



National Library
of Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Direction des acquisitions et
des services bibliographiques

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa (Ontario)
K1A 0N4

Your file *Votre référence*

Our file *Notre référence*

NOTICE

The quality of this microform is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original thesis submitted for microfilming. Every effort has been made to ensure the highest quality of reproduction possible.

If pages are missing, contact the university which granted the degree.

Some pages may have indistinct print especially if the original pages were typed with a poor typewriter ribbon or if the university sent us an inferior photocopy.

Reproduction in full or in part of this microform is governed by the Canadian Copyright Act, R.S.C. 1970, c. C-30, and subsequent amendments.

AVIS

La qualité de cette microforme dépend grandement de la qualité de la thèse soumise au microfilmage. Nous avons tout fait pour assurer une qualité supérieure de reproduction.

S'il manque des pages, veuillez communiquer avec l'université qui a conféré le grade.

La qualité d'impression de certaines pages peut laisser à désirer, surtout si les pages originales ont été dactylographiées à l'aide d'un ruban usé ou si l'université nous a fait parvenir une photocopie de qualité inférieure.

La reproduction, même partielle, de cette microforme est soumise à la Loi canadienne sur le droit d'auteur, SRC 1970, c. C-30, et ses amendements subséquents.

Exhibiting Canada: Articulations of National Identity
at the National Gallery of Canada

Anne Whitelaw

A Thesis

in

The Department

of

Communication Studies

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

October 1995

© Anne Whitelaw, 1995



National Library
of Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Direction des acquisitions et
des services bibliographiques

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa (Ontario)
K1A 0N4

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

The author has granted an irrevocable non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of his/her thesis by any means and in any form or format, making this thesis available to interested persons.

L'auteur a accordé une licence irrévocable et non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de sa thèse de quelque manière et sous quelque forme que ce soit pour mettre des exemplaires de cette thèse à la disposition des personnes intéressées.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in his/her thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without his/her permission.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège sa thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

ISBN 0-612-10909-7

Canada

Abstract

Exhibiting Canada: Articulations of National Identity at the National Gallery of Canada

Anne Whitelaw, Ph.D.
Concordia University, 1995

Under the 1990 federal Museums Act, the National Gallery of Canada has a specific mandate to "preserv[e] and promot[e] the heritage of Canada and all its peoples throughout Canada and abroad, and [to] contribut[e] to the collective memory and sense of identity of all Canadians." This mandate is not taken lightly by the Gallery which conceives of its responsibilities not only in terms of the pedagogical dissemination of Canadian art to the world, but also in terms of the definition and legitimation of a specifically Canadian art practice.

This thesis unravels the threads of the Gallery's commitment to a national programme by examining the mechanisms through which discourses of art and of the nation are constituted and negotiated across the different elements which characterize the Gallery as an "exhibitionary complex." An inquiry into the Gallery's permanent collection of Canadian art and four temporary exhibitions of contemporary Canadian art on display at the Gallery between 1980 and 1992, will situate the ways in which these exhibitions constitute specific articulations of national identity and the aesthetic within the institutional frame of the National Gallery. The thesis argues that far from projecting a single discourse of Canadian identity in its display of Canadian art, the Gallery proffers often disparate views of Canadian cultural production, views that can be traced to the display practices of the Gallery's permanent collection and of its temporary exhibitions.

Acknowledgements

As the thesis writing process winds itself down, I finally have the time to properly thank all those who made it all possible. First, I want to acknowledge my gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Marty Allor, whose kindness, support and consistent intellectual stimulation enabled the completion of this project. Also, my committee members, Dr. Line Grenier, for friendship and encouragement in the final months of writing, and Dr. Maurice Charland for helping me sift through ideas at the beginning of the process. I would also like to thank Professor Reesa Greenberg, whose Exhibitions seminar first prompted me to think about the importance of display practices.

Acknowledgement and thanks must also be given to the staff of the National Gallery of Canada, in particular Cindy Campbell, Michael Williams, Gyde Shepherd and Diana Nemiroff

For providing insightful comments and editorial suggestions at various stages of the thesis, my heartfelt appreciation goes to Susan Douglas, Jennifer Fisher, Danielle Comeau and Jim Whitelaw.

And for their constant love, support and encouragement over the years, I gratefully acknowledge my parents, Pat and Jim Whitelaw.

Finally, I want to thank Danielle Comeau whose love, care, and unfailing belief in my ability to 'get it done' are the main reasons this project is complete.

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Chapter One	
Theories of Nation-Building and Affective Belongings	13
Chapter Two	
Cultural Mediations of National Identity in the Museum	59
Chapter Three	
The Permanent Collection: Ordering National Identity	113
Chapter Four	
Temporary Exhibitions: National Identity in Disarray	164
Chapter Five	
The Exhibitions' Narratives: Articulating National Identity	227
Conclusion	278
Bibliography	285

Introduction

The importance of culture in the fostering of Canadian identity has been a feature of Canadian politics since Confederation, perhaps most emphatically stated in the 1951 Report of the Massey Commission. More recently, the Standing Committee on Communications and Culture released a report entitled *Culture and Communications: The Ties that Bind* that reiterates many of the recommendations of the Massey Commission in its belief that Canadian unity and identity can most successfully be achieved through the mediation of culture - a belief that underscores the federal government's continuing tradition of support for the arts, however much that support has dwindled in recent years.

The general aim of this thesis is to examine the articulation of national identity in Canada within the discursive space of the art museum. In particular, I study how discourses of Canadian nationhood are both taken up and negotiated by the most symbolically important institution of high culture in Canada, the National Gallery. I have chosen this site for analysis because of its very specific mandate - under the 1990 Federal Museums Act - to "preserv[e] and promot[e] the heritage of Canada and all its peoples throughout Canada and abroad, and [to] contribut[e] to the collective memory and sense of identity of all Canadians". This latest legislative move is only one facet of the historical nation-building mandate of the National Gallery

which sees itself not only as the ambassador of Canadian art to the world, but as the institution responsible for bringing Canadian high culture to the entire population of Canada.

The National Gallery itself was established in 1880, little more than a decade after the founding of Canada, as the depository of diploma works by members of the newly formed Royal Canadian Academy. Under the first National Gallery of Canada Act in 1913, the Gallery's primary function was pedagogical in nature and involved "the encouragement and cultivation of correct artistic taste and Canadian public interest in the fine arts, the promotion of the interests of art, in general, in Canada" (National Gallery of Canada Act, 1913). Like most art museums of the period in Europe and North America, the National Gallery was primarily concerned with the promotion of high culture as a means of educating the populace and thereby instilling the critical ability to make the kind of value judgments necessary in a liberal democracy. While the Gallery has actively sought out the work of European artists in the interests of building up a collection that would provide a survey of Western art, the work of Canadian artists, living and dead, remains the central component of its collection and the means through which the institution defines itself. In the National Gallery's own mandate, in addition to its federal mandate, there is a strong commitment to building a national culture, through the preservation of the past, and through the continued collection of works by living Canadian artists.

This research extends the analysis beyond the Gallery's stated commitment to a national programme, and examines the articulations of the aesthetic and national identity as they are negotiated across the different elements which constitute the Gallery as an "exhibitionary complex" (Bennett, 1989). Thus two general areas are addressed: the first pertains to the production of discourses of national identity in cultural forms and institutions - in particular the art museum - in Canada; the second studies the museum itself as a complex institution that produces a number of narratives - on art, on the nation - not solely through its symbolic power as a national cultural institution, but more importantly through the exhibitions of works of art.

Much of the available literature has tended to view the museum as a monolithic institution, its collection and display of works of art sedimented in traditional art historical methods. In addition, the museum's important civic and national stature encourages a reading of the institution as an extension of the state. In contrast to these analyses, I view the museum as a discursive apparatus, made up of a number of elements that while connected, cannot be reduced to a single effect. As such I focus the analysis of the museum as exhibitionary institution on two specific sites: the permanent collection and the temporary exhibition, which each produce different aesthetic narratives. In the analysis of discourses of national identity presented at the National Gallery, it will become apparent that far from projecting a

single discursive articulation of Canadian identity, the Gallery proffers often disparate views of Canadian cultural production, views that can largely be traced in the contrasts between the Gallery's display of its permanent collection, and in the temporary exhibitions organized by and on display at the National Gallery.

It is the intention of this thesis to examine these exhibitions as discursive events in the sense described by Foucault: each one producing a specific account of Canadian art at a particular point in time. They must therefore be viewed within their historical specificity as taking place not only within a given institution [the National Gallery of Canada] but at a particular time in the history of Canadian artistic production, in the institutional history of Canadian museums, and at a particular point in the history of aesthetics, art criticism and exhibitionary practice. In sum, the thesis investigates articulations of national identity at the National Gallery as they occur on a number of levels: at the level of institutional and museological discourse, at the level of exhibitionary discourses, and finally at the level of discourses of national identity in Canada. All these levels or threads intertwine in the discursive mediations on the aesthetic and the nation that are produced across the exhibitionary orderings of the National Gallery.

My choice of 1980 to 1992 as the temporal frame for this analysis is due in large part to the temporary exhibitions that were on display between those years. The four

exhibitions - *Pluralities* (1980), *Songs of Experience* (1986), *The Canadian Biennial of Contemporary Art* (1989), and *Land Spirit Power: First Nations at the National Gallery of Canada* (1992) - are of interest not only because they present a snapshot of Canadian artistic production during a period of great stylistic diversity, but because they are all shows of national importance. Exhibitions in the previous decades, such as the 1973 *Boucherville/Montréal/Toronto/London*, while also of Canadian art, concentrated on artistic production from particular centres and were less obviously 'national' in scope. My selection of these four exhibitions is also due to their status as group exhibitions, thereby providing a interesting glimpse into the curatorial process of selection and combination, and an insight into what was considered to be significant Canadian art at particular moments in time.

Finally, the period between 1980 and 1992 was an interesting one, not only in terms of artistic production, but also politically. During this period, debates raged over national identity and unity as Quebec's demands to be recognized as a distinct society were stonewalled by the other provincial governments, and Canada's own identity seemed under threat as economic treaties were signed with the United States. In tandem with Quebec's desire for autonomy, members of the First Nations demanded recognition and restitution for historical and contemporary mistreatment at the hands of the Canadian Government. On the cultural front, the period between 1980 and 1992 also saw a number of changes

in cultural policy, and an increasing emphasis on the mediating role of culture in the formation of national identity and unity. The National Gallery's celebration of its centenary in 1980 is only the beginning of a number of changes undergone by the institution, the most important of which was, of course, the Gallery's long-awaited relocation from the Lorne Building, to a permanent and monumental structure on Nepean Point.

There are two main issues that I want this research to address: the first is the role of culture in the mediation of national identities in Canada. The second consists in a reevaluation of the museum as institution, and a proposal regarding a more complex understanding of the museum as discourse. To accomplish this, I suggest that the museum must be understood in terms of its exhibitionary function - in other words, not as a monolithic institution, but as the site for the multiple discursive articulations of the aesthetic. In particular, I want to argue that it is only in the imbrication of the permanent collection and the temporary exhibition that the exhibitionary - and therefore discursive - function of the Gallery can be understood in its entirety.

The multiple aesthetic orderings that underscore a view of the museum as an exhibitionary institution further suggest that there is not one articulation of the aesthetic and national identity in the National Gallery. The project undertaken in this dissertation is not, then, to identify a

set of figures or characteristics that are identifiable as 'Canadian', and to then map these definitions onto the exhibitions at the National Gallery. As I argue in Chapter One, national identity must be understood as a continuous process of formation, of definitional and counterdefinitional struggles (Schlesinger, 1991). Across the political and cultural landscape of the nation, debates are played out between a state-sanctioned or 'legislated' identity that presupposes some form of unity or commonality within the population, and an understanding of identity as an affective investment. This latter conception of national identity proposes a conception of national belonging which occurs differently across regional, linguistic, gender and racial formations. At the same time, however, the form of legislated identity that underscores recent Canadian cultural policy is far more fractured and admits a certain lack of homogeneity through the introduction of such legislative measures as official bilingualism, multiculturalism, and the devolution of power to the provinces.

In the consideration of governmental discourses of nationhood, a tension can be seen to exist between this relatively fractured sense of the nation, and the rhetorical invocation of a unitary 'we' by a population in times of crisis - a stance that is particularly evident in Reform Party rhetoric. Nevertheless, these internal debates on national identity in Canada continue to be framed in terms of the traditional categories of the landscape, geography, and

language. At a completely different level, however, is the articulation of national identity as an affective belonging - an understanding that takes into account the specificity of different social formations within the political and geographic boundaries of the nation. The split between these two conceptions of the national formation, highlights the shifting terms of national identity, and the interstices between legislated identity and national belonging. In terms of its representational and affective power, the aesthetic provides an important key to an understanding national belonging. As the analysis of the National Gallery will show, the conjunctural nature of the aesthetic mediations operating across the permanent collection and the temporary exhibitions of Canadian art demonstrates the complexity of definitions of national belonging in Canada in the last fifteen years.

Chapter One considers recent literature on the nation and national identity for the ways in which it theorizes the affective relationship between individuals and the national imaginary. First, I look at the nation as a particular historical formation of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and its definition in terms of essential characteristics. In contrast to these static conceptions of nationhood, I examine a body of literature that positions the nation in terms of an imagined community, the definitions of which are under constant negotiation. This more performative view of national identity has important

consequences for an understanding of the affective nature of this form of belonging. This 'view from below' is seen through an analysis of Gramsci's conception of the national-popular, and its inflection through recent work in Cultural Studies on identity formations and the cultural politics of representation. Finally, the concept of affective investments is considered for its relevance to an understanding of the processes of national belonging.

Chapter Two situates the National Gallery within recent analyses of the museum as a discursive apparatus. Beginning with the conjunctural relation of the birth of the public museum and the formation of the nation-state in Europe at the beginning of the nineteenth century, this chapter chronicles the deployment of the museum and other public spaces by an emerging middle-class for the imposition of self-regulating behaviour on the population as a whole. Inherent in this conjuncture is the formation of a universal bourgeois subjectivity that is tied to the emergence of the aesthetic as the central conceptual category of modernity. The exhibitionary space of the museum thus serves as the locus for classification and ordering, not only of aesthetic objects, but of peoples and civilizations. The chapter concludes with an examination of art history and cultural policy in Canada and their implications for the nation-building project of the National Gallery.

Chapter Three consists of an analysis of the display of the National Gallery's permanent collection of Canadian art.

I begin with a discussion of recent writing on the museum which argues for an analysis of the exhibition as a discourse. I expand on this literature and propose a reading of the museum and its articulations of national identity through an analysis of the discursive orderings of the displays. A material analysis of the displays of the permanent collection of Canadian art as they were organized in the Lorne Building - where the collection was housed until 1987 - and in the new National Gallery on Nepean Point suggests the solidity of the trajectory of historical Canadian art that is on display.

A different articulation of the aesthetic and the national is proposed in the exhibition of contemporary art. The remainder of the chapter focuses on an analysis of the discursive orderings in the Contemporary Galleries. Central to this analysis is the tension between Canadian and non-Canadian art, and notions of the historical and the contemporary, that is evidenced in the different ordering of artworks in the Contemporary Galleries of the Lorne and the Safdie buildings.

Chapter Four continues the discursive analysis of exhibitions by considering four temporary exhibitions of contemporary Canadian art on display at the Gallery between 1980 and 1992. The pertinence of this analysis lies in its consideration of the specificity of the display of Canadian art in temporary exhibitions, and the relationship to the discursive orderings of Canadian art in the permanent

collection. The underlying assumption of the analysis is that where the permanent collection establishes a solid trajectory of aesthetic works, the temporary exhibition provides the possibility for a more flexible ordering of artistic production, and therefore of a more performative engagement of the aesthetic to national identity.

As the critical reception of the four exhibitions demonstrates, however, the nation-building mandate of the National Gallery effectively frames these exhibitions of Canadian art as national exhibitions, leaving them open to criticism in terms of the representativity of their display, even as questions of representation and 'national' representativity were already highlighted by the exhibitions themselves. This critique along the lines of representation returns to some of the issues addressed in Chapter One's discussion of national identity in terms of the split between legislated definitions of nationality and the affective dimension of national belongings.

Chapter Five brings together the material analyses of the permanent collection and the temporary exhibitions undertaken in the previous two chapters and discusses their different articulations of national identity. The importance of understanding the affective nature of national belongings is emphasized through the reexamination of the mediating role of culture in the formation of national identity. In particular, the split between a legislated notion of national identity and specific manifestations of national belonging,

highlights the discrepancies between the institutional solidity of the nation-building mandate of the National Gallery, and an affective understanding of national belonging highlighted by the aesthetic field. This discrepancy suggests that there is not one notion of Canadian identity but several that are constantly renegotiated in the play back and forth between the permanent collection and the temporary exhibition. Thus, the different discursive orderings of the two modes of exhibition make evident the multiple ways in which figures of nationhood and of national belonging in Canada are articulated across the exhibitionary practices of the museum.

Chapter One

Theories of Nation-Building and Affective Belongings

This thesis is concerned with the question of national identity, in the ways in which affective investments in the nation are formed, and, in particular, with the ways in which questions of national identity in Canada are articulated across the exhibitionary practices of the National Gallery of Canada. This chapter presents a discussion of recent research on the nation and on the formation of national identity. While the concepts underlying the terms nation, nationalism and national identity are related, they are nonetheless concerned with different aspects of national formations. A brief description of each term will reveal the distinguishing elements of these slightly overlapping issues. The nation properly speaking delimits a territory or state (especially in the term nation-state), and, as will be seen below, is also used to describe a group of like-minded individuals who identify with particular ideological, political or cultural principles - an "imagined community". Nationalism, on the other hand, is a political and emotion-driven movement or force that is used to support and maintain the principles of the nation. Finally, national identity describes an emotional and identificatory process, productive of affective investments, that has particular effects in the cultural field. Unlike nationalism, which is motivated by a strong

political commitment, national identity operates within the affective sphere of identity formation, and is concerned with those attachments and investments that extend beyond the geographical delimitations of the nation-state, and reach across political, social and cultural fields. I have defined these terms as they will be used in this thesis; the differentiations between them are part of an attempt to distinguish between fixed or limited definitions of nationness, and the more fluid sense of national belonging. Implicit in this attempt is the desire to highlight the mobile boundaries of nationhood, and to suggest that articulations of national identity in the cultural field are always shifting, always existing within the conjuncture of the social and the aesthetic.

Definitions of Nationhood

The principle myth of the nation, and one which motivates much of the histories of national formations, is the perception of the nation as the natural form of societal organization. Inherent in this myth is the belief that nations have existed since time immemorial, and that each nation has identifiable characteristics of long-standing historical legitimacy that differentiate it from other national formations. The myth of the 'natural nation', then, provides a powerful emotional force to what is largely a political preoccupation: nationalism and histories of the nation-state. In his 1983 book *Nations and Nationalism*,

Ernest Gellner defines nationalism as "primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent" (1983: 1). In this analysis, then, nationalism serves as the political motor through which a given culture obtains political legitimacy.

Nationalism - the principle of homogeneous cultural units as the foundations of political life, and of the obligatory cultural unity of rulers and ruled - is indeed inscribed neither in the nature of things, nor in the hearts of men, nor in the preconditions of social life in general, and the contention that it is so inscribed is a falsehood which nationalist doctrine has succeeded in presenting as self-evident. But nationalism as a phenomenon, not as a doctrine presented by nationalists, is inherent in a certain set of social conditions; and those conditions ... are the conditions of our time (ibid.: 125)

Underlying Gellner's theory of nationalism is the central premise that while the form taken by the nation is contingent, the principle itself is not, emerging only under the particular conditions of modernity.¹ This emphasis on the contingent nature of national formations, however, does not prevent Gellner from formulating a model of the modern nation that is valid for all societies that have achieved the appropriate degree of modernization. Gellner's transposable conception of nationalism, while temporally specific, does not take into account the specificities of context or place, but relies instead on a typically western view of

¹ Gellner's emphasis on education as high culture as the nodal point of the nation emerges out of his positioning of the nation within an historical continuum of stages of social organization, starting from the hunting/gathering stage where even the possibility of state formation was non-existent, through the era of agrarian society where the possibility of state-formation existed but was adopted by few societies, and finally, the current industrial time where there is no option other than the national-state option.

civilization, and on a universally based conception of 'modern' levels of industrial development.

In keeping with this modernist view, Gellner's own focus is on understanding the nation as "an eventually homogeneous, internally mobile culture/polity with one educational machine servicing that culture under the surveillance of that polity" (ibid.: 44). In other words, the central characteristic of the modern nation is homogeneity, achieved under the guidance of a standardized, centrally sustained high culture² (viz. education), which cuts across all strata of the population. In Gellner's model, the essence of nationalism lies in the close relationship between culture and the state. The state exists as an overarching, legitimating power,³ "the only effective keeper and protector of a national education and communications system" (ibid.: 52); in sum, the establishment of a high culture is possible only under the supervisory guidance of the State.

