</sup>

While the postcard images were undoubtedly interpreted in diverse ways at the time of their initial use, numerous annotations suggest that in many cases, postcard photography was promoted and accepted as a transparent medium, providing a classical window with a view beyond. Publishers encouraged this conception of a seemingly neutral image-based means of communication by competing for the status of "official" producer of postcards of specific sites and buildings. Raphaël Tuck & Sons for instance, touted their status as "Publishers to their Majesties the King and Queen and H.R.H. the Prince of Wales", and produced numerous series featuring "Official Real Photo Postcards" such as those of Exeter

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<sup>17</sup> Germany's annual consumption in 1906 is cited as 1,161,000,000; the United States', 770,500,000; Great Britain's, 734,500,000. Ryan 23.

Cathedral. (Figure III-4) In France, the Maison Neurdein extended its tradition of classical photography to the postcard and in 1908 was vested with official government patronage, conferring a prestige on the firm that increased the marketability of its postcard production. The firm was granted the exclusive concession to manage and reproduce all the images of buildings under the responsibility of the "service des monuments historiques,"<sup>18</sup> a move reminiscent of Louis XIV's focus for the Cabinet du Roi. (Figure III-5)

Other publishers, to provide a stamp of "authenticity" and to convey a sense of authority and veracity to their postcard representations, printed on the back of their cards "Photographie véritable, Reproduction Interdite" or as in the case of the Valentine and Sons, very explicitly, "This is a real Photograph." (Figure III-6)

What photography achieved and what the postcard promoted throughout the world in the early twentieth century was the possibility to derive a conception of place from and in terms of neat portable photographic fragments. As Naomi Schor relates:

In contrast with earlier modes of recording travel impressions- paintings, sketches, engravings- photography operates by morcellization. It is a detailing technique, in the etymological sense of the word *détailler*: to cut in pieces. To the jaded eye, bored with pictorial overviews, the new technique opens up the vast unexplored

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<sup>18</sup> Ripert 53.

territory of luxuriant, inexhaustible detail-colonial metaphor intended.<sup>19</sup>

By making the world seem more accessible and immediate in a neatly summarized and punctual form, the postcard provided the means of "seeing" from afar, of selectively bringing in hand aspects of different parts of the world, without displacement of the self. The convenience and trust in the medium as a means of understanding the world is expressed by the editor of the French Revue illustrée de la carte postale in 1901, who states that in leafing through a postcard album:

...c'est presque faire un voyage, même mieux, c'est faire un voyage durant lequel on ne verrait que ce qu'il a de digne d'être vu. Monuments et paysages, types indigène, tout ce qui donne l'idée nette d'un pays et d'une nation fidèlement reproduit par la photographie, viennent charmer les yeux et meubler l'esprit d'impressions et d'aperçus nombreux.<sup>20</sup>

Indeed the images of what was considered valuable and interesting was placed on postcard; and conversely those places and buildings not featured on postcards were understood as devoid of interest.

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<sup>19</sup> Naomi Schor, Reading in Detail (New York and London: Methuen, 1987) 48.

<sup>20</sup> "Choses et autres: l'Espéranto," Revue illustrée de la carte postale. No.13, Janv. (1901) 123. Quoted in Ripert, 166-167.

## **The architectural image as Other**

In the extensive European and American markets, postcard images of Africa and what was considered the "Orient" were greatly sought for collection purposes, as is evident by the large number of predominantly "view" type of cards found in various collections today. Because of the large numbers produced and the extensive private collection that spanned many years, postcards deemed valuable enough to be preserved now constitute a vast archive to be culled for study. A large part of this archive comprises depictions of places unfamiliar, photographed in the context of foreign occupation.

The fascination and attraction for "foreign" cards which grew unabated in the early years of the postcard can in part be explained by the novelty of the medium. But more significantly the postcard provided a material basis for perceived differences between one cultural group and another, or in purely spatial terms, the contrasts between center and periphery, however they are conceptualized.

As Naomi Schor suggests, "...the colonial postcard represents the clearest confirmation of the link between photography and the colonialist enterprise,"<sup>21</sup> where images became an exploitable raw resource to be plundered, sharply

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<sup>21</sup> Schor, Reading in Detail, 154, note 9.

cutting and separating out an element from its surrounding field and transposing it through the mail to another setting.

It is not, however, simply a case of one culture prospecting images of another. As Edward Saïd has suggested, images of the Orient have provided the West with its contrasting image, idea, personality and experience, and constitutes "...an integral part of European material civilization and culture."<sup>22</sup> It exposes aspects of both the observed and the observer at specific historical moments inextricably binding conceptions of the self and other with the notion of place.

Working from the premise that meaning is socially and culturally constructed, it is evident that those conceptions of place mediated by architectural images results in multiple layers of significance, a stratification which becomes deeper and more complex as time alters the physical locus of cultural production. Yet the relationship between representation and identity of particular groups can be both reinforced and contested as the distortions and omissions created by dominant ideologies are challenged.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Saïd, Orientalism, 2.

<sup>23</sup> Uni-dimensional postcard depictions of race and ethnicity that promote stereotypic imagery of particular groups of people are examined by Patricia C. Albers. "Symbols, Souvenirs, and Sentiments: Postcard Imagery of Plains Indians, 1898-1918" in Geary and Webb, 65-89; Eric Cohen "The representation of Arabs and Jews on Postcards in Israel" in History of Photography. Vol. 19, No 3 (Autumn 1995) 210-219; Christin J. Mamiya, "Greetings from Paradise:

Several contemporary authors use postcards of the past to decry the effects of foreign domination through the use and control of particular images of a place. The Colonial Harem for instance, features postcard images in which Algerian women are the prime focus, although frequently framed or depicted in an architectural setting. This convention of portraiture has been frequently employed in photography in a broad range of contexts.<sup>24</sup>

During the same period of Algerian occupation, house owners in America were photographed in front of their dwellings as produced and promoted by the "US View Company"<sup>25</sup>; the "Old Uncle Tom" is seen in front of a dilapidated "Old Plantation Cabin Down South"<sup>26</sup>; while in Quebec, the French Canadian "Habitant" is seen in front of his barn and homestead as shown in Figures III-15 and 16.

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The Representation of Hawaiian Culture in Postcards" in Journal of Communication Inquiry. No 16, 2 (1992) 86-101; and Gail Guthrie Valaskakis, "Postcards of My Past; The Indian as Artifact," Relocating Cultural Studies; Developments in Theory and Research (London and New York: Routledge, 1993) 115-170.

<sup>24</sup> See for instance the early British postcard pin-up girl in "Bromide Beauties," British Journal of Photography 5 november (1987) 1328-1329.

<sup>25</sup> Jay Ruby, "Images of Rural America," in History of Photography, Vol. 12, No.4 (October-December 1988) 327-342; 333.

<sup>26</sup> Wayne Martin Mellinger, "Toward a Critical Analysis of Tourism Representation" in Annals of Tourism Research, Vol. 21, No.4 (1994) 756-779. 770.

As Marek Alloula points out, the body in the image becomes symbolic for the place. His description of the postcard medium itself is in spatial terms: "It straddles two spaces: one it represents and the one it will reach."<sup>27</sup> He describes the model as "...a figure of the symbolic appropriation of the body (of the Algerian woman), [while] the studio is a figure of the symbolic appropriation of space. They are of a piece together."<sup>28</sup> Within the frame of postcolonial studies, the stereotyped images of women in their confined spaces constitute a coded representation of Algeria, one that bears the overt marks of trespassing and domination over a land and its people.

In contrast to Alloula's "riposte" for the occupation of his land, is Beirut Our Memory, a book of postcard images that form an extended family's recovery of a history layered in the changing architecture of Beirut.<sup>29</sup> The images show a place transformed by the attrition of time, war and numerous conflicts that accompanied a succession of different colonial authorities up to the early twentieth century.

For its author, Fouad Debbas, the postcards found while visiting Paris are not simply a vehicle for the historical

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<sup>27</sup> Marek Alloula, The Colonial Harem, Trans. Myrna Godzich and Wlad Godzich (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986) 4.

<sup>28</sup> Alloula 21.

<sup>29</sup> Fouad Debbas, Beirut: Our Memory (Beirut: The Neufal Group, 1986)

documentation of a changing cityscape. They have an emotive and spatial function, filling the voids that, he felt were created by the stories he read in the Lebanese history school books of his childhood. The occluded aspects of his native country's history, he writes, were not just concealed but stolen outright from him.<sup>30</sup> The postcard images provide him with traces that enable him to reconstruct a sense of the complex material past, missing from the collective memory of the place.

Several series of postcards depict the ancient buildings that line the streets of old Beirut, the arches and gateways, many centuries old, demolished as war casualties or under the Ottoman policy of "renovation" in 1915.<sup>31</sup> At a time when the notion of architectural preservation was nascent in Europe, photographic documentation of urban architecture was of interest to few individuals. Eugene Atget used the designation "photographe-archeologue", first used by Jules-Césaire Robuchon, who had photographed many architectural monuments in France as "...as concrete witness to the glory of French civilization."<sup>32</sup> Atget's photographs recorded images of the ephemeral presence of the many streets of Paris before their destruction through modernization. Similarly the images

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<sup>30</sup> Debbas 5.

<sup>31</sup> Debbas 43-49.

<sup>32</sup> James Borcoman, Eugene Atget: 1857-1927 (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1984) 62.

of Beirut postcard photographers document the Bab Ed Derkeh, the Shamseddin mosque and all the little paved souks in the center of the city before their destruction.

From within the paradigm of "modernization" the ravages were conceived as a progressive and beneficial force meant to ameliorate living conditions, enabling civic control of practical aspects of life such as public hygiene, and policing. The postcards document the later "Haussmannization" of an archaic Mediterranean port city under French authority. In the place of busy narrow streets lined with mediaeval relics are fifteen metre wide boulevards bearing names such as Maréchal Foch Street, Marseillaise Street and Place de l'Étoile.<sup>33</sup>

The urban transformations that precipitated the destruction of entire parts of the city also created the space for exchanges among numerous commercial and banking interests flourishing with the international trade. For traveling foreigners not accustomed to the sensorial cacophony experienced in the old busy streets, nor the disorientation caused by the seeming lack of clarity and order,<sup>34</sup> the architectural and urban planning changes created a physically comprehensible gateway to the "Orient", one with

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<sup>33</sup> Debbas 62.

<sup>34</sup> Mitchell discusses how Europeans perceive Cairo as a city where there seems to be a "total absence of pictorial order." Mitchell 21, 22.

long vistas and identifiable European-style architectural landmarks. (Figure III-8) These were reproduced repeatedly on postcard images and sent abroad.

The great demand for Oriental cards, in some instances, may also have been their illicit appeal. In 1900 the Turkish Sultan of the Ottoman Empire imposed censorship of images, creating strict controls on the sale of postcards and confiscating any cards bearing the names of Allah or Mohammed, views of mosques or Mohammedan women. In 1909 views of Imperial palaces and gardens were also banned.<sup>35</sup> This simply created a greater demand from postcard clubs and other collectors in Europe and America. (Figure III-9)

Beyond its formal appearance, the architecture represented on postcards also suggest networks of transactions and series of events that involve movements of people, money, and ideas. The diversity of these forces is represented through the amalgam of architectural form in the urban landscape. In the case of Beirut, postcards show international diversity and urban hybridity with hotels such as the Deutscher Hof, Hotel-Casino Alphonse and others on Boulevard des Français- the former Minet El Husn;<sup>36</sup> banking institutions such as the Banque Sabbagh, the Imperial Ottoman

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<sup>35</sup> Carline 67.

<sup>36</sup> Debbas 109. These changes show how naming and renaming of streets as a function of colonial presence is an exercise of power aimed at recreating a reality in the likeness of the occupiers.

Bank, the Bank of Salonika<sup>37</sup> in the old part of town; as well as numerous educational establishments situated on higher ground overlooking the port, such as the American University of Beirut, Collège Laïque Français, and St-Joseph University.<sup>38</sup> These buildings and their images become material evidence of the different interests that transform the architectural landscape of Beirut.

The postcard images dramatically illustrate how transformations which are imposed on a city by groups in power, be they military, economic, commercial or religious, frequently disregard the interest of the local inhabitants most directly affected by the changes. The later postcards depict an architecture that has come to define Beirut as attractive, modern and European-like, the city that Debbas grew up believing was really his.

#### **Postcard from India**

Haridas Swali describes how the Asian Exchange Club of Poona, issued a composite-view postcard in order to bolster its worldwide membership.<sup>39</sup> This card, as illustrated in figure III-10, features a broad panoramic vista of Bombay as

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<sup>37</sup> Debbas 40, 222, 223.

<sup>38</sup> Debbas 132, 161, 169.

<sup>39</sup> Haridas Swali, "The Picture Postcard - a reflection of daily life," Marg Vol. 37, No 1, [1985].

well as specific views of British-built buildings such as Crawford Market, the Municipal Office, the High Court, the Victoria Terminus. Its Honorary Secretary, Mr. T.N.R. Cama promised his clients "round the world tours" for "an annual due of two shillings only."<sup>40</sup>

The postcard issued by the Asian Exchange Club in the 1920's was indeed sent around the world. A card of the same edition was found in a Montreal postcard exchange in 1998.<sup>41</sup> Judging from the fact that the card was circulated under the cover of an envelope so as to not mar the card with writing and postal obliteration, it was undoubtedly sought exclusively for collection purposes - as promoted by its editor.

As the postcard traveled freely around the world to its various destinations, it brought along the multi-layered traces of politics and ideology that surround both card and the architectural representations it bears. The Bombay views for instance, while superficially displaying the new architectural faces of Bombay in the early twentieth century, also chronicle the imposition of architectural practices that sought to modernize India with transformations reflecting the massive British colonial enterprise in the country. By means of an extensive building program, the most overt and visible

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<sup>40</sup> Swali 92.

<sup>41</sup> Salon de la carte postale, Montréal, June 13-14, 1998.

marks of colonial presence are mapped onto Indian townscapes. The physical and functional likeness of British architecture and cultural practices are reproduced - the Yacht Club for leisure, the High Court for British-style justice, the Municipal Office for urban control and politics. As Swali points out, with only two images featuring native Maharashtrian street scenes, the Bombay postcard is manifestly an expression of the British viewpoint, contributing to a conception of India as a country molded to the image of its British occupiers.<sup>42</sup>

By the selective display of architectural practices and building styles which transformed the physical appearance of a place, the images of civilizing order from British optic were imprinted on the postcard's face and transmitted abroad. Writing from his own cultural position, Swali states that the postcard "...promoted the image of British rulers as builders..." with the frequent pictures of railway terminals or stations, municipal or hospital buildings, schools which "...were all symbols of the British way of life."<sup>43</sup>

Yet the effacement of the Indian perspective on the postcard can also be understood as a state of daily life for those in subordinate positions within a colonial power structure - present but (un)spoken for by others in

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<sup>42</sup> Swali 93.

<sup>43</sup> Swali 93.

authority, whose reality is established as the normative one.<sup>44</sup> India of the imagination, Francis Hutchins suggests, "...contained no elements of either social change or political menace", with Indian society conceived as being "... devoid of elements hostile to the perpetuation of British rule."<sup>45</sup>

While the Western architectural images were highly circulated, postcards depicting "native" themes and settings were also in great demand by card users and collectors. For members of the Asia Exchange Club and others receiving mail from India at that time, the possibility of obtaining a glimpse of the world and of life elsewhere, the window onto distant cities and strange abodes undoubtedly fueled their enthusiasm. As Swali reports, numerous series were produced depicting native women in their kitchen preparing a local dish, or the working class at the service of the British: the coolie woman, the milkman, the knife grinder, or the stone mason at work in "typical" settings.

Those were the images being sent out of India. However the reciprocating nature of correspondence ensured that

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<sup>44</sup> Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak? Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture Eds. Cary Nelson and Laurence Grossberg (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988) 281.

<sup>45</sup> Francis Hutchins, The Illusion of Permanence: British Imperialism in India (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967) 157. Quoted in Saïd, 1993. 149.

images from beyond were also sent to India. E.M. Forster describes the musings of a British national who returned to Europe in the novel A Passage to India:

The buildings of Venice, like the mountains of Crete and the fields of Egypt, stood in the right place whereas in poor India everything was placed wrong...Writing picture post-cards to his Indian friends, he felt that all of them would miss the joys he experienced now, the joys of form, and that this constituted a serious barrier. They would see the sumptuousness of Venice, not its shape.<sup>46</sup>

The suggested poor "form-quality" and imageability of native India's architecture and urban form implies a situation of void needing to be filled. As Edward Saïd puts it, "Forster's India is a locale frequently described as unapprehensible and too large," concurring with British "officialism" which tries to impose sense on India from a British perspective. "There are orders of precedence, clubs with rules, restrictions, military hierarchies, and, standing above and informing it all, British power."<sup>47</sup> From the British vantage point, understanding place from any other paradigm of order ran counter their interests.

#### **Postcard from Viet Nam**

A postcard produced many years later shows a consistency in graphic conventions and attitude toward photographic

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<sup>46</sup> Quoted by Kevin Lynch in The Image of The City. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1960) 138.

<sup>47</sup> Saïd 1991. 201, 202.

realism. "Souvenir du Viet Nam" features several small views of the city of Saigon under French occupation. (Figure III-11) The card is annotated by the sender on the reverse side with: "Saïgon, le 23.2.54

Mademoiselle, Je joint à ma lettre cette carte postale qui vous donnera une idée sur la vie Indochinoise."

Sent inside a letter envelope, it bears no postage markings. Chosen by the sender as representative of Indochina it reveals a Saigon that has been Europeanized with wide boulevards flanking the "Grands Magasins Charner", a department store of modernist architectural style; the rue Catinat with its cinemas; and the neoclassical B.I.C. (Banque Indochine) with floating bamboo boat-houses on an arroyo in the foreground. Next to these three images is a view of the native Vietnamese awaiting new fares as cycle-taxis in service to foreigners.

With these four small views, the sender's intent is to convey to the receiver what Indochina was like in 1954, under the French regime. It bears no trace of the political conflicts and military struggles seething at the time and functions toward the perpetuation of an imagery of the city that conforms to the fantasy elaborated in the myths of "l'Indochine."<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> French diplomat Paul Claudel wrote in the 1920's "Never in Indochina has the collaboration between indigenous and European populations been more intimate and peaceful. We are witnessing the impulse of an entire people whose sole and

Saigon could indeed be a very different city according to point of view. A cursory review of the postcard in Figure III-11 indicates formal architectural aspects which suggest thriving mercantile and commercial activities and a civic pride in the westernization of the city. The French values being promoted are evident through the principles of urban design, the wide Haussmann-like boulevard and the modernist architecture.

According to the sender's words, the card is deemed representative of the cosmopolitan nature of the city, with all the amenities one could expect in a European context when part of the ruling class. For the receiver who kept the card, it not only informed her about some of the building typologies and style that could be found in Saigon, but also suggested how for some, living could be good, with varied services and Western-style entertainment. However it does not represent the reality of those who did not sip French wines and bottled water.

As suggested by Virginia Thompson, the external elegance of the French colonial towns did not reflect an equally fastidious attention to the design for clean water and good sanitation. While there was lavish spending on civic architecture, civil engineering for infrastructures necessary

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most profound desire is to adopt our culture and, indeed, our language." Quoted by Pavivong Norindr, French Colonial Ideology in Architecture, Film and Literature (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996) 6.

to provide vital services to the community at large were grossly neglected. Saigon had for many years the best theatre in the Far East; at the same time it could not provide its citizens with a reliable water supply.<sup>49</sup>

With a postcard rendering the triumphal nature of both building design and its representation, the more profound realities of the urban life in Saigon at the time are obviated, political tensions subsumed. As a result through effects of surface both the architecture and the postcard image conspire to create a conception of place conforming to the rampant colonialist ideology of the time where selective aspects of life are used to promote positive effects of occupation.

The card of Saigon in the 1950's was sent to Quebec and kept in a personal collection. It was later acquired by the Bibliothèque Nationale du Québec and integrated into its permanent archive of postcards.

### **Postcard From Montreal**

For many parlour travelers, foreign lands did not have to be scoured in order to convey images of vast unexplored and sometimes dangerous territory. Reviewing late nineteenth century writers, Raymond Williams comments on H.G. Wells' conception of East London. "He saw the East End as a 'sordid-

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<sup>49</sup> Virginia Thompson, French Indo-China (New York: Octagon Books, 1968) 219.

looking wilderness' in which the people had a white dull skin that looked degenerate and ominous to a West-end eye."<sup>50</sup> This predominant image of darkness and poverty in lower-class areas, with East London as prime example, became quite central in literature and social thought.<sup>51</sup> The "Terra-Incognita", a characterization of which occurred frequently in urban descriptions of early Victorian England,<sup>52</sup> could be found not only on far-off continents but right within the precincts of their city proper.

Postcard views depicting Canadian "native" villages on reservations or the urban poor amid slum dwellings lining narrow lanes within the city also provided a means for established groups to understand those places which, because of class and ethnic divisions, they either never knew existed or simply could not imagine. Images of those parts of the city inhabited by the working classes and the poor provided the visual shorthand for the Dickensian settings that had captivated the imaginations of so many readers.

In America, Jacob Riis, a popular police reporter, wrote numerous articles in the spirit of social reform that emerged

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<sup>50</sup> Raymond Williams, The Country and The City (London: Chatto & Windus, 1973) 229.

<sup>51</sup> Williams, The Country 221.

<sup>52</sup> F.S. Schwarzbach, "Terra Incognita" The Art of Travel: Essays on Travel Writing. Ed. Philip Dodd (London: Frank Cass, 1982) 64.

in the late 19th century. In 1890 he published How the Other Half Lives: Studies Among the Tenements of New York, a book featuring photographic images of the poor quarters, accompanied by descriptive text. It was the first of a genre of "street-type" books examining urban poverty. It became an instant success.<sup>53</sup>

In Quebec, for the more privileged groups within cities such as Montreal or Quebec City, the exotic urban "Terra Incognita" could be found literally at their feet, in the areas many dared not step foot in. As Kathleen Jenkins recounts, the sociological study of Griffintown produced by Herbert Ames in 1897 The City Below the Hill expressed the conviction that the privileged ought to "...endeavor to learn something about conditions in their midst. The denizens of the lower town might as well be natives of Central Africa for all the upper classes cared."<sup>54</sup> For a turn-of-the-century eye witness, the postcard image taken Sous Le Cap Street in Quebec City shown in Figure III-12, mailed to New York City at that time, is considered by the sender "...a good representation" of the way things were.

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<sup>53</sup> Peter Hales, Silver Cities: The Photography of American Urbanization, 1839-1915 (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984) 178-179.

<sup>54</sup> Kathleen Jenkins, Montreal: Island City of the St. Lawrence (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1966) 435.

As a genre, the depiction of the dismal conditions of the poor constituted a pungent contrast to the grand style urban photography frequently reproduced in triumphant proportions on postcard city views. It reaffirmed the privileged class-based status and comfortable lives of many who observed the stark differences the postcard images presented to them.

The appeal of such images has not diminished. In the panoply of architectural postcards presently available for public purchase at the Canadian Centre for Architecture in Montreal is one which features an image of a narrow lane in the slums of Glasgow, circa 1870. (Figure III-14)

During the same period contrasting images of small villages and farms were used as visual testimonials to promote the unspoiled and wholesome simplicity of life that urban dwellers had forsaken.<sup>55</sup> (Figures III-15 and 16)

The suggested polarities between urban center and rural periphery are underscored by a more profound axis of tension. According to Jacques Poitras, urban images circa 1900, especially those of Montreal, were "demonized" in the highly

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<sup>55</sup> Other representations under the "Habitant Lifestyle Studies" include: The Typical Home in Quebec Province; The Typical Farm Scene; Evening Devotion; At Work in the Fields; Familiar Scene in Quebec Province. The rest of Canada is featured under a "Canadian Homestead Life" series that includes titles such as Loading Hay; The Thirsty Plowman; Starting out to the Day's Toil; Ready for a Days Work; The Farmer's Daughter; Bringing in the Firewood. W.L. Gutzman, The Patriotic Postcard Handbook (Toronto: Unitrade Press, 1984) 30, 33. See figure IV-9, "Afternoon Refreshment".

conservative rural climate led by the clergy. The "city" was characterized as a place where anglophone commercial interests reign; a place where a francophone might lose his or her language and faith.<sup>56</sup> Personal identity and integrity are entwined with the diverse forces associated with the urban representations - the urban anglophone Protestant corporate architecture is placed in opposition to pastoral Catholic ecclesiastic architecture.

The sheer volume of postcard images arranged by the building type "churches", a very large section in the archival collections consulted, is related to the significant role played by the clergy and religion in developing Quebec's ecclesiastic "patrimoine bâtis". At a time where nearly every "quartier" is said to possess a postcard image representing its church, the circulating postcard images reinforced the city's reputation as a "ville aux cents clochers."<sup>57</sup> (Figure III-17) The soaring steeples could indeed serve as a source of identity for each distinct "quartier", as well as for the city as a whole. Collectively the images frame a broader discourse about a society during a specific period.

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<sup>56</sup> Poitras 117.

<sup>57</sup> Michel Bazinet, Montréal vue à travers la carte postale ancienne: 1871-1940 (Montréal: Nostalgia 1, 1994) 85. See also Peter D.K. Hessel, Souvenir d'Ottawa: Cartes postales anciennes évocant la capitale du Canada en des visions fugitives (Ottawa: Commission de la capitale nationale, 1979)

In contrast to the postcard's role in the politics of difference in the conception of place, is its ability to be considered as sociological record, legitimized in the context of contemporary cultural studies. As Michel Lessard considers:

Les cartes sur Montréal réalisées entre 1901 et 1910 rendent compte, comme aucun autre médium de représentation, de l'état de la vie de la métropole au début du XXe siècle.<sup>58</sup>

A publication of postcard images of the city featured in Montréal vue à travers la carte postale ancienne: 1871-1940, presented from an avid collector's point of view, adopts a position which implicitly assumes a privileged access to the past through the images and texts that have been preserved. For author/collector Michel Bazinet, the postcard becomes a vehicle for discovery of the various social and cultural factors that have played a part in the changing urban landscape.

He tells a story by displaying postcards that show the streets, the businesses, the markets, schools, hotels and private clubs, the parks and the sports and leisure and cultural events. With an orderly classification by period and building type, the narrative is an uncritical "voyage through time" structured around a panoply of images which for him,

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<sup>58</sup> Michel Lessard, Images oubliées de la vie quotidienne: 1852-1910 (Montreal: Les Editions de l'Homme, 1992) 161.

testify favorably about a past being saved and made retrievable with the postcard.<sup>59</sup>

Presenting postcards from a diversity of editors, the collection of images ranges from international producers to small independent photographer-editors. The selection of cards included in the Bazinet collection effectively challenges the claim made by Jacques Poitras that Quebec at the turn of the century was:

... une province où le modernisme et le renouveau relève d'une autre culture. En fait la plupart des monuments dignes d'intérêt au tournant du siècle ont été érigés par les Anglais.<sup>60</sup>

The images Bazinet presents depict a diversity of influences which have contributed to creating the face of the city, elements not strictly defined along linguistic or nationalistic lines, but rather constituted by a mingling of religious, commercial and popular interests. Cards promoting companies such as Alphonse Racine Limitée, Entrepot et bureau, "Fabrique de la Chemise 'Strand' (de luxe)" (card no.230); F.X. St. Charles & Co. of Montreal advertising

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<sup>59</sup> Bazinet 1.

<sup>60</sup> Poitras makes this statement in referring to the postcard production of the French firm, Neurdein Frères in Québec, which he describes as featuring views similar to that of the Scottish firm James Valentine and Sons. Neurdein's focus was basically on the urban character of the province's larger cities, albeit with more animation. Poitras states that Neurdein's postcards are mostly "... une intervention touristique et les messages à caractère idéologique sont quasi absents ou pratiquement imperceptibles à l'oeil nu." Poitras 135, 136. Figure I-7 suggests otherwise.

"Wholesale Wine and Liquors" (card no. 232); and La Maison Viau, Dept. Store (card no. 234), and numerous others are an indication of a business class more diverse than the frequently promoted nationalist stereotype depicting a strictly anglophone monopoly of business.<sup>61</sup>

The postcards also depict the impressive and dignified architecture of the Marché Maisonneuve (card no. 111); the College St-Laurent (card no. 203); Le Crédit Foncier Franco-Canadien (card no. 156) and the dynamics of Ste-Catherine Street east, circa 1910, with billboard advertising for the thriving La Presse newspaper, circulation 100,000, not far from its competitor in l'Édifice La Patrie. (Figure III-18)

The growth in service industries is also suggested by a number of postcards used for publicity purposes by pharmacies, restaurants, and other commercial establishments. As the Café de Paris boasts (Figure III-19), its image is integral to its expansive identity as a player on the international scene, significant for both locals and tourist who come to the city.