Gellner's effort to situate the nation as a conjunctural form of social organization, however, provides an important, even central, insight into the literature on the nation. Fundamental to his project is a concern to underscore the disjuncture between the modernity of the concept of the nation, and the feelings of antiquity or of past histories upon which many national narratives depend. Most writers on

² It should be noted that Gellner differentiates between culture and high culture: Culture is the distinctive style of conduct and communication of a given community; High culture, on the other hand, signals education and access to the acquisition of skills.

³ Following Weber's conception of the State, seen as the agency possessing the monopoly on legitimate violence in society.

nationalism agree that the late eighteenth century was the moment when the nation as a classificatory concept emerges. Benedict Anderson (1992) locates the appearance of the concept of nationhood in the Americas where Creole communities strove for independence from European rule and embarked on a process of self-definition articulated in nationalist terms. Gellner and historian Eric Hobsbawm (1990) both point to the French Revolution as the moment at which the concept of the nation entered common usage to identify and delimit both territories and populations. For Hobsbawm in particular, the emergence of the nation as a conceptual category is inextricably tied to the notions of citizenship formulated during the French Revolution. As he argues in *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (1990), the concept of the nation as it originated around the American and French Revolutions equated the state with 'the people'. Thus, the differentiation of one nation from another was not understood in terms of specific linguistic or ethnic characteristics that underscored later definitions of nationhood. Instead, these distinctions lay in the constitution of the state in a community of individuals: in other words, the formation of 'citizens'.

Hobsbawm's description of the early or revolutionary nation in terms of the equation 'nation=state=people' underscores the need to distinguish the modern state - an autonomous and self-sufficient nation-state organised around a consolidation of power in the people - from earlier state

formations whose characteristics emerged from a divinely ordained monarchy. The use of citizenship as a marker of national belonging meant that nation-states were determined along political lines, with the criteria for membership relying upon the participation of the citizenry, rather than on the identification of essential characteristics.

The 'nation' so considered, was the body of citizens whose collective sovereignty constituted them a state which was their political expression. For, whatever else a nation was, the element of citizenship and mass participation or choice was never absent from it. (ibid.: 18-19)

As Hobsbawm convincingly argues, when national identity is seen in terms of citizenship - when nationality is state-based - as in the Revolutionary nation, there is no need for the circumscription of identity along ethnic or linguistic lines:

if 'the nation' had anything in common from the popular-revolutionary point of view, it was not, ethnicity, language, etc., though these could be indications of collective belonging also. What characterized the nation-people as seen from below was precisely that it represented the common interest against the particular interests, the common good against privilege, etc. (ibid.: 20)

However, as Hobsbawm relates, the constitution of a national body, of a people, becomes more difficult as the criteria defining nationhood come under increasing scrutiny. It is no longer 'the people' which determine the nation, but a particular conception of the nation which determines who may claim to belong to 'the people'. In this analysis, as the nineteenth century progressed, nations were increasingly defined according to a set of essential characteristics which

were drawn along the lines of language, ethnicity, geography, and culture. In contrast with the revolutionary nation, within which membership was dependent upon citizenship, conceptions of the nation in the mid- to late-nineteenth century relied heavily on the purity of lineage and origins. Nationality was no longer determined along political lines as the production of a citizenry, but depended on the formulation of a set of essential characteristics that circumscribed the nation. These characteristics became the foundation for the systematic exclusion of those who did not fall within its firmly drawn parameters.

Since language, ethnicity and cultural heritage played such an important role in the formulation of essentialist definitions of nationality in the nineteenth century, they bear close examination. Language and ethnicity as criteria of national belonging first appeared during the nineteenth century. Prior to that, nationhood was state-based, and had less to do with the sharing of ethnic or linguistic characteristics than with the establishment of citizenship. Nationalist rhetoric, however, required that a unified state possess a single language, common to all its members. As both Gellner and Hobsbawm argue, the formation of a national language was due in part to the efforts of the state to impose a single vernacular, usually for administrative and educational purposes, rather than through a desire on the part of the nation's inhabitants to speak one common language.

National languages are almost always semi-artificial constructs... They are the opposite of what nationalist mythology supposes them to be, namely the primordial foundations of nationalist culture and the matrices of the national mind. (Hobsbawm: 54)

Benedict Anderson locates the development of vernacular languages in Western societies as an important motivating factor in their use as markers of nationhood. The rise of the vernacular, in turn, is tied to the development of the printing press, the increasing number of literate people and the consequent demand for the publication of work in the vernacular. Anderson traces the rise in power of a commercial and industrial bourgeoisie to the existence of a shared print-language, and thence to the development of national languages, and concludes that this process enabled the formation of an imagined community in a way that previous forms of alliance could not produce. Through this analysis of print-capitalism, Anderson argues against the belief that language is a 'natural' arbiter of national identity. Rather, his unpacking of the political and economic conditions for the development of a single (print) language forcefully demonstrates why some languages gained national prominence, while others disappeared from everyday use. The return of language in the late twentieth century as a marker of national distinctiveness occurs largely as various emergent nationalisms attempt to assert their legitimacy by contesting the official and educational usage of language (Hobsbawm, 1990: 162). As the example of Quebec nationalism illustrates, language can also bring with it an important sense of

cultural history and tradition that extends beyond the need for the simple preservation of a linguistic form, to the very specificity of cultural (national) formations.

Tied to the issue of language in the ascription of nationality is the appeal to racial or ethnic specificity as a characteristic of nationhood. Recent writing on the cultural politics of race⁴ has engaged with the ways in which articulations of national identity are organized around specific conceptions of race and ethnicity. As Stuart Hall (1993) has argued, the appeal to racial or ethnic purity in the formation of nationhood - a manifestation which can be seen everywhere from the ethnic cleansing in Bosnia, to the Reform Party's anti-immigration platform - is becoming dangerously prevalent in the discourses of both emerging and established nations.

Since cultural diversity is, increasingly, the fate of the modern world, and ethnic absolutism a regressive feature of late-modernity, the greatest danger now arises from forms of national and cultural identity - new or old - which attempt to secure *their* identity by adopting closed versions of culture or community and by the refusal to engage - in the name of an 'oppressed white minority' (*sic*) - with the difficult problems that arise from trying to live with difference. The capacity to *live with difference* is, in my view, the coming question of the twenty-first century. (Hall, 1993: 361)

In the nineteenth century, ethnicity was used in tandem with language as a marker of national belonging or of national character, often functioning as a powerful reinforcement for linguistic nationalism. Given the correlations being made

⁴ See, for example, Chatterjee (1993), Bhabha (1990a; 1990b), Hall (1990; 1993), West (1990) and Gilroy (1991).

between genetics and behavioural characteristics in nineteenth century science and social theory, the argument for ethnic or racial purity was a powerful tool in the process of inclusion and exclusion that increasingly defined the nation.

As Hobsbawm argues, ethnicity only became a real determinant of nationality in the nineteenth century as the number of possible nations increased and the need was felt to devise a set of rules circumscribing national membership. The discourse of race and ethnicity thus became a quest for origins, a process through which nation-states positioned themselves as the legitimate occupiers or owners of a given territory. Implicit in the use of ethnic characteristics in defining nationhood is the inevitable slippage to racial exclusion. The link between ethnicity as a marker of national identity and racism can be seen especially well in nineteenth-century tendencies to use 'race' and 'nation' as virtual synonyms, thereby enabling the proposal of widespread generalizations about racial and national characteristics. In Canada, this racial characterization of nationhood was articulated in terms of the inherent superiority of the nation's geography and its climactic conditions. Especially prevalent among the members of the Canada First movement at the turn of the century, this view contrasted the hardworking and self-sufficient nature of the 'northern' Canadians, with the idleness and moral degeneration of the more 'southern' inhabitants of the United States (Berger, 1966). As will be

discussed in Chapter Three, this articulation of racial and geographic characteristics to a particular conception of the nation is reflected in the paintings and writing of some members of the Group of Seven.

The figures of language, ethnicity and geography as markers of an essential national character were gradually abandoned by all but the most strident nationalist politics. What increasingly became a more effective determinant of national character was culture - and while a notion of a national culture is often accompanied by vestiges of essentialist linguistic and ethnic nationalisms, it has served discourses of nationhood well as a broadly encompassing and malleable concept. As Raymond Williams has suggested, the cultural field encompasses a broad range of things, from the general habits and customs of a people or a period, to "the works and practices of intellectual and especially artistic activity" (1983: 90). It is in this complexity that culture as an index of nationality is most productive.

Recent writing on the nation has placed a strong emphasis on the role of culture in the process of national formation. At the heart of Gellner's argument, for example, is the contention that a standardized, homogeneous, and centralized high culture is the foremost condition for modern nationhood. The primacy of this cultural homogeneity is illustrated in Gellner's claim that ethnic diversity can be tolerated only where it does not disturb the homogeneity of a

nation's high culture (Gellner, 1983: 121). This argument underscores the potential difficulties of using culture as a characteristic of nationhood when that culture is defined as homogeneous and/or monolithic. When seen in these essentialist terms, a 'national culture' can be as problematic as language and ethnicity in circumscribing national identity. What needs to be understood in the analysis of cultural and national formations are the multiple ways in which culture effects specific articulations of national identity.

Central to an understanding of culture in terms of definitions of nationhood is its range of meanings across a number of contexts; in other words, culture is productive for a variety of political and social positions - by nationalists and official uses alike. The idea that there exists a single and definable national culture supports the idea that there is or can be a united, if not homogeneous, nation that can be differentiated from all others on the basis of that culture. Canada is a prime example of state intervention in the cultural field for the purposes of defining and maintaining a distinct form of national identity. This intervention can be traced through the development (evolution) of cultural policy in Canada which sought to regulate broadcasting systems in terms of both the content and dissemination of their programmes. The importance of Canadian-made programming was emphasized in the earliest telecommunications legislation. It was also believed that Canada's large geographic size (in

tandem with its sparse population) necessitated a national system that would link up Canadians from 'sea to sea to sea', in an effort to encourage the creation of a community that would be connected through the media of radio and television.⁵

Central to such legislation was the belief that the creation of a national culture would strengthen national identity and foster national unity, a belief shared by most official or government-sponsored nationalisms. Philip Schlesinger (1991) has written about this in terms of a "rhetoric of cultural defence". As he reminds us,

cultures are the shapers of 'national characters', and culture-bearing national entities are seen as producing homogeneous effects upon their citizen-members, and as being collective actors with singular identities. Such definition takes 'culture' as a finished product and the nation as a stable given. This ... view ... is also a perfect instance of a top-down, 'official' view of what a national culture might be: integral, integrating and integrated." (Schlesinger, 1991: 142-3)

In this view, culture is the unificatory element which will simultaneously bind a nation's populace together, and differentiate that nation from others which might resemble it linguistically or ethnically. One important mechanism through which this dual function of culture is achieved is through the rhetorical appeal to a common heritage, a collection of artefacts and values shared by all members of the nation. The permeability of the term is necessary, thereby leaving unstated but obvious whose heritage represents the nation and whose does not. This question of inclusion and exclusion will

⁵ For an analysis of the nation-building mandate of telecommunications policy in Canada see Charland (1986), Raboy (1984) and Collins (1990).

be considered at greater length in the consideration of the formation of national identity, but it is important to note that the official use of a term such as common heritage presupposes the unity and totalizing character of that common heritage; and in turn, assumes that what has been legitimized as heritage is in fact common to all who are truly members of the nation. Stuart Hall has discussed the erasure of difference within dominant conceptions of national culture as part of the necessity to present a homogeneous narrative of national development:

It has been the main function of national culture which, as we argued, are systems of representation, to *represent* what is in fact the ethnic hotch-potch of modern nationality as the primordial unity of 'one people'; and of their invented traditions to project the ruptures and conquests, which are their real history, backwards in an apparently seamless and unbroken continuity towards pure, mythic time. (Hall, 1993: 356)

In Hall's argument, the point is then to expose these ruptures and discontinuities that characterize the national formation, and that belie the rhetorical invocation of unity and commonality in the discourses of the national heritage. In Canada, this rhetorical shift is most convincingly found in the idea of 'unity through diversity' that has been deployed largely by government agencies to contain the diversities acknowledged by federal policies of bilingualism and multiculturalism. These official efforts to recognize cultural diversity, however, do not produce the kind of ruptures or attention to difference proposed by Hall and other writers on national and cultural identities, because as

governmental agencies, they ignore the specificities of those other identities in favour of the construction of a homogeneous national discourse. In Canadian government documents, the allusion to the common ('national') heritage is used repeatedly to weave the immensely diverse cultures that compose Canada into a single strand. One of many examples can be found in the 1992 Report of the parliamentary Standing Committee on Communications and Culture, appropriately entitled *Culture and Communications: The Ties that Bind*, which reiterates the centrality of culture in Canadian identity. Written during a time which highlighted the diversity of the Canadian population (specifically around the distinct nature of First Nations and Québécois cultures), the Report emphasizes the unifying potential of culture: "culture is at the very soul of our society, in the sense that it reflects our beliefs and convictions, our way of life and perception of the world around us" (1992: xi).⁶

As Donald Horne has suggested, the national culture is the result of a "demand for what appears to be a shared 'public and visible culture' in which both rulers and ruled can appear to be common, if differentiated, participants" (1986: 54). As Horne's argument also underlines, appeals to a common culture function to unite individuals not only from different 'cultural' communities, but also serve to iron out

⁶ *The Ties that Bind* is only the most recent cultural policy document that underscores the importance of a common conception of culture and of heritage. However, in this report, the pertinence of a common culture is articulated to the specific requirements of the constitutional question, and the political goal of national unity.

class differences as individuals from all economic levels are given the illusion of participating in the life of the nation. At the same time, the appeal to a common heritage or culture suggests that different relationships of and to power are erased in the communal participation in and effects of culture on various levels of the population.

The appeal to a common history and culture as a way of uniting a diverse group of individuals is rooted in the construction of memory - the building up of social memory in an effort to construct a collective community. This occurs on both a symbolic and a governmental level in the references to national heritage discussed above. Donald Horne has pointed to the importance of social memory in the construction of national formations in his analysis of the public culture. Described as "a form of limiting and organizing 'realities'" (1986: 189), the public culture is a process in which experiences, perceptions, and habits are organized and classified, and thereby given meaning. That meaning is then shaped to fit into an often national framework, which in turn reshapes and 'explains' those same experiences and perceptions within the terms of such 'governmental' frameworks.

The shaping of experience can occur in several ways, but for the purposes of this argument, the two fundamental operations of the public culture are the ascription of importance to particular elements from the past, and the containment of oppositional discourses by the dominant one.

The first move of the public culture involves the legitimation of modern national elements through the assertion that they follow traditions that are seen to have great antiquity; what Hobsbawm and Ranger have grouped under the term "invented traditions":

'Invented tradition' is taken to mean a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past."
(Hobsbawm and Ranger, 1992: 1)

The common heritage is therefore an important mechanism for grounding the nation in the past, for establishing the nation's antiquity. History (or antiquity) being a relative term, especially for certain older nations such as, for example, England or France, it is important to trace this 'common' history as far back as possible, even prior to the Classical period. That the nation itself is a modern notion has little importance when the Culture dates back over a millennium. In Canada, the situation is entirely different, because we cannot even invent a 'Canadian' history that dates back further than the fifteenth century.

When Canadian politicians and nationalists allude to 'the common heritage', they are more often than not referring to the cultures of the 'founding nations' of Canada, which until recently⁷ were England and France. Even with the renewed

⁷ A shift can be observed in government documents between the establishment of the English and the French (themselves positioned as undifferentiated ethnic categories) as Canada's two founding nations, to more recent documents such as *The Ties that Bind* (1992) in which First

awareness of native issues, and the lip service paid to first nations as 'a founding people' (which in itself is problematic), the image conjured up by the phrase 'common heritage' is largely the European culture of the British and French settlers and its eventual sedimentation into 'Canadian culture'. This, in turn, was differentiated from the other distillation of British culture in the United States, with important differences rhetorically maintained between Canadian and American cultures. And, crucially, these differences were most visibly manifest in government policy regarding the cultural industries: in the creation of the CBC as a national radio and television network, in the traveling programmes of the NFB, and in the monitoring of Canadian broadcasting signals for Canadian content. Underlying the strict regulation of Canadian media was a general distrust of the mass media which was seen to be largely an American phenomenon. This distrust, which was an important factor in the development of federal cultural policy during the 1950s, was due in large part to the belief that American popular culture was inferior to Canadian, and would have a detrimental effect on the inherent values and beliefs of Canadian culture. As Paul Litt has remarked, in reference to the intellectual climate that surrounded the Massey Commission hearings in the mid-1940s:

[c]onvictions of Canada's cultural superiority were expressed with a sincerity which suggested that

Nations are placed, together with the 'English' and the 'French' as Canada's three founding peoples. The addition of a fourth, 'immigrant', category was suggested in the report, but largely ignored.

they were more than just a cynical means for highbrows to sell high culture to the masses. As both liberal humanism and nationalism were defined in opposition to the tide of American mass culture which spilled over the forty-ninth parallel, they became lumped together in the minds of cultural nationalists. . . . The culture lobby's call for cultural development was inspired by the faith that if Canada retained some cultural independence, it could build a society more civilized than the United States. This faith in turn rested upon the conviction that Canada was already a significantly different society. No one ever defined exactly what made Canada different, but a firm belief in the superiority of the Canadian way of life was implicit in most of the submissions to the commission. (Litt, 1992: 107)

The second operation of the public culture involves the containment of oppositional discourses. As Horne has suggested, the myths of public culture can also appear in conflict. However, the presence of oppositional discourses largely figure to indicate the limits of areas of conflict that are permissible in the public culture (1986: 76). The invocation of the common heritage - particularly when framed in the possessive as 'our' common heritage - is accompanied by the assumption of a singular, unitary national culture: a homogeneous essence that transcends time and place, and is valid for all times and for all people within the nation. It is this homogeneous culture, maintained by nationalists, which works to contain oppositional discourses by limiting the definitional boundaries of the nation. To impose a homogeneity on these various cultures is unproductive, given the multiple cultures which together form the nation, and only serves to reinforce the cultures of the dominant groups

at the expense of others who have uneven access to power. As Horne has further argued:

within any modern society there are more 'cultures' than the public culture admits - more ways of giving meaning to existence by the construction of 'realities' that provide a basis for thought and action - than are visible in what is presented as 'the national life'. (1986: 192)

The lack of complexity of notions of the nation underscores its shortcomings as a system of representation. The concept of national identity as a process of affective identification with a nation, involves many more levels of mediation than does the analysis of the political formations of nations and nationalism. This may be why so many writers on the nation skirt the question by concentrating their efforts on the genesis of the nation as a political and ideological concept. The remainder of this chapter will examine the process of national identification: the mechanisms through which individuals and groups insert themselves within a particular national formation on a day-to-day basis. My concern here is with extending the current literature on the nation to look at the cultural mediations of national cultural formations. In other words, to examine the terms around which the articulations of an affective national belonging are founded, and to situate the articulation of these terms within the aesthetic discourse of the art museum in Canada.

The Formation of National Identity

As was suggested above, many writers on the nation are more interested in examining the nation as a form of social

organization than in pursuing the mechanisms through which attachments or identifications with the nation are formed. Ernest Gellner, for example, while acknowledging that powerful sentiments are evoked by the nation, asserts that such attachments are predicated upon the existence of a centrally organized, homogeneous culture:

when general social conditions make for standardized, homogeneous, centrally sustained high cultures, pervading entire populations and not just elite minorities, a situation arises in which well-defined, educationally sanctioned and unified cultures constitute very nearly the only kind of unit with which men willingly and often ardently identify. (1983: 55)

In Gellner's analysis, as was suggested earlier, the emphasis is placed on the development of such centrally sustained national formations, an analysis which obscures the often contradictory ways in which individuals live within nations, and identify themselves as members of nations. However, even while criticizing Gellner for approaching the question of national formations 'from above', Eric Hobsbawm's analysis also fails to adequately address the actual processes of national identity formation, despite his assertion that nations should be analysed "in terms of the assumptions, hopes, needs, longings and interests of ordinary people, which are not necessarily national and still less nationalist" (1990: 9). Hobsbawm's neglect of the question of national identity, however, can largely be attributed to his larger concern with the development of the concept of

nationalism in Europe, a historical approach which does not lend itself to an analysis of affective belongings.

In *Imagined Communities* (1992), Benedict Anderson provides another approach to the question of the nation by addressing the ways in which the idea of 'nation-ness' is translated into the everyday life of a nation's inhabitants. Anderson's oft-cited description of the nation as "an imagined political community" spells out what Gellner and Hobsbawm were only hinting at: that while characteristics of nations can be enumerated, and the historical specificity of the concept argued, the 'nation' (as opposed to the state which is a territorially bounded political entity) can only be imagined conceptually. Anderson's analysis also points to the limits of other approaches which attempt to delimit one universally valid definition of the nation, against which specific national formations can be measured. Thus, what is at stake in Anderson's writings is not the greater authenticity of one imagining over another, but the ways in which they are imagined: "Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity or by their genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined" (1992: 6).