In the context of empire in the early twentieth century, geography and culture, Edward Saïd has argued, are supported and impelled by impressive ideological formations.<sup>62</sup> The

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<sup>61</sup> Bazinet, cards nos. 230, 232, 234 on 118, 121, 122. The Bazinet card collection was donated to the Bibliothèque National du Quebec in 1998, and digitized in part for Internet access to a virtual collection.

postcard's innocuous ubiquity and neutral acceptance in its early days dovetailed with the ideology of empire where mass-produced images of the occupied territories served to reinforce the validity of occupation and benevolent relationships with their peoples. Like two contrasting faces of a card however, the meaning derived from the images has shifted over time to reveal starkly contrasting conceptions of place, conceptions dependent on particular cultural and temporal frames of reference. The following chapter will continue along this theme, shifting the focus to local concerns that sought to develop and refine a national image for export abroad.

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<sup>62</sup> Edward Saïd, Culture and Imperialism (New York: Alfred A. Knoff, 1993) 9.

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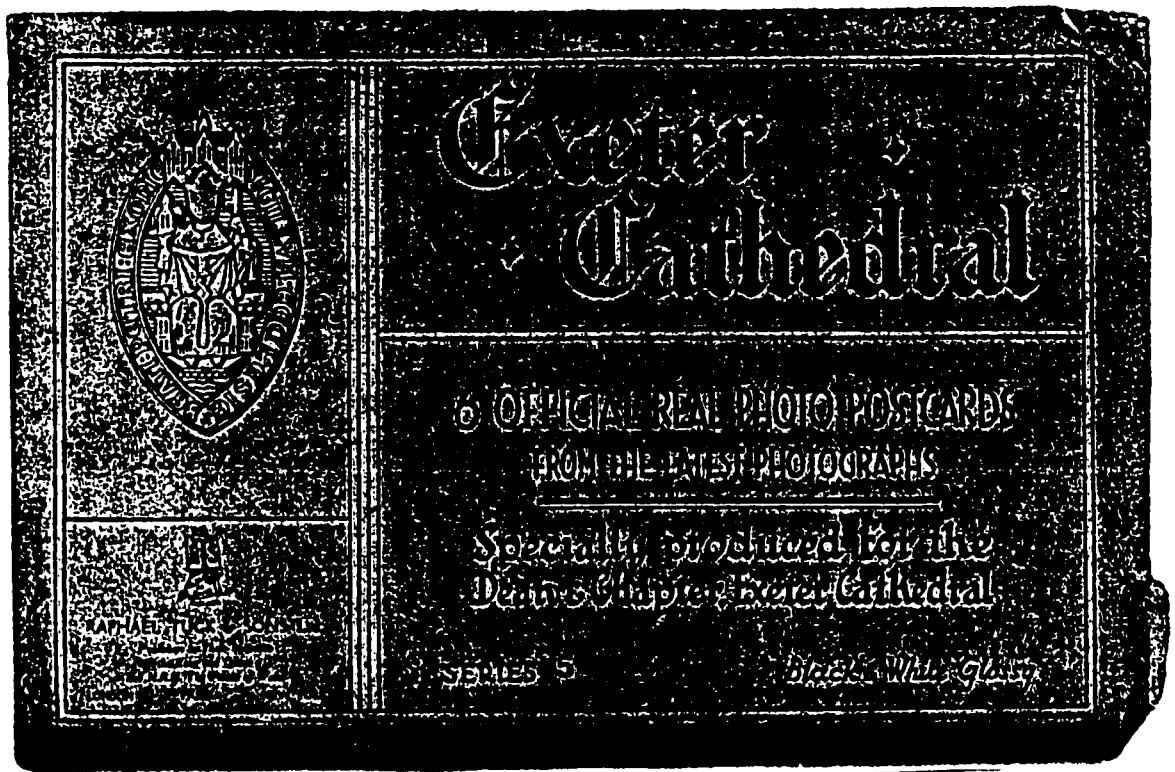
Fig. III-1. Advertisement offering postcards of Africa in the magazine Le Touriste, of 1907. Source: BNQ.



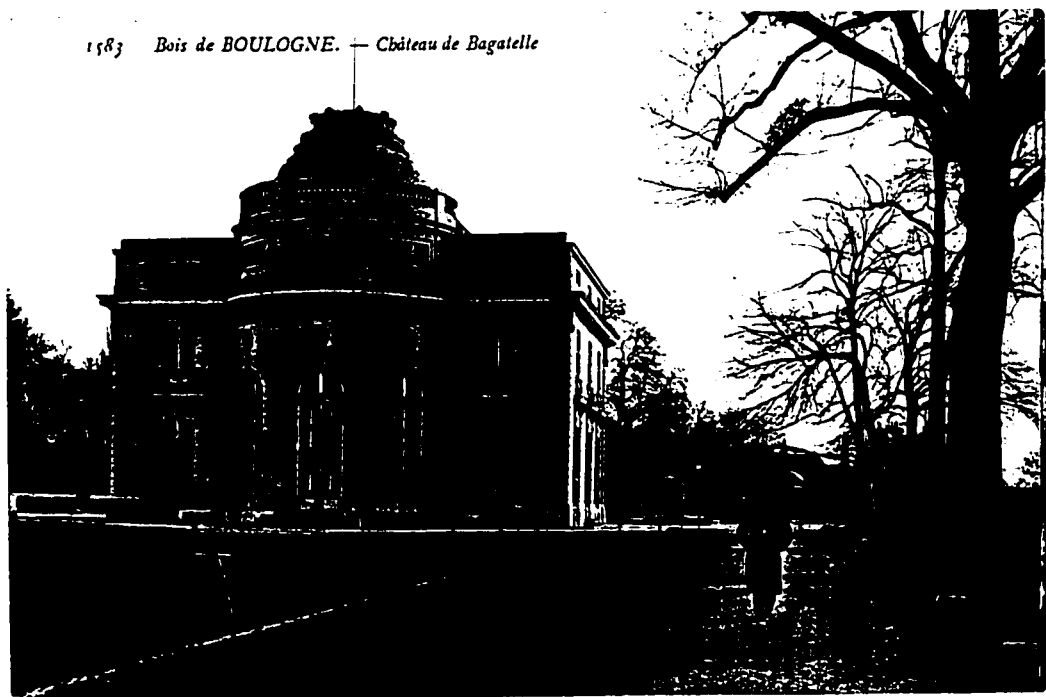
**Fig. III-2.** The Lambly pharmacy in the town of Cookshire, Quebec, with postcards in the storefront, ca. 1911. Source: WPL No. 2070.



**Fig. III-3.** Postcard of Ave Laval, in Montreal with an annotation soliciting card exchanges. Source: BNQ /Web ref.05110



**Fig. III-4.** Official Postcard series of Exeter Cathedral. Raphael Tuck & Sons. Source: CAC/Maxwell Archive.



**Fig. III-5.** Postcard of Bois de Boulogne- Château de Bagatelle, photographed and produced by Neurdein, a company granted an exclusive concession by the French government. Source: PC.



**Fig. III-6.** Postcard view of Champlain Street, Québec, Canada. Valentine-Black. Source: PC.

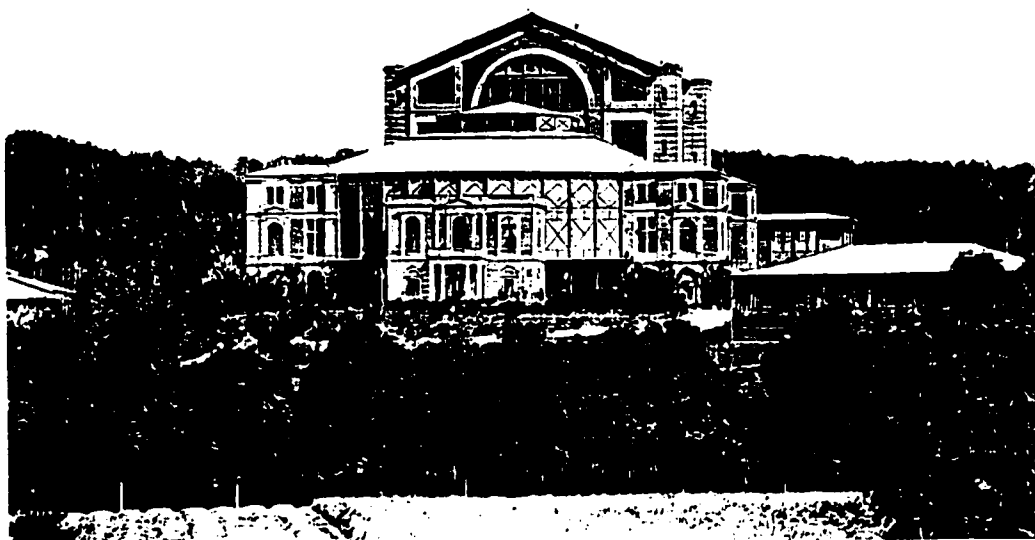


34 TUNIS - Avenue de France

**Fig. III-7.** Postcard of Tunis - Avenue de France. Edition J. Barlier, Tunis. Source: BNQ.

Gruss aus Bayreuth

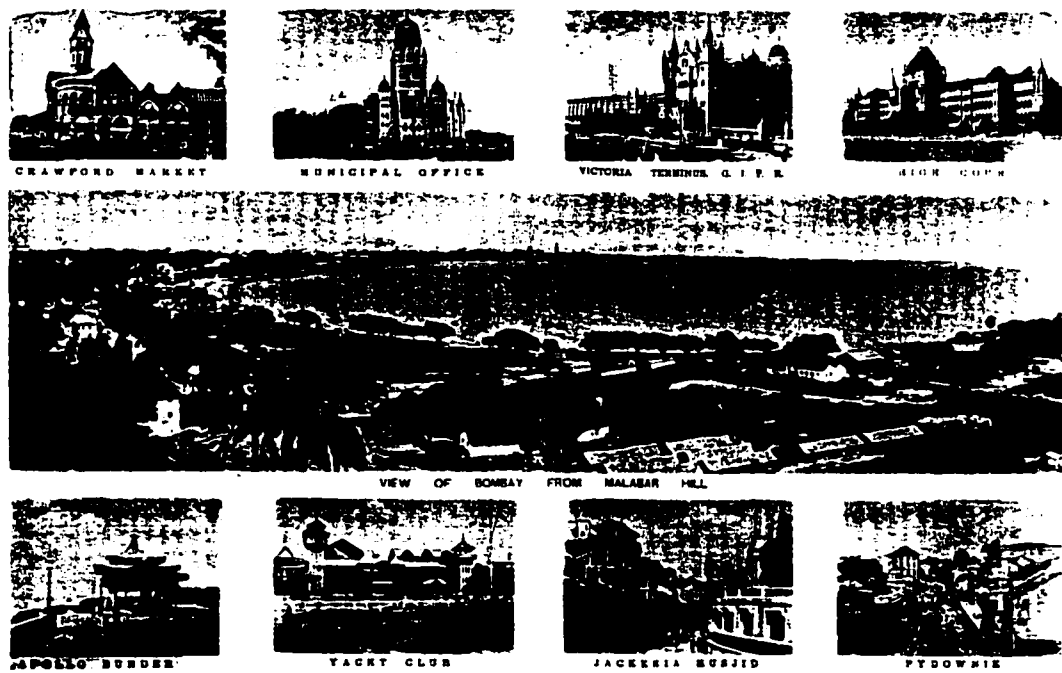
Richard Wagner's Festspielhaus



**Fig. III-8.** Postcard Grüss aus Bayreuth: Richard Wagner's Festspeilhaus. Source: PC.



**Fig. III-9.** Postcard "Salut de Constantinople" with view of mosque. Source: CAC/Findlay Archive.



**Fig. III-10.** Postcard of Bombay with views from Malabar Hill and of other landmarks, ca. 1920. Source: PC.

Saigon le 23-2-54  
 Mlle Mariecelle  
 Je joint à ma lettre  
 cette carte postale qui vous  
 donnera une idée de mon  
 lieu d'habitation.

Photo NAM PHAT  
 Saigon

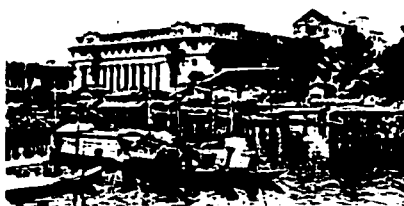


SAIGON Station de voitures-parking



SAIGON Grande Minorsite d'habitat

# SOUVENIR DU VIET-NAM



SAIGON H. C. (sur les anciens-chinois)



SAIGON Rue d'altitude Parc Eden

**Fig. III-11.** Postcard "Souvenir du Viet Nam", Saïgon, ca. 1950. Photo Nam Phat. Source: BNQ.



Sous Le Cap Street, Quebec.

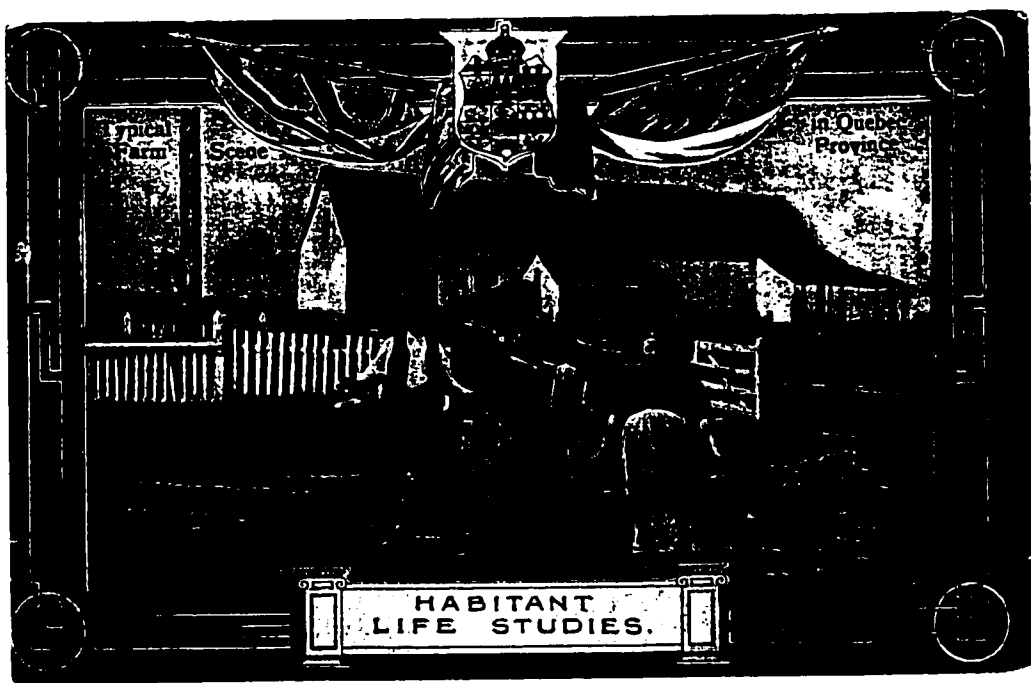
*This street is a good  
representation, also in view  
back-ground, we can see a  
glance of the "Beak-jaw" & this  
Aug 22-1901. with 4 lines in*

**Fig. III-12.** Postcard view of Quebec City- Sous Le Cap,  
Source: PC. See also Fig. I-7 Cap Diamant.





**Fig. III-14.** Postcard view of Close No. 37, High Street, Glasgow. Photo by Thomas Annan, reprinted 1989. Source: CCA,

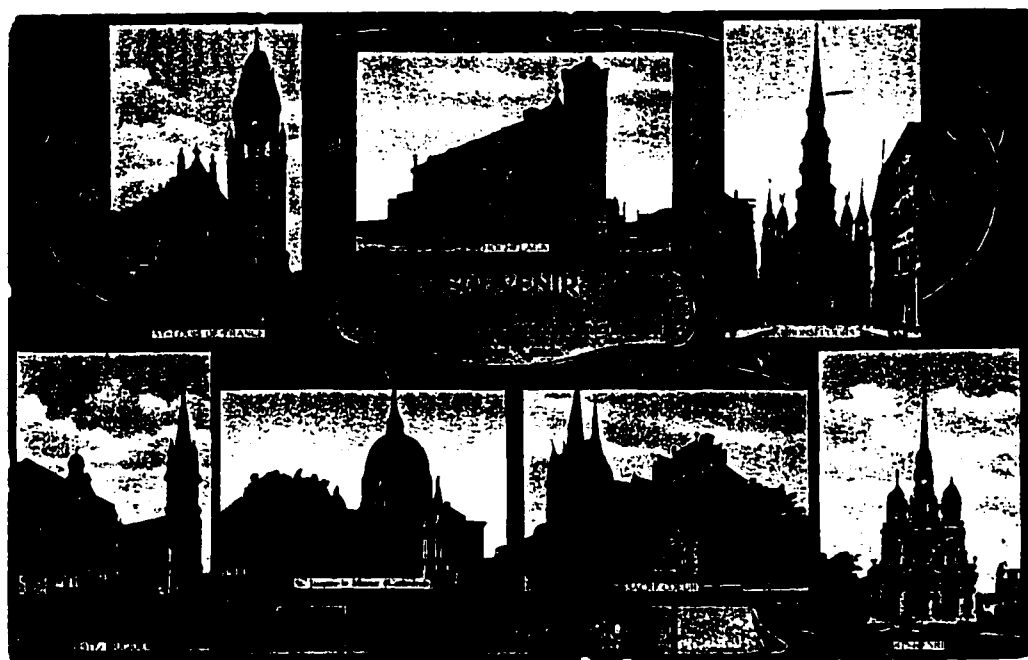


**Fig. III-15.** Postcard from the series *Habitant Life Studies*: Typical Farm Scene in Quebec Province, ca. 1908. Valentine and Sons. Source: PC.



HABITANT FARM HOUSES, QUEBEC—C.P.R. Photos.  
TYPICAL STURDY FRENCH CANADIAN FAMILY

**Fig. III-16.** Habitant Farm Houses, Quebec- Typical Sturdy French Canadian Family. C.P.R. Photos "Canadian Art Deeptone Series". Source: PC.



**Fig. III-17.** Postcard "Souvenir du 21ème Congrès Eucharistique International in Montreal, 1910". European Postcard Company. Source: PC.

St. Catherine, East, Montreal



**Fig. III-18.** Postcard view of Ste Catherine Street east, Montreal. Valentine & Sons. Source: BNQ.

# THE PARIS CAFE

112 St. Catherine St. East

MONTREAL, CANADA



The Most Handsome  
Dining Parlor in America.

**Fig. III-19.** The Café de Paris on Ste Catherine Street east.  
"The Most Handsome Dining Parlor in America". Source: BNQ.

## CHAPTER IV

### Creating Myths and Realities:

#### The Promotion of Place

Taking 'place' seriously means taking ...  
postcards, advertisements, music, travel  
patterns, photography and so on  
seriously.<sup>1</sup>

The previous chapter introduced the idea of place, constructed and construed from an outside vantage point. The early postcard images of colonized countries eschewed depictions of realities from a local perspective for the benefit of a larger colonial enterprise that depended on support from "back home". This chapter examines the creation of place as a deliberate construction emanating from a local vantage point, intended for consumption by others abroad.

As an inexpensive medium, the postcard was a particularly appropriate marketing tool for the promotion of tourism and immigration in Canada. The postcard became a means for both government and private sector enterprises

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<sup>1</sup> John Urry, Consuming Places (London: Routledge, 1995) 30.

seeking to promote various places as tourist "sights" or as destinations for settlement and development. As a part of the system of signification, the architectural image in postcard form contributed to the marketing of "essential" features intended to create abroad positive national, regional or urban personae.

The manner in which the architectural image served in the development of world-class architecture for the embryonic tourist industry in Canada in the early twentieth century will first be explored. With the postcard as chief instrument of dissemination of that image, what began as the commercial interests of a few entrepreneurs resulted in a national concern and debate over the image of architecture in Canada.

Another equally pervasive phenomenon concerned with the perception of place by others occurred with international exhibitions and Fairs, a microcosm where nations presented themselves according to controlled national and corporate strategies. These manifestations became privileged sites for the acquisition and dissemination of postcards bearing images of the innovative and phantasmal architecture developed specifically for the occasion.

### **Creating civilized personae abroad**

Just as postcard images of the colonized world circulated great distances in the early twentieth century, finding their way into the homes of millions of people - so

too did images of Europe and America. With growing self-consciousness about perceptions beyond, the role that images played in creating a sense of place became increasingly important. Recognized as a form of presentation of self to others, the architectural image was scrutinized as never before. In postcard form, the architectural image figured prominently in the strategies developed for the promotion of place.

With postcard images of photographic quality becoming commonplace, acceptance of the medium as a truthful representation became well entrenched; the medium came to be known as an efficient means of acquiring knowledge of place. As a French promoter of the postcard suggested to readers of the Beaux-Arts magazine in 1931, the postcard's ability to impart awareness of what is architecturally significant was generally acknowledged. "Certes, le rôle publicitaire que jouent nos éditions est très grande: elles font connaître les monuments, les paysages de toute la France."<sup>2</sup>

Within the same paradigm of photographic truth, George Watson Cole proffered practical advice for the traveling tourist in 1935:

The wise traveler on reaching a stopping-place, will ... do well to make his first visit a postcard shop, and there look over its views of the place he is in, from which he can select such objects as

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<sup>2</sup> Armand Noyer, "Chefs-d'oeuvre à la douzaine," Beaux-Arts, 25 Septembre, 1931.

he may desire to see. Then and then only  
can he intelligently start out to behold  
its show-places and feel assured that in  
the end he will have seen all that is  
really worth his inspection.<sup>3</sup>

Whether for a correspondent, a traveler or collector,  
postcard images were considered by most as truthful and  
objective, capable of relating the essential qualities of a  
place, efficiently eliminating aimless exploration.<sup>4</sup>

In late nineteenth century Canada, as a young developing  
nation, it was felt that an inhospitable image abroad could  
have a negative impact on immigration and tourism. This was  
of particular concern to those who stood to benefit from the  
propagation of a completely opposite image, one that  
emphasized culture and development rather than untamed  
nature. Early souvenir photographs which promoted Canada as a  
frozen snow-covered wilderness were the antithesis of the  
civilized image desired by many entrepreneurial Canadians.<sup>5</sup>

In 1882, for instance, in an effort to promote the  
tourist trade in Montreal, various winter sports clubs in

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<sup>3</sup> George Watson Cole, Postcards, The World in Miniature  
(Pasadena: Privately Published, 1935) 3.

<sup>4</sup> Many types of postcards used overtly manipulated images  
to achieve humor and exaggeration during the period of 1905-  
1915, as covered in Roger L. Welsch, Tall-Tale Postcards: A  
Pictorial History (South Brunswick and New York: A.S. Barnes,  
1976)

<sup>5</sup> Jana L. Bara, The Image of Canada: Iconological Sources  
of Canadian Popular Symbolism, Nineteenth Century Souvenir  
Photographs. Ph.D. Dissertation (Concordia University, 1991)  
239.

conjunction with local businesses organized an annual Winter Carnival, an event which rapidly became the high point of the winter season over the years.<sup>6</sup> The focal point of the Carnival was the Ice Palace, built with 250,000 cubic feet of ice cut from the St. Lawrence River and illuminated at night with electric lights. The week of winter sport and carnival festivities ended with the storming of the palace by snowshoers waving blazing torches and fireworks. This was an exciting activity, as attested by a first-person account (Figure IV-1) on a postcard to Little Rock, Arkansas in February 1910:

Saw the storming of the Ice Palace,  
Tuesday and enjoyed it. Received card  
with picture of Meritt's offices- they  
must be fine...

Over thirty different postcard views of ice castles were published between 1909 and 1910.<sup>7</sup> These postcards, mass-produced by several publishers, featured the different palaces built each year. However Montreal, the cosmopolitan business center of Canada at that time, required a more cultured image. As Kathleen Jenkins recounts, the "Carnival and the Ice Palace came to an end, it being felt that they gave an erroneous impression as to the severity of the

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<sup>6</sup> Dorothy Carruthers, Wish You Were Here!: An Exhibition of Early Postcard Views of Montreal in Winter. Rare Books Collection, McGill University. Electronic Web-site location at <http://www.gslis.mcgill.ca/>

<sup>7</sup> Bazinet 29, 49.

Canadian climate. The American tourists, in their thousands, must not think that Montreal was an Arctic city in the land of perpetual snow."<sup>8</sup>

Entrepreneurs such as William Van Horne wanted to promote overseas an image of Canada as a temperate, fertile, picturesque and progressive country.<sup>9</sup> When urged to support a winter carnival in Winnipeg similar to Montreal's, he curtly declined by saying "Ice palaces, Indians and dog trains are not popular features in our foreign advertising."<sup>10</sup> What was promoted in its foreign advertising was the Canadian Pacific Railway as "The New Highway to the Orient - across the Mountains Prairies and Rivers of Canada,"<sup>11</sup> with a route served with hotels that rivaled the best Europe had to offer. But first the network of facilities had to be designed and developed in order to suit the promotional objectives.

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<sup>8</sup> Kathleen Jenkins, Montreal: Island City of the St. Lawrence (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Company, 1966) 440. Quoted in Carruthers.

<sup>9</sup> Bara 239.

<sup>10</sup> Pierre Berton, Why we act like Canadians: a personal exploration of our national character (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982) 84.

<sup>11</sup> Caption on a poster produced by the CPR for European distribution. E.J. Hart, The Selling of Canada: The CPR and the Beginnings of Canadian Tourism (Banff: Altitude Publishing, 1982) 9.

## Designing for promotion

In the late nineteenth century, tourism and associated industries experienced rapid development world-wide, fostered by the symbiotic relationship between transportation companies and the tourist attractions and accommodations they were instrumental in developing.<sup>12</sup>

The transcontinental rail line to the Pacific coast of Canada was extended through vast scenic expanses of mountains and forests, through areas with great potential for attracting tourists, an asset William Van Horne quickly recognized. Sensing the great commercial possibilities associated with tourism he is said to have remarked at the time, "Since we can't export the scenery, we shall have to import the tourists."<sup>13</sup> To transform those natural sites into "sights"<sup>14</sup> that would draw the affluent clientele he sought, the Canadian Pacific Rail (CPR) needed clear design and

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<sup>12</sup> The role played by enterprising Canadian transportation companies is discussed by Donald H. Kalman and D. Richardson in "Building for Transportation in the Nineteenth Century," Journal of Canadian Art History 3, 1976. 21-43.

<sup>13</sup> John Murray Gibbon, Steel of Empire: The Romantic History of the Canadian Pacific (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill 1935) 304. Quoted in Kalman 1976, 39.

<sup>14</sup> Frequently cited as a late 20th century phenomenon, the postcard from its inception promoted this mode for apprehending a place, making it a "way of seeing". John Urry, The Tourist Gaze (London: Sage Publications, 1990) 11.

marketing strategies, a massive operation in which the postcard became a vital promotional tool.

To achieve Van Horne's objectives in developing tourist business, the railway commissioned architects to design a series of hotels along the route as stop-over points: first modest Swiss-chalet style wooden buildings, and then as traffic increased, more imposing structures such as the Banff Springs Hotel in Alberta. (Figure IV-2)

For accommodations of world-class calibre, the American architect Bruce Price was commissioned to develop the Banff hotel with a style sufficiently distinctive that it would provide a clear and positive promotional image. He designed the building with steep roofs, pointed dormer windows, corner turrets, and oriels- features derived from the picturesque "château" architecture of the Loire River region in France.<sup>15</sup>

As Harold Kalman suggests, with Price subsequently reproducing and refining similar architectural characteristics for several other CPR commissions, notably the Château Frontenac in Québec City (1892-93), in figure IV-6, the château image emerged as the definitive style for railway hotels.<sup>16</sup> The CPR used it across the country, from the

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<sup>15</sup> The original frame structure was replaced by a masonry structure by W.S. Painter in 1912-13, with a later addition by J.W. Orrock in 1926-28. Kalman, 1976. 39.