The underlying theoretical premise of Anderson's consideration of the nation is the fluidity of its boundaries and the centrality of the affective dimension of nationhood. It is this affective dimension that enables Anderson to characterise the nation as "an imagined political community, and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign"

(ibid.: 6). Within this conception, the nation is imagined because it exists in the minds of each member as a lived image of communion; it is limited because it has geographic boundaries which differentiate and separate one nation from all other nations; it is sovereign because it is no longer ruled by a divinely ordained monarch, but is instead ruled by men and is thus a legacy of the ages of Enlightenment and Revolution; and finally, the nation is a community because it is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship in which there is an identification with like-minded people (i.e., the constitution of 'a' people). Thus, he argues that the nation is produced less through the defining of territorial boundaries, than through the collective imaginings of its inhabitants.

As I indicated above, Anderson locates the 'becoming' (or the possibility) of the nation at the point at which a group of individuals recognizes a co-terminousness to themselves, a relationship between themselves and a whole range of like people that is not based on family. This is the moment at which the idea of community (of simultaneity and similarity) is acknowledged. Anderson ties this greater awareness of community (and of simultaneity) to the development of vernacular print-languages and of what he calls print-language capitalism. He argues that the widespread literacy of the middle class, and the tendency of establishing contacts through abstract channels (information, contracts, etc.), rather than through marriage and offspring

like the aristocracy, positioned the bourgeoisie as the first class to imagine itself across time and space as a community. To illustrate this point, Anderson posits two cultural forms, the novel and the newspaper, as instances where the imagined community is made visible. The newspaper, in particular, is constituted as the moment where, through the very act of reading, the individual consciously or unconsciously links him or herself to a range of other individuals, seen and unseen, that are simultaneously participating in the same activity. Thus, for Anderson, the element that joins members of the nation together and defines nationality is no longer a set of essential characteristics, but shared activities and imaginings.

In describing the nation as an 'imagined community', Anderson shifts the emphasis from an essentialist notion of national identity as something one is born into, to a fluid conception of nationhood as a sense of belonging, organised around shifting signifiers that resonate in the everyday experience of a nation's populace. In addition, unlike Gellner and Hobsbawm who see a necessary collocation between nation and state, Anderson provides the first step in an understanding of nationhood that exists over and above formally defined territorial boundaries. For Anderson, it is the "profound emotional legitimacy" that nations command, the "deep attachments" of individuals to nations, that provides the greater insight into national formations (ibid.: 4).

In *Media, State and Nation*, Philip Schlesinger extends Anderson's conception of the nation as community in his characterization of national identity as "a particular kind of collective identity" (1991: 153). Drawing on the work of social theorists on the question of group or collective identity, Schlesinger suggests that national identity (which, significantly, he distinguishes from nationalism) be viewed as a dynamic construction, the process of collective identity taking place through the sharing of a common past. To support this claim he cites social theorist J.W. LaPierre writing in 1984: "Collective identity relates to a collective memory through which the contemporary group recognizes itself through a common past, remembrance, commemoration, interpretation and reinterpretation". (ibid.: 153). Unlike other analyses which offer up a transposable and relatively stable model of nation formation,⁸ Schlesinger's articulation of national identity as a form of collective identity shifts the analysis of the nation from its artefacts to what he terms "a system of relations and representations" (ibid.:

⁸ The most obvious example of a static conception of the national form is that proposed by Gellner (1983). But as Partha Chatterjee (1993) has charged, Anderson's understanding of the nation as an imagined community rests on a specific model of western nation formation that he establishes as having universal validity. "I have one central objection to Anderson's argument. If nationalisms in the rest of the world have to choose their imagined community from certain "modular" forms already made available to them by Europe and the Americas, what do they have left to imagine? History, it would seem, has decreed that we in the postcolonial world shall only be perpetual consumers of modernity. Europe and the Americas, the only true subjects of history, have thought out on our behalf not only the script of colonial enlightenment and exploitation, but also that of our anticolonial resistance and postcolonial misery. Even our imaginations must remain forever colonized." (Chatterjee, 1993: 5)

154). The formation of national identity, then, should be seen as a constant process of definition and redefinition.

It is this dynamic aspect of national identity that makes these arguments so powerful. Schlesinger views national identity as negotiated within a series of definitional and counter-definitional struggles that take place across a number of terrains, including the cultural. He is quick to point out, however, that while cultural institutions play a vital role in producing a national culture, they should not be considered the sole arbiters of that culture. In other words, the production of national identity takes place not only across official institutions, but in the population's engagement with them:

[I]n principle, the national culture is bounded by the territorial confines of a given nation-state. However, the 'national' characteristics are not given. National cultures are not simply repositories of shared symbols to which the entire population stands in identical relation. Rather, they are to be approached as sites of contestation, in which competition over definitions takes place. (1991: 174)

This line of argument is a useful counterpoint to Gellner's insistence on the congruence of state and culture in the formation of the nation. Within that frame of analysis, the only acceptable culture is state culture, with any possibility of negotiation rendered obsolete from the start. Even Anderson's approach to culture is limited to a consideration of the representational strategies of official culture - especially, as we shall see, in his consideration of the museum. The imagined community is seemingly incapable

of producing negotiated readings, or interventions in cultural forms.

Within this context, then, it is not surprising that Schlesinger insists on the distinction between nationalism and national identity, asserting that the two terms are not necessarily co-terminous. This distinction could also be extended to the separation of official or state culture from other forms of national culture.

Nationalism, one may agree, is a particular kind of doctrine, but the term tends to carry the sense of a community mobilized (in part at least) in the pursuit of a collective interest. National identity may be invoked as a point of reference without thereby necessarily being nationalistic. There are undoubtedly historical periods when the construction of a national identity may be part of a nationalist programme, and therefore involve a good deal of intellectual labour. However, once the political boundaries of the nation-state have been achieved, a national identity, with all the accompanying mythico-cultural apparatus, may be in place and not necessarily identical with nationalism as such. (Schlesinger, 1991: 168)

In this distinction between an official nationalism and a more affective connection to the nation, which underscores Schlesinger's conception of collective identity, the idea of a national community should in no way be confused with the notion of a homogeneous or unitary people. While the concept of collective identity, of a shared social memory as helping define that collective identity (and the idea of community), does carry with it the idea of a people, an important distinction should be made and maintained in order to acknowledge that the community posited by Schlesinger (the holders of collective identity) are necessarily

heterogeneous. Members of the collectivity (of the community) are always engaged in a series of definitional and counter-definitional struggles over the terms within which they are inscribed in the nation.

The view of the nation as a process of constant redefinition and of contesting positionalities is brilliantly argued by Homi Bhabha in his essay "Dissemination: Time, Narrative and the Margins of the Modern Nation" (1990), in which he introduces important elements to the theorization of narratives of the nation, particularly around their temporal organization. The project undertaken by Bhabha is the double-writing of the nation - a conjunction between the solidity of the concept of the nation and its historical existence, and the affective experiences of a nation's inhabitants, the narrative of individual citizens. Bhabha is not setting up a binary opposition between the abstract concept of the nation and the experience of a people, but rather, in using the term double-writing, he is suggesting the coexistence of two temporalities in the narrative of the nation: what he terms the pedagogical and the performative.

The pedagogical is the time of the nation, what he describes as "a movement of becoming designated by *itself*, encapsulated in a succession of historical moments that represents an eternity produced by self-generation" (Bhabha, 1990: 298); in other words, the nation as a fixed sociological and historical entity. The performative, on the other hand, breaks into the pedagogical time of the nation,

and disrupts its self-generation, thereby locating the writing of the nation in the specific experiences and interventions of individual subjects (ibid.: 298). Thus, it is not on the level of a timeless conception of 'the people' that Bhabha's notion of the performative operates, but rather, in the local experience of individual subjects which disrupts the official narrative of the nation.

One of the central aspects of Bhabha's notion of the performative is its refusal of a homogenous or monolithic conception of 'the people' in the assertion that the performative is itself the articulation of difference.

the nation is no longer the sign of modernity under which cultural differences are homogenized in the 'horizontal' view of society. The nation reveals, in its ambivalent and vacillating representation, the ethnography of its own historicity and opens up the possibility of other narratives of the people and their difference. (ibid.: 300)

Bhabha's conceptualization of the different temporalities of the nation refuses the fixity of certain of the conceptions of national identity discussed earlier. For Bhabha, the complexity of the lived experiences of the nation makes it impossible to ascribe it an a priori monolithic definition or characterization, emerging from historical events. Rather, the narratives of the nation are situated in the present, in the performative temporality of local experiences and identifications of individual subjects.

Like Anderson, Bhabha's description of the processes of nation formation emphasises individuals' affective relationship to the nation, examining the manner in which

cultural artefacts are seen to have particular meaning for individuals and their conceptions of nationhood, and thereby moving the analysis of national identity to an examination of the mechanisms through which identification with the nation takes place. The focus thus shifts from a predetermined conception of the nation, where its boundaries are already prescribed, to a view of the process of constructing national identity as the site of Schlesinger's definitional struggles: it is a continual contestation over the ways in which the nation is defined. In this view, the emphasis is placed on the ways in which notions of social memory and tradition are taken up and mobilized by both institutional and popular forces, with differing results. As Schlesinger argues:

The elaboration of national identity is a chronic process. Of considerable importance is the relationship between the present of a national collectivity and its past. That relationship should be understood, at least in part, as an imaginary one, mediated by the continual, selective reconstitution of 'traditions' and of 'social memory'. These categories direct our attention to the role of cultural institutions and practices through which the chain of identity between past and present is forged. It also requires us to consider the special role of cultural producers as active constructors of national identity. (1991: 174)

As was suggested earlier, the position of cultural institutions in nation-building discourses should not be seen solely as part of official state culture. While cultural institutions, especially national ones, play a central role in the production of national cultures, this positioning should not be seen only as top down or hierarchical in nature. As will be discussed throughout the thesis,

institutional discourses are multiple in nature and must be seen in terms of official discourses of culture and the nation as well as the renegotiations of those narratives that occur both inside and outside the institution.

For Anderson, cultural institutions such as the museum were but one regulating institution that organized the nation's populace into manageable groups. The museum, along with the census and the map, served as an important tool through which the colonial powers organized and controlled the native inhabitants of the colonies. Through the tracking system of the census, which provided identity categories for classifying individuals within fixed groups ("the fiction of the census is that everyone is in it, and that everyone has one - and only one- extremely clear place" (1992: 165-6), and through the census's accompaniment, the map, which delimited territorially the location of the various identity categories, or as part of what Anderson has called 'the museumizing imagination', the nation's populace was represented as inherently classifiable and hence knowable. The museumizing of the nation occurred on the level of both the designation of particular sites as having historical importance in the formation of the nation⁹, and in the organization of exhibitions in museums and World's Fairs. As

⁹ This conception of 'museumization' also underlies Donald Horne's study of Europe in *The Great Museum* (1984). For Horne, the aim of modern tourism - and the institutions that are part of the 'tourist experience' - is to engage in "that area of the great public display of a modern industrial society, that has turned parts of Europe into a museum of authenticated remnants of past cultures, resurrected so richly and professionally that the people of those days would probably not recognise their own artefacts." (1984: 1)

both Annie Coombes (1988) and Tony Bennett (1989; 1995) have shown, the organization of displays of the cultures of colonized peoples function on a metonymic level to present a coherent, homogenizing, and containable display of a culture, while on a more governmental level demonstrate the classifying capability and power of the colonizer. The nation-building role of the museum works both to lay out the national history of the colonized people, and to inscribe the conquest of that people in the national history of the Empire. While this process of representing a people metonymically through culture is particularly apparent in the display of cultural artefacts, especially in museums of history and anthropology, as will be seen in the next chapter, the display of works of art can play a similar role in the building of a national culture and in making of the art museum a site for the formation of national identity.

National Belonging

The understanding of national identity as a continuous process of formation, as argued by Bhabha and Schlesinger, points to the tensions between an official view of nationhood supplied by the state, and the ways in which specific formations articulate their affective relationship to the nation. This tension between what might loosely be described as official and 'popular' nationalisms can be characterised as more or less recursive, a continual process of negotiation at the level of both official and 'popular' articulations of

the national. In the following section I will examine the work undertaken in Cultural Studies on the issue of the state and civil society, with a particular focus on the rearticulation of Gramsci's conceptions of hegemony and of the national-popular. Stemming from this work, I will also look at Lawrence Grossberg's conception of affect for the way in which it can be usefully deployed towards an understanding of the processes of national identification across the aesthetic field.

Antonio Gramsci's examination of the complexities of social and political organizations makes him an obvious choice in the analysis of the nation, but as Philip Schlesinger points out, his writings have been ignored by many authors whose work would have benefited from his analysis. Schlesinger in particular cites Benedict Anderson as an author whose conception of imagined community is indebted to the "Gramscian problematic of cultural and ideological dominance in the articulation of the discourses of nationhood" (1991: 170-1). The pertinence of Gramsci's writing for the understanding of national identity lies in its original consideration of the state as both political society and civil society. In contrast to other contemporary Marxist writers exploring the question of relations of power in the state, Gramsci sees the relationship between political society and private society as the locus for an understanding of the processes through which ideological and political

hegemony is obtained and maintained.¹⁰ In Gramsci's writing, civil society is the area between the economic base and the superstructure, the coming together of economic, political and ideological interests; in other words, it is the "terrain in which classes contest for power" (Hall et al., 1978: 47). Through an analysis of the workings of civil society, Gramsci is able to examine the relationships between those holding power and the subordinate or dominated classes, and to conceive that relationship in terms of relations of force that are continuously under negotiation.

The concept of hegemonic power as developed by Gramsci, then, stresses the imbrication of ruler and ruled in the functioning of the state. The governing of a particular class formation is secured only with the consent of subordinate classes within the social formation: it is not a question of domination and coercion, but of the deployment of strategies through which the ruling class seeks to obtain the consent of others. As Hall et al. have argued, hegemonic power is not achieved by physical force, but by securing the emotional investments of the population as a whole: "ideological dominance and subordination are not understood in isolation, but always as one, though crucially important aspect of the relation of classes and class fractions at all levels -

¹⁰A thorough analysis of Gramsci's concept of civil society is provided in Hall, Lumley, and McLennan (1978). This essay is particularly useful for its emphasis on the specificities of Gramsci's conception of 'civil society', and its difference from Althusser's view of the relations of culture and the state as set forth in his analysis of what he terms Ideological State Apparatuses (Althusser, 1971).

economic and political, as well as ideological/cultural"

(ibid.: 48-9). As Lawrence Grossberg has further explained:

a hegemonic politics always involves the ongoing rearticulation of the relations between, and the identity and positions of, both the ruling bloc and the subordinate fractions within the larger social formation. A hegemonic politics does not incorporate resistance but constructs positions of subordination which enable active real and effective resistance. (Hegemony also defines the position of the excluded: those resistant fractions with whom it cannot or will not negotiate, which it therefore seeks to place outside the hegemonically restructured social formation.) This is not, then, the construction of a consensus in which all resistance is incorporated into the dominant ideological positions; rather it is the ruling bloc securing for itself a position of leadership. (Grossberg 1988a: 24-5)

As Grossberg's description of a hegemonic politics suggests, the rule of society as theorized by Gramsci is not a hierarchical and monolithic exercise of power by the rulers upon the ruled, but is rather a continuously shifting relationship between two differentiated political and social positions. And unlike other descriptions of hegemony which see it as incorporating all resistance and creating a society of consensus - and thus subsuming all ideologies to the ruling ideology - Gramsci's analysis allows for the existence of a diversity of positions, which, while having unequal access to power, are nonetheless imbricated in its rule.

The rearticulation of Gramsci in Cultural Studies provides a different understanding of the cultural field in relation to national formations. In particular, Gramsci's positioning of the cultural field as integral to the understanding of society takes the analysis of culture away

from a deterministic view of it as an instrument of the state, and instead recognises its centrality in the mediation of social experience. In the analysis of national identity, the cultural field provides an important locus for the establishment of official definitions of nation-ness, as well as oppositional ones. As the breadth of governmental documents on cultural policy suggest, culture is recognized as playing a central role in the definition of nationhood in Canada. And as will be argued in Chapter Two, the expected contribution of culture (of the aesthetic) to nation-building is particularly evident in its deployment by cultural institutions.

One of the main contributions of Gramsci's writing to an understanding of the relationship of culture and society is his concept of the national popular, which he describes as "a specific tactic which confronts the concrete problems of national life and operates on the basis of popular forces as they are historically determined" (1971: 410). Gramsci designated as 'national-popular' those forms of culture that came directly from the people, and as such differentiated one nation from another.¹¹ This is not strictly speaking a desire for an authentic 'folk' culture, although any such cultures are inherently part of what could be constituted as the national-popular. Instead, the terrain of the national-

¹¹ It must be stated from the outset that Gramsci was not interested in selecting out one specific kind of culture (popular culture) that would be characterized as authentically national - something that many in Italy attempted to do with the publication of his writing in the 50s, ascribing sole national-popular status to neo-realist film in a move that directly contradicted Gramsci's purposes.

popular was broad and highly complex, involving a number of media and styles that changed over time. The importance of the national-popular in Gramsci's writing pertains to the centrality of the cultural field in the diffusion of ideologies and thus in the constitution of hegemony. For Gramsci, writing in support of a social and political revolution (and against a totalitarian regime that framed the imposition of a narrow definition of culture as a broader nationalism), the sphere of a 'popular' culture provided the locus for building a collective identity in the people and thus securing an affective identity with the nation.¹²

[T]here is no contradiction between the cultural aspects of the national-popular concept and the political meaning it possesses. The cultural and ideological terrains are merely sites on which the work of political organization and change is carried out. In each case, what is at stake in the national-popular concept is the construction of hegemony involving the building of class alliances under the leadership of a unitary centre in order to form a collective will which can disarticulate an existing hegemonic bloc and establish a new social order in its place. (Forgacs 1984: 94)

As David Forgacs has argued, Gramsci's conception of the national popular has relevance for the analysis of contemporary society because of its integration of the cultural and the political, and because it poses these questions as existing outside of the limitations imposed by a rigid class analysis. In particular, Forgacs sees the contemporary usefulness of the concept of the national-

¹² To quote David Forgacs, "The Italian nation had thus been more a rhetorical or legal entity than a felt cultural reality, existing at most for the intellectual and ruling élites but not for the masses. 'Nation' and 'people' did not coincide in Italian history" (1984: 90).

popular as a way of theorizing the political effectivity of 'the new social movements', and their ability to join forces on issues across alliances of class, race or gender. The pertinence of the conception of the national popular to this analysis resides in its focus on the mediating role of culture in the formation of national identity, and in its location of that mediation across a broad range of affective and ideological planes.

The oppositional character of the notion of the 'national-popular' as articulated by Gramsci marks its difference from official (state-based) concepts of the national heritage discussed above. These differences are apparent in the recent trend in a number of western nation-states to conceptualize the national heritage in terms of its 'popular' manifestations and affective potential; for example, by broadening the scope of what artefacts can be given the status of national heritage.¹³ As was seen earlier, this is accomplished through various strategies of governmental agencies to produce a version of a historical past that can be used to 'bolster' specific conceptions of the social order in the present, through appeals to an idealized, unified 'national heritage'. This manipulation of the past has been examined in recent research in Britain and

¹³ One example is the invocation of hockey as a part of the national heritage in *The Ties that Bind*: "the institution of ice hockey is a proud Canadian creation, one in which all Canadians can reconcile their differences and share a common identification" (1992:20) .

Australia around the question of the political use of heritage.¹⁴

As Michael Bommers and Patrick Wright have argued, the invocation of 'the national heritage' has little to do with actual past events and more to do with representations of an imaginary and idealized past. The state's interest in promoting a national past is part of the process described earlier which involves a harnessing of past events to support specific social orderings in the present. Part of that process is the constitution of an idealized citizen, a national subjectivity to which a sense of belonging can be articulated. Inherent in this conception of national heritage is the belief that it can have significance across the national formation (i.e., transcend or cut across other identity-formations) and produce specific affective investments. At issue here is the creation of a (single) version of the past that is then constituted as something with which a citizenry should have some connection. From a certain perspective, the assertion of a national heritage, or of a common culture, can be seen as an attempt on the part of the state to achieve the results of a national popular: an affective sense of belonging rather than a list of essential characteristics. The articulation of a particular conception of the past to contemporary ideas of the nation is what underlies the concept of national heritage, but instead of

¹⁴ For example in Bommers and Wright (1982), Wright (1985), Bennett (1988), and Corner and Harvey (1991).

emerging from below, it is instated from above as official culture.