<sup>16</sup> Kalman and Richardson, 39-40. Also Harold D. Kalman. The Railway Hotels and the Development of the Château Style in Canada (Victoria: University of Victoria, 1968)

Place Viger Hotel and Station (Bruce Price, 1896-98) in Montreal, in figures IV-3 and 4, to the Empress Hotel (F.M. Rattenbury, 1904-08) in Victoria, B.C. (Figure IV-18)

In the process of cultivating the château image, the CPR successfully employed the marketing strategy in which the anticipated "tourist gaze" becomes a generating factor, a process whereby the architecture is developed as a function of image for the controlled development of place.<sup>17</sup>

This strategic approach was quickly emulated by other railways who also adopted the French castle style for the hotels they erected, creating architectural landmarks in several other cities across Canada, all bearing the same family resemblance, such as the Château Laurier in Ottawa (Ross & MacFarlane, 1908-12 and 1927-9), the Fort Garry Hotel in Winnipeg, Manitoba (1911-13, Ross & MacDonald), shown in Figure V-16; and the Bessborough Hotel in Saskatoon (Archibald and Schofield, 1930-32), erected by the Grand Trunk Railroad, later known as the Canadian National Railway.

With architectural investments possessing such iconic qualities, rail companies like the Canadian Pacific and the Grand Trunk Rail were quick to capitalize on the promotional potential of their photogenic real-estate. William Van Horne, intent on "importing" the tourists for his railway and hotels, entered into agreements with photographers, most

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<sup>17</sup> Urry, Consuming Places 132-133.

notably the Notman Photographic Studio, to produce images for the railway's advertising program.

Notman, who negotiated to get royalties for all the photographs he took, made several trips across Canada.<sup>18</sup> While the early trips that he took (1884, 1887, 1889, 1897) were not specifically intended to provide material for postcard images, trips made later as the postcard's popularity increased (1901, 1903, 1904 and 1909) provided numerous views that circulated for many years by multiple printings of both legitimate and pirated postcard images. Companies such as Stengel, one of Germany's largest in the early twentieth century, advertised that they would make cards from any photograph that is "clear and sharp and not too deep in tone" or even "from other postcards". With offices in London, Paris and New York, Stengel produced and shipped cards for prices that averaged about \$6.00 per thousand.<sup>19</sup>

At the service of the financial and ideological ambitions of the railway establishment, the photographs produced by Notman were to depict the hotels built on the splendid sites, with the awesome views of wilderness and mountains that surrounded them. By juxtaposing the pristine and rugged beauty of the remote site with the suggested

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<sup>18</sup> Stanley Triggs, William Notman's Studio: The Canadian Picture (Montreal: McCord Museum, 1992) 45.

<sup>19</sup> James L. Lowe "National Art Views Company" in Deltiology (Vol. 21, No. 159) 3-4.

comforts of world-class architectural hotel design, the possibility of experiencing nature from a civilized base was reassuringly promoted.

The postcard proved to be the perfect medium to disseminate the controlled and deliberately framed images of luxurious accommodation developed to bolster tourism in the early twentieth century. Series such as the Canadian Rockies: "En Route the Canadian Pacific Railway" (Figure IV-2) were made available by the CPR in their hotel lobbies and train stations. Losing no opportunity to reinforce the cultured connotations of the château style that their buildings possessed, the CPR consistently reproduced their images on other paper products such as hotel and company stationary, invoices, shipping notices, (Figure IV-3) and even went to the extent of distributing the company's financial statements on the back-side of postcards featuring Hotel Viger in Montreal.<sup>20</sup> (Figure IV-4)

The hotels quickly acquired a "recherché" status and wide recognition. Tourists who sought out the facilities as a holiday destination, as well as new immigrants and travelers who viewed the architecture from a distance while in transit

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<sup>20</sup> Horace W. Harrison, Postal Stationery and the CPR Topics (British North American Philatelic Society. Jan. 1971) 30-33; Topics, Feb. 1971, 64-65; Topics, Mar. 1971, 98-97; Topics, April 1971, 122-124; Topics May 1971; Topics, June/July 1971, 177-179.

across the country, acquired the hotel images in postcard form. They mailed cards in astounding numbers.<sup>21</sup>

The ubiquity of the château image enabled it to assume a broader significance, one with a particularly "Canadian" resonance. Through an overarching ideology of progress and modernity, the chateau style's unified canon of design came to signify, with the railroad, and the postcard medium that made mass dissemination of that image possible, a coming of age for the country in search of identity.

The federal government itself in the first quarter of the century, conscious of the potential for serving nationalist ambitions, recognized the appeal and power of the clearly defined "modern" adaptation of an architectural image originally conceived in a European context for its privileged nobility. In 1915 a Federal Plan Commission, appointed to recommend a master plan for Ottawa and Hull, proposed in a report that any new public building feature "the external architecture of the Château Laurier," considered particularly appropriate to the Canadian condition. A second report in 1920 urged the adoption of the "French Northern Gothic (French Château)" style; while a third report in 1927 asked for "...the adoption of the French Château style of

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<sup>21</sup> In 1912 for instance, with the Canadian population being 7,467,000, the Post Office recorded that 54,727,000 postcards had passed through the mail. The Canada Yearbook. Ed. Ernest H. Godfrey (Ottawa: C.H. Parmalee, Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 1913) xiv, xvi.

architecture, of which the Château Laurier is a modernized type."<sup>22</sup>

Indeed the Château style, made synonymous with prestige and grandeur, came to be used for several other building types, including Post Offices, administrative buildings, train stations, as well as luxury apartments. A notable example of the latter is the eponymously named Château Apartments in Montreal<sup>23</sup>, designed by the architects of the Fort Garry Hotel in 1925,<sup>24</sup> visible in central background of figure IV-5.

The ability of the architectural image to serve as an iconic locus for national identity was perhaps not completely understood as it was being shaped and developed. Like the most popular postcard image in France, that of the Eiffel Tower, produced in the millions, it is over a period of time that its promotional role assumed mythic proportions extending well beyond its immediate civic association. As Roland Barthes describes, the tower is considered a major sign of a people and of a place, a whole much larger than

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<sup>22</sup> Kalman, 1968. 23-31.

<sup>23</sup> Répertoire d'architecture traditionnelle sur le territoire de la Communauté urbaine de Montréal: Les Appartements (Montréal: Le service de planification du territoire, 1987) 366-371. See also The Trafalgar and the Gleneagles, 100-103.

<sup>24</sup> Ross & MacDonald, with H.L. Fetherstonhaugh, Architects.

itself. As a structure, he states "...it belongs to the universal language of travel."<sup>25</sup>

Similarly a building such as the Château Frontenac inextricably links the hotel with the identity of its place, Quebec City. It was for a long time, as William Van Horne had intended, "the most talked-about hotel on the continent."<sup>26</sup> As a correspondent in 1912 noted on a postcard sent to his brother in Brooklyn, N.Y.: "Some hotel, yes? It certainly is a big one and is owned by the Canadian Pacific R.R. as is most of Canada." (Figure IV-6)

Château postcards were made available for purchase in train stations, hotels, stationary shops, drugstores, and other shops throughout the twentieth century. These postcards provide a view of Quebec City that since the outset, has remained the most popular image of the place.<sup>27</sup> (Figure IV-7) Through the massive distribution of this image in postcard form, the prominent landmark functions as a metonym, the château rising high upon the bluffs overlooking the old town settlement along the St. Lawrence River is the French city of North America.

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<sup>25</sup> Roland Barthes, "The Eiffel Tower," The Eiffel Tower and Other Mythologies (New York: Noonday Press, 1979) 4.

<sup>26</sup> Quoted in Kalman, 1968. 18.

<sup>27</sup> Information provided in discussions with M. Normand Chartrand of Messageries de Presse Benjamin, Enr. Lasalle, Québec, a major postcard distributor in the province of Quebec.

### **The creation of place: smaller scales**

While the large hotels and amusement centers catered mostly to the affluent traveler and tourist, they did not constitute the sole focus of the numerous photographic forays that transportation companies commissioned. Almost every small town and its respective train station along the new railway lines were also diligently photographed. The postcard in its early years became a convincing means to attract immigrants to the settlements that developed along way.

The CPR had been granted title rights to a twenty mile belt of land on either side of the trans-Canada rail line as part of the government concession for their investment in the construction. By 1889 the CPR was active in promoting colonization of the West by selling parcels of this land. As Norman MacDonald relates, the Canadian Pacific Railway "had land to sell; the denser the population along its line the heavier the traffic and the greater its income."<sup>28</sup> Indeed, land values were established in direct proportion to their proximity to the tracks. Images of the train stations, with a church and a general store clustered near tracks, were intended to reassure potential settlers about the links to civilization and the value of their land investments.

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<sup>28</sup> Norman MacDonald, Canada: Immigration and Colonization, 1841-1903 (Toronto: Macmillan, 1966) 286.

The photographic illusion of transparency in the postcard's images made them seemingly more truthful than the frequently difficult to understand promotional booklets and pamphlets that were circulated to attract immigrants. Books such as The Colonial Handbook, published in 1882 by a private colonization company, was considered by many as deceitful and containing erroneous and misleading information.<sup>29</sup> The Canadian government itself was prone to frequently euphoric propagandist pronouncements about the attractiveness of Western lands, as the advertisement in The Book of Canada in 1905 indicates. (Figure IV-8)

The aggrandizing and idealized picture of Western Canada painted in words simply did not match the impact of postcards produced with the same national boosterism. Series such as "Canada's Golden West" or "Canadian Homestead Life"<sup>30</sup> depict vast lands of golden opportunity, farms with a surfeit of grain and grazing animals; wholesome and self-reliant farm-life. There is no hint of the massive difficulties most settlers faced in starting to cultivate the land.

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<sup>29</sup> MacDonald 239.

<sup>30</sup> The Canadian Homestead Life series (1907-1910) emphasizes the wholesome and virtuous life in the frontier areas, while the Canada's Golden West (1910-1911) series presented images of abundance and fertility with titles such as: Miles of Wheat in Saskatchewan; Cutting the Wheat in Saskatchewan; Threshing in Alberta; Cutting the grain; Clearing the fields; Harvesting near Edmonton; Harvesting Near Portage La Prairie, Manitoba. W.L. Gutzman, The Patriotic Postcard Handbook (Toronto: Unitrade Press, 1984) 26, 30.

Other photographers such as the Livernois of Québec City produced thousands of images of the developing north, a chronicle which in their case, dove-tailed with the late-nineteenth century nationalistic ideological mission of Quebec City's political, religious and economic elite. As stated by Michel Lessard, the great social project of the period entailed the opening up of new lands for settlement in the north of Quebec. It was hoped that the new opportunities being offered would stem the great exodus of French Canadians who were lured to the United States, or simply attracted by the glitter and seeming prosperity cities offered.<sup>31</sup>

The photographs of the railway extension in the north of Quebec and the development of communities along the way that the Livernois and other photographers produced over many years served to promote both colonization and tourism of the outlying areas such as the upper Laurentians, the Saguenay and Lac St-Jean regions. Train stops in places like St. Faustin Station, Roberval, or Tadoussac each had its station and hotel offering refinement and the luxury of civilization, attracting tourists with its clean air and waters while reassuring settlers in the region.<sup>32</sup> (Figure IV-10) As the advertisement in The Book of Canada<sup>33</sup> of 1905 indicates

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<sup>31</sup> Michel Lessard, The Livernois Photographers (Quebec: Musée du Québec, 1987) 289-291.

<sup>32</sup> Lessard, The Livernois Photographers. 267, 268-274.

(Figure IV-11), Quebec's Colonial Office, selling land for 20 to 30 cents per acre in these areas, offered to send cards, pamphlets and other information to entice prospective buyers toward these outlying areas ripe for development.

In places such as Murray Bay (now La Malbaie), Pointe-au-Pic, Cacouna, Riviere-du-Loup and Lac St-Joseph, hordes of tourists traveling by train and steamships sought summer respite from the city heat and crowding. Many of the Livernois (Figure IV-12) and Notman photographs were used for postcards, reprinted for many years to keep up with demand.<sup>34</sup>

At a time in Canada when "colonization" meant populating territories outside of the urban areas of central part of the country, the circulation of postcard images served a vital marketing function: though a simple means of communication, it became a tool for those who sought to develop the vast territories served by rail and waterways, considered ripe for resource development. It disseminated tangible images to the prospective investors and workers needed in order to accomplish industrialization.

In Quebec for instance, during the early twentieth century, the government in power encouraged industrial

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<sup>33</sup> Ernest J. Chambers, The Book of Canada: Illustrating the Great Dominion (Montreal and Toronto: The Book of Canada Company Publishers, 1905)

<sup>34</sup> Lessard, The Livernois Photographers. 108. The Livernois photo of Cacouna was taken in 1890, and starting in 1903 reprinted for many years by Quebec City by publishers Pruneau et Kirouac.

development by granting numerous concessions concerning the province's hydro-electric potential and vast forestry resources. In turn, corporate investments took many forms, the most prominent developing massive physical installations with entire communities built around the industry. Companies such as Price Brothers in Jonqui re and K nognami (1912), and Alcoa in Shawinigan (1901) and Arvida (1926) established their industrial operations and associated town developments in the Saguenay, Lac St. Jean region in northern Quebec.<sup>35</sup>

In the flurry of construction activity that ensued, the representation of industrial might and power became significant to the enhancement of corporate interests. Early twentieth century bird's-eye views of industrial facilities in the northern Quebec such as the Port Alfred Paper Mills in figure IV-13 show staid buildings, with smoking plumes above tall stacks jutting across the sky. These early industrial depictions became a naturalized way of representing industry, one which in no way appeared to conflict with the images of wholesome settings and orderly housing developments that grew along with the company town.<sup>36</sup> Strong reassuring images were

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<sup>35</sup> Lucie K. Morisset, Arvida: Cit e industrielle, une  pop e urbaine en Am rique (Sillery: Editions du Septentrion, 1998) 17-19.

<sup>36</sup> Peter White profiles the contrasting images of British Columbia with postcards of polluting industries from a later era. As he points out, at the time of their production, these cards were "...intended to be read not just in terms of pride but also beauty." It Pays To Play: British Columbia in

necessary to lure potential workers to the large pulp and paper industry situated in the still sparsely populated regions. The town of Port-Alfred, for instance was founded in 1916 as an industrial town by J-E.A. Dubuc, who owned a pulp mill in Chicoutimi. However it was only during the period of 1918-1919 that his company, the "Ha! Ha! Bay Land and Building Company", began building housing for the workers. In 1926, the total population of the region was 15,000 when Alcoa started developing nearby Arvida, conceived with an urban plan and infrastructure to accommodate a population of 50,000.<sup>37</sup> Postcard images, which today could serve as indictment for environmental violations, undoubtedly were intended to show the impressive scale of the operations with vast infra-structures implanted in places which, only a few years earlier, were considered a vast hinterland.

Companies sought to control not only the resources for their operations but also the images that they projected. Newly planned and expanding Northern Quebec communities such as Temiscaming, Shawinigan Falls and Arvida were developed and maintained according to strict design and urban protocols.<sup>38</sup> The image projected by these new urban

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Postcards: 1950-1980 (Vancouver: Presentation House/ Arsenal Pulp, 1996) 101-109.

<sup>37</sup> Morisset 19, 43.

<sup>38</sup> Robert Fortier, "Le Pouvoir de Bâtir: Société et aménagement de la ville industrielle au Québec," Villes

agglomerations in outlying areas was carefully manicured to ensure a homogeneous, welcoming look, capable of impressing tourists and visiting clients.<sup>39</sup> The control is evident in postcard views that were disseminated depicting ideal housing, without a hint of the terrible overcrowding conditions that existed for many years because of the lack of facilities to house single men.<sup>40</sup>

In the case of Témiscaming, Quebec, the control of image in order to conform to the ideology of the "Garden-City" planning<sup>41</sup> went so far as to encourage the tenants of company housing to mow their lawns and maintain flower beds, under threat of penalties, so that its reputation as "Flower Town" would be maintained.<sup>42</sup> The postcard image of a "typical" house (Figure IV-14) with its formal annotation were intended to convey what Témiscaming could offer in the 1940's. This same postcard view included in a context of research, serves as a visual document about the urban philosophies and policies associated with the workings and aesthetics of the "model" towns.

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Industrielles Planifiées, Ed. Robert Fortier (Montréal: Editions Boréal, 1996) 17-48.

<sup>39</sup> Fortier 37.

<sup>40</sup> José Igartua, "Vivre à Arvida," Fortier 1996. 167-168.

<sup>41</sup> Igartua 28.

<sup>42</sup> Igartua 37.

Numerous affinities between corporate and national interest are evident in the representational practices used for the promotion and development of particular places. These involved the projection of long-term visions that gave priority to stable values on one hand, while displaying a progressive optimism about the future on the other. For this objective, the postcard was the ideal messenger.

### **Temporary places/ permanent myths**

Another forum in which the postcard figures prominently, albeit in a more punctual manner, are the International Exhibitions and World Fairs in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Countries sought to build "models" of their accomplishments in their march toward modernization. Initially staged in order to promote and celebrate the industrial developments which created mass-production, prefabrication, mass communication and urbanization,<sup>43</sup> the manifestations during this period quickly became venues to display imperial might and nationalistic ambition.

The postcard became the ideal means for transmitting images of architecture carefully designed to positively reinforce the perception of nations as dominant influences in international power relationships as part of the

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<sup>43</sup> Paul Greenhalgh, Ephemeral Vistas: The Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World's Fairs, 1851-1903 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988) 142.

"exhibitionary complex" that emerged at that time.<sup>44</sup>

Postcards, developed specifically for the events, were popular not only for the duration of the exhibitions but remained in circulation for many years that followed.<sup>45</sup>

In France the Great Paris Exhibition of 1889 produced the monument and architectural icon to be thereafter associated with the city, a soaring steel tower from which postcards could be mailed with the postmark "Sommet de la Tour Eiffel."<sup>46</sup> In America the Chicago Columbian Exhibition of 1893 launched its own official souvenir postcard featuring the sprawling Machinery Building, while several "unofficial" versions featuring similar views were available for purchase throughout the city.<sup>47</sup>

These exhibitions received hundreds of thousands of visitors who looked not only to acquire information from the commercial and industrial theme displays but also to be

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<sup>44</sup> Robert W. Rydell. "Souvenirs of Imperialism: World's Fair Postcards." in Geary and Webb, 47-63.

<sup>45</sup> A full listing of types of cards produced at these exhibitions is documented by A.D. Brooks and F.A. Fletcher British Exhibitions and Their Postcards: Part 1, 1900-1914 (Privately Published, 1978) and A.D. Brooks and F.A. Fletcher, British Exhibitions and Their Postcards: Part 2, 1915-1979 (Privately Published, 1979) and Frederic Megson and Mary Megson, American Exposition Postcards: 1870-1920 (Martinsville, NJ: Postcard Lovers, 1992)

<sup>46</sup> Carline 44, 52.

<sup>47</sup> Dorothy B. Ryan, Picture Postcards in the United States: 1898-1918, 34-39.

entertained by the viewing the fantastic and exotic. Long before the American Disneyland provided a permanent setting for mythic displays, the late nineteenth and early twentieth century exhibitions developed the means to exhibit what at that time was considered curious: the architecture and peoples of colonized cultures. By deploying various processes of "invention" and "reconstruction", villages and street scenes from colonized areas were created, complete with natives imported for the duration of the event.<sup>48</sup> Each country sought to provide visitors with a sense of its colonial accomplishments and riches gained by creating pavilions that displayed resources and produce that the colony provided. Visitors were placed in recreated urban settings such the very popular "street in Cairo"; Sudanese and Senegalese villages; the Turkish Bazaar; all of which featured indigenous peoples being displayed as tableaux vivants.<sup>49</sup>

Various countries also presented themselves through exhibits such as "A Portuguese Street", a "Spanish Village",

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<sup>48</sup> See for example, Greenhalgh, "The Colonial Exhibitions"; Panivong Norindr's discussion of the creation of "l'Indochine", "The French Colonial Phantasmic and the Exposition Colonial Internationale de Paris" in Phantasmic Indochina: French Colonial Ideology in Architecture, Film, and Literature 14-51; Timothy Mitchell. "Egypt at the Exhibition" in Colonising Egypt 1-33.

<sup>49</sup> Japan displayed aspects of Formosa, Korea and Manchuria, while American exhibits included Cuban, Hawaiian and Philipino villages. Canadian exhibits often included an Iroquois village. Greenhalgh 43, 85, 93, 101, 104.

an "Old Heidelberg Inn", or an "English Pub", in the hope of creating a positive and pleasing national image that would attract investment and tourism.<sup>50</sup> All of these pavilions and displays were documented by photographers, and the images disseminated by means of postcards.

During the brief duration of the exhibitions approximately every four years, visitors from the host nations and travelers from foreign countries experienced the montage of spaces that show-cased different cultures, abetting the interest in the highly defined stereotyped images on display. Over the years people sent away millions of postcards created for the occasion, and brought many more home for collections, images which today provide vistas of these ephemeral sites of cultural exchange.

In many cases the buildings created for these World's Fairs and Exhibitions remained significant long after they were either demolished or put to other uses. It is the lasting impact of the pavilions that many sought to capitalize on, spawning a number of initiatives in which the architecture is designed with an image considered an integral part of the display.

One such attempt in Canada involved the capital city Victoria, British Columbia. In a plan to promote tourism in the early 1920's, the municipality felt it was necessary to

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<sup>50</sup> Greenhalgh 105.

create a leisure palace with activities available year-round. Desirous of creating a center of attraction with architectural merit, the city sought a proposal from architect Francis Rattenbury. In the spirit of the great international exhibitions and world fairs held in years past, Victoria wished to have its own Crystal Garden, based on Sir Joseph Paxton's Crystal Palace for the Great Exhibition of London in 1851.<sup>51</sup>

The architect was highly enthusiastic about the ways in which world's fair buildings in America had been converted to become "permanent palaces of delight for the people" and the local Chamber of Commerce fully endorsed the project. Yet in 1921, after a two year campaign, the City Council's Amusement Centre Committee failed to raise sufficient funds for the construction of the Crystal Garden.<sup>52</sup>

The idea however resurfaced again in 1924 when the Canadian Pacific Railway decided to revive the project, largely to serve its own corporate self-interests. With its substantial financial clout, the CPR agreed to build the amusement center. In the process they managed to extract numerous concession from the city. The CPR would invest not

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<sup>51</sup> Anthony A. Barrett & Rhodri Windsor Liscombe, Francis Rattenbury and British Columbia: Architecture and Challenge in the Imperial Age (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1983) 259-260.

<sup>52</sup> Barrett 260-261.

less than \$200,000 in exchange for the lease of the site at \$1.00 per annum along with an exemption of taxes for twenty years. They also obtained the supply of free water to the site for twenty years; and the assurance that taxation and water charges on their nearby Empress Hotel would be maintained at their then current figures.<sup>53</sup>

The Crystal Garden, a combination of ballroom, cocktail terrace and North America's largest swimming pool, opened in 1928 with a demonstration of swimming and diving by Johnny "Tarzan" Weismuller.<sup>54</sup> The building's novelty and its image became useful in larger promotional efforts that served different objectives. Postcard views of the building's exterior and interior were produced to promote Victoria as an attractive and exciting tourist destination on one hand, and from the CPR's perspective, to bolster traffic along the CPR lines and to attract clientele for the Empress Hotel. (Figure IV-17) Acquiring a more staid character over time, it is used today as an arboretum with free-flying birds and butterflies and promoted as "a nice place to have tea under the palms."<sup>55</sup> It remains a major recreational facility for the citizens of Victoria.

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<sup>53</sup> Barrett 267.

<sup>54</sup> [www.islandnet.com/~andersen/neighborhood.htm](http://www.islandnet.com/~andersen/neighborhood.htm)

<sup>55</sup> [www.tbc.gov.bc.ca/pcc/ar\\_94\\_95/chapter8.htm](http://www.tbc.gov.bc.ca/pcc/ar_94_95/chapter8.htm)

Through the medium of the postcard, the concept of spatial production as defined by Henri Lefebvre- the perceived, the conceived, and lived- is materialized in a variety of forms, revealing a number of interconnected practices, broadly formed by national and corporate interests, which operate in the creation of place. While the conception of place as promoted by its chief instigators are seen as having been effective as intended, interpretations change as the temporal ground shifts. Indeed as Lefebvre notes, these three moments are seen as never either simple nor stable over time.<sup>56</sup>

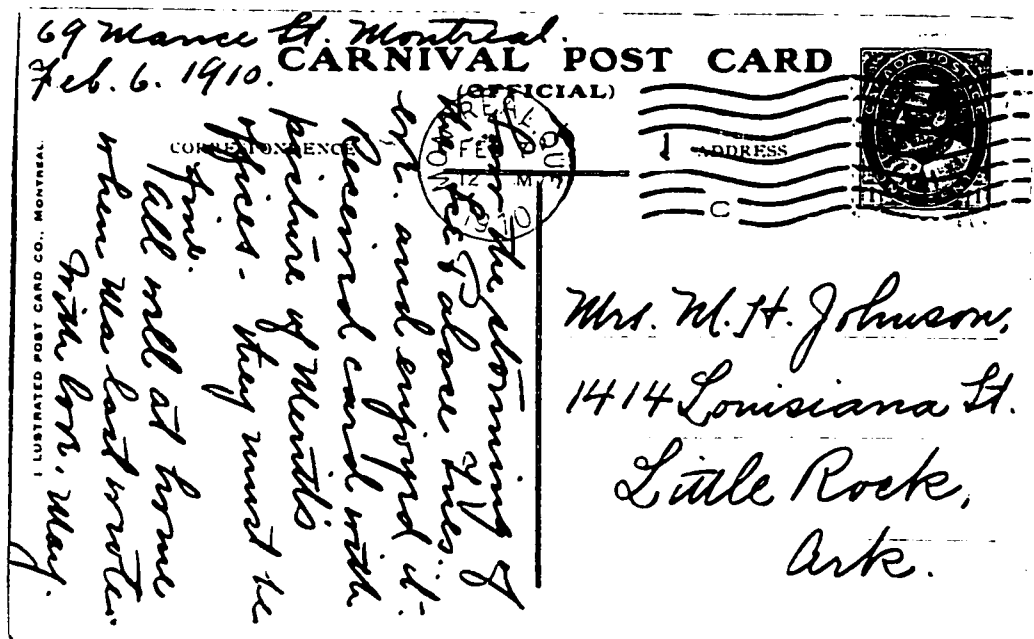
With temporal displacement the divergences in interpretation of the images become more apparent. They reveal how the conception of place as initially intended is frequently at variance with that which is perceived and lived. The Château Frontenac or the Empress Hotel for instance, exist as prominent architectural icons in the visual marketing strategies of their respective municipalities. The images no longer belongs to the CPR for the exclusive promotion of its hotel and rail network. The public spaces that surround them have been appropriated by the citizens and tourists alike, serving as places for a lovers' stroll, genteel afternoon tea, or site of winter reveling and amusement. The postcards of these sites, while

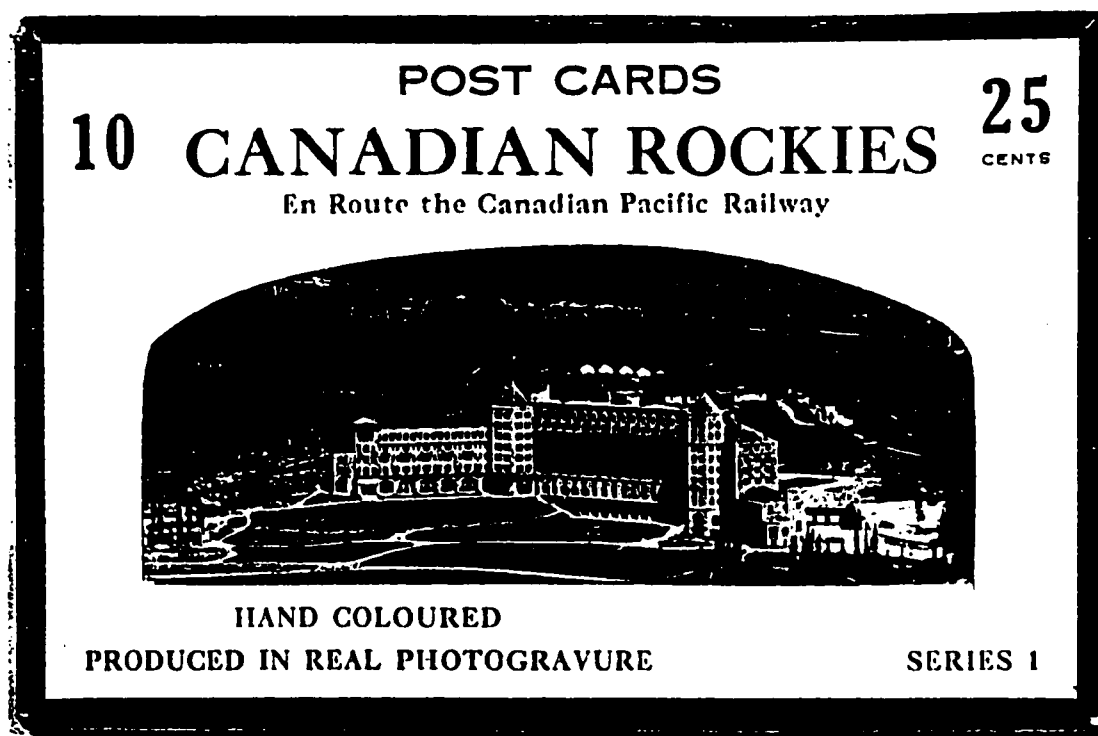
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<sup>56</sup> Lefebvre 46.

circulating fixed representations of places, provide evidence of the dynamic temporal flux at play in the production of meaning.

The following chapter will focus more narrowly on the individual and the institution, and will present some of the different attitudes and receptions towards the collection of images in postcard form.





**Fig. IV-2.** Postcard of the Banff Springs Hotel in the Alberta Rockies. Source: CAC/ Maxwell Archive.

## FREIGHT ADVICE

FORM 11  
3-8-00CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY CO. LTD. *Montreal*Station, *1300 St. John St.* 1900

The undermentioned Goods having arrived at this station to your address, you will please remove them as early as possible, as they remain here entirely at owner's risk (from any cause whatever) and expense.

*J. M. Dawson* Freight Agent.

FROM	No. of Way-Bill	No. and Description of Packages.	Paid on	Weight in lbs.	Total.
<i>St. Lawrence Co. #10069</i>			<i>12/10/00</i>	<i>53</i>	
<i>Grade Oak - 3 mts</i>			<i>1093</i>		



THE SPACE BELOW IS RESERVED FOR ADDRESS ONLY.

Place Viger  
Hotel  
MONTREAL P.Q.

Fig. IV-3. Postcard with Place Viger Hotel, dated 1900. The reverse side is a shipping notice sent to a customer. Source: BNQ/Bazinet.

# Canadian Pacific Railway Company.

## STATEMENT OF EARNINGS AND EXPENSES.

	April, 1912	July 1st to April 30th, 1912
Gross Earnings.....	\$11,301,349.46	\$100,647,723.22
Working Expenses. ....	7,185,597.67	64,876,598.31
Net Profits.....	<u>\$4,115,751.79</u>	<u>\$35,771,124.91</u>
In April, 1911, the net profits were .....		
		\$3,156,974.61
And from July 1st to April 30th, 1911, there was a net profit of. ....		
		\$30,731,074.76
The gain in net profits over the same period last year is therefore, for April,		
\$958,777.18, and from July 1st to April 30th.....		\$5,040,030.15

W. R. BAKER,  
Secretary.

MONTREAL, May 28th, 1912.



**Fig. IV-4.** Postcard with image of Place Viger Hotel. The reverse side bears the financial statements of the CPR Company for the month of April 1912. Source: BNQ/Bazinet.



SHERBROOKE STREET WEST, MONTREAL, CANADA

**Fig. IV-5.** Postcard view of Sherbrooke Street West, Montreal, ca. 1940. Canadian Art Deeptone Series. Source: PC.

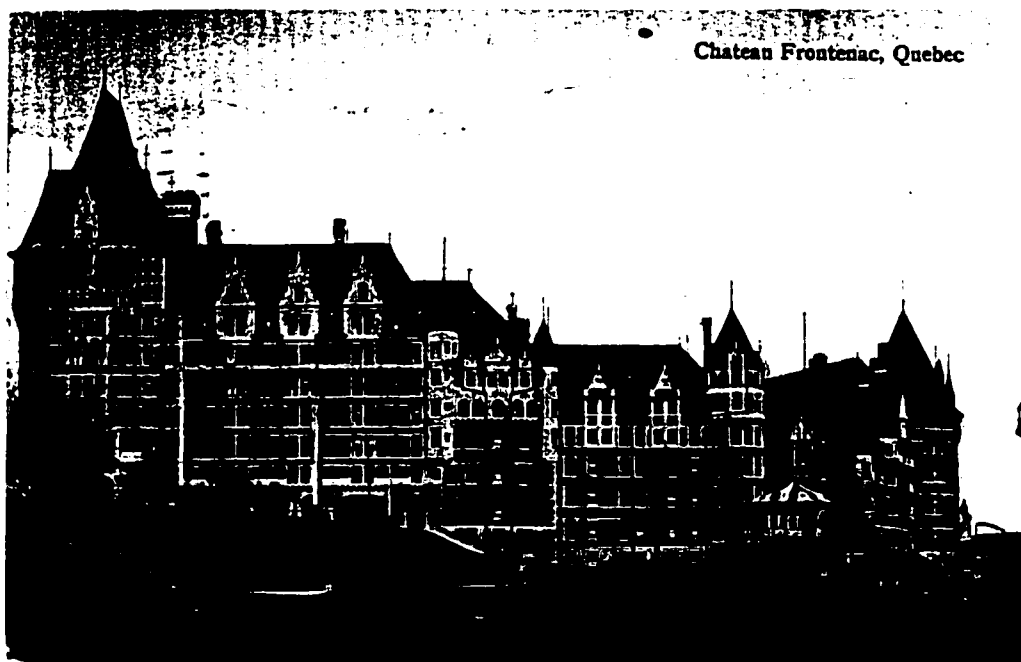
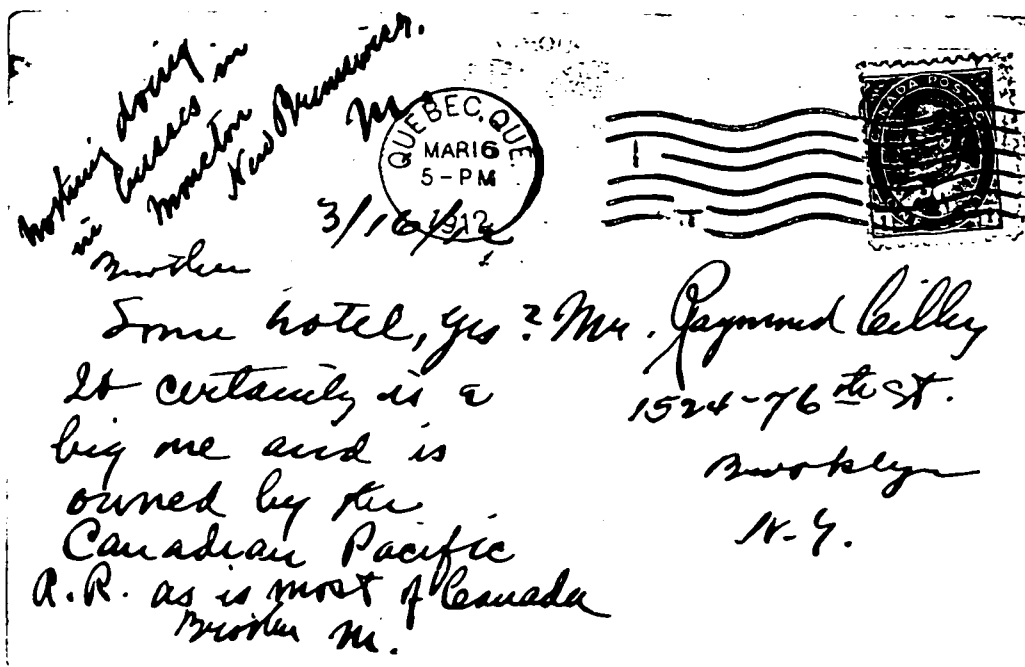


Fig. IV-6. Postcard view of Chateau Frontenac, Quebec with annotations, ca. 1912. Valentine & Sons. Source: PC.



**Fig. IV-7.** Postcard view of Château Frontenac in Québec City, dominating the lower town, ca. 1995. J.C. Ricard.  
Source: PC.

# WESTERN CANADA WINS

## THE WORLD'S ATTENTION DRAWN TO IT

A Phenomenal Development. — In the Splendid Harvest of 1904 Western Canada produced over One Hundred Million Bushels of Grain—Probably Sixty Million Bushels of Wheat—Forty of Oats—Ten of Barley—Making a Grand Total of 110,000,000 Bushels.

### WESTERN CANADA HAS THE RICHEST SOIL IN THE WORLD.

More than half a Million People have their Homes in Western Canada.  
Still there is Plenty of Room.

The Canadian Government gives 160 Acres, FREE, to any male over 18 years of age, or to a widow having minor children dependent upon her for support.

### DON'T DELAY, THE LAND IS BEING RAPIDLY TAKEN UP.

In the past year, 22,727 British Settlers came to Western Canada.—Poor Men grow rich and glad in Western Canada.—Happy homes for millions.—Western Canada the future Granary of the World.—Three hundred miles of Coal.—Finest Grain and Cattle.—Every inducement for Homeseekers.—Churches and Schools.—Small taxes, Cheap fuel, Good climate, Good markets.

### DON'T BE A RENTER. OWN YOUR OWN HOME.

Railways keep pace with the needs of Western Canada.—Six thousand miles of Track.—Hundreds of miles to be added.—1015 Elevators in Western Canada with a capacity of 27,883,000 Bushels.—33,152 head of Cattle were sent east from Western Canada from May 1 to Oct. 31, last year.

### FIELDS OF GOLDEN GRAIN. WORLD'S HARD WHEAT GRANARY.

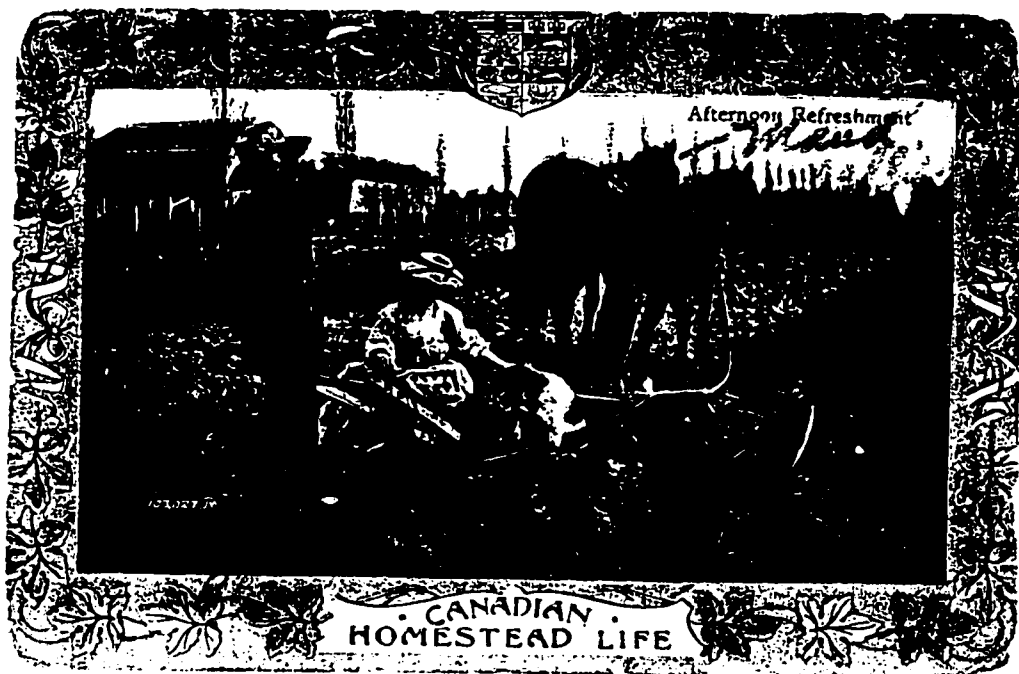
Information gladly given on Western Canada by the following :

**W. W. CORY**, Deputy Minister of the Interior, Ottawa, Canada.

**W. D. SCOTT**, Superintendent of Immigration, Ottawa, Canada.

**W. T. R. PRESTON**, Commissioner of Emigration,  
11 & 12 Charing Cross, London, England.

**Fig. IV-8.** A 1905 Canadian government advertisement promoting immigration to the Canadian West. Source: The Book of Canada 340.



**Fig. IV-9.** Postcard from the "Canada's Homestead Life" series- "Afternoon refreshment", ca. 1912. Valentine and Sons. Source: J. Gallop.



**Fig. IV-10.** Postcard showing a bird's eye view of Lac Carré, St. Faustin Station, Quebec. Source: WPL No. 2812.

## COLONIZATION LANDS

For Cards,  
Pamphlets,  
Information, Etc.,  
on Colonization Lands in the  
Province of Quebec

Please Address to Colonization Office.

1600 Notre Dame St., MONTREAL



The following districts are now colonizing:

Haie des Chaleurs and Gaspé Coasts, Matapédia Valley, Lake St. John District, North of Montreal, Lake Temiskaming, Matane and Temiscouata Reserves, where excellent farming land can be had at 20 and 30 cents per acre.

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IN ALL COUNTRIES

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Experienced men make smaller cases easy to  
U. S. C. All kinds welcome as we are well equipped  
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SEND WRITING FOR SCHEDULE OF CHARGES AND HOW  
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Capital fully subscribed,	\$12,500,000
Life funds, - - -	13,095,445
Total Assets exceed -	33,750,000
Total Annual Income exceeds,	12,500,000

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J. MCGREGOR, Manager

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Late Examiner Canadian Patent Office.  
Graduate in Electrical Engineering  
of the McGill University,  
Montreal.

Validity and Infringements of Patents Investigated  
Assignments, etc., Drawn. Searches Made

CANADA LIFE BUILDING, MONTREAL.

Toronto (Head) Office - Canadian Bank of Commerce Building  
Ottawa Office - - - - - Carriek Chambers, 5 Elgin Street  
Washington (U.S.) Office - 1003 F St. N. W., near Patent Office

## Furness, Withy & Co. Ltd.

Steamship Agents  
and Brokers

AGENCIES

MANCHESTER LINERS, Limited  
CANADA AND NEWFOUNDLAND LINE  
FURNESS LINE

HANSA-ST. LAWRENCE LINE  
CANADA-SOUTH AFRICA JOINT SERVICE

MONTREAL

## George Durnford

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT  
AND AUDITOR, F.C.A., CAN.

Accounts of Companies, Firms and Individuals audited.  
Estates administered. Rents, Dividends, etc., collected.  
Arbitrations and Valuations made.  
Real Estate bought and sold.

TELEPHONE MAIN 1158

ROOM 58 CANADA LIFE BUILDING.

189 St. James Street, MONTREAL

## The Accident and Guarantee Co. - of - Canada

HEAD OFFICE:

179 ST. JAMES STREET, MONTREAL

Capital Authorized,	\$1,000,000.00
Capital Subscribed,	250,000.00

FULL GOVERNMENT DEPOSIT

TRANSACTS:

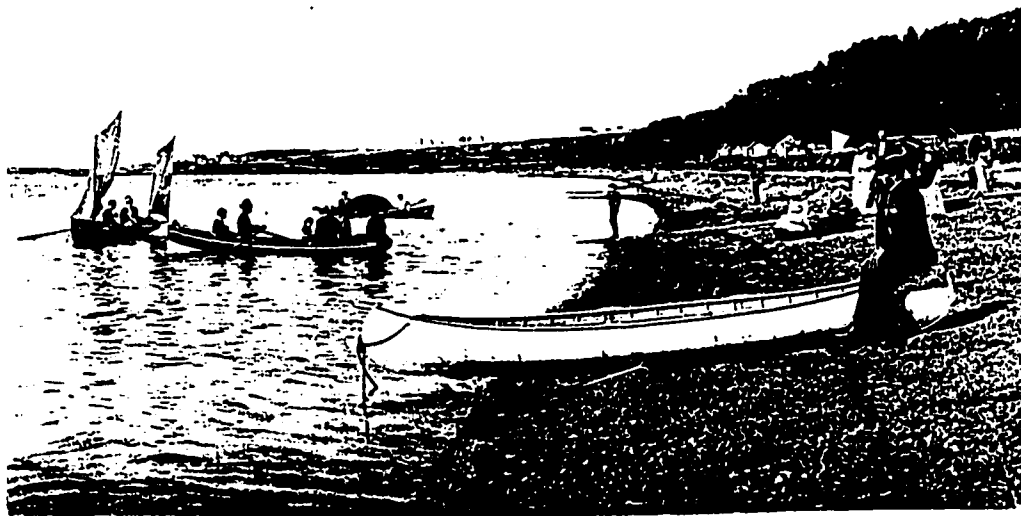
Personal Accident, Sickness, Collective and Liability  
Insurance

FOR PARTICULARS  
APPLY TO

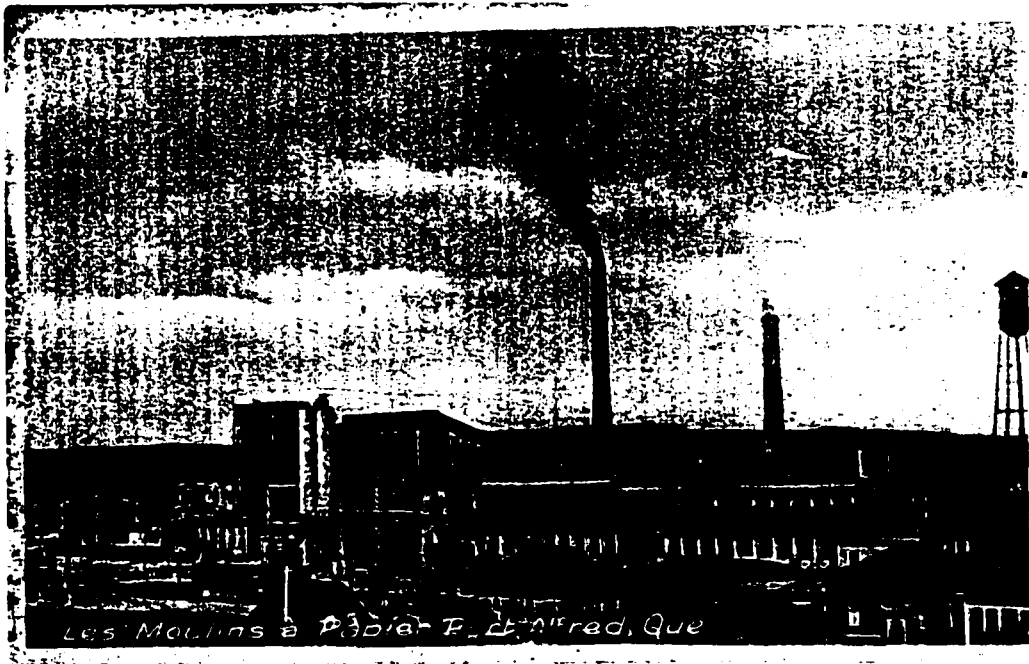
F. J. J. STARK, Manager.

Fig. IV-11. A 1905 advertisement for Colonization Lands in Quebec. Source: The Book of Canada 372.

Province of Quebec. On the Beach at Cacouna.



**Fig. IV-12.** Postcard of Murray Bay, ca. 1909. Livernois.  
Source: WPL No. 244.



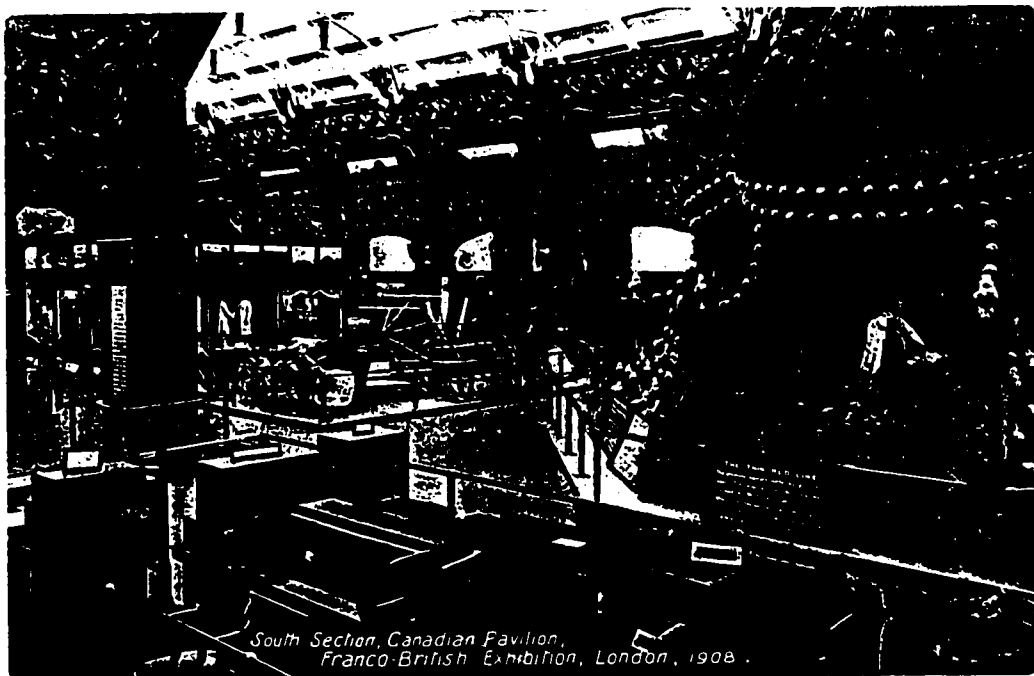
**Fig. IV-13.** Postcard view of Les Moulins à Papier, Port Alfred, Québec, ca. 1920. Novelty Mfg. & Art. Source: PC.



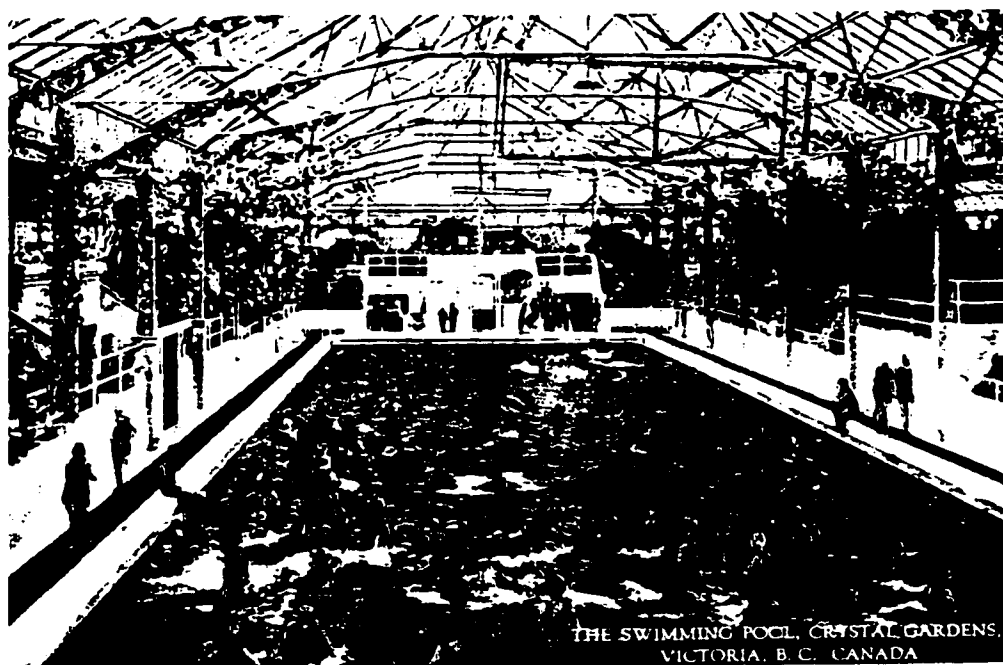
**Fig. IV-14.** Postcards of Témiscaming, Québec, The Flower Town. View of a semi-detached house, corner Kipawa Road and Thorne Ave. Irwin Specialty. Source: Fortier 38.



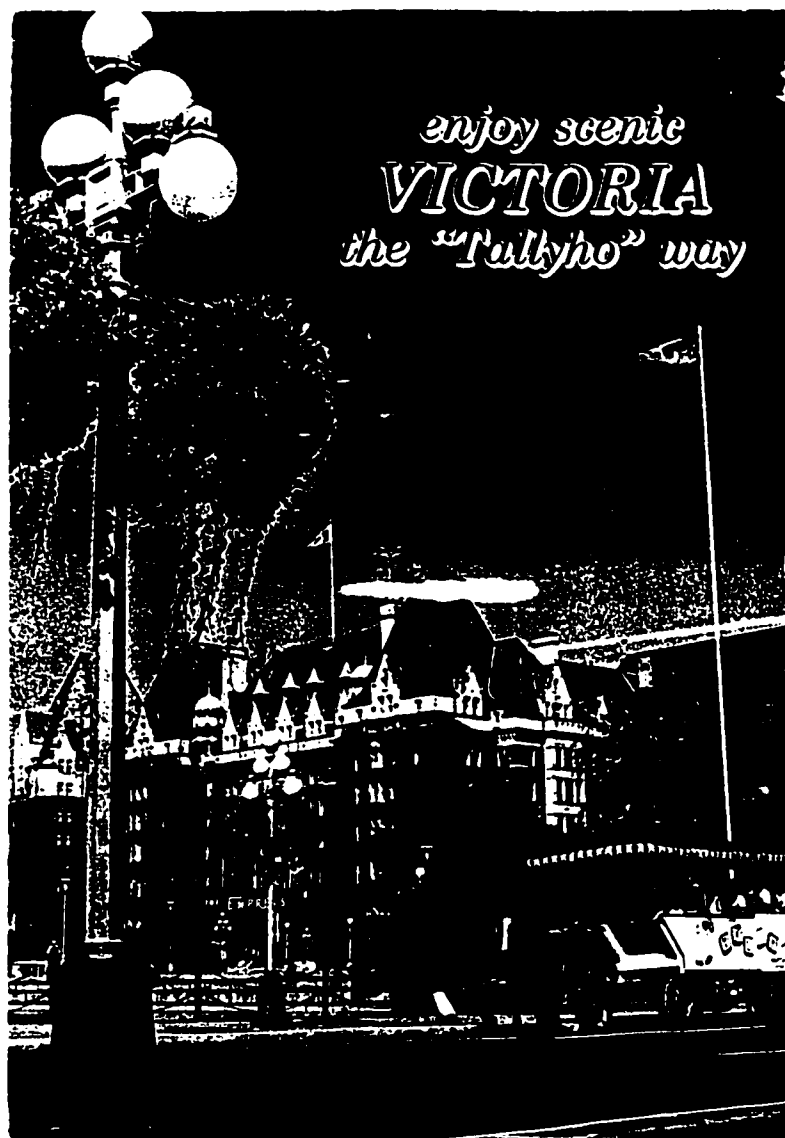
**Fig. IV-15.** Postcard from the Empire Exhibition in Wembley, 1924 featuring the Indian Pavilion. Source: Greenhalgh 18.



**Fig. IV-16.** Postcard featuring an interior view of the Canadian Pavilion, at the Franco-British Exhibition of 1908. Source: J. Gallop.



**Fig. IV-17.** Exterior and Interior views of the Crystal Garden, Victoria B.C. (1926 and 1930 respectively). Source: Barrett 276.



**Fig. IV-18.** Postcard of the City of Flowers with a view of the Château style Empress Hotel. "Enjoy scenic Victoria the "Tallyho" way, ca. 1990. Stan V. White. Source: PC.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **COLLECTION AND MEANING:**

#### **The individual and the collective**

The previous chapters discussed how the postcard disseminated the architectural image as means to convey particular conceptions of place, serving various frequently conflicting ideologies at the national and corporate levels. In the highly contrasting contexts of the individual and the institution, the practice of postcard collecting also acquired various differential values and meanings with time.

Mass-produced objects such as postcards, while assigned to the realm of "popular culture", have nevertheless been conserved and collected by a very broad range of people who, for a variety of reasons, considered them sufficiently valuable to be kept. For individuals, the subjective criteria informing institutional collection concerning the worth of particular media and types of images, such as preciousness, rarity and artistry, have been difficult to apply and have not been particularly relevant. By transcending its basic use function, postcards effectively mediated the cultural experience of architecture and space, developing a polysemic

basis for their collection. In the process, postcards enabled individuals to seek out postcards for collection purposes as a way of enhancing their "culture capital."<sup>1</sup>

This chapter will first examine how collecting architectural images in postcard form came to be an act of acquisition entwined with issues associated with architecture and its image. The values and significance attributed to postcards by individuals and how their personal collections played very pragmatic and didactic roles in the conception of place will be discussed. Many of those personal collections are now in the care of various institutions, where they are gradually acquiring new roles.