An awareness of how to harness the national popular and use it to secure hegemony is chronicled by Stuart Hall in his numerous essays on the politics of Thatcherism and the 'crisis of the Left' during the 1980s. In his analysis of what he terms the 'Authoritarian Populism' of Margaret Thatcher and the Conservative party, Hall (1988) suggests that it was through the appropriation of slogans from the Left which she transformed into slogans of the Right - in part through an appeal to popular conceptions of patriotism and of the nation - that Thatcher was able to secure the consent and the support of traditionally Labour constituencies, in particular the working classes and the petit bourgeoisie. Unlike the Left, which was caught up in struggles of conceptual self-definition, Thatcher's Conservative party was able to successfully stake out various class positions, manipulate them, and inscribe them within a Conservative political platform. As Hall argues, in Gramscian terms Thatcherism established a base of widespread popular support, thereby winning for itself the 'war of position'. To quote Hall:

this is no rhetorical device or trick, for this populism is operating on genuine contradictions, it has a rational and material core. Its success and effectivity do not lie in its capacity to dupe unsuspecting folk but in the way it addresses real problems, real and lived experiences, real contradictions - and yet is able to represent them within a logic of discourse which pulls them systematically into line with policies and class strategies of the right. ... Ideological

transformation and political restructuring of this order ... works on the ground of already constituted social practices and lived ideologies. It wins space there by constantly drawing on these elements which have secured over time a traditional resonance and left their traces in popular inventories. At the same time, it changes the field of struggle by changing the place, the position, the relative weight of the condensations within any one discourse and constructing them according to an alternative logic. What shifts them is not 'thoughts' but a particular practice of social struggle: ideological and political class struggle. (1988: 56)

Lawrence Grossberg chronicles a similar shift in the United States in the early 1980s under President Ronald Reagan, but convincingly argues that the conditions in the United States, and therefore the strategies used to secure hegemonic power, are markedly different from those employed in Great Britain by Thatcher. In the United States, according to Grossberg, the project of the state is less the securing of popular support through political maneuvers, than of capturing the area in which Americans have an emotional investment: the field of popular culture. Grossberg summarizes the situation as follows: "the crisis of America, according to the New Right, is neither economic nor ideological, but affective" (1988a: 31). Thus, Grossberg suggests that in Reagan's America, struggle is not over ideological positions, but over people's affective investments. Hence the increasing importance of popular culture as the terrain over which the struggle for power is waged: because popular culture, and the pleasures and sensations that it provides, has a more central place in the everyday life of Americans than ideology.

It is this frontier, a gap between affect and ideology, between fans and fanatics, that is rearticulated into the national popular as an increasingly unbridgeable chiasma which leaves us standing on the border of our affective relations, unable to anchor ourselves ideologically. By disarticulating youth and cultural fandom from America and fanaticism, the New Right is constructing America as a powerful affectively charged but ideologically empty identity. It is articulating the postwar national popular against itself, using the very sites of everyday empowerment to undermine the possibility of any resistance. (ibid.: 38)

For Grossberg, the cynicism and nihilism of the postmodern is mirrored in the American situation where the gap between affect and ideology translates into the emptying of meaning from popular culture, leaving it open to political manipulation from above. In political terms, Grossberg argues, this means that Reagan's tapping into American popular culture was not the nostalgic evocation of an idealized and containable past, but an awareness of the significance of popular cultural forms in the shaping of everyday experience. In the positioning of the affective plane as central to the formation of identity, Grossberg is arguing that (popular) culture has a deeper range of effects than is suggested by analyses of the formation of pleasure. Culture figures as an important site in the struggle over meaning. What he is warning against, is that by taking out the content of the popular, "by articulating America into the frontier between affect and ideology" (ibid.: 62), the New Right establishes its hegemony; because since what is most

important is the act of caring (about anything), the ability to resist or to offer an oppositional reading is impossible.

The construction of a national popular is more problematic in Canada and differs from both the British and the American situation. The focus of recent government policy on culture, and the seemingly endless public debate over national identity and unity, provide an important point around which an analysis like Grossberg's and Hall's into the production of specific articulations of the national and the cultural can be undertaken. The appeals to Canadian identity and unity, to 'our common heritage' and 'shared values' that run through Canadian cultural policy, presuppose an emotional identification of the people with the nation, but an identification which is based on an idealized unity of the national cultural field. As both Schlesinger and Bhabha have argued, the production of national formations is a complex process, the definitions and terms of which are under constant negotiation. The tensions between official nationalisms and 'popular' instances of national belonging are most apparent in the contestation over the parameters of nationhood. In a consideration of a cultural institution like the National Gallery, the concept of affect is particularly useful because it places the emphasis on the field of the aesthetic as the site for the production of multiple articulations of national belonging.

This shifting of the field of inquiry is important in an analysis of cultural institutions in Canada. The youth of the

national formation as well as the precariousness of its social and political organization in recent years means that the building of a national culture is important; and to this effect, Canada has a lengthy history of state support of cultural production and cultural institutions. Because of the history of these institutions, it is not surprising that the cultural field is central to political and state action. Culture in Canada is not simply linked to the espousal of particular civic values and beliefs, but is tied to the process of national building. In particular in recent quests for national identity in Canada, the cultural has come to have an increasing importance, largely because the question of national identity has been asked at the level of both politics and affect; a doubling that was particularly evident in the 1992 referendum on the Charlottetown accord. This brought out a slew of passionate debates about the constitution of a national character, especially in light of the inclusion/exclusion of First Nations, and the question of Quebec's distinct cultural status.

However, within the doubled nature of this quest for national identity (doubled in terms of politics and affect), two important points need to be mapped out. The first concerns the specific nature of national identity as it is laid out in official definitions, while the second involves the affective nature of national belonging. The first, official sense of national identity, true to the legacy of official bilingualism and multiculturalism in Canada, offers

a definition of nationality that, in taking account of the diversity within the national formation, composes a kind of checklist within which this diversity can be contained. Roughly speaking, these 'diversities' include an attention to equal representation on the basis of language, regional origin, ethnicity and gender. And while I would not argue with the importance of attending to the question of representation, the legislated nature of this kind of national identity, as it translates into practice, does not adequately engage with the specificity of difference within the national formation. In contrast, an understanding of national identity as an affective investment, which acknowledges the specificity and the range of 'imaginings' within the national formation, is more pertinent to the analysis of the multiple mediations of the nation produced by the institution.

The analysis of the affective dimensions of the national-popular focuses on the mediating role of culture in the formation of national identity. In the analysis of the articulations of national identity at the National Gallery, an understanding of the formation of identity at the level of the affective broadens the range of objects and sites of analysis. It is no longer simply a question of looking to the institutional discourse of the Gallery to understand the nation-building function of the museum. Rather, what the analysis of the National Gallery will suggest is the complex articulation of artistic practice to the formation of

national belonging that occurs across the Gallery's displays. The shift from institutional discourses to the affective dimension of national identity, then, enables an analysis of the relation between the narratives of Canadian art on display at the National Gallery, and the constitution of a distinct national identity. The rest of the thesis will consist of an analysis of the material ways in which the aesthetic articulates national identity at the National Gallery of Canada.

Chapter Two

Cultural Mediations of National Identity in the Museum

The conceptions of nationhood and national identity discussed in the preceding chapter revolve around a consideration of the nation's collective relationship to culture. National formations are diverse both in their makeup and in the way in which they are theorised, but whether it is Anderson's conception of the nation as an imagined community, Schlesinger's description of communities engaged in definitional struggles, Bhabha's sense of the tension between the pedagogical and the performative writing of the nation, or even Gellner's model of a centralized, educated high culture, this literature underscores the different modes and levels of mediation of the nation.

In this chapter, I will focus the analysis of the relations between culture and national formations on a consideration of the museum as a specific site for the articulations of national identity. In particular, I will examine the ways in which the National Gallery of Canada has, since its foundation, put into practice its nation-building mandate. In the first instance, I will briefly examine theories of the museum that have a particular bearing on this analysis. Second, the nature of art history as an organizational principle in the ordering and display of objects in the museum will be considered. Finally, the

effects of Canadian cultural policy on the acquisition and exhibition practices of the National Gallery will situate the institution within the complex web of culture and politics that underscore the development of the specific articulations of national identity and the aesthetic that have taken place at the National Gallery.

The Origins of the Public Museum

In historical terms, the development of the public museum occurs almost simultaneously with the formation of nation-states in Europe and the Americas - indeed, both emerge out of the same politico-philosophical tradition of Enlightenment rationality. As the power of the state was transferred from the body of the ruler to the body of the people, royal and princely art collections were opened up to the public, and if not directly then symbolically given over to the people, as occurred in France. In fact, the Louvre provides the paradigmatic example of the new public museum: originally the palace of the King, during the French Revolution the galleries of the Louvre were opened to the public as the "Museum français" (Seling, 1967: 109). The 'repossession' of royal treasures by 'the people' of the republic constitutes an important symbolic moment in the construction of a certain kind of nationhood in France. The formation of the revolutionary nation, as described by Hobsbawm, depended on the reconfiguration of objects and events from the Ancien Régime into the putative symbols of an

emerging nationhood. The museum accomplished this by physically taking over one of the King's residences, and turning it and its contents - what was to all intents and purposes the material record of western civilization - over to the citizens of the new republic. That the museum constituted such an important symbolic dimension can particularly be seen in the changing uses to which it was put by successive governing regimes. Each new ruler used the walls and ceilings of the Louvre not only to exhibit the national heritage of France and its dominions,¹ but to literally inscribe the symbols of their rule through painted cornices, ceilings and other architectural details. As Duncan and Wallach have argued, the museum in its earliest manifestations in Europe appropriated the symbols of absolutist rule and put them to new ideological uses, to stand for the bourgeoisie and their acquisition of power. This appropriation occurred not only at the level of the possession and transformation of physical structures, but more importantly, rested on the bourgeoisie's ownership of art: the material constituents of Western civilization. As will be seen in greater detail below, through the appropriation and manipulation of the aesthetic, the nineteenth-century bourgeoisie was able to secure, on a

¹ As Duncan and Wallach have pointed out, Napoleon Bonaparte was particularly adept at manipulating the symbolic power of the Louvre to his advantage, a skill which was most evident in his triumphal procession through the streets of Paris with the artistic 'spoils' of his military campaigns. (Duncan and Wallach, 1980)

symbolic as well as on a political level, its claim to universal subjecthood.

A different articulation of nationhood and the early museum can be traced in the 1824 establishment of the National Gallery in London.² As Carol Duncan has argued, there is neither a 'revolutionary moment' that precipitated the founding of the National Gallery, nor a significant royal collection that was symbolically given over to the people. It was instead, the result of a series of lengthy debates that pitted social reformers, philosophers and Academicians against the wealthy landowners who dominated Parliament, and who saw the expansion of the notion of the public that underscored the establishment of a public art gallery as a challenge to their political and social hegemony. The fear that a 'national' gallery would bring with it the kind of republicanism that had taken hold in France was only one of the concerns voiced by the upper echelons of British society. The very idea of a national art collection was seen as unnecessary amongst those who felt that they themselves constituted the 'true' citizens of England, and who had regular access to their own and each other's considerable collections of art and *objets d'art*. In the end, the 'new' face of England won out in the shape of the increasingly powerful merchant bourgeoisie who, while not having access to

² The National Gallery in London is particularly pertinent to the analysis of the National Gallery in Canada, because the latter's first director, the British-born Eric Brown, modeled certain elements of the Gallery - in particular the decision to collect only paintings - on the London institution.

power through traditional social and political channels, nevertheless gathered about them the symbolic trappings of power which included works of art. And it was by this means that the National Gallery in London was put in place.³

As Carol Duncan has shown, both the princely collection and the 'public' art museum served to represent power, either through a glorification of the figure of the ruler or through the representation of the idea of the nation-state. The differences in the ideological programme of each form, however, necessitated not only a different architectural vocabulary, but a revised consideration of the appropriate hanging for the works of art. In the royal art gallery, paintings and other works of art were arranged to produce iconographic programmes that glorified the ruler and his (sic) realm. In the public art gallery, a new presentation of art was required to represent the new state, and thus paintings were arranged according to Enlightenment ideas of historical progress, and the centrality of the individual Subject - an idea that could be embodied to perfection in the persona of the artist-genius.

In principle the public art museum and the royal art gallery imply sharp political differences. Both institutions make the nation a visible reality. The royal gallery identifies the nation as the king's realm, while the public art museum identifies the nation as the state - an abstract entity in theory belonging to the people. For this reason, public art museums could serve the needs of enlightened or

³ It is interesting to note that the aesthetic imperative of the newly formed art historical discipline forced the replacement of the eighteenth-century paintings beloved of the 'gentlemen art owners' with the more aesthetically sound works of the Italian Renaissance (Duncan, 1995).

modernizing monarchs as well as the new republican state. The sudden flowering of art museums all over Europe in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries testifies to the bourgeoisie's growing social and political power. (Duncan and Wallach, 1980: 454-5)

The museum's deployment of artworks to enshrine a particular ideological conception of the state is further traced by Carol Duncan in her recent book *Civilizing Rituals*.⁴ She argues that large public museums such as the Louvre form an ideal museological type whose organization of art works and framing of exhibition spaces has influenced the formation of museums around the world.⁵ Duncan uses the phrase 'universal survey museum' to describe these large institutions, and argues that far from being a neutral container of works of art, the art museum is a powerful organizing force which constructs a specific trajectory of Western artistic production by legitimizing certain artistic practices and styles as having aesthetic importance, while relegating others to supporting roles as incidental elements outside the artistic flow. Central to Duncan's discussion of the universal survey museum is the viewer's relationship to this aesthetic trajectory, and by extension, to the

⁴ This is only the most recent (but also the most detailed) version of a project that has occupied Carol Duncan since at least 1978. In that year she published with Alan Wallach "The Museum of Modern Art as Late Capitalist Ritual: An Iconographic Analysis"; two years later they co-authored "The Universal Survey Museum" which outlines the main tenets of their argument regarding the ritual aspects of public museums. While I am using elements from a number of different essays, some written solely by Carol Duncan, others co-authored with Alan Wallach, for the sake of brevity, when referring to this literature within the body of the text, I will use only Duncan's name.

⁵ Duncan (1991) tells the story of Imelda Marcos putting together a museum of modern art, only weeks before a meeting of the International Monetary Fund, to show the affinities of her husband's regime with Western values.

ideological programme that underscores the display. For Duncan, the visit to the museum is seen in terms of the enactment of a secular ritual, in which the objects and the physical environment of the institution stand in for the state's cultural and political power. Walking through the museum display, then, tacitly positions the viewer within the broader ideological narrative of the institution, articulating the aesthetic to a dominant conception of the state.

The public art collection ... implies a new set of social relations. ... Now [the visitor] is addressed as a citizen and therefore a shareholder in the state. ... Art can be used to realize the transcendent values the state claims to embody. It can make good the state's claim to be the guardian of civilization. It lends credibility to the belief that the state exists at the summit of mankind's highest attainments. In the museum, the visitor is not called upon to identify with the state *per se* but with its highest values. The visitor inherits this spiritual wealth but only on the condition that he lay claim to it in the museum. Thus the museum is the site of a symbolic transaction between the visitor and the state. In exchange for the state's spiritual wealth, the individual intensifies his attachment to the state. (Duncan and Wallach, 1980: 456-7)

The pertinence of Duncan's conception of the ritualistic nature of the museum visit lies in its interrelation of the ways in which the art museum articulates a particular conception of citizenship to Enlightenment notions of the subject and the universal bourgeoisie. The power that accompanies such an articulation is most evident, however, in the nineteenth century where the ideological programme of the museum exceeded the symbolic presence of the institution, and inserted itself within the discursive orderings of the

objects contained within its walls. More than the early public museum discussed above, museal institutions in the late nineteenth century functioned alongside other bourgeois institutions and societies as powerful instruments of middle-class morality. Beyond establishing the habitus of the bourgeoisie as the model of the universal subject, institutions such as museums, libraries, the Salvation Army and the YMCA served to instill a code of behaviour in the population as a whole, but worked particularly well as a mechanism for the behavioural regulation of the working classes.

The view of the art museum as a space for the acquisition of good moral values underlay the institution of art museums and galleries throughout the West, but was largely the impetus for those museums that were built in the nineteenth century in Britain and North America. The belief in the transformative potential of museums was bolstered by the writing of critics and philosophers such as John Ruskin who championed the inherent moral value of works of art. Thus, in the nineteenth century, the museum functioned as much as the site for the acquisition of morality through the viewing of the 'fine' arts, as the locus within which the appropriate code of self-regulating behaviour could be instilled in the population at large.

It is this aspect of the museum as the site of intersecting cultural and disciplinary discourses that has interested Cultural Studies scholar Tony Bennett. In his

numerous writings on the museums and World's Fairs of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Bennett has explored the public display of power and the impetus towards self-governance that characterise such cultural sites, seeing them as powerful tools of bourgeois cultural and political hegemony. As he states:

[i]t is, then, in the view of high culture as a resource that might be used to regulate the field of social behaviour in endowing individuals with new capacities for self-monitoring and self-regulation that the field of culture and modern forms of liberal government most characteristically interrelate. (1995: 20)

For Bennett, the encouragement of self-regulating behaviour among the populace as a whole, extends beyond the mere existence of such cultural spaces as museums, exhibitions or libraries. Rather, it is in the conjunctural analysis of these institutions as both cultural and public spaces - what Bennett terms the 'exhibitionary complex' (1989) - and specifically in the arrangement of objects and the spatial ordering of individuals through these spaces, that the concept of self-monitoring behaviour is shaped. The key to Bennett's discussion of the exhibitionary complex is the relations of power/knowledge inscribed within these spaces.⁶ Following Foucault's discussion of relations of power/knowledge in disciplinary institutions, Bennett argues that in its display of objects, the museum produces

⁶ This point is particularly relevant for any discussion of the articulations of national identity and the aesthetic, for Bennett does not see this relationship simply in terms of institutional power. In the essay "The Exhibitionary Complex" (1989) Bennett situates his examination of museum and exhibitionary institutions within an analysis of Foucault's power/knowledge essays (e.g. Foucault 1977; 1978; 1980).

strategies of organization and classification that order not only the objects on public display, but the bodies of the visitors who walk through the exhibitionary spaces of the museum.

Unlike other writers such as Douglas Crimp (1983) who have made use of Foucault's description of disciplinary practices to theorize the rationality of the art museum,⁷ Bennett does not see the museum as an institution of confinement. In its simultaneous ordering of objects for public inspection and of the viewing public, the exhibitionary complex is the complete opposite of the prison. Rather than hiding bodies away from view, nineteenth-century museums, by opening their doors to the public and making accessible the previously inaccessible, placed the very bodies of the public - of the populace - on display, and thus subject to a form of social ordering.

If the museums supplanted the scene of punishment in taking on the function of displaying power to the populace, the rhetorical economy of the power that was displayed was significantly altered. Rather than embodying an alien and coercive principle of power which aimed to cow the people into submission, the museum - addressing the people as a public, as citizens - aimed to inveigle the general populace into complicity with power by placing them on this side of a power which it represented to it as its own. (1991: 41-2)

For Bennett, this is the particular interest of the exhibitionary complex: its ordering of bodies and its transformative role in the hands of the bourgeoisie for the

⁷ In the essay "On the Museum's Ruins", Crimp references Foucault's analyses of the asylum, the clinic and the prison, in his claim that the museum is another "institution of confinement awaiting archeological analysis" (1993, p.48).

regulation of public behaviour. Thus, in an extension of Foucault's terms that focuses on the specificity of exhibition practices, the exhibitionary complex combines the regulatory function of the Panopticon with the spectacular display of the Panorama; the simultaneous placement of objects and people on public display making the public itself the ultimate spectacle. For Bennett, the constitution in the exhibitionary complex of "a new technology of vision, rendering the crowd visible to itself" (1989: 81) is the central moment in the establishment of specific power knowledge relations and in the institution of self-regulatory behaviour in the public.

However, Bennett does not simply shift Foucault's model of disciplinary power from the prison system onto the exhibitionary complex. He is quick to point out some of the differentiations between the forms, particularly with regard to the question of spectacle. For while the prison removed the spectacle of punishment from public view, the museum accomplishes the opposite, rendering visible to all what had previously been hidden. Congruent with this shift, the museum provides a permanent display of power: "a power which was not reduced to periodic effects but which, to the contrary, manifested itself precisely in continually displaying its ability to command, order and control objects and bodies, living or dead" (ibid.: 79).

The exhibitionary complex's provision of a permanent display of power rendered it particularly useful for the

introduction of nineteenth-century conceptions of nationhood and empire. In Britain in particular, museum and exhibition displays constructed narratives of progress and civilization which established a hierarchical ordering of cultures and peoples based on current Darwinian models of social development. The exhibitionary complex thus functioned as an important new space for the representation of articulations of the social order: through the metonymic containment of the 'other' in the displays, the colonizer's relationship to the colonized could be made visible (ibid.: 92). The ordering of objects and peoples to produce specific relations of power shares some features with Duncan's conception of the ideological function of the museum's ritual. However, in its reliance on Foucauldian notions of discursive formations and institutional relations of power/knowledge, Bennett's analysis provides a better understanding of the dual nature of the relationship between the viewer (constituted as the public) and the institution.

Bennett describes this ordering of peoples and objects in the service of nationhood especially well with regard to the industrial and cultural exhibitions that characterized nineteenth century Europe. In particular, he distinguishes these temporary displays from the public museums which, as institutions linked to specific discursive formations and disciplinarity, are characterized by a certain ideological intractability. In contrast, the temporal limitations of Great Exhibitions provided them with greater flexibility with

regard to their utility for the dominant causes of the host nation; for Bennett, these temporary exhibitions "injected new life into the exhibitionary complex, render[ing] its ideological configurations more pliable in bending them to serve the conjuncturely specific hegemonic strategies of different national bourgeoisies" (ibid.: 93).

Although Bennett's analysis brilliantly describes the rationality of the display at the World's Fairs in terms of a discourse of Empire or national superiority, a different set of mediations operate in the art museum. Equally susceptible to manipulation for ideological ends (including national ones), the aesthetic is nevertheless characterized by a certain discursive universality. Thus while the basic premise of Bennett's argument is pertinent to the analysis of the art museum - the ordering of people for the purposes of self-regulation, the dual nature of the display, etc. - the modalities of the forces he analyzes differ within the context of the aesthetic. This emphasis on the specificity of the art museum is not an argument in support of the aesthetic as existing outside the realm of ideology. Rather it suggests that the aesthetic's relation to ideology is of a different order than that of the objects that constitute the display in commerce and trade fairs, or in the collections of ethnographic museums.

In *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (1990), Terry Eagleton argues that the development of the category of the aesthetic is central to the construction of the autonomous bourgeois

subject because of its ability to mediate between rationalist thought (philosophy) and the sensual realm. For Eagleton, the emergence of the aesthetic as a central philosophical category is symptomatic of the rise of the autonomous bourgeois subject - if not the impulse that made this emergence possible - and is concomitant with the rise of an autonomous bourgeois public sphere. The bourgeoisie's sense of its autonomy altered its relation to the power structure: power no longer resides in the absolute, there is no longer a predetermined set of duties imposed from without and from above; instead, power is located within individual experience. It is here that Eagleton correlates the autonomy of the bourgeois subject with the art work's growing autonomy, specifically, the art work's distance from its traditional social function. The connection between the individual bourgeois subject and the autonomous work of art centres on the sensual nature of the aesthetic, on its affective mediations. The notion of the aesthetic as a sphere separate from reason and morality (or what Eagleton terms the cognitive and the ethico-political) is what constitutes modernity - and what enables the autonomy (self-referentiality) of the subject.

[T]he category of the aesthetic assumes the importance it does in modern Europe because in speaking of art it speaks of these other matters too, which are at the heart of the middle class's struggle for political hegemony. The construction of the modern notion of the aesthetic artefact is thus inseparable from the construction of the dominant ideological forms of modern class-society, and indeed from a whole new form of human subjectivity appropriate to that social order. ...

[A]lso ... the aesthetic, understood in a certain sense, provides an unusually powerful challenge and alternative to these dominant ideological forms, and is in this sense an eminently contradictory phenomenon. (1990: 3)

Eagleton contends that the development of the separate sphere of the aesthetic functioned to consolidate the bourgeoisie's political and cultural power: "enabling" their maintenance of political and cultural hegemony since the eighteenth century. And, as the arguments thus far have suggested, this political and cultural hegemony of the bourgeoisie had its greatest material manifestation in the museum. The category of the aesthetic negates the possibility for absolute power by situating power within immediate sensuous experience. At the same time it locates this power solely within the experiences of a universal subject - no longer identified as the aristocratic classes or personified in the body of the ruler - but which is instead found in a newly constituted *universal* bourgeoisie. The political hegemony secured by the middle classes through the aesthetic was extended to all fields (cognitive, ethico-political, and libidinal-aesthetic) and accounts for the middle classes' control over all areas of social life, including the moral.

For Eagleton, the political stakes of the aesthetic lie in the centrality of its role in the construction of the political and social order specific to western modernity. With the advent of postmodernity, the aesthetic loses its relevance to the social as art objects are reduced to operate on the level of the commodity. To quote Eagleton, in

postmodernity "the economic penetrates deeply into the symbolic realm itself, and the libidinal body is harnessed to the imperatives of profit" (ibid.: 373). Despite what he views as postmodernism's heralding of itself as the ultimate coupling of art and life, Eagleton contends that postmodernity is less about the potential of the political, and more about the fluidity of the commodity. Eagleton thus critiques the postmodern for its displacement of the political by the economic, and returns to the lessons of modernity in order to locate the political imperative of the aesthetic in contemporary social praxis.

Within this context, the pertinent question relates to the nature of the specific issues to be considered in the examination of the art museum as part of the exhibitionary complex, and how the social and aesthetic practices of the art museum at the end of the twentieth century are to be understood. Of greater relevance to the concerns of this thesis, however, is the pertinence of this literature to the understanding of the specific articulations of aesthetic modernity and nationhood in the nation-building mandate of the National Gallery.

The National Gallery: Collecting in and for Canada

As was seen above, the strategies for the acquisition and display of objects in the museum do more than provide a showcase for the accumulated wealth of a nation or city. The process of collecting, on an institutional rather than

individual level,⁸ involves the amassing of objects to create a functioning, self-contained whole. Beyond the idea of accumulation, implicit in the notion of the collection is the sense of completeness it conveys. On the one hand, the collection suggests that possessing an object renders it knowable, but at the same time, the object only becomes knowable once it is inserted within a series. Part of the process of collecting, then, is to place objects within a particular discursive order, to render them knowable through their inscription within a particular system. As Susan Stewart argues, "[b]ecause the collection replaces origin with classification, thereby making temporality a spatial and material phenomenon, its existence is dependent upon principles of organization and classification" (1990: 153). As Duncan and Wallach's discussion of the universal survey museum suggests, the classification scheme (the taxonomy) comes before the objects acquired: thus while it might be thought that a museum's collection plays a crucial role in the identity of the institution, it seems closer to the truth that the classification system is to a greater extent the determinant of the nature of the institution, and of the objects' position within that institution.

The set of objects the Museum displays is sustained only by the fiction that they somehow constitute a coherent representational universe. The fiction is that a repeated metonymic displacement of fragment for totality, object to label, series of objects to

⁸ For a fascinating examination of the vagaries of individual collecting practices, see John Elsner and Roger Cardinal (eds), *The Cultures of Collecting*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994)

series of labels, can still produce a representation which is somehow adequate to a nonlinguistic universe. Such a fiction is the result of an uncritical belief in the notion that ordering and classifying, that is to say, the spatial juxtaposition of fragments, can produce a representational understanding of the world. (Donato, 1979: 233)

As the history of the National Gallery suggests,⁹ the accumulation of objects for the collection was a lengthy process, fraught with controversy virtually every step of the way. When the Governor General the Marquess of Lorne publicly gave his support to the decision to found a national art gallery in 1880, it was with the primary aim of advancing the development of artistic production in Canada, and to encourage the appreciation of the arts among the Canadian public. Like other art museums and galleries founded in the late nineteenth century, the implicit belief in the ethico-cultural values that would come out of the experience of viewing art was the foundation upon which the National Gallery's collecting and exhibition programmes were built. In addition, the educational benefits that accrued from exposure to the arts were seen as a crucial incentive to the foundation of a national gallery of the arts, and remained a central component of the Gallery's national programme well into the 1950s.¹⁰ Indeed, the pedagogical function of the early National Gallery is underlined in a statement from the

⁹A sense of the National Gallery's history can be gained from Boggs (1971); a more complete and interesting history can be found in the collected press clippings, collated by generations of volunteers, in the Library of the National Gallery.

¹⁰ For an extended analysis of the Gallery's popular educational programme of Canadian prints, and its implications for the development of Canadian art history, see Zemans (1995).

Gallery's 1921-22 Annual Report: "Canadian education, like education everywhere, requires a close study of art at all times, because art is closely interwoven with the history of nations and the geography of countries and the story of its growth is the story of the growth of all that is intellectual and moral." (cited in Boggs, 1971: 17)

Beyond the attempt to impart good moral behaviour to the population, however, the twin founding of the National Gallery and the Royal Canadian Academy in March 1880 was a step towards the establishment of an artistic tradition in Canada. For the Marquess of Lorne, the formation of the Gallery was essential to the welfare of artists and of the arts generally in Canada. And as the texts of the various Acts governing the Gallery over the years attest, the central mandate of the National Gallery since its inception has been to make available and to interpret for Canadians the art of the world - in other words to give Canadians a sense of western cultural history - and to provide for Canadians and for the world a showcase of Canadian artists both living and dead. Despite some important structural modifications in the Acts governing the National Gallery over the decades of its existence, and minor internal changes in acquisitions policy, the mandate to make works of art accessible to Canadians has remained constant. This is evidenced in the remarkable similarity in the Directors' statements regarding the Gallery's mandate: from Eric Brown's declaration that the Gallery "will accomplish worthily its task of fostering and

advancing the national art of Canada and of educating its people to some understanding of the world's artistic achievement" (undated; cited in Boggs, 1971: 10), to current director Shirley Thomson's assertion that "the gallery is a force of [national] unity, for bringing Canadians to a heightened appreciation of their visual arts heritage" (Thomson, 1991: 8).

Over the decades, the acquisition process of the National Gallery has been governed by two goals: on the one hand to collect a representative collection of European art that would adequately present a chronological history of art (along the model of the survey museum), and on the other, to amass a collection of work by Canadian artists from the past, and more importantly - a sentiment articulated particularly forcefully in the early years of the Gallery because of the affiliation with the Royal Canadian Academy - to collect the work of living Canadian artists. This connection with contemporary artists was seemingly secured with the simultaneous foundation of the National Gallery and the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts, and the pledge procured by the Marquess of Lorne that Academicians would deposit their diploma works with the National Gallery. Because of this promise, the initial core collection of the National Gallery consisted of the paintings and sculptures of the Royal Canadian Academy. While initially this arrangement worked well - the Academicians having a forum, if not a physical site, within which to exhibit their works, and the Gallery

assured of a growing collection of artworks - it was not long before relations between the Gallery and the Academy were strained. Particularly under the directorship of Eric Brown (1910-1939), the role played by the Academy in the exhibition and collecting practices of the Gallery decreased in importance, ultimately resulting in inquiries by the House of Commons into the Gallery's functioning.¹¹ The invocation of a long-standing connection with and support of living Canadian artists, however much contemporary artists themselves suggest the contrary,¹² continues to be an important feature of the public documents and statements issued by the Gallery, and therefore in the way in which the Gallery positions itself within the arts in Canada.

In the contemporary field, the emphasis has been on buying the work of the moment by Canadian artists. It is essential for the integrity of the Canadian collection to continue this practice. In fulfilling its national role, the National Gallery has a primary responsibility, to the public and to the artists themselves, to acquire and exhibit contemporary Canadian art; and, once it has acquired them, to maintain these works as part of the permanent collection. In time these contemporary works of art will join the historical structure of Canadian art, of which the Gallery is the chief national custodian. (National Gallery of Canada, 1993, Appendix B: 4)

The bulk of the National Gallery's collection, in Canadian and non-Canadian, historical and contemporary art,

¹¹ These inquiries were occasioned by debates over the artists selected to represent Canada in the British Empire Exhibitions during the 1920s. These will be discussed in the context of the position of the Group of Seven in the historical galleries. See also Hill (1991).

¹² An account of Canadian artists' perceptions of the National Gallery's relationship with contemporary Canadian art can be found in Jennifer Dickson and Sarah Yates *Study of the National Gallery of Canada* (1983) which they conducted on behalf of CAR (Canadian Artists' Representation).

has been acquired through bequests and purchases, despite the relative lack of funds appropriated for the Gallery by Parliament. The strength of the Gallery's collection of historical and contemporary Canadian art can be seen as the result of an interest in the work of emerging Canadian artists by the Gallery's first director, an interest which subtended all subsequent collecting policies. The weaknesses and gaps in the Gallery's holdings of European and modern American art - the 'staples' of the universal survey museum - can be explained to some degree by the lack of curatorial staff until the late 1950s, and a paucity of available funds. Jean Sutherland Boggs's 1971 history of the National Gallery suggests that the directors were largely responsible for selecting, negotiating for and securing works for the Gallery, thereby determining the shape and the scope of the collection. While Boggs seems reluctant to acknowledge the point, it would seem that the strengths and weaknesses that characterized the collection at the time in which she wrote the book were due not to decisions in policy, but were rather the result of the tastes of individual directors (1971: 41). As only one example, the Gallery's first director, Eric Brown, did not like French post-impressionist and modern painting - everything from Cezanne to Picasso, Surrealism and Futurism. Believing that they were a fad, and against the advice of his European advisors, Brown refused to purchase any works from these schools of art. Under the following director H.O. McCurry, according to Boggs, a change in policy

was made and the National Gallery began to acquire modern French art (no doubt aided by the promise of a particularly generous bequest by H.S. Southam¹³).

An indication of the nationalistic collecting practices of the museum, however, was the policy in force up to 1967/8 which prohibited the purchase of contemporary American works of art. The proximity of the United States to much of Canada was an important factor in the formulation of the policy, but the decision was undoubtedly underscored by a certain anti-American attitude prevalent in Canadian culture at the time.¹⁴ As Boggs, who was responsible for reversing the policy when she became director in 1966, writes:

Although American abstract expressionism was at its height in the mid-fifties, the Trustees in May 1956 confirmed an unwritten policy against the collecting of contemporary American art that reflected (besides a possible touch of anti-Americanism) their belief that American works of art were easily accessible to Canadians in American Galleries." (1971: 49)

In subsequent years (after 1971 when Boggs wrote her book), the Gallery actively expanded its collection. Boggs was responsible, through newly-hired curator Brydon Smith, for the Gallery embarking on an active programme of collecting the work of modernist and contemporary American artists. In addition to new areas of collecting, there was also an extensive reorganization and expansion of the curatorial

¹³ H.S. Southam's promised bequest never materialized. Following his retirement from the Board of Trustees, he changed the terms of his will and left only a few works to the National Gallery. (Boggs, 1971: 28).

¹⁴ A certain anti-Americanism can be detected in, for example, the report of the Massey Commission, which warned that the encroaching presence of popular culture brought with it an undesirable lowering of cultural standards. (Litt, 1992).

functions and departments at the National Gallery during this period. Boggs created such specialized areas as Canadian Historical (both pre- and post-Confederation), Canadian Contemporary, Non-Canadian Contemporary, European and American Painting, as well as specific fields of collecting in the area of Prints, Drawings and Decorative Arts. With some modifications, this curatorial structure has remained in place at the National Gallery.

Building a National Gallery: The Safdie Building

As Tony Bennett's analysis of the exhibitionary complex makes clear, the museum's ordering of objects for display to an identified and specularized public reproduces the relations of power/knowledge that underscore the state. As the collecting history of the National Gallery suggests, one of the functions undertaken by such a central institution has been that of constructing Canada, a role which underscores the histories of the institution written by Boggs and others. The mediation of a national public space on an institutional level is a twofold process: on a symbolic level, the National Gallery is a visible monument to the nation, to Canada's status in the world. On an aesthetic level, it inserts Canada's cultural achievements within a universal history of art. The first, symbolic, construction of the Gallery as a national monument was finally achieved with the opening of the new building in 1988. Although the Gallery had been in existence since 1880 and had asserted itself as an important

national institution, it was only able to fulfill its symbolic status with the construction of a new and permanent building, a building which was designed with monumentalism in mind. Prior to that point, the Gallery had been housed in a succession of makeshift buildings, from rooms next to the Federal Department of Fisheries, to the Victoria Memorial Museum Building (which currently houses the National Museum of Nature) and finally, the dismally insufficient office structure that was the Lorne Building. Since 1913, successive competitions had been held, and designs selected, for the construction of a permanent building that would reflect the stature of a national gallery. However, it was only in 1982 with the formation of the National Museums Construction Corporation chaired by Jean Sutherland Boggs, that federal money was officially allocated to the construction of a National Gallery building. The choice of Moshe Safdie as architect was unexpected within the Canadian museum and architecture communities, and criticism of his designs and his building methods was prevalent, in particular his use of fast-track construction techniques which helped erect the building within the allotted time-span, yet did not allow for an in-depth consideration of the needs of the Gallery.¹⁵ Nevertheless, the important elements were that the Gallery finally had galleries built to the specifications of the curators, adequate lighting and space, and perhaps most importantly, an identifiable and identity-creating building.

¹⁵ For a full critique of fast-track architecture with regards to Safdie's National Gallery, see Boddy (1988).

However, as one writer for the American journal *Architecture* noted:

For Canada, ... the new gallery is more than a building. It marks a rite of passage for a nation whose image abroad, fairly or unfairly has been that of a likable but unsophisticated society notable for vast empty plains, healthy outdoor living, nasty hockey players, aggressive real estate developers and boring politicians. The Canadian pride in the new National Gallery is a pride in the emergence of a new and more urbane Canada that is joining the ranks of great nations. (Campbell, 1988: 98)

Regardless of the accuracy of this perception, the cultural and symbolic weight imputed to the Gallery's new building underscores the importance of having a permanent home for the Gallery in terms of its public functionality. As Duncan and Wallach have suggested, a museum's ideological programme is signified through its architecture and its interior decoration. In particular, through the selection of a specific architectural style and the use of certain motifs and decorations, the museum "embodies and makes visible the idea of the state" (1980: 450). In the new National Gallery building, the "idea of the state" is made manifest architecturally in two ways: through the Great Hall, whose tower is designed to echo the Library of the Parliament Buildings across the river, and in the ceremonial ramp linking the entrance to the Great Hall. The ramp constitutes a central element in the National Gallery's ideological and museological programme: it slowly and smoothly leads the visitor up towards the hall and its vista of the Parliament buildings, connecting art and state with an immediacy that is

almost surprising given the traditional aesthetic tendency to distance art and politics.¹⁶ The ramp also instills in the visitor the sense of solemnity and monumentality that is normally associated with the entrances to religious buildings, but which has been an important feature of museum architecture since the late eighteenth century.¹⁷

In much recent museum architecture, while a certain sense of the monumental is preserved, the grand ceremonial entrance has on the whole been eschewed as too intimidating, and has been replaced by smaller, more intimate or human-scaled entrances that welcome an unsure visitor.¹⁸ The Safdie building, however, seems to have accomplished both elements: an entrance way that is "human-scaled" that gets the visitors into the museum, followed by an extended ramp leading up to the glassed-in Great Hall, which preserves the monumentality and the ceremony that is expected in large museums of art. Regardless, many critics have commented that Safdie's attention to such architectural details as the entrance ramp, the Great Hall, and the massive granite walls, functions to call attention primarily to the building's monumentality, making its presence as a national monument its main *raison*

¹⁶ According to Safdie, "at the time, none of us realized that we had made an intuitive move that would allow Ottawa to become one of the few capitals in the world where an institution of culture shares symbolic prominence with government. And no capital that [then-Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau] or I could think of has art, almost equal to governance, as a symbolic element on the skyline." (cited in Schmertz, p.121)

¹⁷ The analysis of the museum as temple is found in Cameron (1971).

¹⁸ Two examples of a more human scale in recent museums buildings are James Stirling's addition to the Staatsgalerie in Stuttgart, and the literal interpretation of the 'home' in the design for the Burrell Collection in Glasgow. (Whitelaw, 1989).

d'être. As architect Mehdi Ghafouri has written, "It means to be a monument first and a museum second" (Ghafouri, 1987: 101).

Duncan's description of the importance placed on the symbolic status of the museum's architecture makes clear that the attention to the monumental is crucial to the elaboration of the museum's ideological programme. The monumentality of Safdie's building is a necessary component of the Gallery's fulfillment of its nation-building mandate, making evident in its exterior physical structure the symbolic dimension of the artwork collected within. To cite the conclusion to the most recent narrative of the National Gallery's history, Witold Rybczynski's glossy *A Place for Art*:

[p]olitics and art - the symbolism is unmistakable and compelling. The museum as an institution that is not a world apart ... Putting works of art inside the walls isolates them, but it also celebrates our shared belief in the importance of a common culture. The National Gallery reminds us that this aspiration is a civic virtue that marks us not only as individuals but as a society. (1993: 101)

Museums and the Discourse of Art History

The second nation-building mediation of the museum is in its collection and display of works of art. Although the focus of this dissertation is the consideration of the museum as an exhibitionary institution, the collecting function of the museum, the establishment and organization of an archive, is an essential component of the national character of the Gallery. In the examination of the archival character of the

museum, the formation of traditional art historical discourses provides an important focus for an understanding of the organization of the permanent collection's display. This importance lies as much in art history's construction of a universal aesthetic discourse as in the discipline's ability to harness to that universal aesthetic, the cultural production of a nation.