### **Collection and the individual**

In order to understand the massive appeal of the postcard as a collectible, it is important to consider the dearth of architectural imagery in the public sphere in the late nineteenth century. In Quebec at that time, other than small religious icons from Europe distributed by the clergy,<sup>2</sup> holiday greeting cards, or family portraits and cartes-de-visites,<sup>3</sup> portable material bearing architectural imagery in

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<sup>1</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, Distinction: a social critique of the judgement of taste Trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984)

<sup>2</sup> Dominique Lerch, "L'imagerie au Quebec: un cas de dépendance culturelle" in Vieux Papier, 277 (juillet 1980) 69-79.

particular was not readily available to the general public. Stereoscopic views featuring black-and white photography of buildings such as figure V-1 were highly popular, but generally confined to the bourgeois classes who could afford the apparatus required to view them.<sup>4</sup>

What could be considered popular print media such as newspapers at that time included few realist representations. Nevertheless many companies saw advantages in using building views to promote their business interests when advertising in various newspapers and magazines. Publications such as L'Almanach du Peuple Illustré<sup>5</sup> regularly printed advertisements associating the architectural image to both products and places, emulating the tradition established by banks and insurance companies who spent lavishly acquiring buildings with an impressive architectural presence in order to reflect positively on their business.

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<sup>3</sup> While the medium of carte de visites used a range of subject matter, including "scenic views" featuring architecture, the photographic images were predominantly of people. William C. Darrah, Cartes de Visites in Nineteenth Century Photography (Gettysberg: W.C. Darrah 1981) 9-10.

<sup>4</sup> Stereographs were mass-produced in the U.S.A. and Canada and frequently sold in sets or series by mail-order, through distributors, as well as itinerant salesmen. While the sale of individual cards was not encouraged, it was possible to purchase individual views. Darrah, The World of Stereographs, 45-52.

<sup>5</sup> L'Almanach du Peuple Illustré (Montréal: Co. Beauchemin & Fils, 1890)

Architectural images were used to fulfill the marketing objectives of very diverse businesses by tapping into a growing affinity for imagery. Whether for promoting the sale of pianos and organs, or for a department store seeking to present itself as the shopping destination in Montreal, the architectural image, although in rather sketchy form, was used to develop distinctive public recognition for the product and place of retail by associating itself with the solidity and stability that such architectural forms and materials could suggest. (Figures V-2 and V-3)

Other more public and accessible displays of the architectural image included posters and occasionally at night, projected "stereopticon views" on the sides of buildings<sup>6</sup> or equally ephemeral magic lantern shows in halls. The Canadian Pacific Railway, through its early photographic forays across the country, developed an extensive archive of negatives of various Canadian subjects used to make lantern slides intended for promotional purposes.<sup>7</sup> However manifestations such as magic lantern shows could only be fleeting at best, and did not provide the general public a

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<sup>6</sup> "Canadian Printer and Publisher" Oct. and Nov., 1902. Bryan Dewalt, Technology and Canadian Printing: A History from Lead Type to Lasers (Ottawa: National Museum of Science and Technology, 1995) 53.

<sup>7</sup> E.J. Hart, The Selling of Canada (Banff: Altitude Publishing, 1982) 176. See also, Steve Humphries, Victorian Britain Through the Magic Lantern. (London: Sidwick & Jackson, 1989) 66-83.

material object capable of being held in cultural esteem in the same manner as earlier limited edition sets of engravings and lithographs of city views.<sup>8</sup> In the early 19th century, city views, by far the most popular subject in Canadian prints at that time, were often sold by subscription only, making them a cultural object that remained "recherché". In 1829 advertised prices for a set of six Montreal views were 10 shillings per set plain, and 15s for a coloured set, a sizable discretionary purchase for that time.

Throughout Canada, when private production of postcards became possible in the late nineteenth century, the intensity of demand for both the imagery and convenience they provided was unprecedented. While heretofore a photographer's services had to be engaged to obtain a specific photograph of one's residence or place of business, the assortment of different views made available with postcard photography meant that images produced on a "speculative" basis could find takers who related to them for diverse personal reasons. The general public was thus presented with a vast assortment of architectural imagery that could easily be acquired at a truly accessible price of pennies apiece, as the advertisement for postcards in figure V-4 indicates.

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<sup>8</sup> Mary Allodi, Printmaking in Canada: The earliest views and portraits. (Toronto: Royal Ontario Museum, 1980) xv, 64.

The architectural and urban representations featured on postcards could originate from, or be sent to, the most remote communities or homesteads throughout the country. For both the urban dweller or the village inhabitant, postcards were not simply an inexpensive and expedient means of communication. They enabled the world to be framed and fixed in a standardized format, a consistent and reliable source of imagery, which unlike stereographic views, possessed the added appeal of color in the early twentieth century. Claude Bourgeois describes the initial power of the medium:

...la seule représentation photographique de son village ou de sa maison possédait ce côté 'magique' qu'on arrive mal à imaginer de nos jours. Le fait d'envoyer à sa famille et à ses amis ces merveilles en noir et parfois en couleurs devait constituer en soi des événements inoubliables, et le fait de pouvoir reproduire à volonté ces instants sublimes pour quelques sous seulement, devait en étonner plus d'un...<sup>9</sup>

Indeed this was a great novelty that changed perceptions of the immediate and familiar, as well as the world beyond.

As architectural images became available everywhere and to anyone in postcard form, a very broad-based participation in use and collection was fostered, a phenomenon which ruptured the confines of previously class-based, predominantly urban, bourgeois domestic spheres that had privileged the collection of earlier prints and later stereoscopic views. As the use function became transformed

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<sup>9</sup> Claude Bourgeois, quoted in Poitras, 30-31.

into display, postcards simply assumed a significance specific to the particular group they were associated with.<sup>10</sup>

For many who possessed neither schooling nor economic clout, postcards could tacitly suggest relations of the self and the built environment. They required little writing skills to use: a simple "X" or star sufficed to mark one's presence in the place represented, as indicated in figure V-5. As the text on the correspondence side of the postcard confirms, the street view is used to explain a place of residence:

A mes chères petites cousines, Voici le  
portrait du lieu ou nous allons demeurer, la  
ou la voiture est arrêtée, au troisième. J'ai  
mis une étoile au dessus; c'est la!...

By selecting and purchasing a particular postcard, anyone could demonstrate an appreciation for architecture and its image and engage in a dialogue about its experience. Whether in early Edwardian times or the late twentieth century, the postcard elicits casual responses to the architecture that is depicted, recording reflections about the city, its buildings, its weather, and the pleasures to be experienced from architecture and its image. Simple comments such as "Quite a nice building," referring to the Montreal Court

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<sup>10</sup> Susan Stewart reviews how the miniature transforms "use-value" into "a time of infinite reverie." She also points to the secret life of things which open to reveal a set of actions and hence a narrativity and history outside the given field of perception. On Longing: 54, 65. The postcard is a prime example of this.

House of 1919 or for Florence in 1995 "C'est vraiment très beau, architecture différente...", and numerous close variations are typical of the medium in spite of a very large time-span. (Figures V-6 and 7)

As Allen Anderson relates, in reviewing cards from his personal collection, the postcard was a means to communicate across distances which, unlike letters, were kept, frequently in albums, and shown to friends and visitors.<sup>11</sup> The massive appeal of postcard collections was partly grounded in the simple pleasure of acquisition, an act of superfluous consumption outside the needs of the quotidien. It made collection a cultural activity accessible to everyone. As with all the early cards which are extant today, their original owners or recipients felt they should be kept, formally in elaborate albums as a collection of things very precious or casually at times, in the bottom of a drawer, in a book, in a basement or attic.

### **Collection and the institution**

In Architecture and Its Image issued by the Canadian Centre for Architecture in 1989, Phyllis Lambert points out that autonomous architectural museums or departments within museums are a recent phenomena, being first "recognized" in 1979. The

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<sup>11</sup> Alan Anderson and Betty Tomlinson, Greetings From Canada: An album of unique Canadian postcards of the Edwardian Era 1900-1916 (Toronto: MacMillan, 1978) xii.

International Federation of Architectural Museums met for the first time and agreed on:

the importance of collecting and preserving architectural documents for the purpose of interpreting and presenting architectural concepts to the public.<sup>12</sup>

In the past architectural drawings, prints and photographs were collected by many institutions with the underlying intention emphasizing preservation of documents rather than to broadening public access and understanding about architecture in its built form. Architectural drawings and prints were preserved as art objects rather than used as didactic material for public consumption.

The architectural image nevertheless existed and proliferated beyond the walls and coffers of official collection and ironically, the one media which made the architectural image most widely available, the postcard, has yet to be given full scholarly legitimization. Architectural scholarship has focused extensively on the vast archives of material that have been amassed through architectural practice, theory and representation, while very little research has been undertaken to explore the architectural image outside official cultural frameworks where "...the

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<sup>12</sup> Phyllis Lambert, "Forward" in Architecture and Its Image: Four Centuries of Architectural Representation. Eds. Eve Blau and Edward Kaufman (Montreal: The Canadian Center for Architecture, 1989) 9.

notion of architectural artifact as representation is inherent..."<sup>13</sup> As Naomi Schor aptly asks:

Can't we begin to unburden representation just a little in order to take into account other disdained archival materials, those that do not fit comfortably under current available paradigms? Postcards, for example...<sup>14</sup>

In spite of its prominent role in disseminating architectural concepts to the public, the postcard, when viewed in terms of production, has been assigned to the amorphous subordinate class described as "mass culture". Stereotypically cast at the bottom of the high/low culture paradigm, "popular culture" espoused by the masses, the postcard is often granted an inferior status as object of study when not totally ignored. However, valorization outside the institutional system has ensured its integration in mainstream collections, albeit slowly, and sometimes inadvertently. Several institutions with extensive postcard collections in their archives, frequently acquired them along with the papers of individual collectors.<sup>15</sup> Many have yet to

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<sup>13</sup> Lambert 9.

<sup>14</sup> Naomi Schor, "Cartes Postales: Representing Paris 1900" in Critical Inquiry 18 (Winter 1992) 192.

<sup>15</sup> George Watson Cole's own collection of approximately 35,000 cards was acquired along with his extensive papers by the American Antiquarian Society, in Worcester, Massachusetts. Postcards until now were not an acquisition priority for the Society nor have they formed a research interest. Jennifer Henderson, "George Watson Cole: A Man, His Postcards, and the American Antiquarian Society" in Postcards In the Library: Invaluable Visual Resources Ed. Norman D. Stevens (Binghamton, N.Y.: Haworth Press, 1995) 176.

be examined and a number remain completely unaccounted for and unexplored.

The influence that postcards have wielded in relation to architectural practice suggests a reversal of the pyramidal paradigmatic conception of cultural dissemination. Ernest Cormier, an architect who played a prominent role in the developing the Art Deco architectural style in Montreal, assembled such a collection of postcards. His voluminous architectural archive of drawings and files, including the postcards, were placed in the custody of Canadian Center for Architecture. His uncatalogued collection of cards remains inaccessible until funds will permit proper cleaning after years of oblivion.<sup>16</sup> The Canadian Architecture Collection of McGill University also preserves a broad variety of material from the archives of Robert Findlay and Edward Maxwell, two architects who played a significant role in the design of architecture for the early twentieth century Montreal establishment. The Edward Maxwell archive includes not only postcards but also magazine clippings which have yet to be completely catalogued and organized. The CAC archives preserves the papers of other architects as well who are

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<sup>16</sup> Subsequent to my queries in early 1997, the existence of a Cormier postcard collection was ascertained and confirmed to me by the head archivist, Mr. Robert Desaulniers. Due to a mold and mildew infestation, the cards remain inaccessible until they are fumigated and cleaned. According to the Chief Curator, Mr. Nicholas Olsberg, the project will be undertaken sometime in 1999.

either alumni or teachers at the McGill University School of Architecture, such as Peter Collins. The personal collections of these architects will be examined in the context of the institution they now reside in.

### **The Canadian Architecture Collection - McGill University**

As the postcard collection found in the Canadian Architecture Collection of McGill University confirms, collecting postcards has been important to many practicing architects. While archival priorities have meant that attention and resources have been concentrated elsewhere, it has also meant that fortuitously, apart from their placement in proper archival shoe box-like containers, the postcard collections have until now remained in the state and order in which they were received. This involves packets of cards held together with disintegrating rubber-bands, wrapped around the original handwritten classifying labels and others bearing visible water and humidity damage. The markings and particular groupings of cards originally made by two prominent Montreal architectural practitioners of the early twentieth century, Edward Maxwell and Robert Findlay, have remained integral. The Peter Collins archive similarly includes a collection of nearly 1200 cards, annotated in Collins' handwriting, still in the brown manila envelopes he placed them in.

In the case of the Edward Maxwell collection, the predominantly uncirculated postcards represent purchases made during his extensive travels throughout the world. Grouped loosely by country or city- such as France, Scotland, Egypt, Jerusalem, Java, Ceylon, Japan and so on- the cards chronicle the cultural tours the architect undertook, including the museums visited. In addition to images of the museum buildings and interior views, are postcards of their art collections. Some cards such as figure V-8, which were originally intended to be mailed as the addressed side indicates, notes the name of the hotel occupied during his stay. Other cards indicate Maxwell's interest in depictions of the people of foreign lands, as represented in "exotic studies" such as the Arab house and the Arab village in figures V-9 and V-10 indicate.

Like many other postcard collections estranged from their original owners, the Maxwell collection suffers evidence of neglect in the form of water and humidity damage, that has yet to be tended to and controlled. It awaits a new archival order and protection.

Another extensive collection of cards in the Canadian Architecture Collection is that which was assembled by Peter Collins, an architect, professor of architectural history and theory at McGill University, whose tenure to 1981 spanned over twenty years. Within seven large envelopes are groupings of cards broadly organized by geographical location, in

several series numbered on a small adhesive circle in the upper right hand corner of each card. Acquired during his extensive travels, the postcards provided Collins with, as Anne-Marie Adams observed, the images that are often difficult to obtain, such as aerial views that give a sense of urban development; building interiors often inaccessible to the public; or simply facades taken under ideal lighting conditions or time of year.<sup>17</sup>

A number of postcards provide traces of how the architectural historian sought the medium for didactic purposes. Collins' teaching strategies and concerns centered on his desire to impart to his students the rational underpinnings of architecture. Slides made from cards in his collection were used for projection in his lectures, providing a focus for queries and speculations about the resolution of particular architectural problems.

The issues and constraints that influenced the finished architectural outcome, though not always apparent at first glance, were of utmost concern to Collins. Practical circulation problems or subtle refinements of different structural elements required to produce a harmonious whole were facets of design he frequently explored. For instance,

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<sup>17</sup> The collection was reviewed by Anne-Marie Adams in a posthumous profile of Collins "With the Precision Appropriate: Images from the Peter Collins Postcard Collection" in ARQ 75 (Octobre 1993) 19.

the annotation on the back of a postcard of Palazzo Turzi in figure V-11 shows his sketch indicating the relation of stairs to pedestrian and vehicular access, while figure V-12, a view of the Geneva City Hall interior courtyard, is annotated with the note "first row of columns oval, second...round."

By frequently focusing on those issues which are not temporally specific, such as circulation, differentiation and articulation of distinct functions, he challenged his students to think beyond the two-dimensional representations, to understand not only the processes involved in architectural design and construction but also the practical experience of architecture.

In the case of the Findlay collection, the mostly uncirculated postcards are each meticulously ink stamped with his personal identifying mark "Frank R. Findlay", and grouped according to locations, broadly classified as United Kingdom, followed by various city groupings in Europe, Canada and the United States. The United Kingdom grouping of cards feature views of different sites with a focus on English homes of different periods, views undoubtedly important and inspirational for Findlay, an architect who designed numerous houses for the anglophone elite of Montreal in the early 1900's.<sup>18</sup> As indicated in figure V-13 some of the cards also

served to record details not apparent on the postcard image but significant enough to be sketched for future reference.

A number of circulated cards in his collection are regrouped under the title "advertisers". This section features postcards sent to practicing architects at the time, with the intention of informing and influencing product specification. The cards promote a range of building products such as waterproofing compound, nailing concrete, mortar colours or temperature controls. As figures V-14, 15 and 16 indicate, the products, which by themselves possess little aesthetic appeal, are associated with the effectiveness of the whole, an exemplary architecture whose representation is circulated by the postcard medium. Companies such as Sweet's—referred to in figure V-14, have been very successful in the promotion of building products. Just as they used the postcard to capture attention in the early 20th century, Sweet's today makes available their catalogue of building materials in CD-ROM format and on-line through the Internet. While it is not known whether the postcards received by Findlay fulfilled their advertising objectives, they were surely kept because the architectural images provided him with a potential source of forms and details according to building type.

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<sup>18</sup> Hazel Power, Robert Findlay and the Macaulay Family Architecture (Masters thesis, Dept. of Art History, Concordia University, 1993)

Other packets in the Findlay collection which lent themselves to practical use are pragmatically labeled according to design elements, such as: "Entrances", "Windows", "Stairways", and "Fireplaces". Organized for ease of reference, these cards provided Findlay with a visual database that could serve as a design reference or simply as a basis for discussion with the clients of the numerous housing commissions he was awarded.

As a postcard found in the Macaulay family papers suggests (Figure V-17), the Scottish Baronial architecture of the Helenburgh castle sufficiently intrigued and captivated Robertson Macaulay, a wealthy client of Findlay's, for him to name his Westmount villa "Ardincaple".<sup>19</sup> It is quite likely that Macaulay showed his architect the postcard, a view inspirational for his new home on the slopes of Mount Royal, one worthy of the social status he had achieved as a successful businessman. It is also quite likely that Findlay showed his client the numerous postcards he kept of wood joinery and interior details in an effort to draw out from the former President of the Sun Life Assurance Company, what his stylistic preferences for finishes were.

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<sup>19</sup> Power 52-54.

## Other architects and their collections

Direct use of postcards for architectural practice is inferred by the organization and categories of images Robert Findlay purchased and so possessively marked out in his collection. While a number of images resemble some of the homes Findlay has built in the Westmount, Quebec area, a systematic search to correlate specific postcard images and particular buildings or details was not attempted. However the archives of other architect contemporaries such as the American James Gamble Rogers and Le Corbusier have left clear evidence that postcards indeed influenced not only the manner in which they worked but directly influenced their architectural design.

James Gamble Rogers, architect for several private east coast learning institutions such as Yale and the University of Chicago, was perhaps more forthright about his sources of inspiration. As Aaron Betsky writes, the James Gable Rogers Papers contain a manuscript unequivocally identified as Scrapbook Containing Postcards Collected and Used as Sources of Inspirations for Design of Yale Buildings.<sup>20</sup> This scrapbook assembled architectural elements of buildings he admired from all over the world, and classified by specific headings such

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<sup>20</sup> Aaron Betsky, "James Gamble Rogers and The Pragmatics of Representation" in Critical Architecture and Contemporary Culture, Eds. William Lillyman, Marilyn Moriarty, and David Neuman (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994) 84, note 27.

as "screens", "columns", and "windows". Working from the stylistic reference of Oxbridge "Gothic" architecture, he selected elements from his postcard collection, reassembling and rearticulating them in a manner which signified conservatism and stability, values of the elite circles he frequented and which provided him with his professional mandates. For Rogers the scrapbook of postcard images became a pattern language for the Memorial Quadrangle.<sup>21</sup> It enabled him to assuredly provide Yale with the tradition-bound values associated with its American Neo-Gothic style. This referential historical lineage created from the postcard imagery suggests a process in reverse to the putative implosion and flatness of meaning frequently associated with mass media representations.

Another architect who made frequent use of postcards is Le Corbusier. For the pioneer of modern architectural design concepts, the past presented practices to be rejected rather than emulated in order to make place for the new. The postcard, with its usually horizontally proportioned rectangular format, may have been instrumental for Le Corbusier in developing new ideas concerning buildings and the views they both provide and become.

At a time when the postcard was still understood to be a modern and innovative means of communication, it constituted

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<sup>21</sup> Betsky 72.

a modern way of seeing the world, one which Le Corbusier integrated in both his design research and work methodology. Indeed the postcard easily lent itself to many different creative activities. The art and studio of his friend, painter Fernand Léger, was replete with postcard images assembled as a wall mural and element in a wireframe mobile. Use of postcards, a writer of the time asserted, "...jettent un défi à la peinture."<sup>22</sup> It did the same for architecture.

One significant and highly influential concern of Le Corbusier centered on vision and views from within a building and how it impacted views of the building itself. This led him to reevaluate the concept of window, that omnipresent building component that he felt must be horizontally proportioned. This idea was directly counter to that of the traditional vertically proportioned window his mentor Auguste Perret continued to advocate.<sup>23</sup> As Beatriz Colomina argues, in elaborating this concept of "fenêtre en longueur" in his villas of the 1920's, Le Corbusier was in effect adopting the aesthetic of the camera eye, of photographic framing, and the creation of significant views as promoted by the postcard. The design for the Beistegui apartment in Paris for instance,

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<sup>22</sup> Pierre Berthelot, "L'Atelier de Fernand Leger," Beaux-Arts 20 Décembre (1930) 14.

<sup>23</sup> Beatriz Colomina, Privacy and Publicity: Modern Architecture as Mass-Media (Cambridge and London: MIT Press, 1996) 128-130, 306-311.

declines the panoramic view of Paris and replaces it with a series of precisely constructed and controlled vistas of the Arc de Triumph, the Eiffel Tower, Notre-Dame, Sacré-Coeur, etc.,- the touristic "icons" defining the city, as depicted by contemporary postcards.<sup>24</sup> (Figure I-4)

Postcards figured not only in the development of Le Corbusier's horizontal "fenêtre en longueur" concept that produced framed and controlled views from the buildings he designed; they were also used very pragmatically as a base for his prolific sketching. Sometimes he integrated them directly into his drawings and utilized them in publications such as "La Ville Radieuse."<sup>25</sup> As figure V-18 indicates, a postcard became a part of a montage featuring a vista Le Corbusier completed by inserting the apartment building he designed.

For many decades, postcards have been prized possession for many and placed in guarded private collections. It is because of those numerous collections amassed by individuals that official collections are now being acquired and expanded. Since 1991, the Teich Postal Archives<sup>26</sup> has engaged

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<sup>24</sup> Colomina 318.

<sup>25</sup> Colomina 319.

<sup>26</sup> The core collection, acquired in 1982 comprised the raw industrial archives of the Curt Teich Company of Chicago, which operated from 1898 to 1978, as the world's largest volume printer of view and advertising postcards. Katherine Hamilton-Smith, "The Curt Teich Postcard Archives: dedicated to the Postcard as a Document Type" in Stevens 5-16. Also,

in an active program of collecting postcards and albums to add to its core collection, which in 1995 yielded an additional 25,000 cards. In February 1993, La Revue du Louvre reported the acquisition of 873 postcards from the E. Stephan collection, where it is also noted that the cards were to be numbered, catalogued, made available for public display, and subsequent archiving.<sup>27</sup> In 1998, the Bibliothèque National du Quebec posted on the World Wide Web<sup>28</sup> a notice about the acquisition of two important Quebec postcard collections, increasing its already substantial collection by over 16,000 cards.

This chapter raised the issue of how the architectural image in postcard form became an object of collection for individuals, enabling the aesthetic appreciation of architecture through the acquisition of its image. As a practice, postcard collecting is seen to function in ways contrary to the model of "art and cultural consumption ...predisposed, consciously and deliberately or not, to

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Kim Keister, "Wish you were here!: The Curt Teich Postal Archives depict Americans as they saw themselves through the first seven decades of the twentieth century." Historic Preservation (Vol.44, Mar/Apr., 1992) 55-61.

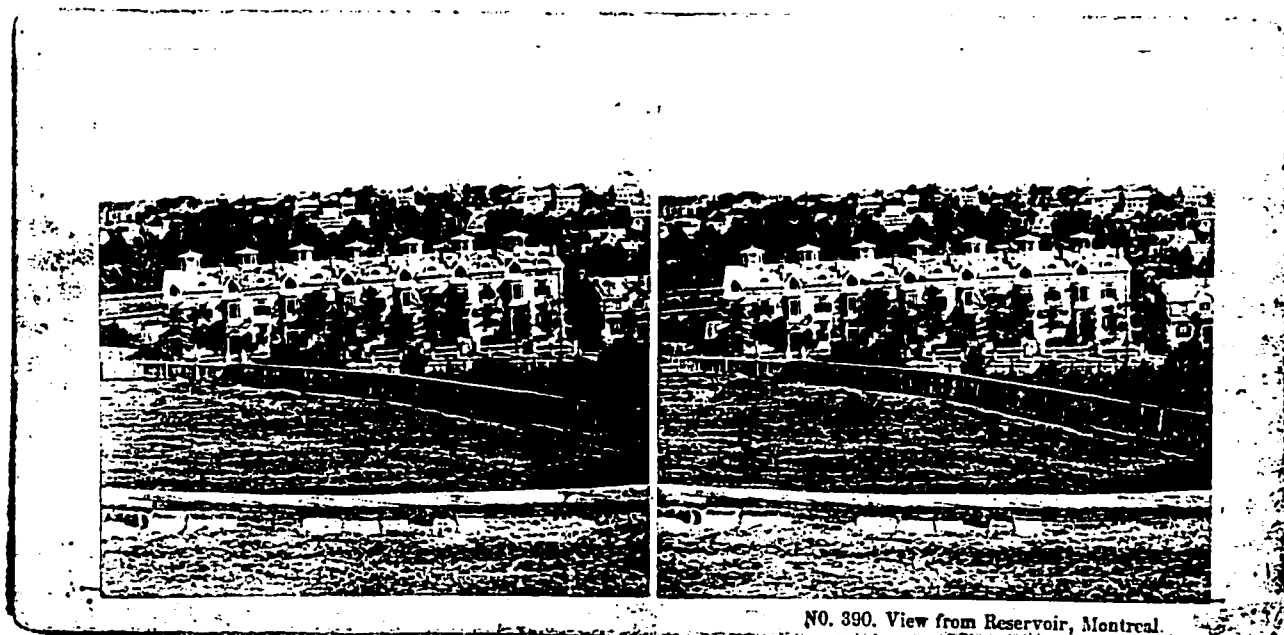
<sup>27</sup> "Acquisitions," Revue du Louvre Paris (Février: 1993) 99.

<sup>28</sup> The collections of Michel Bazinet and Marcel Paquette were acquired in 1998 and preserved in their original albums. "Acquisition de deux importantes collections de cartes postales," <http://www2.biblinat.gouv.qc.ca/>

fulfill a social function of legitimating social difference."<sup>29</sup> As a highly inclusive practice, postcard collecting became significant to people of diverse backgrounds, social or economic strata, and aesthetic positions. With institutional collection, however, where stewardship and control govern the choices and practices that surround the selection and preservation of cultural artifacts, the postcard has received varied reception over time, including outright exclusion and frequent oblivion. This is a situation that is gradually being transformed, as values shift. The following chapter will examine the expansive meanings that postcards have been given across a temporal spectrum of approximately one hundred years, a range which goes from postcards at the height of their popularity to their electronic transformation nearly a century later.

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<sup>29</sup> Bourdieu 7.



NO. 390. View from Reservoir, Montreal

**Fig. V-1.** Stereoscopic view of University Street from the reservoir, Montreal ca. 1870. Kilburn Brothers, Littleton, N.H. Source: PC.

**L. E. N. PRATTE**  
 Facteur et Importateur de  
**PIANOS ET D'ORGUES**  
 FOURNISSEUR DES PRINCIPAUX ARTISTES DE MONTREAL

**PIANOS**

**PRATTE**  
 MONTREAL

**HARLTON**  
 NEW-YORK

**DOMINION**  
 BOWMANVILLE,  
 Ont.

**BERLIN**  
 BERLIN,  
 Ont.

**REIMERS**  
 TORONTO

ET AUTRES.



**ORGUES**

ORGUES D'EGLISE  
**VOCALION**

**DOMINION**

**BERLIN**

**KOLIENNES**

**INSTRUMENTS**

D'OCCASION

DE

**TOUS PRIX.**

**LE PLUS GRAND ASSORTIMENT EN CANADA**

**AUX PLUS BAS PRIX**

N'achetez pas ailleurs avant de venir visiter mon établissement  
 ou de demander mes catalogues illustrés.

**No 1676, rue Notre-Dame, Montreal.**

Fig. V-2. Advertisement by L.E.N. Pratte, Piano and organ importer, from L'Almanach du Peuple Illustré, 1894. Source: BNQ.

## A LA VILLE DE MONTREAL



Ces magasins sont les plus populaires de la ville par la raison bien simple qu'ils offrent aux classes ouvrières toutes les marchandises qui leur sont nécessaires, aux prix les plus bas du marché.

C'est le but de cette institution et c'est là ce qui a fait son succès dès son ouverture.

Ouvriers et artisans, achetez tout ce dont vous avez besoin. **A LA VILLE DE MONTREAL,** et vous saurez chaque semaine une jolie somme que vous pouvez employer au plaisir.

Etoffes & Robes, Soieries, Manteaux, Draps pour Hommes, Modes, Toiles et Cotons, Couvertures, Lingerie, Corsets, Gants français, Mercerie, Bas, Costumes d'enfants, Couturières, Modistes, Tailleurs, Articles de Voyage, Rideaux, Tapis, Jouets, Articles religieux, Articles de Paris, Maroquinerie, Cadeaux en tous genres pour fêtes, baptêmes et mariages.

**COMPAGNIE GENERALE DES BAZARS**

Coin St-Laurent, Ste-Catherine et St-Charles Borromée  
MONTREAL

Fig. V-3. Advertisement for "La Compagnie Générale des Bazars" a department store targeting the "classes ouvrières", from L'Almanach du Peuple Illustré, 1894.  
Source: BNQ.

# CARTES POSTALES ILLUSTRÉES

NOUVEAUTÉS POUR 1912

**CHEZ E. H. RICHER & FILS**

**ST-HYACINTHE, Qué.**

		Pièces	Douz.
10	Cartes Fleurs chromos. . . . .	01	\$0 10
11	" Vie rurale au Canada. . . . .	01	0 10
12	" Chromos relief, sujets variés . . . . .	01½	0 15
13	" Chromos vernis, filets dorés. . . . .	02	0 20
14	" Paysages, marines, etc. couleur. . . . .	02	0 20
15	" Chromos givrés et diamantés . . . . .	02½	0 25
16	" Bromure couleur . . . . .	03	0 30
17	" Bromure couleur glacées . . . . .	04	0 40
18	" Nacrées avec devises . . . . .	04	0 40
19	" Fantaisie avec herbe, chromos. . . . .	05	0 50
20	" Aquarelles, peintes à la main . . . . .	05	0 50
21	" Cœurs parfumés, satin. . . . .	07½	0 75
22	" Oiseaux tenant une pousée . . . . .	07½	0 75
23	" Fleurs peintes sur rizaline. . . . .	10	0 90
24	" Carnets avec poésie amoureuse. . . . .	10	0 90
25	" Fleurs velours, riche. . . . .	10	1 00
26	" Celluloïd, fleurs, oiseaux. . . . .	15	1 50
27	" Celluloïd, fleurs, velours. . . . .	20	2 00
28	" Celluloïd et peluche. . . . .	25	2 10
29	" Eventail sur peluche, riche . . . . .	40	4 00
30	" Fond satin, mécanique . . . . .	50	4 80
31	Série de 5 cartes, bromure glacée. . . . .	15	
		la série	
32	50 Cartes assorties, couleurs. . . . .	30c	
		le paquet	
33	Paquet de 100 cartes couleurs, vues de Paris, costumes militaires, etc. Pas une pareille. . . . .	25c.	
		le cent	

*Toujours en stock un choix immense de cartes de fête,  
pour Noël, 1er de l'an, Pâques, 1er Avril, etc.*

*Les frais de poste sont à notre charge.*

Adresse : **E. H. RICHER & FILS, Libraires**

**ST-HYACINTHE, Qué.**

**Fig. V-4.** Advertisement for Cartes Postales Illustrées, Nouveautés pour 1912 in L'Almanach du Peuple Illustré. Source: BNQ.

Montréal, 28 février, 15.

Chères petites cousines,

Voici le portrait du lieu où l'on  
on demeure, la où la nature est amicale, au Québec.  
j'ai mis une étoile au-dessus, c'est là! non pas là où  
je voudrais vivre, au sur, au sur et au sur! cette chanson me  
venait certainnement pas du cœur si j'allais la faire  
entendre car je vous l'avouerai franchement, c'est à regret  
que je pars d'ici, mais le souvenir d'un petit frêle disparu restera  
certainnement plus longtemps dans mon cœur que nous n'avons  
pu rester à l'étranger, quel à hélas! Oh souvenir du passé!  
que le regret, de tristesse et d'ennui vous laissez dans le cœur  
mais qui nous servent de guide quand même. (Quand je vous  
garde fidèle!...) Après de vos gentilles lettres, je ne puis  
répondre plus longtemps de soir, mais sages, patientes  
Vive la bonne souvenir de J. J. J.



Fig. V-5. Postcard showing 667 Delormier street, Montréal, dated 28 février, (19)15. Source: WPL No. 12626.





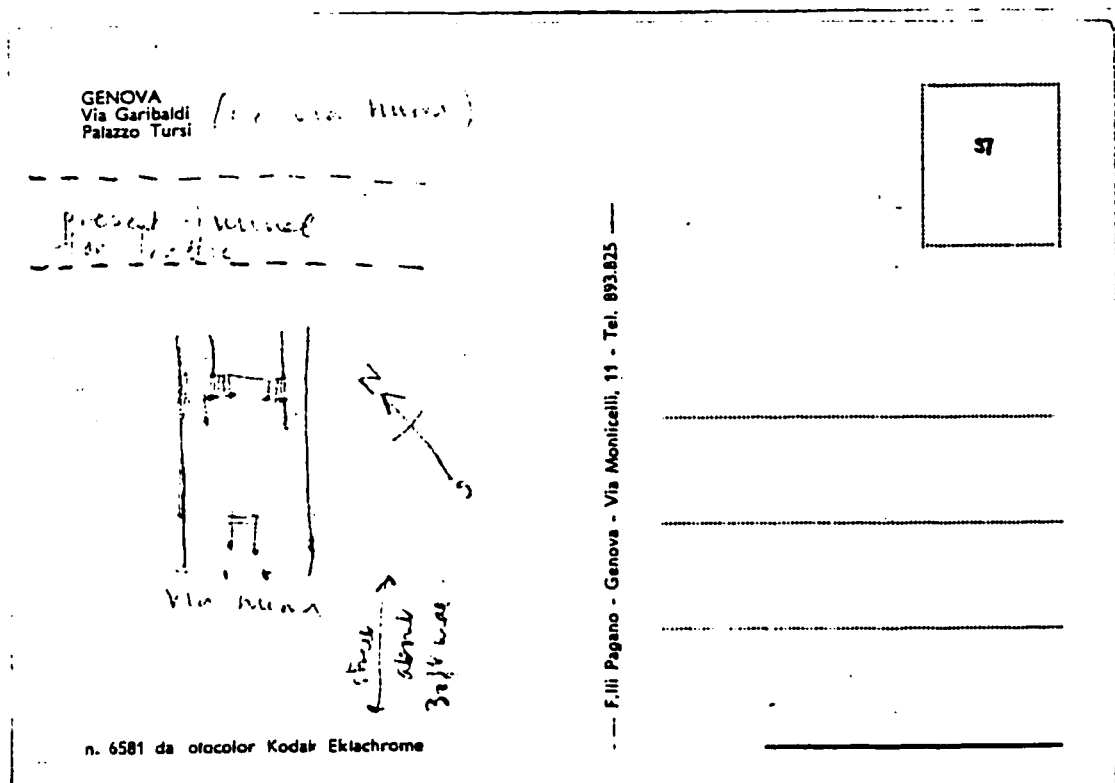




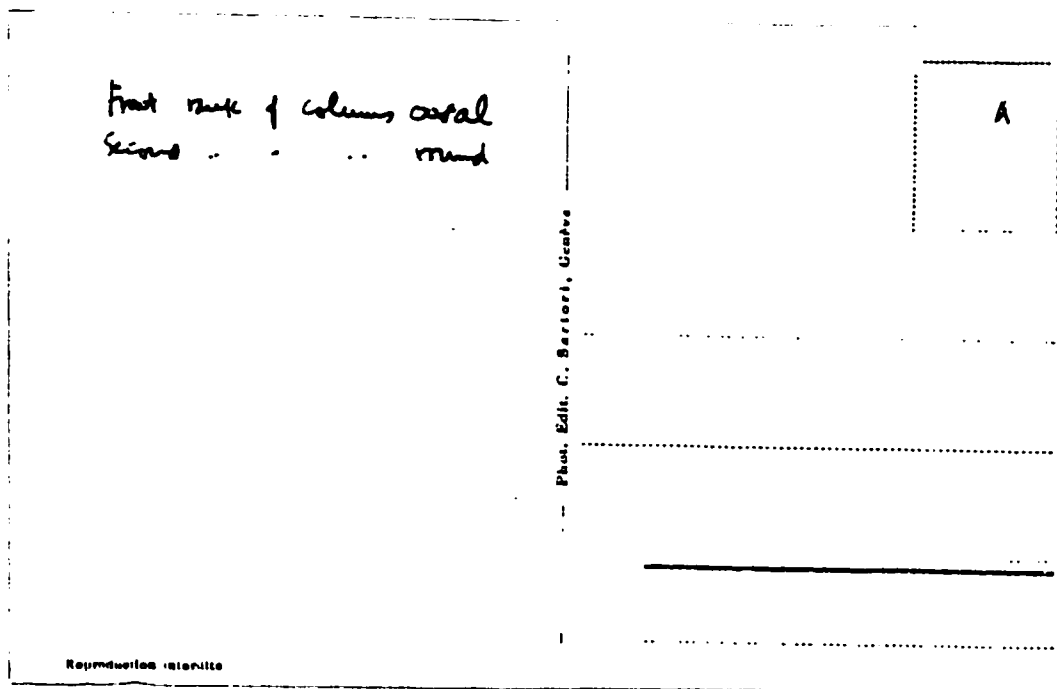
**Fig. V-9.** Postcard from Egypt. "La Véranda d'une maison Arabe". L.L. Source: CAC/Maxwell Archive.



**Fig. V-10.** Postcard from Egypt. "Une boutique au village Arabe". L.L. Source: CAC/Maxwell Archive.



**Fig. V-11.** Postcard of Palazzo Turzi, notes and sketch on the reverse by Peter Collins. Source: CAC/Collins Archive.



**Fig. V-12.** Postcard Geneva City Hall. Source: CCA/Collins Archive.

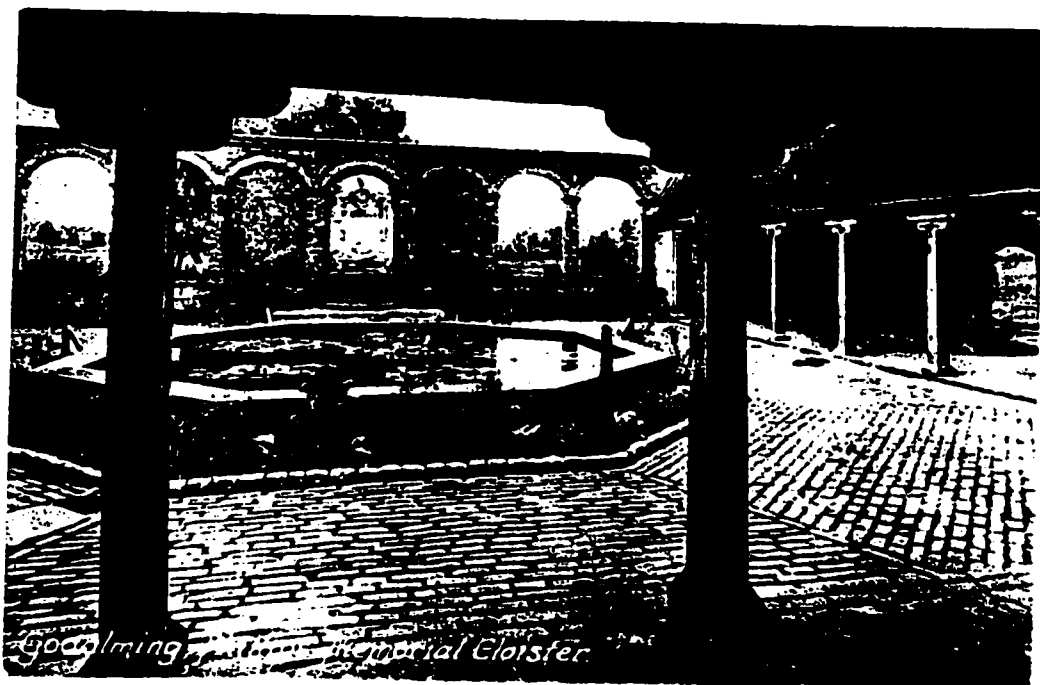
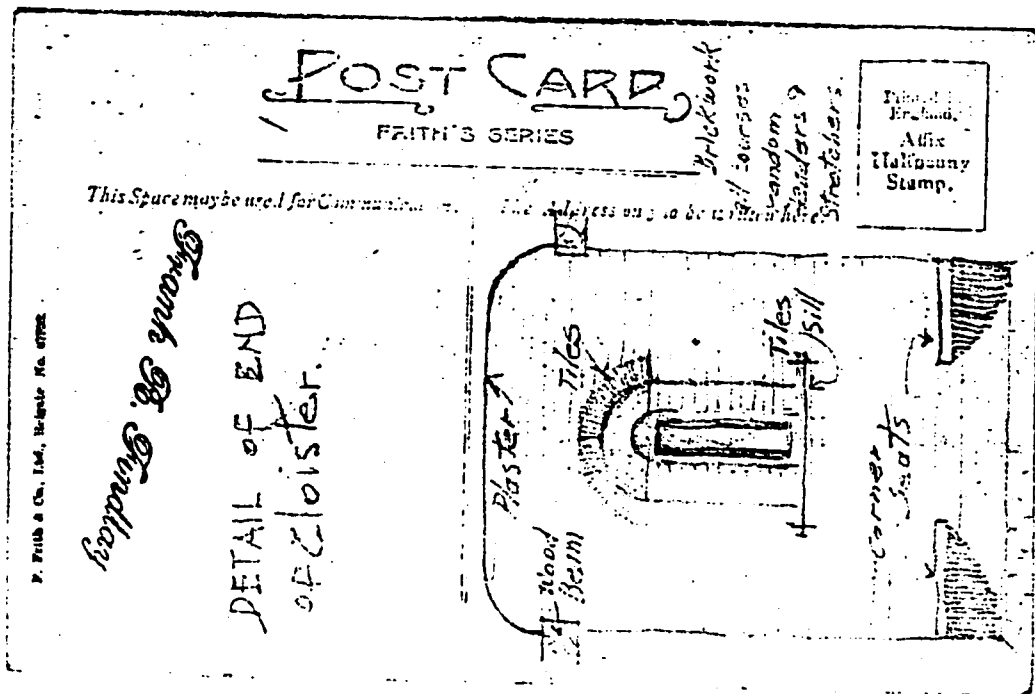


Fig. V-13. Postcard of Godalming, Philips Memorial Cloister. Sketch by Robert Findlay on reverse. F. Frith. Source: CCA/Findlay Archive.

**THE ORIGINAL NAILING CONCRETE  
NAILCRETE**

Patented. Name Registered

**ROOF**-Nailcrete coating 2 in. thick  
on cinder concrete slab, covered  
with standing seam copper.

**CLOCK TOWER**-Nailcrete walls  
and roof slab, covered with  
copper.

**THE NAILCRETE CORPORATION**  
105 West 40th Street, New York City  
Telephone Penn. 2072

**STINSON-REEB**

Builders Supply Co., Ltd.  
Read Bldg. Montreal Que.  
Distributor.

CLEAN UP  
Post Card  
MAY 20-26 1925

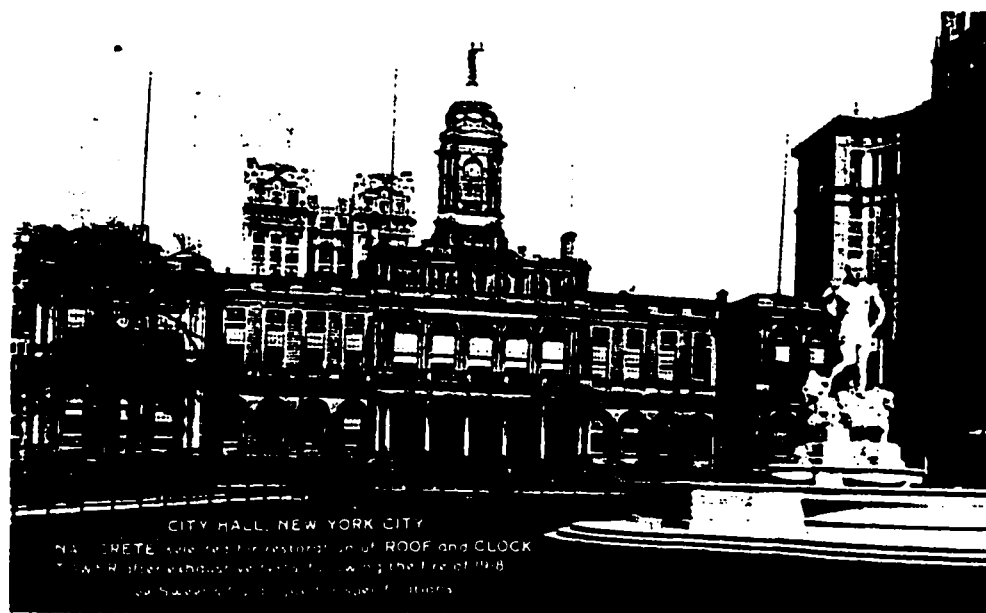


ADDRESS

MR. R. FINDLAY.

614 PHILLIPS PLACE.

MONTREAL.



**Fig. V-14.** Postcard of City Hall, New York City, with  
Nailcrete product information on the reverse. Source:  
CAC/Findlay Archive.

## TOCH'S "EDINBURGH" MORTAR COLORS

Have held for years their attractive colors against the severe climatic conditions of the New York Harbor and the bleaching action of time in the beautiful brick work of the WALDORF ASTORIA.

Write for "TOCH'S" CHART OF "EDINBURGH" MORTAR COLORS.

TOCH BROTHERS  
320 FIFTH AVE  
New York.

Paints, Enamels Colors,  
Damp Proofing,  
Compounds.



WALDORF-ASTORIA  
NEW YORK.

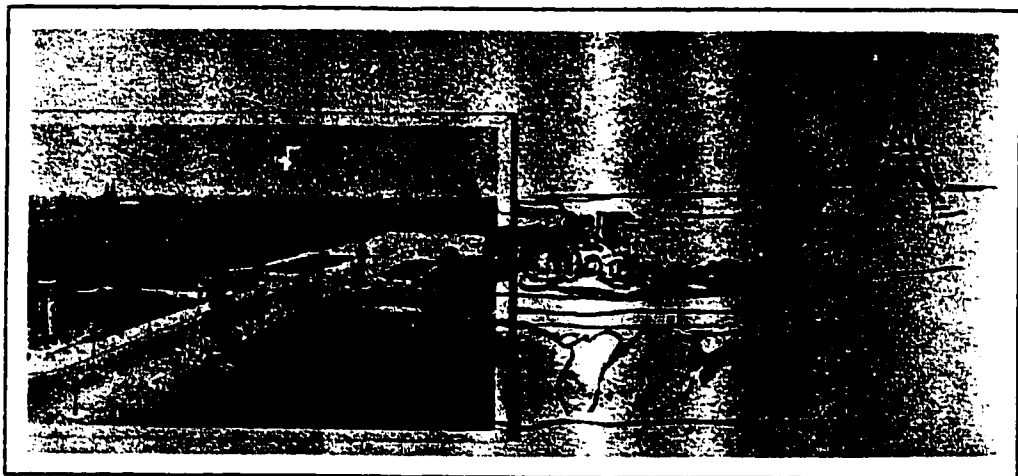
Fig. V-15. Postcard of the Waldorf-Astoria, New York with Toch's "Edinburgh Mortar Colors" Source: CAC/Findlay Archive.



**Fig. V-16.** Postcard of "The Fort Garry", Grand Trunk Pacific's New Hotel in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Features Medusa Waterproofing. Source: CAC/Findlay Archive.



**Fig. V-17.** Postcard view of Ardencaple (sic) Castle, Helensburgh, ca. 1900, found in Macaulay family papers. Source: Power 136.



**Fig. V-18.** Le Corbusier photomontage with postcard and sketch for an apartment building on rue Fabert, in Paris. Source: Colomina 320.

## CHAPTER VI

### POSTSCRIPT:

#### The many lives of the postcard

"Picture postcards," he laughed. "The souls of things." *Rushdie*

For my part, I believe that I should gain numerous insights into my later life from my collection of picture postcards, if I were able to leaf through it again today.  
*Benjamin*<sup>1</sup>

In the previous chapters, the postcard was seen disseminating architectural images that promote particular conceptions place, in the service of various corporate, commercial, or national interests. However those publicly promoted conceptions are not necessarily those understood, nor retained privately by individuals. By exploring various postcard annotations and other writings, these interpretations are understood as being subject to culturally specific codes, conventions and expectations. Nevertheless, they give rise to expressions of personal agency, and individuality.

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<sup>1</sup> Salman Rushdie, The Ground Beneath Her Feet (Toronto: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999) 221; Walter Benjamin, A Berlin Chronicle 40.

The first part of this chapter relates how the personal collection as a unit is given a particular order and meaning distinct from collection as a practice. In exploring a range of interpretations related to postcards, the emphasis is on the diversity and fluidity of meanings invariably associated with the image of architecture and place.

The second part of the chapter will examine how the postcard has functioned in a symbolic way, emerging as a paradigm for the presentation of place. Instrumental in providing an element of familiarity to changing contexts and communication practices, the postcard assumes a new role. With technological transformations, virtual "postcards" are presented as the "new" way to access images of place through a world wide electronic network.

### **Order and meaning**

Groups of objects are frequently given an order and meaning which supersedes the significance and meaning of its individual elements. Susan Stewart, who makes a distinction between two similar types of object groupings - the collection and the souvenir, states that for her, the collection is:

...a form involving the reframing of objects within a world of attention and manipulation of context. Like other forms of art, its function is not the restoration of context of origin but rather the creation of a new context, a context standing in a metaphorical, rather than contiguous, relation to the world

of everyday life. Yet unlike many forms of art, the collection is not representation.<sup>2</sup>

Unlike the souvenir which provides a trace of the context from which it must be removed,<sup>3</sup> the collection, according to Stewart, is said to create its own hermetic world that replaces origin with classification, and makes temporality a spatial and material phenomenon dependent upon principles of organization and categorization applied within.<sup>4</sup>

Advice proffered in various collection guides for postcards concurs with this assessment. The recommended approach involves creating a distinct and independent collectivity of objects classified by specific group characteristics, creating a system that will provide the collector with an immediate and practical means of finding images. In the 1930's for instance, George Watson Cole (1850-1939) a professional bibliographer, librarian, writer, and a consummate card collector, amassed a very extensive collection. In a self-published work Cole proposed a structure to empower those like him, who amassed an large number of cards. He sent the publication to numerous libraries across North America in the hope of promoting the collection of postcards.<sup>5</sup> As Cole and his publication's title suggests, the postcard "represents the world in miniature."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Stewart, On Longing 151-152.

<sup>3</sup> Stewart 150.

<sup>4</sup> Stewart 153.

Emphasizing the rational basis of his plan for the systematic arrangement of postcards, Cole describes a postcard collection as a knowledge system about the world in which an "objective" order is imposed. In his sixty-one point plan he nevertheless makes a distinction between the cards in a general collection, and those that relate to specific personal travel experiences. In the outline he states:

Every traveler who has collected view-cards naturally decides to keep those of each country by themselves; and for the convenience of consultation, to arrange its cities in alphabetical order, instead of grouping the whole collection in a single alphabetical order as is done in gazetteers.<sup>7</sup>

Similarly the Hachette guide to postcard collecting<sup>8</sup> emphasizes an orderly organizational schema that consist of the following broad categories:

- la collection régionale;
- la collection thématique;
- la collection des précurseurs et des incunables;
- la carte moderne.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Jennifer Henderson, "George Watson Cole: A Man, His Postcards, and the American Antiquarian Society." in Postcards in the Library 173-186. The signed copy consulted is in the McLennan Library Collection at McGill University.

<sup>6</sup> George Watson Cole. Postcards: The World in Miniature. (Pasadena: Privately Published, 1935) 3.

<sup>7</sup> Cole 6.

<sup>8</sup> Serge Zeyons, Les Cartes Postales: Le Manuel de L'amateur (Paris: Hachette, 1979) 71-131.

<sup>9</sup> Zeyons 71.

Stewart's suggestion that a collector makes no direct personal associations about contexts of origin from an assemblage of postcards is reinforced by another postcard collector and scholar, Naomi Schor, who relates that

With the exception of one or two real finds in my collection- whose acquisition was marked by a particular feeling of triumph- I would be hard pressed to say how I came by a particular card. When I open my albums or storage boxes, time is not recaptured.<sup>10</sup>

In aligning her thinking with Stewart's reflections on collection, Schor attempts to explain the reasons for her impersonal detachment concerning her collection of Paris postcards from the turn of the century. She states that:

...postcards are organized in series and their very seriality negates their individual mnemonic properties; what matters in the case of my postcard collection is not the contiguity between an individual card and the environment from which it was detached; but rather, it is the contiguity between a single card and its immediate predecessor and follower in a series I am attempting to reconstitute, or the contiguity I create between cards linked by some common theme.<sup>11</sup>

However as Schor's later discussions reveal, different meanings about collection can co-exist within the same person, without seeming contradiction. The theoretical distance which is assumed for the analysis and structure of

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<sup>10</sup> Naomi Schor, "Cartes Postales: Representing Paris 1900," in Critical Inquiry 18, (Winter 1992) 188-244.

<sup>11</sup> Schor 199-200.

the collectivity elides the fact that the overt principles of organization and categorization selected reflect the underlying personal predilections, experiences and histories of their authors. Far from replacing origin with classification, decisions about collection are frequently infused with a latent sense of origin or place, creating contradictions that paradoxically reside unchallenged within the same person. In explaining the preference people have for collecting the "regional" card, one that can be identified with a person's home territory, Serge Zeyons says:

L'attachement des gens a leurs terroir, à leur pays d'origine, à la ville ou ils habitent explique cet engouement. D'autre part, les transformations énormes auxquelles le paysage urbain a été soumis, les bouleversements intervenus dans les campagnes confèrent à la carte locale une valeur inestimable. Elle reste souvent le seul témoin d'hier et d'avant-hier; elle est un lien culturel avec le passé.<sup>12</sup>

By delving more deeply into Schor's exposé, it becomes apparent how postcard collections can neither be considered a simple rational series whose meaning is derived from the order of the collectivity nor solely a mnemonic device correlating a representation with the physical context that it refers to. For Schor, in spite of the professed lack of mnemonic properties of individual postcards, the collection

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<sup>12</sup> Zeyons 71. He claims that 90% of collectors seek out cards of the local, county or regional levels. Some collectors from large cities go to the extent of specializing on specific neighbourhoods, such as "Montmarte" in Paris.

as a whole assumes associative properties which become apparent when looking beyond her stated reasons for collecting postcards.

From the initial undirected acquisitions common to so many novice collectors, Schor explains how she eventually narrowed down her efforts reconstituting the series of cards produced by the French Lévy Brothers in the first twenty years of the twentieth century. This "specialty" of sorts suggests a very reasoned approach to collecting, one that models art historical methodology. In clearly defining authorship and limiting the period of production, the possibility of achieving closure becomes feasible.

However less conscious motivations and other meanings concerning her practice of collection are dispersed throughout the text. Having grown up in the United States, Schor admits eschewing the attachment to ones' "terroir" or native land by collecting images of Paris at the turn of the century, the proud and confident Paris chosen by her parents, who first emigrated there from Poland. She explains that the images provide her with a sense of Paris, not of her own recollection, but that of her Jewish parents, forced to flee France under the menace of Nazism. They are the images produced by the Lévy Brothers.

In a footnote she recounts:

There, to my surprise, I found a small group of postcards my parents had brought with them in rucksacks, as they called them, which was

their baggage on arriving in the United States from Europe in December 1941... They have become, retroactively, the matrix of my collection.<sup>13</sup>

The found cards give new meaning to her collection by linking her parents' "souvenirs" with the distant sense of the Paris she was not able to experience as home but would have, were it not for World War II. Far from suggesting a "dis-location" in the foundation of her being, Schor's attachments testify to her particular expansive sense of a lost "terroir" that reaches beyond the immediate boundaries of her familiar space. It is about a longing, which in the case of Schor, is for "the home that is not home."<sup>14</sup> It is about a place as an idea shaped by images chosen for collection and the common sense experience of space felt in one's gut and articulations, a background feeling frequently difficult to express in words.