Many writers on the museum have pointed to the almost simultaneous development of the museum and a conception of art history which in the mid-nineteenth century evolved into the familiar modern disciplinary formation. In a more sweeping statement on the relationships of museal institutions and disciplinary formations, Tony Bennett argues that the birth of the museum coincided with, and supplied a primary institutional condition for, the emergence of a new set of knowledges, including art history. Each of these knowledges, as they are deployed in the museum, arranged objects as parts of evolutionary sequences which, in their interrelations, formed a totalising order of things and peoples that was historicized through and through (1991: 41-3). In a similar vein, Donald Preziosi contrasts the development of art history as a "scientific" academic discipline in the United States in the 1930s (markedly later than the institution of the discipline in Germany and Britain) with the almost simultaneous development of the taxonomic or survey art museum during the same period. In his analysis of the Fogg Art Museum at Harvard, Preziosi argues

that the institution was founded on the principle that the history of fine arts should be related not only to the history of (western) civilization generally, but that the objects contained within the museum's walls should function as evidence of the genius of the people who produced them. In other words, underlying the collection of objects in the museum (and Preziosi argues that this principle of national genius underscores much of the collecting and display activity from the turn of the century) was the principle "that there is an essential relation between the aesthetic character of a people's works of visual art and that nation's social, moral and ethical character" (Preziosi, 1992: 368). And while the genius of a people (or of a nation) can be located exclusively in the work of a single artist who has achieved international or historical recognition, this confers a measure of cultural significance on the nation itself and its aesthetic production.¹⁹

The epistemological relationship of art historical taxonomies to the exhibition of art objects is thus central to the museum's aesthetic function. The modalities of the disciplinary formation of art history, its assumptions, its strategies of inclusion and exclusion, articulate the organizing principles of the discipline to the ordering of

¹⁹ For example, the eminent art historian Erwin Panofsky sought to identify in the work of Albrecht Dürer the essential nature of the German character, in order to secure Germany's presence in the art historical canon (Moxey, 1994). A similar ascription of national character occurs in the National Gallery's canonization of the Group of Seven as the artists who best express the essential spirit of the Canadian nation.

art objects in the institution. Art history emerged out of the same Enlightenment discourse that produced many of the other disciplines that structure the current academic system. Originating in the attempt to produce a science of aesthetic judgement, art history was initially concerned with questions of connoisseurship: the biographical description of major artists, the identification of formal characteristics, the establishment of the artist's work within a linear stylistic succession, and the insertion of the oeuvre within a universal conception of aesthetic value. In sum, art history is about the construction and management of a highly defined archive of artistic production. The formation of the archive, and the ascription of universal validity to its underlying principles, ensures that any additions to the existing archive submit to these specific criteria. The immutability of aesthetic criteria and the self-perpetuation of the art historical canon contribute to the belief that the art historical discourse is the natural way to order works of art. Concomitant with this view, the only objects included in the canon are masterpieces, and more perniciously, the objects that do not form part of the canon do not possess aesthetic value. As feminist and postcolonial critics have argued in their critique of the legitimating power of the traditional art historical canon, the rules of formation of the aesthetic inherently privilege the production of white, bourgeois, male artists (Pollock, 1988; West, 1990). This is effected primarily by upholding as the only valid criteria of

aesthetic judgement those categories of artistic production that have been formulated since the Enlightenment, and which are seen as having a universal validity that transcends temporal and geographic boundaries.

Beyond this consideration of the immutability of aesthetic categories, the pertinence of this examination of the art historical archive lies in the mapping out of the different levels of relationships, and of categories, that exist among the objects that constitute the archive. The modalities of these categories can perhaps best be seen in the art history survey text, which presents the history of art as a long unbroken historical succession of artists. The works of art in the archive are arranged for the most part according to the following three elements: the form or the stylistic elements of the work, the themes or subject matter addressed by the work, and finally the geographic origin and/or location of the artist. Within each of these categories or levels, works of art are arranged, and often hierarchically ordered, according to media, with painting occupying the highest position, followed by sculpture, printmaking and drawing.²⁰ However, in the overall schematization of the works of art contained in the archive, thematic and geographic levels of organization are subordinate to formal considerations when it comes to the overall organizational hierarchy. For in the modernist discourse of art history, it is in the formal analysis of the

²⁰ The origin of these classifications in the seventeenth century European academies is described in Burgin (1986).

work that art's essential quality is seen to lie. More importantly the element of form is seen to be the element most resistant to the vagaries of historical interpretations, and upon which the foundation for a scientific approach to aesthetic judgement rests. The writing of art critic Clement Greenberg is central to an understanding of the importance of artistic form in the evaluation of works of art. Writing mainly about the work of American Abstract Expressionist and Colour Field painters in the 1940s and 50s, Greenberg maintained that the 'successful' work of art was that one which embodied the essential character of the medium, seen particularly well in the call for flatness for painting (Greenberg, 1973).

Thus the goals of the traditional discourse of art history are made apparent: artworks, artists, and schools being arranged or organized according to a teleological structure in which each element has its correct place, and in which relationships or filiations are always already determined because of the immutable nature of the criteria governing the selection and the preservation of works of art. The uses to which this universal history of art is put, however, organizes itself along two main yet interrelated threads. On the one hand, the history of art is seen as the history of great names, a discourse which inherently privileges the artist. This history, based on the genius of the (white, male) individual artist, can of course be linked back to the above discussion of the privileging of the

habitus of the bourgeoisie, and the central position of the aesthetic in that rise. The second, related, formation governing the history of art is that of the genius of the people, in which the work of the individual artist - although occasionally this can be transmuted into the work of an entire school - is made to stand in for an entire nation.

It is clearly the case...that the discourse on art has been deeply concerned, implicitly and explicitly, with the promotion and validation of the idea of the modern nation-state as an entity ideally distinct and homogeneous on ethnic, racial, linguistic and cultural grounds. Museums of art in particular have served, since their origins in the late eighteenth century, to legitimize the nation-state or the Volk as having a distinct, unique, and self-identical persona, style, and aesthetic sensibility. At the same time, art history and the museum have worked to promote the idea of the historical period as itself unified and homogeneous, or dominated by a singular family of values and attitudes. (Preziosi, 1992: 383)

In both these formations, the artwork functions in an evidentiary capacity; not, however, as an illustration of the social (as might be argued in a vulgar social history of art) but to uphold the autonomy of the individual bourgeois subject.

Thus, a homology exists between the principles of art history and the classification of objects that constitute the organizational structure of the museum. As Preziosi has argued, the modernist trajectory of art history as it is reproduced in the museum not only serves to organize and order the works of art, but it also explicitly positions the museum viewer as the inheritor of Enlightenment values.

[O]ne of the primary functions of the art museum in its modern history has been to install the

Cartesian self in a hall of mirrors (Albertian vedute) in which that Subject can be re-cognized. Indeed, it might be suggested that the art museum reduces all installable objects to positions of predication in an Albertian subject-predicate frame, wherein the composed object is made to work to reflect the beholder's Subjecthood. ... All must "stay" and "lie orderly," preserving and projecting a fixity of meaning so as to capture in their gaze the gaze of an integral self. Challenged to find and locate the unity in works, we inevitably find our own unity. Even if - indeed, especially where - certain works refuse unity and fixity of meaning: The power of the museum lies precisely in its ability to elide alternative signifying practices. (Preziosi, 1989: 69)

The 'survey' museum, as described by Duncan, in particular embodies the modernist teleology of art proposed by traditional art historical discourses. The source of this teleology, however, may reside less in the direct descent from the discipline of art history, than through a shared point of origin in the philosophical underpinnings of Hegel's aesthetic writings. Hegel's conception of the developmental progress of art and of history was the source for both the emergence of art history as a disciplinary formation, and of the museum. As Douglas Crimp has suggested (1987), the use of an "evolutionary" model to structure the display of art in the early public museum can be dated to Friedrich Schinkel's Altes Museum in Berlin (1823-30). In his account of the debates that surrounded the disposition of the objects in the institution, Crimp argues that Schinkel's placement of a rotunda at the center of the building - the first room encountered by the visitor - for the display of work from Classical antiquity, embodies the principles put forth by Hegel in his *Aesthetics*. In this model of museal display, the

first encounter of the viewer with Art is with Classical sculpture which, as the highest ideal of beauty in a material object, sets the tone for the successive aesthetic moments to come. The endurance of such a conception can be seen in Greenbergian modernism's ascription of status to abstract art: in its renunciation of everything but the formal properties of the medium itself, abstract art - and in particular the American Colour Field Painters - has attained "the self-transcendence of art itself" (Crimp, 1987: 264).

The novelty in [Hegel's] ideas is evident. It consists not in locating the classic phase in art, but rather in locating art in history, namely, as a transitory stage in the process of the spirit's taking possession of world. Art, as a sensory manifestation of the spirit, has assumed a historical function. Thus art can - indeed must - become the subject of a universal art history, through which this function can be reconstructed. (Belting, 1987: 11)

It is this underlying chronology derived from Hegel (and it must be said, from other Enlightenment philosophers who held the arts of Antiquity in similar esteem) that serves as the basis for the display of art in major Western fine arts museums. And it is this teleological narrative of history that charts the organization of objects through the succession of rooms; in other words, which structures the aesthetic discourse constituted by the museum.

The diachronic outlay of objects, and the implications of this organization for the reading of works of art in the museum, was taken to its logical conclusion by André Malraux in his 1965 proposal for a *Musée imaginaire*. In this project, he argued that the limits imposed on the pedagogical and

aesthetic functions of the museum, because of its site specificity, could be countered through the dissemination of the history of art by means of photographic reproductions. While the basic premise advocating the use of reproduction technologies to increase the social relevance of the art object originates with Walter Benjamin, Malraux's museum without walls advocates the photographic reproduction of works of art in order to illustrate, not only the stylistic development or evolution of artistic production, but also, through the juxtaposition of images, the stylistic affinities between works from different historical periods. This approach to the history of art is underscored by an attention to the possibilities of both synchronic and diachronic orderings, but to a degree that would be impossible to achieve within the structural confines of the museum. In this extreme conception of the pedagogical function of the museum, the role of the institution in the de-historicization of the art object through the emphasis on the aesthetic is harshly magnified. It is no longer a question of the museum functioning as a frame or as a container for the work of art, but rather that, in its reduction of all art to a photographic representation, Malraux's *Musée imaginaire* lays bare the museum's role as constitutive of artistic narratives.

This raises the question that will be considered in greater detail in subsequent chapters: in the process of historicization of objects, of rendering them containable or

subject to some form of understanding through the universal framing process of the museum, what happens to contemporary art, which has not come under the purview of historical reflection, and has yet to be fully 'evaluated' under traditional aesthetic criteria? However, the introduction of works of contemporary art into the museum is a first step towards their full inclusion in the history of art. As Donald Preziosi has argued, "art history and museology constitute the promise that whatever might occur could one day be made meaningful" (1992: 382).

Preziosi follows this statement with a consideration of the effect of particular conceptions of time and the historical on the ordering of works of art in the museum and in art history: "At the same time, art history and the museum have worked to promote the idea of the historical period as itself unified and homogeneous, or dominated by a singular family of values and attitudes" (ibid.: 383). The 'idea' of history, and the process of 'placing' objects within history is particularly important in the consideration of the display of contemporary art at the National Gallery. As many of these works refuse the formal linearity of modernism, their placement within a trajectory that is either historical or stylistic imposes the kind of homogeneity in relation to which much postmodern theory and practice stands in critical opposition. On a more practical level, the contrast between the contingent nature of the temporal frame that defines the contemporary at the National Gallery (work that has been

produced in the past twenty years) and the more sedimented and historically specific nature of the modern can be seen in conflicts over the positioning of particular works, and until recently, in gaps between areas of curatorial expertise.²¹

The 1985 *Collections Policy and Procedures* suggests, however, that an evolutionary model of history shapes the Gallery's perception of artworks and their positioning as historical artefacts. As stated in this document, the goal of coherence and unity informs the Gallery's collecting practice, and is translated in its displays.

The collecting patterns of the Gallery have been conscientiously based on the realization of certain principles: the necessary inter-relationships between art made in Canada and art made in other countries, between contemporary and historical, and among the various media. The collection has been developed as a whole, with an awareness of historical process - which is to say, that what is modern today, will be historical tomorrow. In the future, no doubt, new directions will develop, but the evolutionary pattern set early in this century, has resulted in a collection of which the coherence and integrity can and must be perpetuated. (1985: unpaginated)

This coherent periodization, however, falls apart when it is read in relation to the exhibition of contemporary art. The frequent changes in the display, and the varied nature of those changes, point to the difficulties of circumscribing contemporary art within already existing historical frames. The evolutionary model of history that is outlined in the above passage can certainly be found in the historical Canadian galleries. As will be argued in Chapter Three, this

²¹ The curatorial 'gap' has been remedied by giving Brydon Smith curatorial responsibility in the area of international modernism.

chronological ordering of objects not only constructs a developmental history of art in Canada, but in its chronicling of the unfolding of a 'distinct' Canadian aesthetic, it parallels the narrative of the nation's emerging autonomy. This imbrication of the aesthetic and the nation, is not an isolated instance in the Canadian Galleries, but underscores Canadian cultural policy in general, and National Gallery policy in particular, since the beginning of the twentieth century.

Museums and Cultural Policy in Canada

Thus far we have discussed the aesthetic and institutional mediations that have contributed to the specificity of the museum's articulation of national identity. It is equally important, however, to look at governmental mediations in cultural roles. Particularly in the case of Canada, whose political and cultural history can largely be characterised as highly interventionist in the cultural field, the impact of cultural policy on the functioning of a museum such as the National Gallery cannot be underestimated. As Tony Bennett has argued, the analysis of the articulations of culture and society which has preoccupied the field of Cultural Studies cannot take place outside of a consideration of the effects of cultural policy on the social and political realms.

Many aspects of modern cultural politics, then, are effects of the ways in which specific fields of cultural practice have been governmentally deployed. ... What a text is, and what is at stake

in its analysis depends on the specific uses for which it has been instrumentalized in particular institutional and discursive contexts - some of which, of course, will be governmentally constructed and organized. This being so, the development of politically self-reflexive forms of textual analysis depends precisely on adopting a policy perspective - that is, on recognizing how the textual regime in question functions as part of a technological apparatus with a view to considering the kinds of reading activities and relations through which that regime might be redeployed for new purposes. (Bennett 1992: 404)

The issue that needs to be explored here is the tension between the cultural policies that have shaped the institutional discourses of the National Gallery, and the exhibitionary discourses of art in Canada, as they occur variously in the permanent collection and in temporary exhibitions. Implicit in this discussion is the consideration of the tensions between what we might call Canada's *legislated identity*, and the affective mediations of the aesthetic.

The period under discussion, 1980 to 1992, saw tremendous upheavals in federal cultural policy, particularly reflected in structural changes made to federal museums policy and the governing of Canada's National Museums. These changes reflect the tensions between overlapping aesthetic and political concerns that underscore the cultural field on a national and international level during this period: first, in the challenge from artists, critics and alternative forms of display to the museum's traditional role in the cultivation of taste; second, the incorporation of national cultural institutions into a corporate structure and the

accompanying reduction in the Gallery's institutional autonomy; and finally, the political forces pushing for the decentralization of cultural power. The following section will chart these changes and their impact on the structure and functioning of the National Gallery. In addition, these changes in cultural policy will be examined for their effect on the larger concerns of the federal government in the formation of Canadian national identity. Some discussion of cultural policy before 1980 will take place here, particularly the 1968 National Museums Act and the 1972 National Museums Policy, because these two documents played a crucial role in the governing of the National Gallery, and its relationship with the federal government.

The National Gallery was the first of the current federal museums to become a crown corporation of the federal government. The 1913 National Gallery of Canada Act was put in place to assure Canadian artists that their concerns were recognized by the federal government, and to guarantee some measure of support by the government towards the encouragement of artistic production in Canada.²² Under the 1913 Act, besides the duties of collecting and preserving works of art from Canada and abroad, the Gallery's primary function was framed as

²² Charles Hill (1980) discusses the enactment of a National Gallery of Act as both a means through which the Gallery received a more permanent foundation, and also as effectively limiting the power of the Royal Canadian Academy in the Gallery's subsequent development, by placing primary responsibility for acquisitions in the hand of a Board of Trustees, and a new director - Eric Brown - who had no ties to the RCA.

the development, maintenance, care and management of the National Gallery and generally the encouragement and cultivation of correct artistic taste and Canadian public interest in the fine arts, the promotion of the interests generally of art in Canada. (Canada, 1913)

In other words, an early role of the Gallery was to infuse Canadians with an appreciation of the fine arts, an appreciation which extended to the work of Canadian artists, but which was not as explicitly stated as in subsequent policy documents.

The terms of the 1913 Act continued to govern the Gallery until the Trudeau government implemented the National Museums Act in 1968. With this Act, the National Gallery, and three other designated National Museums (the National Museum of Man, the National Museum of Nature, and the National Museum of Science and Technology) were brought together under the trusteeship of a central Board of Trustees, the National Museums Corporation, overseen by the Department of the Secretary of State.

The purposes of the Corporation are to demonstrate the products of nature and the works of man, with special but not exclusive reference to Canada, so as to promote interest therein throughout Canada and to disseminate knowledge thereof. (Canada, 1967)

The cornerstone of the 1968 Act and its slight amendment under the 1972 National Museums Policy (which added to the National Museums Corporation's mandate responsibility for administering an assistance programme to museums outside the National Capital Region, the Canadian Conservation Institute, and a computerized database of the holdings of the national

museums in Canada) were the twin principles of "democratization" and "decentralization", an effect of developments in cultural policy in many western countries at the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s. This recourse to democratization and decentralization in the formulation of cultural policies is particularly evident, for example, in the planning of the Pompidou Center in Paris, whose open-concept structure and multidisciplinary organization can be seen largely as the historical legacy of '1968'. These sentiments, including the distrust of the term 'museum', underscore the foundational structure of the National Museums Corporation. Secretary of State Gérard Pelletier framed the Corporation's mandate as the attempt "to erase the traditional notion of stagnancy that comes to mind when one hears the word 'museum' and instead try to envisage a modern and dynamic instrument of initiation to culture" (cited in National Museums Corporation, 1986b: 3). The significance of the principles of democratization and decentralization for the governing of Canadian museums are immediately apparent. The principle of democratization was instituted to give the Canadian public (the taxpayers) greater access to the nation's collections of artistic and natural heritage through the means of four national museums situated in the capital, Ottawa. This seeming containment of heritage to a specific geographic locale was justified through an appeal to the importance of the existence of the actual collection - something along the lines of "this is

your collection, that is housed for you, together, in the capital of the nation". The democratization effect took place through a rhetorical appeal to ownership: because the objects were paid for with taxpayers' money, then the collection *belongs to* the taxpaying citizens of Canada.

The principle of decentralization was put in effect with the Museum Assistance Program which provided funds for museums outside the National Capital region, helped set up and operate National Exhibition Centers in small urban areas, and supported touring exhibitions to other museums and centres. In addition, the National Museums Corporation operated other programmes - the largest of which were the Canadian Conservation Institute (CCI) and the Canadian Heritage Information Network (CHIN) - which provided professional and documentary services about the national collections to museums across Canada. While the very formation of the National Museums Corporation in 1968 appears to necessarily encourage centralization rather than decentralization,²³ in 1968 and again in 1972 when the policy was reformulated, the idea behind a central governing or steering body was felt to increase the effectiveness of the National Museums' promotion of Canada's heritage across the country. The Corporation, then, saw itself as undertaking a coordinating role as the representative of the federal government.

²³ Especially in 1983 when National Museums Corporation Chairman Léo Dorais gave himself more power by instituting himself as the Vice-Chairman of the National Museum Corporation's Board of Trustees, in addition to his other duties.

By 1980, the effect of the National Museums Corporation on the operation of the National Gallery was being felt on many fronts. Upon her resignation in 1976, Jean Sutherland Boggs blamed the bureaucracy of the Corporation as one of the main factors contributing to her departure from the directorship of the National Gallery.²⁴ Similarly, the next director, Hsio-Yen Shih, after threatening to quit on numerous occasions, finally left the post in 1981, less than a year after the Gallery's centenary celebrations. The reasons given were again linked to the overwhelming bureaucratic red tape under the National Museums Corporation that prevented the director from having any power or responsibility over the operation of the institution. In addition, however, Shih cited the inadequacy of the Lorne Building to house the national art collection, and an appropriation fund that was nowhere near adequate for the purchase of works of art,²⁵ as reasons for her precipitous departure from the Gallery. Many of the problems cited by the disgruntled directors of the National Museums had already been noted by the Corporation, which argued that the solution to issues such as bureaucratic red-tape, difficult access to

²⁴ There is no institutional history of the Gallery after Boggs' 1971 *The National Gallery of Canada*. The material for the following section was culled from the National Gallery's extensive clipping files, in particular the National Gallery General files, for the period covered by this dissertation.

²⁵ This was particularly frustrating under the National Museums Corporation, because as a Crown corporation, the National Museums Corporation had to return to the public purse any government appropriations that hadn't been used within two years. This made any long-term planning, or 'saving up' for important acquisitions virtually impossible.

funds, and other administrative problems, would lie in the formulation of a different set of rules governing cultural agencies, that would take into account their distinctness from other government agencies.

Some of the problems the individual institutions were having with the National Museums Corporation were addressed in the 1982 Report of the Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee (Applebaum-Hébert). Besides being the first wholesale review of Canadian cultural policy since the Massey Commission, the Report is important for its assessment of the relationship between government and culture (in particular in its examination of the arm's-length policies of federal cultural agencies), and more specifically, the relationship between government and policy (couched as an assessment of what government wants cultural policy to do). In particular, the Committee was concerned that cultural policy was not serving those for whom it was designed - cultural producers and institutions - but was instead functioning to serve the government's own largely political ends.