### **The body and the experience of place**

The ways in which the postcard has enabled people to "make sense" of the world are as diverse as the cultural and temporal settings of individual spatial experience.<sup>15</sup> (Figure

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<sup>13</sup> Zeyons 198.

<sup>14</sup> Zeyons 205.

<sup>15</sup> The interaction between culture, perception and "world view" are discussed by Constance Classen, Worlds of Sense: Exploring the Senses in History and Across Cultures (New York and London: Routledge, 1993)

VI-1) A richer sensory paradigm, one which acknowledges a greater diversity of sensory values influencing conceptions of the world,<sup>16</sup> provides an avenue to explore the different ways in which people comprehend and interpret their experiences in association with the postcard.

To first recognize in the postcard a sensory complexity that exceeds the visual characteristics of the image requires acknowledging the highly complex personal investments that people make in the object, in the image, and the collection of objects as a whole. These complex variations in the practices are the sites where the senses and material culture intersect and exchange, giving rise to the diversity of meanings that emanate from the postcard. As Daniel Miller puts it, with material culture

..the very physicality of the object which makes it appear so immediate, sensual, and assimilable belies its actual nature.<sup>17</sup>

One reason for this complexity relates to the fact that the postcard testifies about human relations, about the interaction of bodies and place. With its images and texts it

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<sup>16</sup> A paradigm based on the social and culturally based variations of the sensorium is discussed by David Howes and Constance Classen in "Sounding Sensory Profiles" in The Varieties of Sensory Experience: A Sourcebook in the Anthropology of the Senses. Ed. David Howes (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991) 257-288.

<sup>17</sup> Daniel Miller, Material Culture and Mass Consumption. (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1987) 3.

provides a view of a place which, as Doreen Massey suggests, represents, "...a particular articulation of those relations, a particular moment in those networks of social relations and understanding." It includes relations which "...stretch beyond [the place]- the global as part of what constitutes the local, the outside as part of the inside." The relations between the inside and the outside, these links make for meanings and identities of place that are always "unfixed, contested and multiple."<sup>18</sup>

The postcard becomes an amalgam of sentiments that bind individuals, their experiences, and the collective memories of a place. Gail Guthrie Valaskakis explores this theme, showing how intertwined are feelings and the issues surrounding the representation of places and their people.<sup>19</sup> Although the postcard gives rise to a diversity of meanings, with frequently conflicting and dissonant connotations, it has also produced and consistently maintained some commonly understood characteristics. That "shared meaning" in the broad spectrum of possibilities is one that centers on the

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<sup>18</sup> Doreen Massey, Space, Place and Gender (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994) 5.

<sup>19</sup> Gail Guthrie Valaskakis, "Postcards of My Past; The Indian as Artifact." Relocating Cultural Studies: Developments in Theory and Research. Eds. Valda Blundell, John Sheperd, and Ian Taylor (London and New York: Routledge, 1993) 115-170.

postcard's ability to connote "place" in a manner independent of the strictly visual aspects of the image.

The bodily basis for spatial understanding becomes the common denominator in excess of the controversies of representation and the conceptualization of space as place. This is an awareness that relies on the sensory interaction that occurs in experiencing space, producing the commonly shared "feelings" and sense of being in space. These sensory perceptions at a neurological level are closely interlocked in creating "topographically organized representations" which form the basis for human understanding.<sup>20</sup> As Yi-Fu Tuan points out, many places "...are known viscerally, as it were, and not through the discerning eye or mind."<sup>21</sup>

The haptic sense, as Jennifer Fisher explains, comprises the tactile, kinaesthetic, and proprioceptive senses, which describe aspects of engagement qualitatively distinct from the capabilities of the visual sense alone.<sup>22</sup> In views of a beach town or a bustling café on a narrow street, the feelings and memory of contiguities is derived from many

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<sup>20</sup> Antonio Damasio, Descartes Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain (New York: Avon Books, 1994) 90-91.

<sup>21</sup> Yi-Fu Tuan, Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977) 162.

<sup>22</sup> Jennifer Fisher, "Relational Sense: Towards a Haptic Aesthetics," in Parachute 87 (1997) 4-11. For a more general discussion of the haptic and other senses, refer to Paul Rodaway, Sensuous Geographies: Body, Sense and Place (London and New York: Routledge, 1994) 41-60.

factors - the sensation of sand, or the cobblestones under the feet; the smell of the ocean, the coffee and pastries, and the feeling of being in the open, or of being outside yet enclosed within space delineated by the building facades and loosely aligned tables and chairs on a terrace.<sup>23</sup> It becomes a "common sense" when suffused with the inchoate elements of sensory experience, reconstituted as an amalgam of feelings and recollections of being in space. The reception and understanding of haptic and olfactory senses encoded in postcard image however, is contingent upon on previous analogous experiences.

The experience of travel and of being in places enables the postcard receiver to share in the experience of the sender through the postcard image. This, and the social framework which supports it, give the postcard both a contiguous and metaphorical relation to the built world in the form of common sense and memories.<sup>24</sup> The discussion that follows explores how through this process the postcard plays a privileged role in our cultural practices by enriching our understanding of our selves in the world.

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<sup>23</sup> This aspect of architecture and space is elaborated by Kent Bloomer and Charles Moore, Body Memory and Architecture (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977)

<sup>24</sup> This is a thesis elaborated by Maurice Halbwachs in The Collective Memory. [1950] Trans. F. J. Ditter, Jr. and V.Y. Ditter (New York: Harper & Row, 1980)

Michael Lesy writes how, after nearly twelve years of study, he developed an uneasy rapport with the photographic archives of the Detroit Publishing Company,<sup>25</sup> a major postcard producer of the early twentieth century. The historian is left with some discomfiting and unresolved feelings, emotions the detached researcher is at first wont to have.<sup>26</sup> As he completes his work, the impersonal archive acquires new meaning through the surreptitious insertion of maternal presence into the imaginary timeline of the images. (Figure VI-2) By allowing himself to relate to the images on a personal level, he realizes that they represent the time and places of his mother's youth. It is then that he understands his struggle with "inexplicable" feelings. He begins to comprehend the life experience of his dying mother, who as a girl walked the streets captured by photographer William Henry Jackson's postcard images.

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<sup>25</sup> Peter B. Hales has commented that William Henry Jackson's solution to the growth of large publishing companies was to "sell out", taking himself and his negative stock to the Detroit Publishing Company, where he supervised its conversion into mass market chromolithographs and postcards. "American Views and The Romance of Modernization" in Photography in Nineteenth Century America. Ed. Martha A. Sandweiss (Fort Worth: Amon Carter Museum, 1991) 236.

<sup>26</sup> The Detroit Publishing Company at its prime sold over seven million images annually throughout the world. The archive of negatives is deposited in the Library of Congress of the United States and the Colorado Historical Society. Michael Lesy, Dreamland: America at the Dawn of the Twentieth Century (New York: New Press, 1997) xi, xii.

Like the sense memories traced in her brain those photographs were no hallucinations...As I gazed ... I became the sentient creature my mother once was, and the photographs, once memories, became facts again. The world inside my mother rustled in the breeze.<sup>27</sup>

Occasionally the spatial link becomes subservient to the temporal, recalling a time and events past. Walter Benjamin recounts, "Among the postcards in my album, there are a number of which the written side has lasted longer in my memory than the picture."<sup>28</sup> The postcards in figures VI-3 and VI-4 show how their significance resides in a particular experience for the individual who selected and annotated it. As the notes on the reverse suggest, the postcard acts as a means of referencing and accessing memories: "Souvenir du dimanche, 20 mai 1906. Grandpapa Vincent est venu dîner. Souvenir de votre Léon." and "Saguenay Cruise, June 7 to July 2, 1960."

The postcard in figure VI-5, a view of Arvida circa 1936, also represents how the postcard's associative properties create deeper strata of meaning and significance on a more personal level. As the text on the reverse suggests, the postcard view undoubtedly conveyed a sense of a place in its early stages of development:

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<sup>27</sup> Lesy 202.

<sup>28</sup> Examining the signature of his first teacher, he recounts how twenty years later he understands the true sense of the "class" acquaintances she introduced him to. Walter Benjamin. "A Berlin Chronicle" in Reflections Peter Demetz, Ed. (New York: Schocken Books, 1986) 44.

This gives you a small idea what Ruth's street looks like. The United Church is at the end of the view. The small cross is opposite Ruth's house ...

Arvida, a modern "new town" being forged at that time in northern Quebec by Alcoa, an aluminum company, is noted as having all the essential features for an anglophone community- "Ruth's street" is marked out and personalized by the sender. The image emphasizes the lawns and the trees and the open spaces. In a present-day context this image of a "company town" signifies the industrial and corporate ambitions of the day. These gave rise to an idealism and paternalistic control of the urban development of town's such as Arvida.<sup>29</sup> However, the postcard image also evokes other highly unexpected meanings when placed in a different context and framework of analysis, one in which meaning is found beyond the immediately connoted or signified.

With an effect more potent than Roland Barthes' photographic "punctum" or detail<sup>30</sup> the postcard acts as a catalyst for associations. In discussing the Arvida postcard image with my mother, for instance, she declared that her

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<sup>29</sup> This is discussed by José Igartua in "Vivre à Arvida" and Lucie K. Morisset and Luc Noppen, Ed. Robert Fortier, Villes Industrielles Planifiées (Montréal: Editions Boréal, 1996) 153-239.

<sup>30</sup> Roland Barthes, Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography Trans. Richard Howard (New York: Noonday Press, 1981) 38-45.

uncle built houses there in the 1930's. A native of the Gaspésie region, he had left his family during the Depression years to work as a master carpenter building the new town of Arvida "up north". For my mother, the houses in the image represented not only the skillful work of her uncle who participated in shaping the new community, but also the painful family separation and alienation that was necessary for the survival of many during those economically difficult years. The postcard provided the means for sharing a part of a collective memory, a fragment of family history that had remained dormant, in spite of our own previous association with the town of Arvida.<sup>31</sup>

Similarly the associative properties of the postcard elicits a way of thinking about a place through another. This form of evocative thinking is expressed by Madeline Doran in her writing A Postcard from Delphi:

It was a postcard from Delphi in the spring of 1968 which began my rumination. The postcard had on it a view of the ancient ruined Temple of Apollo set in the rocky fold of Parnassus, and my correspondent wrote that on the day of his visit eagles were soaring above the cliffs and thunder was rumbling in the gorges below. He could not help being moved, as if the place had never lost its holy mysteries.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> We attended the school in Arvida while living in the neighboring town. My own recollections of the United Church was as the site of several extra-curricular school activities. The oral family history had not included at that time my long deceased great-uncle; but the postcard image reestablished the extended family's link with the place of Arvida.

The author subsequently reflects on her own visit to the mining town of Oatman in the Black Mountains of Northwestern Arizona, and how she is now able to think about it differently. "I probably should not have thought of Oatman in any special way except for the postcard from Delphi."<sup>33</sup> Whereas initially Oatman seemed to be a space in Doran's mind that emerged amorphously as a place, it subsequently became possible for her to sense it with feeling as a place.

The acceptance of the postcard as a common denominator in the cultural experience of place also has transformed it into a sort of suggestive prop within other fictional works. Its use in representing a normalized practice is frequent. In a recent novel for instance, written from a realist perspective, the protagonist describes how she was seduced in leaving Montreal for Beirut by her husband, who presented her with images of the city.

Avec des photos, des cartes postales, des cadeaux et des belles histoires de soleil, de vergers, de restaurants au bord de la mer, il nous a tous séduits. C'est vrai que les photos étaient belles...<sup>34</sup>

In another fictional narrative entitled Postcards, the author Annie Proulx uses the medium as a device to

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<sup>32</sup> Madeline Doran, Something About Swans (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1973) 79.

<sup>33</sup> Doran 80.

<sup>34</sup> Abia Farhoud, Le bonheur a la queue glissante (Montréal: Éditions de l'Hexagone, 1998) 93. My thanks to Dr. Bonnie Campbell for this reference.

create a sense of realism and stability as she recounts the multi-faceted and changing lives of her characters. While the story of a New England farming family spans several decades, the constant throughout the novel remains the presence of postcards and their transmission. The postcard appears in several forms as a motif and vehicle to tell a story, providing both a literal and metaphorical sense of a place and a time. As the protagonist takes flight from the family farm, he pulls his car to the roadside to take in one last look:

The place was as fixed as a picture on a postcard, the house and barn like black ships in an ocean of fields, the sky a membrane holding the fanal light...<sup>35</sup>

Similarly, in the science fiction film Dark City<sup>36</sup>, the main character John Murdoch, finds a postcard in his pocket after waking up in a tattered hotel, oblivious to how and why he is there. The postcard, displaying a view of a sunny town called "Shell Beach", becomes the only tangible link to place for which he has no immediate recollections. With only an intuitive assumption, he figures that somehow the postcard is the key to his past. In searching for his lost identity, the postcard is the one constant perceived as real through the

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<sup>35</sup> E. Annie Proulx, Postcards (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992) 12.

<sup>36</sup> Dark City, dir. Alex Proyas, perf. Rufus Sewell, Kiefer Sutherland, and Jennifer Connolly, New Line Productions (1998)

amnesic confusion and threatening "special effects" changes in the world around him. In the film's context the postcard is given an authority that is more real than Murdoch's own presently lived reality.

The futurist science-fiction television series Star Trek also makes use of the postcard as a temporal prop during an episode featuring a holodeck recreation that takes the entire crew back to World-War II.<sup>37</sup> In meeting B'Elanna, a systems engineer playing the part of a pregnant clerical worker in a Nazi compound, Lieutenant Tom Paris, an American GI, asks why she did not bother to send him a postcard. It would, he claims, have enabled him to know where she was and how she was doing. For the episode's writers, the postcard provides an element of reality for this fiction nested within a fiction.

The postcard also adopts a significance which, for some, amounts to a sort of journalistic truth. Many postcards issued with conflicts and disasters as subject matter show soldiers on battle fronts, places under siege and in the aftermath, on fire, barricaded, or otherwise afflicted by natural or man-made disasters.<sup>38</sup> These images are considered

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<sup>37</sup> "The Killing Game, Part II," Star Trek, Voyager. dir. Victor Lobl, Production no. 887.

<sup>38</sup> Paul J. Vanderwood and Frank N. Samponaro, Border Fury: A Picture Postcard Record of Mexico's Revolution and U.S. War Preparedness, 1910-1917; also Bruno de Perthuis. "Les cartes postales gravées et lithographiées sur la guerre

historical documentation. As Susan Sontag has remarked about photography, the postcard images enable us to "...acquire something as information (rather than as experience)." The postcard in this framework of interpretation "...becomes part of a system of information."<sup>39</sup>

In other contexts, postcards are conceived as enhancing and deepening understanding of lived reality. They provide the means of experiencing a place in time, as Henri Lefebvre suggests, through its image, With cities transformed by design or destroyed through strife, postcard images provide the contrasts which make actualities more palpable and seemingly more comprehensible. Eschewing the "optimistic mood" that generally characterize the successful postcards series of Ireland produced by John Hinde since 1956,<sup>40</sup> a group of postcards depicting the turmoil afflicting the citizens of Northern Ireland draw particular attention. The New York Times reports in 1974:

Belfast, Northern Ireland- The people of Belfast are buying picture postcards of their city's torment by the hundreds. The most popular shows a boy throwing a stone at a British armoured car... other cards show burned-out homes, troops in battle positions on city streets and children at play amid smoking rubble. Each card sells for

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Russo-Japonaise," Gazette des Beaux-Arts No. 1388 (Sept. 1984) 86-98.

<sup>39</sup> Sontag, On Photography 156.

<sup>40</sup> The Irish Museum of Modern Art, Hindesight, Dublin, (1993) 19.

approximately 25 cents in the three Gardener's shops.

"Even at that price, people have been buying them in bundles of five or six at a time," said Rose Lehane, manager of one of the shops. Mrs. Lehane said that nearly 1000 cards were sold in four days.

Since Belfast has few tourists, she said, most of the buyers are local people, mostly young men who want them as "souvenirs".

Neil Shawcross, a Belfast man, bought two complete sets of the cards, explaining, "I think they're interesting mementos of the times and I want my children to have them when they grow up."

"The cards are good for people," said Alan Gardener, a director of the chain. "Too many people in Belfast try to cope with the situation here by closing their eyes and pretending it doesn't exist. Maybe something like this will jar them into seeing again."<sup>41</sup>

In this case, the postcard images act as truthful markers that refer to the then current realities of Northern Ireland.

In other contexts, postcard images are interpreted as part of a referential process that Jean Baudrillard describes, amounts to a simulation or the "hyperreal". This process, he suggests, involves miniaturization, a required dimension for simulation - the generation of models without origin or reality.<sup>42</sup> With photographic views on postcards,

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<sup>41</sup> "Postcards of Belfast Strife are Best-Sellers There" The New York Times (October 29, 1974) Quoted in Sontag 199-200.

<sup>42</sup> Jean Baudrillard, Simulations. Trans. P. Foss, P. Patton, P. Beitchman (New York: Semiotext(e), 1981) 2. Refer

"the real is produced from miniaturized units, from matrices and memory banks and command models - and with these it can be reproduced an infinite number of times."<sup>43</sup> It is what Dean MacCannell describes as operating in Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania, an area made famous by the paintings of Andrew Wyatt. When tourists come by, they are concerned that "it should precisely conform to the postcard..."<sup>44</sup> The image is the reality that the community strives to measure up to.

Likewise, in describing the Rockefeller Center in New York City, with its pedestrian mall and skating rink that attracts mostly tourists, Richard Sennett notes "...its picture-postcard pleasures have not proved very attractive to natives..."<sup>45</sup> To elaborate the idea about the falseness not only of the tourist depictions but also the building's facade - of what constitutes the real nucleus of this architectural landmark behind the surface, he remarks:

The superbly sombre buildings are organized in such a way that their true center is behind the tourist postcard's front...<sup>46</sup>

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to figure I-4 for a "Porte-Bonheur", an early twentieth century good-luck charm in the form of a postcard that fits this late twentieth century articulation.

<sup>43</sup> Baudrillard 3.

<sup>44</sup> Dean MacCannell, Empty Meeting Grounds: The Tourist Papers (New York and London: Routledge, 1992) 287.

<sup>45</sup> Richard Sennett, The Conscious of the Eye: The Design and Social Life of Cities (New York and London: W.W. Norton, 1990) 35.

<sup>46</sup> Sennett 135.

Somehow the postcard images and the image of the architecture itself are considered as obviating the truth, a concern for the locals and not for the fleeting tourists.

However, as MacCannell has questioned, the putative "depthlessness" and "centerlessness" of the two-dimensional representation of communities such as Chadds Ford and other sites known for their image, is in itself a unidimensional commentary. He suggests the critique encrypts a cult of the personality which:

on a theoretical level, appears as an alibi for some older cultural forms: the honoring of fathers and families and the ancient power arrangements between them, a mythic sense of convergence of biological and cultural reproduction.<sup>47</sup>

The attraction and security found in lineage is great; its repudiation or absence however, does not necessarily constitute a lack or deficiency. The value attributed to an analytical model based on the notion of a Platonic essential copy, from which all else is deemed derivative, seems not particularly relevant when considering the Banff Springs Hotel, the Château Frontenac, and the famous Disneyland Castle which have lost their original references to the Loire valley château. Similarly the Parroquia church of San Miguel de Allende in Mexico, said to be designed from postcard impressions of French Gothic cathedrals which showed only facades, has adopted its own local cultural references which

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<sup>47</sup> MacCannell, Empty Meeting Grounds 287-288.

now have little to do with the postcard's original referent. The late 19th century church, which provides a sort of "signature tune" as it dominates views of the town, nevertheless consists of a Gothic "false-front", a facade made from the only view available to its builder.<sup>48</sup> In each of these places, the buildings have developed their own distinct cultural significance and associations that are quite remote from their putative points of origin.

Inserting itself in a variety contexts, the postcard can also be observed as working through an inversion of the previous totemic model. It is held as an ideal which validates reality, providing a commentary not only of the world of images but also the built world itself. In 1995 for instance, John Norquist, the mayor of Milwaukee expressed his views about architecture in an interview with art critic James Auer of the local Journal Sentinel. He suggests that the building's image serves as a measure to evaluate architectural production.

I have what I call the picture postcard test. If you can't find anything in a built landscape that could be put on a picture postcard - and it doesn't have to be individual buildings, but the ensemble of buildings- then the architect has failed. The architect has created a scene that no one will celebrate.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> James Norman, Mexican Hill Town (Santa Monica: Fisher-Edwards, 1963) 2-3.

## **Transformations**

Through the dominating ideology of modernism of the early twentieth century, the postcard, as previously discussed, propagated notions of progress by the very speed and efficiency in which it circulated around the globe. The architectural images themselves reinforced this notion by depicting urban development and the changing face of architecture that resulted through commercial expansion, colonialism, and the ever pressing drive to remove anachronistic forms of the past from the then present. New architectural concepts could now easily be disseminated throughout society.

Images of the Eiffel Tower for instance, captured the popular imagination of the day with the prowess of its steel structural system that enabled unprecedented building heights to be reached. So too did the depiction of American high-rise towers which came to define the concept of metropolis in the early twentieth century.<sup>50</sup> For many collectors, images of these tall structures or "skyscrapers" were not simply a category of collection but constituted a means to participate in the experience of modernity.

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<sup>49</sup> John Norquist, "The Picture Postcard Test," Progressive Architecture (May, 1995) 94-95.

<sup>50</sup> John Pastier, "Postcards of the First Half Century" in Design Quarterly (No. 140 1988) 2-11.

Especially for the early twentieth century, the paradigm of "consumption of the signs of modernity" seems apt one<sup>51</sup> in the sense that the very acquisition of postcards suggested a power and worldly status. Postcards became significant because they served a vital utilitarian communication function in an expedient and cost-effective manner. They also provided urban and architectural views in postcard form that became desirable as commodities which were in addition "...valued for their symbolic significance as agents of cultural change and social power rather than their actual utility."<sup>52</sup> Because of their broadly-based and general accessibility, postcards provided many with a sense of social equality and competence that created an illusory leveling of differences between different social strata, ethnic groups and the disparities between the country and the city.

In exploring the nature of the country and the city as changing historical realities, in themselves and their

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<sup>51</sup> The use of postcards possessed an aura similar to the 1990's idea of "being wired" - being connected to the Internet.

<sup>52</sup> Jean-Marc Philibert and Christine Jourdan have explored this concept with the study of native Islanders who keep manufactured goods such as Polaroid cameras and record players for their symbolic value long after they are no longer functional. In that context, possession of manufactured goods indicated social success in the white world for villagers who considered themselves "évolué". "Modes of Consumption in the Pacific Islands" in Cross-Cultural Consumption: Global Markets Local Realities Ed. David Howes (London and New York: Routledge, 1996) 66-67.

interrelations, Raymond Williams comments that in spite of new forms of social and physical organization,

...the ideas and images of the country and the city retain their great force. This persistence has a significance matched only by the fact of the great actual variation, social and historical, of the ideas themselves... Yet if we can see that the persistence depends of the forms and images and ideas being changed, though often subtly, internally and at times unconsciously, we can see also that the persistence indicates some permanent or effectively permanent need, to which the changing interpretations speak.<sup>53</sup>

Just as sixteenth century wood-block images featuring generic townscapes could be used symbolically to represent several different urban agglomerations, the postcard, with its culturally laden significance, maintains a persistent relevance through its ability to accommodate changing interpretations. Meanings associated with the postcard today simply do not include the rush of progress and connectedness it commanded in the early twentieth century. However newer more technologically developed means of communication rely on cultural familiarity and similar frames of reference to effect the transitions from one medium to another.

Physical travel for both leisure or necessity remains a fact. Borrowing Michel de Certeau's sense of the term "spatial practice" James Clifford writes about the "discursively mapped and corporeally practiced" experience of

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<sup>53</sup> Williams, The Country and The City 289.

space comprised of "embodied practices of interactive travel."<sup>54</sup> Recording in the form of a log an actual travel experience in the Mexican Chiapas region, Clifford tacitly provides a example of how the postcard remains integral to spatial practice in the 1990's.

An entry in the log reads:

4:15-5:30 : A pause at the Crystóbal Colón bus station to reserve a seat back to the highlands. Then, walking downtown, as the sky darkens for the late-afternoon downpour, I watch streetsellers unfurl big sheets of plastic and stuff their wares into garbage bags. Sitting out the rain in a café, I write postcards and decline the woven belts and bracelets.<sup>55</sup>

The late twentieth century also provides alternate ways of "travel" and exploration via electronic means that are increasing in ease and accessibility. In a move reminiscent of the North American launch for the first privately published illustrated postcards made available during the Chicago Fair of 1893,<sup>56</sup> a hundred years later, some of the early forays into "electronic" postcard making were featured during 1993 World's Fair in Taejon, Korea. Within the framework of the exposition's theme "The Challenge of a New Road to Development", images of the world were brought to

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<sup>54</sup> James Clifford, Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997) 53-54.

<sup>55</sup> Clifford, Routes... 236.

<sup>56</sup> Carline 63.

Taejon by means of "postcards". Visitors to the fair could see a young Korean girl using a computer to communicate with her pen pals around the world. They replied to her by sending electronic "postcards" said to "depict life in their respective countries."<sup>57</sup> These postcards, projected as gigantic 360-degree movies to surround the viewer, were filmed with sophisticated camera equipment and technical support in locations of extreme range - from the desert sands to snow capped Canadian Rockies; to roller-skating and cycling over the cobble-stone streets and squares of Paris, right into a little pastry shop; to the Palace of the King of Ubud and the terraced rice paddies in Bali; and the famous Carnival in the thronging streets of Rio de Janeiro. In 1993, it is the technology that enabled the transfer of images that is celebrated. Very quickly, as the technology becomes more widely available and refined, the images themselves are what generates interest.

The exponential explosion of users of the World Wide Web is similarly fueled by the desire access images in order to know more about the world around and beyond us. Just as exchange of information and images was initially developed in the early twentieth century through networks of card exchanges, local images and those from the farthest reaches

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<sup>57</sup> George Turner "Postcards: Touring the World in 360 degrees," American Cinematographer (August, 1993) 46-52.

of the world are made accessible through elaborate electronic networks. With the vast opportunities for promoting particular conceptions of place, a convergence of different interests ideologies emerge in a manner that parallels postcard developments.

The Quebec Ministry of Culture and Communications and the Montreal Tourist Board, for instance, jointly have set up Montreal Cam Network<sup>58</sup>, a site which is fed in "real time" every twenty seconds images from 10 cameras focused on the urban landscape and one or two green spaces. (Figures VI-7 and 8) As reviewers of the site have commented, "It's a live postcard to the rest of the world."<sup>59</sup> and "It's a virtual postcard from the city to the world."<sup>60</sup>

Similarly sites such as The Main Street Gallery,<sup>61</sup> feature photographs and old postcard views of the legendary American Route 66 highway from Chicago to LA. Intended as a visual history of the main street of America, it presents images of all the little road side towns and tourist attractions as "virtual reality tours".<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> <http://www.montrealcam.com/en-sommaire.html>

<sup>59</sup> David Zgodzinski. "See the World on the Web" The Gazette (Montreal, February 18, 1997) D18.

<sup>60</sup> Alan Hustak. "Smile! The World is watching us on Web" The Gazette (Montreal December 19, 1998) D7.

<sup>61</sup> <http://www.digitalaire.com/Route66/iroute66.html>

<sup>62</sup> Grant Yoxon. "Ghosts of Route 66 live on the Web" in The Gazette (Montreal, November 11, 1998) D13.

Individual autonomy is also being achieved by mass market availability of software that assist in producing and sending images. Software such as Kodak's Picture Postcard Software<sup>63</sup> enables people to create their own personalized "electronic postcards". Appealing to collectors, some electronic sites are operated by dealers who effectively broker postcard images of places for various people.<sup>64</sup> (Figure V-9)

The electronic postcard featuring views of the city as an attractive place is not limited to such broadly commercial intentions as developing tourism and attracting foreign investments. Museum and research archives are also aligning with and being altered by the broad possibilities of digital image transfer. The postcard collection of the Bibliothèque National du Quebec for instance, (Figure VI-10) has been digitized and is available electronically on the World Wide Web, where it is possible to "faire un voyage virtuel sur le fleuve St-Laurent à l'aide de cartes postales anciennes."<sup>65</sup> The physical collection, while made accessible to researchers

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<sup>63</sup> Kodak DC25 Digital Camera: User's Guide (Rochester: Eastman Kodak Company, 1996) Chapter 6.

<sup>64</sup> Sites such Archcards have 40,000 architectural postcards of buildings, streets and towns around the world, selling at \$2 per card.  
<http://www.sol.co.uk/c/cbacon/archcards/index.html>

<sup>65</sup> <http://www.biblinat.gouv.qc.ca/antan/acceil/html>

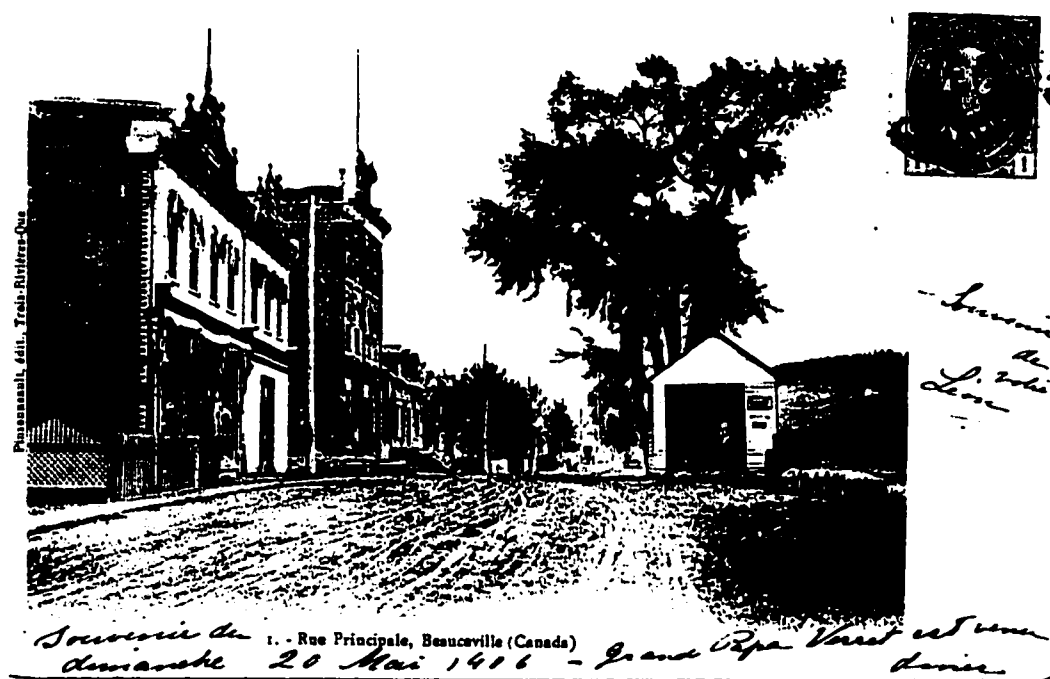
and public in principle, has now been returned to the public domain.



**Fig. VI-1.** Photograph: two residents of Wamira, Papua New Guinea examine a picture postcard of a New York city skyline, ca. 1980. Source: Feld and Basso 171.



**Fig. VI-2.** Detroit Publishing Company image of the Colonial Arcade in Cleveland, 1908. Source: Lesy 5.



**Fig. VI-3.** Postcard of 1- Rue Principale, Beauceville, Quebec. Pinsonneault. Source: WPL No. 118.

Published by Jalbert Distribution (Saguenay), Chicoutimi, Que.

Main Street, Chicoutimi, Que., Canada  
A very modern and busy street, reflecting the  
economic picture of this progressive city.  
La rue principale Chicoutimi, Que., Canada.  
Dans cette partie basse de la ville tout un monde  
y circule aux heures d'affluence, et reflète l'écono-  
mie de tous ses habitants.

P23638



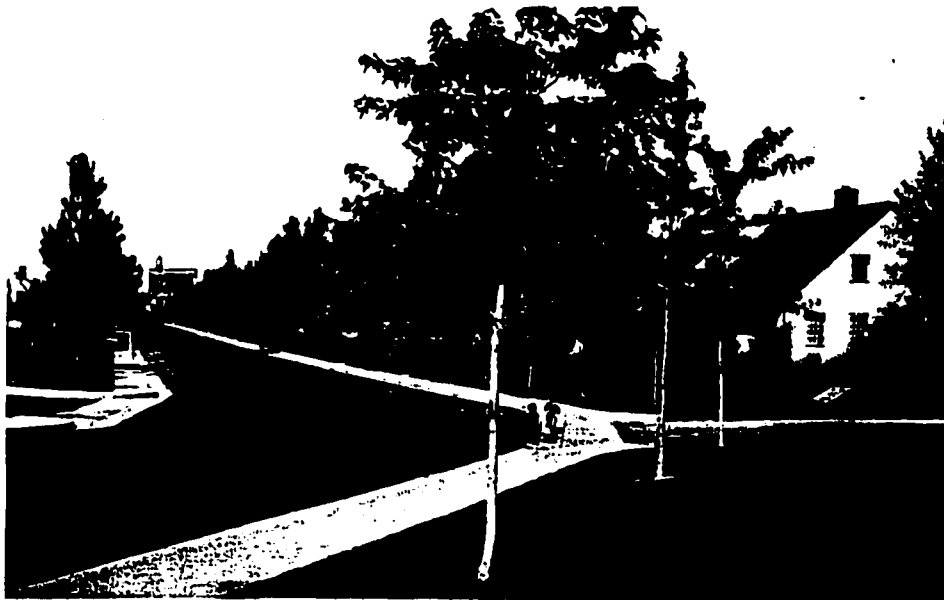
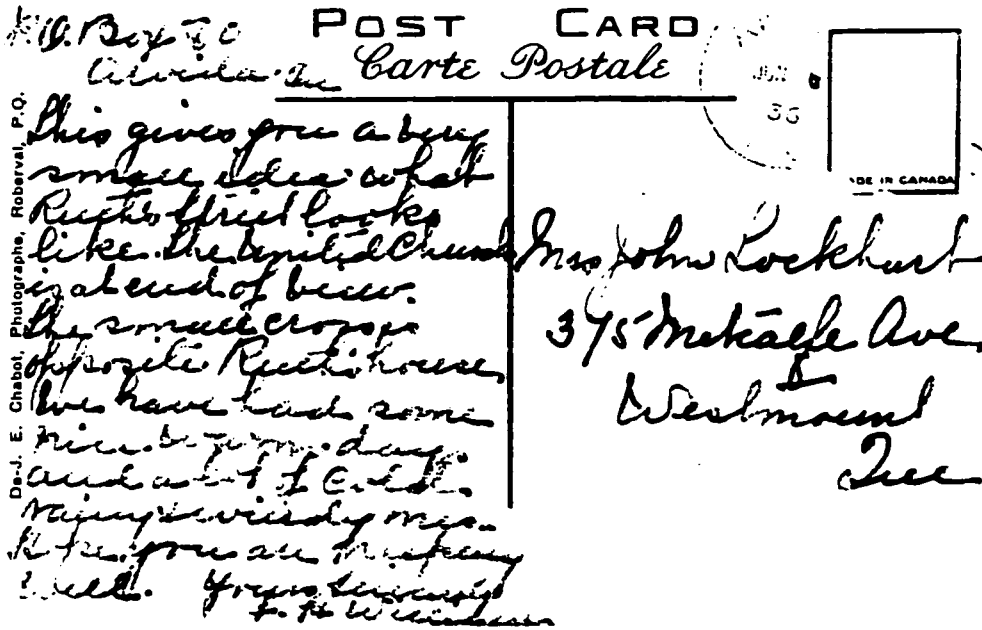
POST CARD

*Saguenay Cruise*  
*June 7 to July 2, 1960*

Plastichrome by COLORPICTURE PUBLISHING INC. 1500 15 Ave. S.W. U.S.A.

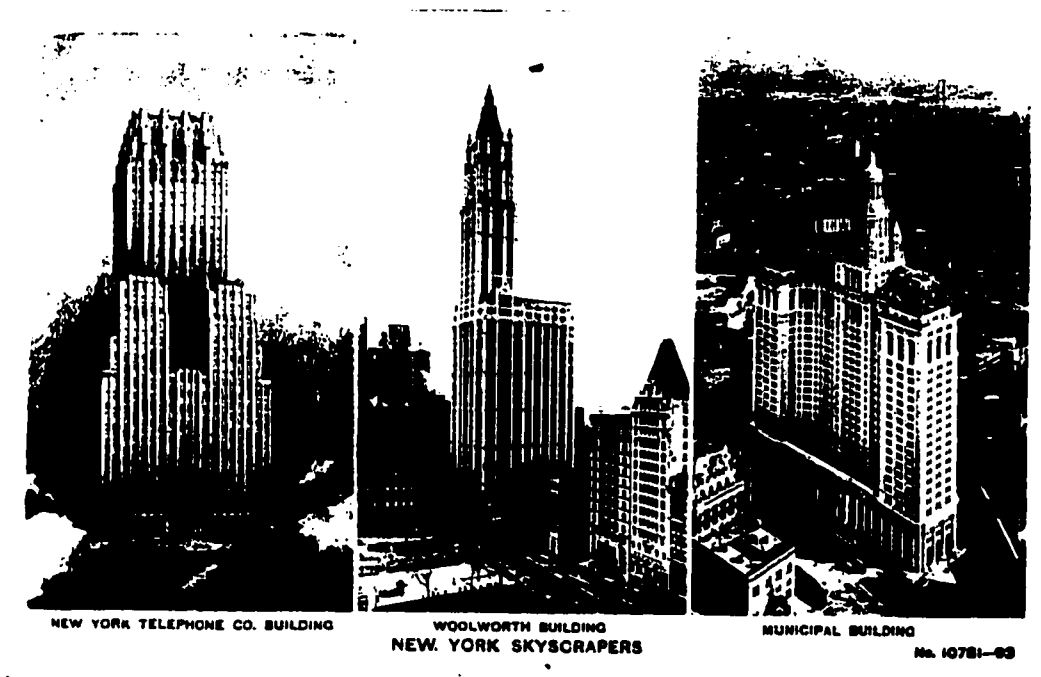


Fig. VI-4. Postcard of Main street, Chicoutimi, Quebec, ca. 1950. Plastichrome Colorpicture, Jalbert Distribution. Source: WPL No. 13186.



Rue Moissan—Moissan Street, Arvida, P.Q.—109.

**Fig. VI-5.** Postcard of Rue Moissan/Moissan Street, Arvida,  
 postmarked June 1936. J.E. Chabot, Photographe. Source: WPL  
 No. 13162.



**Fig. VI-6.** Postcard of New York Skyscrapers. Franco-American Novelty, New York. Source: PC.



**Montréal**  
**CAM**

The Greater  
Montréal  
LiveCam  
Network

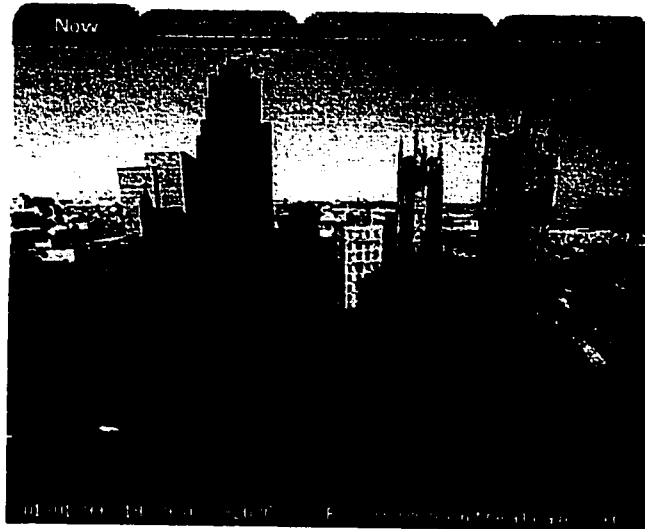


**Overview**

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weather information online](#) ]



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Use the browser's reload button to refresh your  
screen.



Gouvernement du Québec  
Ministère de la Culture  
et des Communications



Ville de Montréal



Société de développement  
de Montréal

Here you are - right in the heart  
of Old Montréal with a superb  
view of Place d'Armes. Come  
discover the city's oldest district,  
with its wealth of history, its  
architecture unique in North  
America, its museums, boutiques,  
art galleries and many  
restaurants.



Gouvernement du Québec  
Ministère  
de la Métropole

**Montréal**  
TOURIST INFORMATION



Produced by  
**Intellia**

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Greater Montréal Convention and Tourism Bureau.

**Fig. VI-7.** Page from the Montreal Cam Network site: a view  
of Place d'Armes, Old Montreal.



Downtown

Montréal  
CAM

The Greater  
Montréal  
LiveCam  
Network

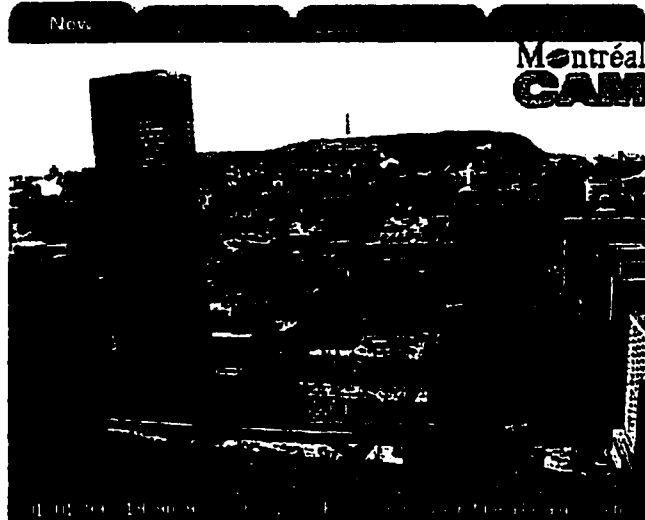


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Intellia

Many Montreal office buildings enjoy a breathtaking panorama of the city. Here, for example, is a view of the Mount Royal from the offices of Talvest Fund Management at 1000 la Gauchetière Ouest. Don't miss a visit to this building when you're in town. It includes a huge indoor skating rink on the ground floor - a true Montreal original!



Gouvernement du Québec  
Ministère  
de la Métropole

Montréal  
TOURIST INFORMATION



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**Fig. VI-8.** Page from the Montreal Cam Network site: a view of downtown Montreal.

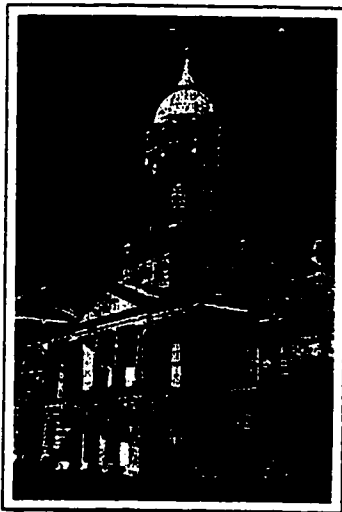
Architectural Dublin [links](#)

Pick up your card

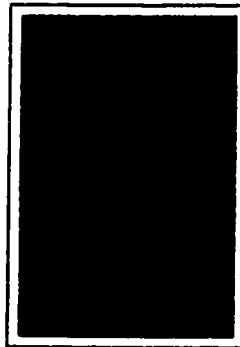
Enter your claim ticket:

Compose your postcard

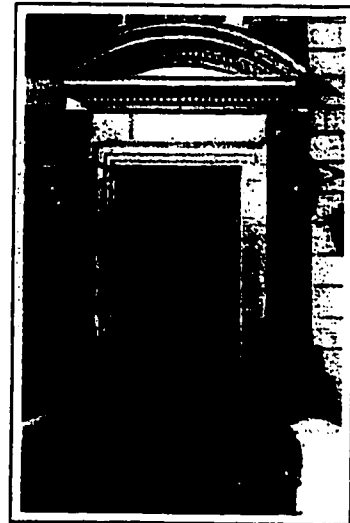
Choose one picture



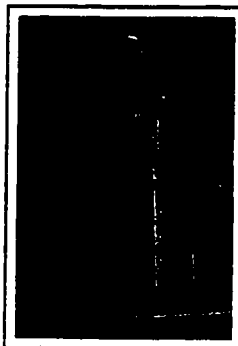
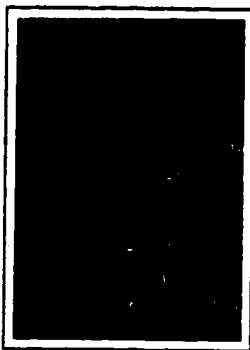
☐ Bedford Tower, Dublin Castle



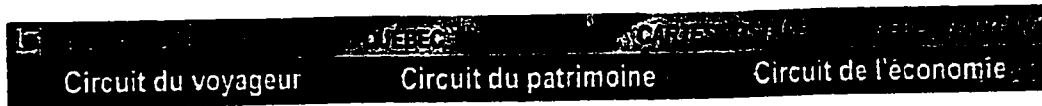
☐ Boyne Riverhead, Custom House



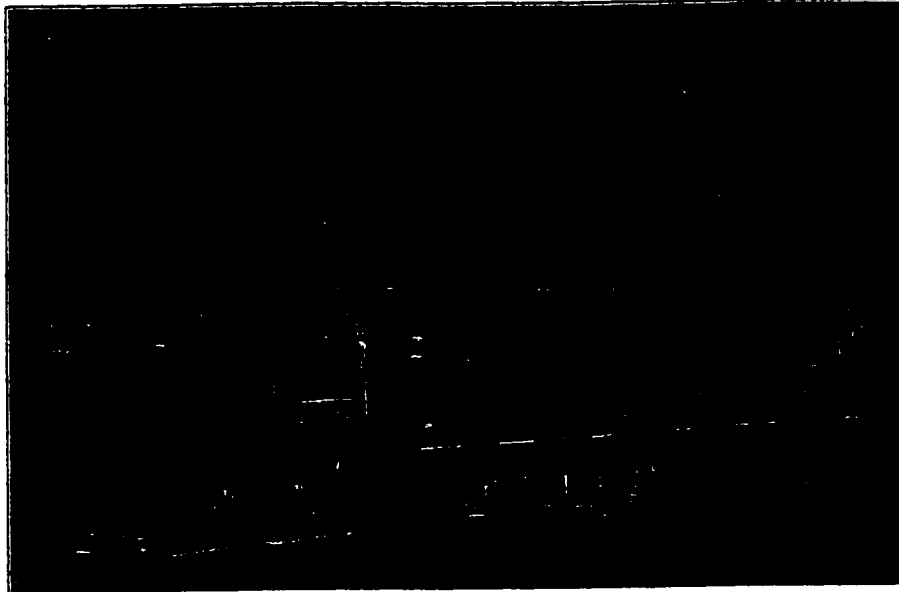
☐ Doorway, Dublin Castle



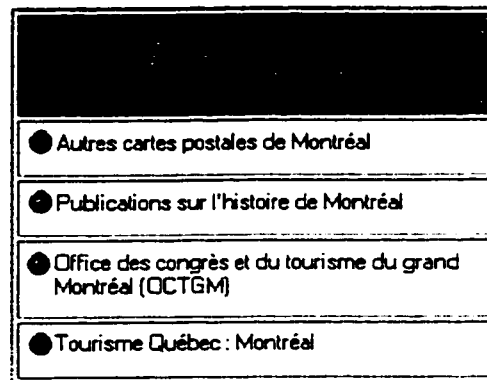
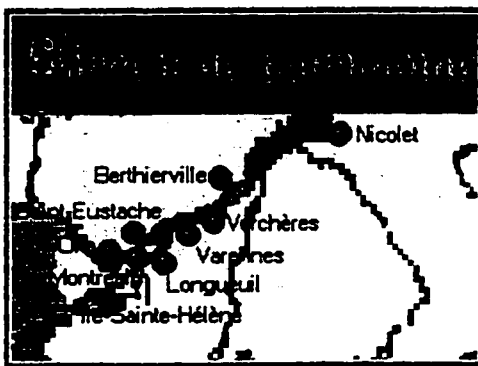
**Fig. VI-9.** Page from within Archcards Website, "Compose your Postcard, Choose one Picture."



## Montréal



Le château Ramezay est construit, en 1705, pour le gouverneur de Montréal, Claude de Ramezay. En 1745, la Compagnie des Indes occidentales en fait son centre des activités commerciales en Amérique. On y entrepose les fourrures, avant qu'elles ne soient expédiées en France. Le bâtiment devient un musée en 1896. ■



**Fig. VI-10.** Page from the Bibliothèque National du Québec Website featuring the Cartes Postales d'Antan.

## EPILOGUE

More than any other medium in the twentieth century, the postcard has produced images of architecture and place that have circulated to all parts of the world, promoting particular conceptions of place. Not simply a disposable product of mass culture, as a highly popular means of communication, the postcard has infiltrated every strata of society, serving the interests of various groups, while yielding to individual interventions.

In developing this project, a large number of architectural images produced in postcard form were examined in institutional and private collections, as well as in the vast collectibles marketplace. The writings of several authors and researchers that focus on aspects of the postcard or make use of the postcard in a variety of ways were also reviewed. Discrepancies between collective and individual interpretations, between official and popular views were observed, pointing to the divergence that exists between the intended and received meanings and values. The intention was to highlight how the object in itself does not possess a priori a fixed meaning. Instead, the different articulations examined reveal how various cultural and temporal factors

influence the reflexive mediation of the postcards themselves as well as their associations with place.

A problematic concern that emerged with this investigation consisted in finding ways to deal with the polyvalent and polysemic nature of postcards - the broad range of uses and interpretations that were observed. To appreciate how the postcard mediates and is mediated by culture, it was necessary to explore a number of different theories which might serve to explain how representations of place have functioned and what meanings can be associated with them. This meant examining concepts that are common to other forms of representation past and present, such as truth and realism, as well as rethinking the very conceptualization of place and its meaning.

To provide a way of conceptualizing space, the tripartite structure developed by Henri Lefebvre in The Production of Space, "the conceived, the perceived and the lived," became a constructive conceptual thread that was woven discretely throughout the project, providing a way of looking at the subject from an abstract construct in order to reveal particular aspects of its materiality. This strategy provided a critical form to buttress the multi-faceted analysis of the postcard as a cultural object and as a cultural practice. It responded to the need for finding ways to examine the manner in which we think and act about a place.

However this theoretical approach does not in itself explain the frequently serendipitous diffusion, melding and cross-overs that occur among the stated categories. Henri Lefebvre himself felt it necessary to make a cautionary statement about the conceptual framework he elaborated.

The perceived-conceived-lived triad...loses all force if it is treated as an abstract 'model'. If it cannot grasp the concrete (as distinct from the 'immediate'), then its import is severely limited, amounting to no more than that of one ideological mediation among others.<sup>1</sup>

Examining the postcard's role relative to the ideologies of French and British colonialism and imperialism for instance, provided a vantage point to observe the forces that operate to modify the physical aspects of land and cityscapes. Furthermore, the more closely observable impact of corporate and governmental ambitions were found to have equally significant and lasting effects on the built environment of Canada. However for anyone not personally implicated or touched by the ideologies that influenced the conceptions of place in distant lands, in other times, the postcards and spaces considered amount to historical constructs that are interpreted cerebrally.

As the dissertation moved from the production of space under colonial regimes, to more specific and local references, and finally to the deeply personal, reflections of a very subjective nature were interspersed to serve as

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<sup>1</sup> Lefebvre 40.

counterpoints to what is perceived as the dominant view. Altering normalized perceptions of a place, expressions of resistance point to the importance of establishing a sufficiently comprehensive and flexible framework of analysis that allows for leaping from the general to the particular, from the abstract to the tangible.

While Lefebvre's insights parallel the general strategy that I used to structure this project, the range of observations and associations made throughout this investigation warranted the use of other concepts. It is to serve this vital function that Stuart Hall's theories of articulation were found to be useful in encompassing the frequently disparate groups of thoughts and practices that were observed. The many interconnected practices surrounding the use and interpretation of the postcard medium suggested the use of a looser framework grounded with fluid expressions of lived realities that goes beyond the confines of "the perceived", "the conceived", and "the lived" categories. Places are shaped by national and corporate interests as well as individual practices that assert themselves through diverse cultural expressions.

Articulation theory allows the linking of many of these diverse practices and ideologies in which the postcard becomes a nodal point. Postcard representations of India or Viet Nam were once seen as a vibrant component in early twentieth century expressions of British and French

colonialism. At that time, postcards meant worldliness, progress, a modern savoir-faire. For years some of those cards were kept neatly in albums or boxes by farmers and architects alike. Years later these personal possessions became a part of larger institutional collections, while others were discovered in a research foray, awaiting archival preservation. Other linkages allow for a postcard to be sent from one place to another because it means "I've been there", later to be kept preciously because it confirms the existence of a person, because a loved one simply touched it.

The theory of articulation was initially developed from conceptions of culture, community, and nationhood.<sup>2</sup> Stuart Hall's ideas about articulation nevertheless create an opportunity to examine a fragmentary aspect of culture, an object such as the postcard, and to observe that similarly its meaning is contingent and relational. It enables a concrete manifestations of representational space that is, as Lefebvre asserted, alive, and consequently to be qualified as "directional, situational or relational, because it is essentially qualitative, fluid and dynamic."<sup>3</sup> It is a role played in the conception of place that absorbs change and transformation.

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<sup>2</sup> Stuart Hall. "Culture, Community, Nation" in Cultural Studies 7.3 (1993) 349-363.

<sup>3</sup> Lefebvre 42.

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**APPENDIX A**

*Un siècle d'histoire*  
*Le club des Cartophiles Québécois présente*

**6<sup>e</sup> Salon Québécois  
de la Carte Postale  
de Montréal  
6<sup>th</sup> Postcard Show**

**Samedi 5 juin 1999  
10h00-16h00  
Saturday June 5, 1999**

**Hôtel Maritime Plaza  
1155 rue Guy, Montréal  
Coin René-Lévesque  
Métro Guy-Concordia**

**Information: L. Otis [514] 722-2239  
L. Brosseau [514] 620-1489**

**Entrée: 3\$**

**TORONTO POSTCARD  
CLUB SHOW**

**Sunday, March 7, 1999  
10 a.m. to 5 p.m.**

**Humber College  
North Campus  
205 Humber College Blvd.  
Etobicoke, Ontario.**

**Postcards  
Postal History  
Covers  
Supplies  
Subject matter related to  
postcards.**

**Please see map on reverse.**

**Admission \$3.00 Free Parking. Inquiries: (416) 493 - 0363**

**18th  
Annual**

# CARTES POSTALES

## DÉTAILS DE DIFFÉRENTES EXPOSITIONS À VENIR

- BOUCHERVILLE** 27 et 28 mars 1999 (10h00 à 17h00). Exposition annuelle de l'Association des numismates et des philatélistes de Boucherville à l'École secondaire de Montagne, 955, boulevard de Montarville, Boucherville. Admission gratuite. Info : (450) 655-9430
- DRUMMONDVILLE** 10 avril (11h00 à 18h00) et 11 avril (10h00 à 16h30) 1999. 4<sup>e</sup> Salon National des Collectionneurs au Village québécois d'Antan (venant de l'Est : autoroute 20, sortie 181). Admission : 4\$. Info : (819) 478-0245
- QUÉBEC** 24 avril 1999. Foire du Vieux Papier à la chapelle du Musée de l'Amérique française au 2, Côte de la Fabrique (près de la cathédrale-basilique) à Québec. Info : (418) 656-5040
- SAINT-HYACINTHE** 15 & 16 mai 1999 (9h00 à 17h00). Salon des Collectionneurs de l'A.N.P.S.H. aux Galeries Saint-Hyacinthe, 3200 boulevard Laframboise. Admission gratuite. Info : (450) 778-3371
- MONTREAL (LONGUEUIL)** 16 mai 1999 (9h00 à 16h00). Salon International de Jouets, d'Objets de collection et de Nostalgie de Montréal à la Place Desaulniers, 1023, boul. Taschereau à Longueuil. Admission : 5\$. Info : (514) 634-3020
- MERRICKVILLE** 18 septembre 1999 (9h00 à 16h00). Eastern Ontario Postcard Show au Community Centre de Merrickville en Ontario. Info : (613) 269-2085
- MONTREAL (LONGUEUIL)** 7 novembre 1999 (9h00 à 16h00). Salon International de Jouets, d'Objets de collection et de Nostalgie de Montréal à la Place Desaulniers, 1023, boul. Taschereau à Longueuil. Admission : 5\$. Info : (514) 634-3020

P.S. Je suis constamment à la recherche de cartes postales américaines (linen et anciennes). Si vous en avez et désirez les vendre, appelez-moi.

P.S.S. Je collectionne les villes de Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu (St. Johns) et de Saint-Luc. Si vous en avez, je peux les échanger pour des cartes de la ville de votre choix.

**SIMONNE BOUDREAU**

**1, RUE FRANCINE, SAINT-LUC (QUÉBEC) J2W 1N6**

**Tél (450) 349-3741**