In recent years, preoccupation with policy coherence and coordination has led to what we believe has been a dilution of cultural policy goals. We have observed a tendency to treat cultural policy as a means to other ends - social, economic and political. The apparent belief by some that culture is an instrument, not an end in itself, has consequences which this Committee must regard as undesirable. [I]t contributes to a muddling of cultural goals with other national goals. We have been told throughout our inquiries that culture employs people, that it expands the economy, that it democratizes society, that it contributes to mental health, that it unites the country, that it advances the national interest in the world. These are all laudable goals, ones which

we support, but we must respectfully observe that as much as possible they should be kept distinct from cultural goals. (Canada, 1982: 8)

The Report, however, stressed the importance of the federal role in cultural matters, in particular its role in ensuring that Canadians from all regions had access to the national heritage. This acknowledgment of the importance of the federal role, however, did not come at the expense of criticizing the existing structure of federal intervention in the arts. Central to the Committee's report was the assertion of the importance of the arm's-length relationship between government and cultural agencies, and the purely advisory or advocacy role ideally occupied by the Minister in charge of culture. Recognizing some of the difficulties that existed within the current bureaucratic structure, the Committee advocated a reevaluation of the status of cultural agencies within the government, suggesting that the specific needs of such agencies would be better served by special legislation. With particular reference to the National Museums Corporation, a revised government-cultural agencies relationship was seen as essential to the improved relationship between the Board and the directorship of the four National Museums. In a recommendation that was hotly contested by the National Museums Corporation Board, the Applebaum-Hébert Committee suggested that control of all National Museums Corporation responsibilities and programmes that were not directly related to the running of the four National Museums, should be given over to the Department of

Communications under the purview of a proposed Canadian Heritage Council.²⁶

A greater policy problem was the National Museums Corporation itself. As an increasing number of directors and interim directors from all four National Museums left their positions because of the paralyzing bureaucracy,²⁷ the Minister of Communications created the Task Force Charged with Examining Federal Policy Concerning Museums. The Withrow-Richard Committee's recommendations were swiftly formulated and called for the immediate dismantling of the National Museums Corporation, giving each of the four federal institutions administrative autonomy as free-standing institutions with their own Boards of Trustees. In addition, the Task Force sought to restructure the existing assistance programmes to non-federal museums by focusing on professional development, interprovincial and international exchange, and a broader range of assistance to museums and exhibition centers across Canada. Underscoring these recommendations is the assessment that the National Museums Corporation under the 1972 National Museums Policy, far from decentralizing cultural initiatives and programmes, actually ended up as a

²⁶ A Canadian Heritage Council never took shape, but as a result of the Applebaum-Hébert recommendations, the Minister of Communications created an Interdepartmental Heritage Committee composed of agency heads and departmental representatives to oversee cultural policy in Canada, but this was in a largely advocacy capacity, and seemed to have little effect on the organization and functioning of federal cultural agencies or institutions in Canada.

²⁷ Up to 1986, four directors at the National Gallery cited as their reason for departure the bureaucratic red tape imposed by the National Museums Corporation: Jean Sutherland Boggs (resigned 1976), Hsio-Yen Shih (resigned 1981), Michael Bell (interim Director, resigned 1982) and Joseph Martin (resigned 1986).

large, unwieldy bureaucracy which was more interested in the centrality of its position vis-à-vis culture in Canada, than with its ability to provide adequate support for its national institutions. As the Withrow-Richard Committee stated in its Report:

The 1968 Act is ambiguous. Did Parliament intend a loose federation of four separate museums with a small central agency to provide broad policy direction from the Board of Trustees? Alternatively, did Parliament intend one integrated agency effectively controlled and managed from the centre, with four branches called "National Museums"? Lacking guidance, through the years the Board of Trustees of the Corporation has in practice, imposed the centralist option and the results are apparent. (Canada, 1986: 19)

It was also apparent to the federal government that the current organization of the National Museums was inefficient and dysfunctional, and the Task Force's recommendation to dismantle the National Museums Corporation was endorsed by Parliament in 1987 and the Department of Communications began the long process of reformulating federal policy on museums. The resulting Federal Museums Policy of 1990, and its accompanying Act of Parliament, reinstated the practice of having Boards of Trustees for each of the Federal Museums. Each museum was therefore a Crown Corporation, responsible to the Minister of Communications, and while each had its own responsibilities and powers, they were given a collective mandate to make their collections available and accessible:

It is hereby declared that the heritage of Canada and all its peoples is an important part of the world heritage and must be preserved for present and future generations and that each museum established by this Act

(a) plays an essential role individually and together with other museums and like institutions, in preserving and promoting the heritage of Canada and all its peoples throughout Canada and abroad and in contributing to the collective memory and sense of identity of all Canadians; and
(b) is a source of inspiration, research, learning and entertainment that belongs to all Canadians and provides, in both official languages, a service that is essential to Canadian culture and available to all. (Canada, 1989)

The importance of the role of culture in the fostering of national identity, while present in previous cultural and museum legislation, is more strongly emphasized in the 1990 Act. The earlier Acts governing the National Gallery and other Canadian cultural policy documents discussed above were, of course, concerned with the particular role that culture could play in the development of Canadian life, and were insistent that culture, Canadian culture, should be made accessible to all Canadians. In the discussion paper that preceded the 1990 Federal Museums policy, the emphasis was placed on museums' role in the production of Canadian heritage. This is especially true in the dissemination and communication of culture. There was a particular emphasis on the way in which access to heritage could lead to a better understanding of Canada's past and present and therefore of its identity. No caveat was made, as in the Applebaum-Hébert report, that the emphasis of Canadian cultural legislation should rest on cultural policy as cultural policy, and not on cultural policy as a means to other ends, in particular as fodder for political aims.

In 1990, however, the political climate was vastly different from what it had been in 1982. With the failure of the Meech Lake accord in 1990, the country was in turmoil about the direction it would take in the coming years. The perceived encroachment on distinctive Canadian culture that came about as a result of the Free Trade Agreement with the United States in 1989 only exacerbated the differences that existed within the country. While the Spicer Commission on Canadian Unity toured the country collecting testimonials to the greatness of Canada, the Federal Museums Policy ensured that the National Museums would work diligently to assure the presence and continued existence of a national heritage, and to make that heritage accessible to the Canadian public through a revamped set of museum assistance programmes. The final consolidation for the use of culture in promoting national identity came with the publication of the Standing Committee on Communication and Culture's Report *Culture and Communications: The Ties that Bind*. Produced in preparation for the 1992 national referendum on the Constitution, the Report underlined the centrality of culture in the production of national identity. Where *The Ties that Bind* differs from other federal reports on culture, is in its focus on the necessity of a common culture in terms of the specific requirements of the constitutional question, and the political (rather than affective) goal of national unity. Throughout this document, the museum was positioned as one of the central ways in which Canadians could bond with their

nation. Written in terms of producing a sense of national belonging, the role of culture in nation-building was seen as being especially important in the museum, particularly in terms of its role in maintaining (and constituting) the national heritage. And as Shirley Thomson's brief to the Committee makes clear, the National Gallery fully supports the federal presence in the cultural life of Canada, and even sees itself as an important force for unity (Thomson, 1991). While *The Ties that Bind* report has not to date had any lasting effect on federal cultural policy, in the current climate of budgetary restraint and political uncertainty it reiterates the value placed on culture as a mediator of national identity.

This chapter examined the historical genesis of the art museum as a frame for the articulation of the aesthetic to dominant conceptions of the state and the nation. In particular, the relation between the universal nature of the aesthetic and its harnessing for nationalist purposes was examined in terms of the constitution of a universal bourgeois subject. The articulation of the aesthetic and the nation is located not only in the objects that form the museum's display, but, as Tony Bennett has argued, in the ordering of the populace in these new public spaces. In addition to the imperative to self-regulation that such an ordering entails, the museum plays an important role in the process of historicization, providing historical as well as aesthetic categories within which the works of art can be

classified and submitted to an overarching order. Cultural policy cements the discursive framing of art and people in the reinforcement of the museum's position within a broader governmental notion of cultural and national politics. Ultimately, this links the discussion of culture and nationhood with the tension formulated in Chapter One between Canada's legislated identity, and an affective national belonging.

Chapter Three

The Permanent Collection: Ordering National Identity

In the preceding chapter, I considered the National Gallery's 'collecting history', the cultural and political implications of the Gallery's move from the makeshift Lorne Building to its present permanent location on Nepean Point, and its relationship as a national cultural institution to changes in cultural policy during the 1980s and early 1990s. In more general terms, the imbrication of the museum's ideological function as an important national symbol, and the effects of Enlightenment discourses of subjectivity that underlie a modernist conception of the aesthetic, have an important bearing on the articulations of art and nationhood presented in the museum.

In this chapter, my emphasis will be on the museum as an *exhibitionary* institution. As such, the analysis will focus on the display of historical and contemporary Canadian art in both the Lorne and the Safdie buildings. In its engagement with exhibitions - with specific displays - this inquiry operates at a different level of specificity from that of the work of Tony Bennett and others whose interests lie in the institutional aspects of the museum. The underlying assumption of this analysis is that an understanding of the social representations produced in and by the museum can be better obtained through an examination of the discursive

orderings constructed by the exhibition, than by imputing significance to objects based solely on their location within the institutional apparatus. The bulk of this chapter therefore consists in a close reading of the permanent display of the Gallery's collection of Canadian art - the permanent collection - in terms of its constitution of differing discursive orderings of Canadian art and national identity.

The Discursive Analysis of Museum Exhibitions

Carol Duncan and Alan Wallach's 1980 essay "The Universal Survey Museum" is a significant text in museological literature: one of the first essays to actually engage with the museum as an exhibitionary institution by imputing significance to the very structuring of the exhibitions themselves. Building on the work of anthropologist Victor Turner, Duncan and Wallach read the visit to the museum as a ritual experience, the features of which are provided by the building itself and the disposition of exhibitionary spaces. The architectural layout of the rooms, the ceiling and wall decorations, and most importantly, the display of artworks throughout the galleries together are thus seen as producing a trajectory through which the viewer is led, and which frames her/his understanding of and relationship to the works of art on display.

The museum, like other ceremonial monuments, is a complex architectural phenomenon that selects and

arranges works of art within a sequence of spaces. This totality of art and architectural form organizes the visitor's experience as a script organizes a performance. Individuals respond in different ways according to their education, culture and class. But the architecture is a given and imposes the same underlying structure on everyone. By following the architectural script the visitor engages in an activity most accurately described as a ritual. Indeed, the museum experience bears a striking resemblance to religious rituals in both form and content. (Duncan and Wallach, 1980: 450)

Thus, for Duncan and Wallach, the visit to the art museum, the passage through the spaces of the galleries, is an enactment of the ideological programme that underlies the Western museum, the ritual experience of walking through the galleries inserting the viewer into a particular narrative of the relationship between, for example, art and the superiority of Western civilization (the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York), art and nationhood (the Louvre and the National Gallery in Washington D.C.) and/or art and international capitalism (the Museum of Modern Art, New York).¹

The strength of Duncan and Wallach's argument lies in its focus on display practices. The analysis of the museum as a ritual space highlights both the auratic value (in Benjamin's sense) ascribed to art works on display in museums and art galleries, as well as the mood of reverence and awe that often accompanies novice visitors to museums - a mood which, as they and other authors have argued,² is already

¹ "By performing the ritual of walking through the museum, the visitor is prompted to enact and thereby to internalize the values and beliefs written into the architectural script" (Duncan and Wallach, 1980: 451).

² Cameron (1971), Pevsner (1976), and Selig (1967).

inscribed in the architectural typology of the museum building. In addition, Duncan and Wallach's focus on layout and display as constitutive of meaning highlights the hidden structure imposed by the authoritative art historical voice. The trajectory along which works of art are positioned is evidence of the fallacy that there exists a 'natural' order in which works of art should be viewed, and instead highlights the existence of an overarching hierarchy which regulates the way in which the history of art is told.

So visitors to a museum follow a route through a programmed narrative - in this case, one or another version of the history of art. In the museum, art history displaces history, purges it of social and political conflict, and distills it down to a series of triumphs, mostly of individual genius. Of course, what the museum presents as the community's history, beliefs and identity may represent only the interests and self-image of certain powers within the community. Such deceit, however, does not necessarily lessen the effectiveness of the monument's ritual structure as such. (Duncan, 1991: 92)³

Duncan and Wallach further elaborate this reading of the museum display by arguing that in the universal survey museum, rooms are organized along a linear chronology of artistic production structured around major art movements and players, while minor movements and media that do not fit into the linear trajectory of art history are relegated to smaller side rooms. In the new building of the National Gallery, this

³ This has also been effectively argued in the work of many feminist theorists, including Carol Duncan. In another essay on museum display, she examines the representation of women and of women artists in the display of New York's Museum of Modern Art. She concludes that while it is perfectly appropriate to have women on display in the work of male modernist artists, the presence of women as producers of works of art is a problem. (See Duncan, 1989)

hierarchical organization is apparent in the absence of prints and drawings from the main narrative of Canadian art history on display, while the artists whose works lie outside this main narrative, as is the case for Emily Carr, have been placed to the side.

In the 1992 essay "Telling, Showing, Showing Off", Mieke Bal examines the display in a section of the second floor of the American Museum of Natural History devoted to the peoples and mammals of Asia and Africa. Although the focus of this essay is on the display of artefacts within an ethnographic context, thereby addressing particular issues that differ significantly from those presented in a fine arts museum, Bal's account of the methodological underpinnings of her inquiry provides some important insights into the narrative analysis of exhibitions. In her study of the rhetoric of the Museum's displays, Bal outlines the differences between her project and other analyses of the American Museum of Natural History such as that offered in Donna Haraway's 1984 essay "Teddy Bear Patriarchy." While Haraway's essay "hovers between a description of Carl Akeley's project and biography and a more fundamental critique of the ideological concatenation of race, class, and gender as it expresses itself therein" (Bal, 1992: 561), Bal's approach is more concerned with the forms of address contained in the displays.⁴ And the form of address that she conceives as being most important in the museum is narrative:

⁴ In some ways, the differences between Haraway's and Bal's interests in and analysis of the American Museum of Natural History mirror the

[T]he space of a museum presupposes a walking tour, an order in which the exhibits and panels are to be viewed and read. Thus it addresses an implied 'focalisor'⁵ whose tour is the story of the production of the knowledge taken in and taken home. I will focus on the display as a sign system working in the realm between the visual and the verbal, and between information and persuasion, as it produces the viewer's knowledge. (ibid.: 561)

By concentrating on the narrative aspect of museums - particularly evident in her statement "the museum is a discourse, and exhibition an utterance within that discourse" (no date, b: 9) - Bal makes one of the most significant contributions to the analysis of the museum as an exhibitionary institution. Like Duncan and Wallach, she views the experience of the museum visit in terms of its temporal and spatial articulations, arguing that museums are not static institutions that function as aesthetic or ethnographic monoliths. For Bal, understanding the museum as a signifying institution consists in mapping out the narrative structures that take place within its walls; to seek out, in other words, the rhetorical strategies of its exhibitions and in this way, tease out the multiple discourses of specific institutions.

Discursivity, most notably rhetoric imbricated with narrative, is in effect a crucial aspect of the

differences between my analysis of the museum in terms of exhibitionary discourses, and the work of other writers on the museum.

⁵ Bal defines the focalisor as the subjective presence in narratives which, while not identical with the person or voice of the narrator, is aligned with the narrator's subjective point of view, and its effect on the reader's interpretation of narrated events. "The distinction between focalisor and narrator is necessary because a narrator is able to subsume and present the subjective view of another ... This split between narrator and focalisor can even accumulate in several degrees." (Bal, 1994: 101)

institution. And I do not mean by this that museums inevitably produce discourse in their information flyers, brochures, and catalogues. I mean something more central, at the core of the idea of exhibition. ... [R]hetoric is not the only perspective that literary theory brings to museology. Another useful perspective, which provides rhetorical analysis with a *raison d'être*, is the assumption that a visit to a museum is an event that takes place in space and in time, and that therefore it produces a narrative. The perspective on narratology can therefore help understand the effectivity of the museum's rhetoric." (ibid.: 4-5)

Within these approaches, the meaning of the museum is read in terms of the visitor's passage through the exhibitionary space. Duncan and Wallach's sense of the museum visit as a ritual, however, infers a relative lack of agency on the part of museum visitors, outside of their capacity to participate in the ritual at different levels (economic, gender, class, level of education). Once the ritual has been established, it seems, the visitor is led through the galleries on a virtual moving carpet, with few allowances for diversion from the pre-ordained track. While I do not disagree with the basic premise that museums offer particular scripts that are imbedded in the layout of the galleries, Duncan and Wallach's seeming obliviousness to even the possibility that the script could or should be altered reveals the shortcomings of their argument. In addition, the lack of specificity of their analysis, in other words, their establishment of a universal survey museum *model* that can be applied with minor variations to any western-style art museum⁶

⁶ See Duncan's anecdote concerning the Shah of Iran's purchase of the contents of a 'Western contemporary art museum' in order to solidify his alliance with the West (Duncan, 1991).

in both its traditional (historical) and its modern forms, is problematic and obscures the material practices of knowledge production that takes place in museum exhibitions.

Nevertheless, Duncan and Wallach's contribution to the analysis of the art museum should not be completely dismissed: more than anyone else writing in the late 1970s and early 1980s, they advanced a mode of analysis that focused on the museum as exhibitionary institution whose symbolic significance resided in its architecture and, equally importantly, in the political symbolism of the museum's interiors. Moreover, they contributed to a better understanding of the mechanisms of power that operate in and through the museum, thereby emphasizing the role of the museum in the production and maintenance of certain conceptions of the nation-state.

Where Bal's analysis improves upon that of Duncan and Wallach,⁷ is in its specific consideration of the museum exhibition as discourse. This strategy immediately avoids the generalizations of Duncan and Wallach's analysis by centering on the specific elements of the exhibition itself. Bal shapes

⁷ It should be underlined that Duncan and Wallach and Bal are operating out of completely different frameworks. Duncan and Wallach could be termed members of the old 'social history of art' school, and their analysis is therefore oriented towards an understanding of the power relations inherent in an institution such as the museum. This can especially be seen in their analysis of the Museum of Modern Art entitled "The Museum of Modern Art as Late Capitalist Ritual," and in Duncan's essay "Who Rules the Art World?," both of which focus on the reproduction of relations of capital within the art institution. Although also interested in relations of power, Bal's departure point is Foucault's writing on the discursive strategies of institutions, and on the relations of power and knowledge that occur within any institutional context. As such, Bal's analysis is more specific, as her detailed analysis of the American Museum of Natural History demonstrates. (Bal, 1992)

her discursive analysis of the exhibition through a combination of elements of rhetoric and the perspective of narratology, which in the essays under discussion, is articulated to a Foucauldian notion of discourse.

Rhetoric then, helps to "read" not just the artefacts in a museum, but the museum and its exhibitions themselves. The narratological perspective provides meaning to the otherwise loose elements of such a reading. Most importantly, the analysis yields an integrated account of, on the one hand, the discursive strategies put into place by the curators, and, on the other, the effective process of meaning making that these strategies suggest to the visitor. The reading itself, then, becomes part of the meaning it yields. And this seems an important insight, for what is a museum for if not for visitors? (no date, b: 6)

Bal's recourse to a conception of rhetoric drawn largely from literary theory⁸ is an important tool in the 'reading' of museum exhibitions as discourse. In particular, Bal is interested in the tension between the visual and the verbal, most often located in the articulation of objects and wall texts in the exhibition, which suggest a more complex articulation of meaning that is often suggested by appeals to the neutrality of the museal institution. In this focus on the relation of word and object, Bal points to the idea of persuasion - a central rhetorical device - as a mode of argument that can be usefully employed to map out the political and discursive strategies of the exhibition.

While Bal is not the only writer to use rhetoric as an analytic tool in the reading of museums, her work is characterized by a close analysis of particular discursive

⁸ Bal's use of rhetoric is particularly indebted to the writing of Hayden White. See in particular White (1973).

orderings of museal space. Stephen Bann has also employed rhetorical tropes to describe two forms of museum exhibitions that originated in post-Revolutionary France, but which evolved into the two distinct but coexisting styles of display that characterise the modern museum. In his discussion of the rhetorical strategies that underscores the systems of collecting during this period in France, Bann contrasts Alexandre du Sommerard's synecdochic jumble of objects, ranging from armour to paintings, that functioned to create a total sense of a historical moment, with Alexandre Lenoir's construction of "century" rooms in which specimens were laid out to form a metonymic chronology of cultural development. For Bann, these two historical instances of collecting practice have their effect in the organization of contemporary museum displays, and also serve to outline two different modes of interpreting the history of art.

The 'poetics' of the modern museum is not du Sommerard's system, nor is it that of Lenoir. Instead it lies in the alternation of the two strategies which have been outlined here. ... Passages and rooms devoted to the metonymic sequence of schools and centuries are interrupted by 'reconstructed' rooms, offering the synecdochic treat of a *salon* transported from the Ile Saint-Louis or a dining-room from a departed Jacobean manor-house. (Bann, 1984: 91)

Donald Preziosi also develops the interrelationship of these two systems of museological display and art historical organization: the synchronic underpinnings of the period room having as its art historical counterpart an interest in the *zeitgeist*, while the diachronic succession of artists and schools perfectly mirrors the teleological organization of

objects in the museum. By themselves, these rhetorical typologies only partially enable any specific or conjunctural reading of exhibition practices. For Bal it is in "rhetoric imbricated by narratology" (no date, a: unpaginated) that the discursivity of the museum can best be understood.⁹

Bal's particular conception of the discursive analysis of exhibitions is clearly made in her criticism of "the new museology".¹⁰ In "The Discourse of Museology" (no date, a) Bal examines the deployment of linguistic metaphors in the context of Evelyn Beer and Riet de Leeuw's *L'Exposition Imaginaire* project: in particular their statement of intent in the introduction to the book section of the project: "arrangements and combinations will preferably be read, within such a constellation, as a text, a fiction: a narrative, with a narrator and an ideal reader. The artworks function as the terms of a linguistic structure" (cited in *ibid.*). While I think Bal would agree with the basic assumptions underpinning a narrative consideration of the exhibition, the unidirectionality of this particular conception of narrative, the implication that the narrator is

⁹ Bal defines narratology as the theory of narrative texts, with narrative understood as "an account in any semiotic system in which a subjectively focalised sequence of events is presented and communicated" (1994 : 100). As a literary theorist, Bal's conception of narratology as outlined in earlier works (Bal, 1985) is very closely tied to the components of the literary text: plot, actors, story, etc. In its application to the museum and to other non-text-based narrative sites (for example her analysis of 'Rembrandt'), Bal's recourse to narratological analysis lies in its ability to account for the spatial and temporal aspects of discourse.

¹⁰ See the contributions to the anthologies *The New Museology* (Vergo, 1989) and *L'Exposition imaginaire: The Art of Exhibiting in the Eighties* (Beer and de Leeuw, 1989).

omnipresent and the 'ideal reader' is a passive (submissive) participant in the proceedings, is counter to the discursive model outlined by Bal. Of greater concern for Bal, however, is the link between a unidirectional conception of the exhibition and the ideological position of intentionalism, considered to be the most tenacious of art historical dogmas. Bal's critique of intentionalism can implicitly be seen as a critique of Duncan and Wallach's analysis of the ritualistic character of the museum visit, because the convention-bound and repetitious nature of ritual allows little room for negotiation by the viewer. Bal's allegation of intentionalism as an effect of a unidirectional and hierarchical view of the operation of narrative also bears consideration, because it is a charge that Bal levels not only at the exhibitions themselves (at the naturalized view of history that is proposed in museums), but also at the producers of the "new museology". Bal's complaint with this recent literature lies in its authors' failure to question the intentionalism that is present in both their writing, and their critical perspectives on exhibition practices. As Bal puts the question:

[d]oes the conception of the museum as a discourse help to get out of the limited intentionalism that, as long as it remains unexamined and taken for granted, is complicit with structures of power, authority, and exclusion because it re-enacts them, or does it on the contrary lend itself only too well to reaffirm these? ...
It seems worthwhile to examine, then, to what extent this "new discursivism" sustains an intentionalism that has been inherited from older positions which its "newness" subsequently makes invisible. (no date,a: unpaginated)

The problem of intentionalism is also, necessarily, the problem of history and the presentation of the past in institutional terms. For the art museum, the display of the material objects of history has always taken place under the assumption of the existence of an essential order of things; in the belief that there is a natural, apolitical ordering of the past that can be put on display. The museum's reputation as the final bastion of a natural, teleological history, has provoked a plethora of writing amongst practitioners of the "new museology" on the questions of representation in museum displays. This literature, however, is for the most part preoccupied with examinations of the content of exhibitions and largely ignores questions of actual exhibitionary or curatorial practice.¹¹ Bal's questioning of the intentionalism lurking in the writings of the "new museologists" pertains to what she perceives to be a lack of reflexivity in their writing and in their conception of exhibitionary structures, not to a lack of awareness of the presentation of history in the exhibitions of artefacts.

In "The Discourse of Museology", Bal writes about the alternative discursive conceptions of exhibitionary display that have been put forward by certain practitioners of "the new museology".¹² Bal outlines the limits of linguistic

¹¹ This literature includes Lumley (1987), Karp and Lavine (1991), and Karp, Kreamer and Lavine (1992) and Vergo (1989).

¹² Many of these individuals may not use "new museology" to describe themselves or their work, but it provides a useful umbrella term under which to gather the work of various writers and curators who are interested in understanding the mechanisms underlying the museum and the museum display, and their articulations of social, political and aesthetic issues. This list could include among others, the contributors

metaphors, such as the exhibition as conversation proposed by curator Rudi Fuchs, by arguing that conversation does not open up the event to all interlocutors, since it serves to reinforce the power of one - the artist or the curator - and excludes those artists and members of the public who do not fit the particular conversational model. Dialogue is another language-based metaphor that has been used to refer to a greater understanding of the relationship between artist, curator, object and viewer in the exhibition. While acknowledging the nature of the exhibition as a social event that exists in time and space, the exhibition as dialogue often conveniently ignores social context and/or spatial situatedness in favour of temporality. For Bal, all models fall short when compared with her own ideal exhibitionary form which is based on a notion of interactive dialogue and exchange: an exhibition, in other words, that would not only take into account the process of *looking* as an activity, but would also acknowledge the potential diversity of these viewing processes.¹³ As she argues:

[i]nstead of seducing the visitor into an endorsement of the curator's aesthetic and the belief that that aesthetic is universal, such an exhibition would honour the self-asserting alterity of each subject of looking and the historical situatedness of her activity here and now. (ibid.: unpaginated)

to Vergo (1989), curators Jean-Claude Amman and Rudi Fuchs, critic Douglas Crimp and artist Daniel Buren.

¹³ Of course, many writers would also argue that Bal's emphasis on the visual was in itself problematic. See the current research of Susan Douglas and Jennifer Fisher.

Bal's discursive analysis of the exhibition, then, goes beyond the simple deployment of linguistic analogies by placing a central emphasis on the social and political dimensions of the exhibitionary discourse. The analysis of exhibitions thus entails an awareness of first, the discipline of art history operating as an exclusionary discourse both in and outside the museum, second, the museum's role as an ideological institution, and finally, an understanding of the relations of power and knowledge as they occur within the museum. Bal's consideration of the relations of power/knowledge, and her understanding of the exhibition as a discursive event demonstrates her debt to a Foucauldian notion of discourse.

As was argued earlier, the contribution of Foucault's understanding of discourse to the analysis of exhibitions cannot be underestimated, and is, I believe, more productive than the analysis of the disciplinary nature of the museal institution.¹⁴ In taking the exhibition as the focus of study, as the screen through which the mechanisms of the institution are revealed, it is possible to view the exhibition not only as a singular event, but as having important consequences for our understanding of the institution itself. The exhibition, then, comes to be seen as a discursive event in the sense outlined by Foucault in *L'Ordre du discours*:

l'histoire ne considère pas un événement sans
définir la série dont il fait partie, sans
spécifier le mode d'analyse dont celle-ci relève,

¹⁴ Tony Bennett (1989; 1995); see the discussion of his work in Chapter Two of this thesis.

sans chercher à connaître la régularité des phénomènes et les limites de la probabilité de leur émergence, sans s'interroger sur les variations, les inflexions et l'allure de la courbe, sans vouloir déterminer les conditions dont elles dépendent. (1970: 57-8)

As Lawrence Grossberg points out, however, the concept of the event is not to be used as a tool through which everything is placed on the same plane of analysis; there are series of levels of events, and different types of events, and it is through the description of the relations and connections between events, of the series to which they belong, that the exhibition's position within, and contribution to, the larger institutional discourse of the museum can be understood.¹⁵ Thus Foucault's conception of discourse as applied to the exhibition underscores the interrelatedness of objects within the overall frame of the exhibition, in addition to foregrounding the exhibition itself as having significance within the context of the institution as a whole.¹⁶ Within this context, the attention that Bal brings to the specific spatial and temporal articulations of objects makes evident the pertinence of discourse analysis to an understanding of the exhibitionary function of the museum.

¹⁵"The problem is to both distinguish the events, differentiate the networks and levels to which they belong, and to reconstitute the threads which connect them and make them give rise to one another." (M. Foucault, *Power, Truth, Strategy* (M. Morris and P. Patton, Eds.). Sydney: Feral Publications, 1979, quoted in Grossberg, 1984 : 415)

¹⁶ Foucault describes the levels of analysis of discourse in the following way: 1) Intradiscursive: within discursive formation or discourse itself; analysis of objects, operations, concepts, theoretical options within a discourse [cf. criteria of formation]; 2) Interdiscursive: between different discursive formations [cf. criteria of transformation or threshold]; and 3) Extradiscursive: between discourse and non-discursive context in which it functions (e.g. institutions, social relations, economic or political elements) [cf. criteria of correlation] (1978: 13).

The analysis of the exhibition as a narrative, the belief that meaning is located not only in artworks themselves, but more importantly, also in their selection, combination, and finally in their organization within the gallery space, offers a more integrative understanding of the function of the exhibition within the institution. This focus on the exhibition's narratives places an important emphasis on the work of the curators who have chosen and combined particular works and left others in storage. Alain Fleischer's essay "Portrait d'un musée ou la photogénie des lieux" uses the metaphor of the film to examine the placement of works of art within the museum, specifically, the Musée national d'art moderne in the Pompidou Centre in Paris. The form of the display, articulated in the tracking motion of the imaginary film, makes visible the function of the museum in the discursive ordering of works of art. In his account of this process, the artworks become words, the galleries and museum architecture are the syntax, and the museum is fiction ("Le musée est une fiction" 1986: 198). Although in many ways similar to Bal's analysis of museum display, Fleischer's account differs in its emphasis on the curator as narrator, a focalization (made particularly explicit in the use of the camera metaphor) that Bal would shy away from.

L'accrochage des oeuvres, leur présentation, sont d'abord une activité de narrateur, de *raconteur d'histoire de l'art*, confronté parfois à la résistance des mots (les oeuvres) contre la syntaxe (l'architecture, l'agencement des espaces qui sont là comme le moule d'une phrase à venir), ou à l'attrait de la versification, de la rime, aux dépens du sens: format d'une oeuvre/proportions

d'un mur, jeux de symétrie des formes, mise en échos des couleurs. Il arrive que stratégies narratives et décoratives s'affrontent et que le récit d'histoire de l'art soit infléchi ici ou là par l'irrésistible séduction d'un jeu de signes visuels. Le conservateur-narrateur devient parfois décorateur, architecte, metteur-en-scène, tandis que se profile son identité-limite: celle d'un méta-artiste qui ferait sa palette des oeuvres de la collection et sa toile blanche des murs blancs du musée. (Fleischer, 1986: 199)

Fleischer's analysis of the curator as narrator inevitably brings up the problematic question of authorship in the curating of exhibitions discussed above, imputing an authority and authenticity to the curatorial voice that precludes any contribution the viewer may make to the exhibition. This is particularly evident in his characterization of the curator as "méta-artiste".¹⁷

As the examination in Chapter Two of the relationship between art history and the museum display suggested, the authority of the exhibitionary narrative is supported by the legitimizing power of the disciplinary formation. The constructed nature of the teleology of artistic development that underscores the ordering of objects in the museum's permanent collection is hidden by the seeming naturalness of the art historical narrative. The analysis of the museum's display, in discursive or even narrative terms, lays bare the

¹⁷ European 'post-modern' curators Germano Celant and Rudi Fuchs have also discussed the curator as producer of meaning in the organization of art exhibitions. While these later texts are important contributions towards an understanding of the exhibition as a narrative, the context of their comments (situated in an analysis of major temporary exhibitions in Europe) makes them more suitable to the discussion in Chapter Four of the temporary exhibitions at the National Gallery, because of the different issues at stake in permanent displays and temporary exhibitions.

criteria and values that have structured traditional aesthetic discourse since the Enlightenment, and makes evident the reproduction of these values in the museum.

In this vein, Claire Stoullig notes that while many reviewers comment on the hanging of an exhibition, few actually delve into the meanings produced by the specific modes of exhibition of works of art. This lack of concern underscores the deep-seated art historical/aesthetic belief that works of art 'speak for themselves' and that the 'exhibition' is irrelevant.

l'exposition; c'est-à-dire la présentation d'un ou de plusieurs codes de déchiffrement d'une oeuvre..., c'est-à-dire le mode d'initiation à cette oeuvre-là, le parcours. Ne pas le prendre en compte implique qu'il va de soi, qu'il n'existe qu'une seule approche possible alors que chaque époque organise l'ensemble des représentations artistiques selon un système qui lui est propre, que son mode est daté, voire millésimé. Et pourtant tout semble rester dans le non-dit afin que le visiteur ait peine à penser qu'il existe d'autres modes d'exister, d'autres relations, d'autres contextes à l'oeuvre. A croire que le mode d'appréhender l'oeuvre demeure unique. A croire que la variété des modes d'approche n'est pas pertinente et que ses caractères sont définitifs et déterminés une bonne fois pour toutes. Comme si les aspects innombrables qu'elle présente relevaient d'une structure identique, d'une seule organisation, d'un seul type de lois cohérentes qui s'articulent entre elles. Il reste que tout cloisonnement retenu oblige à l'abandon de tous les autres. (Stoullig, 1986: 185-6)

This revelation of the narrative underlying the presentation of art objects in exhibitions reinforces the importance of examining the ways in which the disciplinary structures of art history are themselves hidden from view in the museum, and that revealing this unacknowledged narrative,

particularly in the organization of permanent collections, remains an important task of cultural analysis.

In extending the work undertaken by Mieke Bal and others, my discursive analysis of the permanent collection of Canadian art at the National Gallery will consider the display across three interrelated levels: first, the organization of the artworks themselves across a series of rooms; second, the relationship between the narrative produced in the Canadian Galleries and the other galleries at the museum; and finally, the Gallery's role as an institution. Within this third level of analysis, I will focus on two aspects: the relationship of the discursive orderings of the permanent collection to the institutional discourse of national identity that is produced by the National Gallery, and the position of the permanent collection within the emerging discourse of art history in Canada. The view of the exhibition as discourse in addition imparts a situationally specific coherence to the objects on display, providing the means for an analysis of the exhibition as itself productive of meaning outside of, or in addition to, the meaning produced by the individual works. An analysis of the regularities within the discursive formation that is the collection of Canadian art at the National Gallery leads to a more pertinent understanding of the formation of the permanent exhibition.¹⁸ In what follows, I

¹⁸ Although not of the underlying structure, because following Foucault, the notion of a structure implies a fixity which is to be avoided. Grossberg "Seek in the discourse not its laws of construction ... but its conditions of existence" (cited in Grossberg, 1984: 415);

will examine the display of Canadian art at the National Gallery between 1980 and 1992. As has been noted earlier in this thesis, during this period, the Gallery relocated from the Lorne building (a converted office structure) to its present home in the Safdie-designed monument. Thus, it is important to take this move into account, assessing both the differences and similarities of these two sites and their display practices.

The Permanent Collection

(The Lorne Building)

An unattractive eight-floor office building across from the National Arts Center, the Lorne Building housed the National Gallery from 1959 to 1987. The collection was displayed on six of its floors, with some administrative offices¹⁹ and the Restoration and Conservation Laboratories located on the seventh floor, and a public cafeteria on the eighth. In the Lorne Building, the historical Canadian collection was located entirely on the third floor, while contemporary art was divided between the fourth floor's display of Canadian art, and the fifth's collection of contemporary art from outside Canada. Temporary exhibitions, meanwhile, were held on the fourth floor, next to, and

Also, in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* he talks about "rules of formation as "conditions of existence (but also of coexistence, maintenance, modification, and disappearance) in a given discursive division" (1972: 38).

¹⁹ The rest of the administrative offices, including the curatorial departments, were located in a separate but nearby building on Fuller Street.

sometimes incorporating, the permanent display of contemporary Canadian art.

What is truly intriguing about the Lorne Building was its ability to transform itself from office building to art museum. With virtually no natural lighting, low ceilings and wall-to-wall carpeting, the Lorne Building was never the ideal place to display works of art, let alone a national collection, and when compared to the present building, its inadequacies seem insurmountable. However, the difficulties inherent in a building where the collection was spread out over a succession of superimposed floors, with access only by central banks of elevators, required some major rethinking of the concept of the museum, and the interrelationship of architecture and museal function. The Gallery succeeded in negotiating some of these problems by putting the foyer area of the Gallery to full use. While the usual elements of the Gallery entrance were present - admissions desk, coatcheck, bookstore and gift shop - the Gallery also placed a changing display of contemporary artworks to take full advantage of the high glass-curtain walls. This accomplished two things: on the one hand it enabled the display of large installation and sculptural work which could not have been exhibited on the fourth or fifth floors, but more importantly, in the context of the reconsideration of the museum that was taking place in the 1970s and the 1980s, these very public spaces

enabled art to be seen from the outside, and thereby to bring the work of the Gallery to the public it purported to serve.²⁰

Once inside the building, however, the possibility for interaction decreased dramatically, with each floor existing as a domain unto itself, connected only by elevator or by enclosed stairway. The result of this physical arrangement was a separation of the galleries and an inherent lack of connection among the various areas of the collection, a phenomenon of the universal survey museum model proposed by Duncan and Wallach where the linear trajectory of the collection obviates any crossover amongst the art historical areas. Unlike the purpose-built Safdie building where the preservation of distinct realms is a component of the structure itself,²¹ the Lorne Building offered two instances where the structural constraints limiting artistic realms were transcended. The first was the entrance lobby described above, where the purely business function of the museum and the outside world interacted with galleries of contemporary art. The second area, which was put to good use by numerous curators, was the 'well' on the fourth floor. Measuring approximately 9 m by 16m, this space is open up to the fifth floor, and while visitors cannot gain access to the fifth floor from the well, they can lean over balustrades on the fifth floor and look down on the work contained within it.

²⁰ During the 1960s and 1970s, the work exhibited on the ground floor was a 'greatest hits' of Canadian painting, built largely around the work of the Group of Seven and Emily Carr.

²¹ In the Safdie building, the temporary exhibitions area, the contemporary art block, the Canadian galleries and European galleries have all been allocated a separate space.

Conversely, viewers on the fourth floor have a clear view of the works on display in the fifth floor galleries that circle the well. As we will see in the next chapter, this feature of the Gallery was used in both the *Pluralities* and the *Songs of Experience* exhibitions.

(Safdie Building)

In the National Gallery's new building, the permanent collection is laid out as two main blocks or areas of space. The first is a rectangular block along the main axis of the National Gallery (i.e., along the colonnade, facing Sussex Drive and the War Memorial) that houses the Historical Galleries. On the first floor are the Canadian Galleries and on the second floor are the European and American Galleries. The other 'block' of galleries houses contemporary art (post-1960): on the first floor are a selection of American post-abstract expressionist artists in five of the galleries; in the remaining four galleries is a changing installation of Canadian art from approximately the same period (1970-1980). On the second level of this second block is a changing installation of recent contemporary art (1975 to the present) which mixes the work of both international and Canadian artists over nine galleries. Other areas of artwork deemed of less importance (for example, prints and drawings, photography, and Inuit art) are located in small spaces peripheral to these major 'art' blocks, a positioning that

suggests a hierarchy of art forms and of countries/civilizations.

Each 'block' of galleries produces a coherent trajectory which only tenuously connects with any of the other blocks of galleries. For instance, the Canadian Galleries on the first floor are self-contained, the exit to the entire complex emerging onto the same place from which the exhibition began. In addition, the galleries form a continuous loop from which the viewer can only with difficulty escape. The same can be said for both floors of contemporary art: both sets of galleries consist of a unit that has its entrance and exit in the same place. In terms of exhibitionary flow, each of the gallery units is self-contained and does not readily encourage access from one area to the other.²² Although some might argue that the openings onto the inner courtyards in the Canadian Galleries offer the possibility of escape from the exhibitionary narrative, compared to other museums built in the 1980s which were careful to incorporate windows and openings between and across galleries, Safdie's building is remarkably lacking in any form of reflexivity. Even the portholes and windows inside the galleries look either onto other portholes of the same dimensions, or in the European and Contemporary Galleries, provide glimpses of the

²² This could be due to the separating out of curatorial domains and territories among the curators and the lack of willingness to encroach or to let others encroach upon a defined and contained territory.

elaborately designed lighting shafts for the lower galleries.²³

What is certain, is that the new building occupies a central role in the delineation of the permanent collection. Not only do the new gallery spaces produce a clearly defined ordering of the various artistic domains, but the strong symbolic presence of the new Gallery building imputes a stature if not a grandiosity to the works of art that was missing from the display in the Lorne building. Even for some of the new building's supporters, however, the overwhelming monumentality of the architecture takes attention away from the works of art, locating the Gallery's symbolic impact, not in its collection of art, but in its social and national function.

The Canadian Galleries

The permanent display in the Canadian galleries of *both* National Gallery buildings provides a linear chronology of Canadian artistic production from the late seventeenth century to the 1960s. Traditional in scope and intent, it provides a trajectory of great moments in Canadian art organized around a selection of major artistic movements - e.g., the Royal Canadian Academy, the Group of Seven, the Canadian Group of Painters, the Automatistes and the Plasticiens. Thus, the Gallery's display of the permanent

²³ See Whitelaw (1989) for an overview of the reflexive character of the architecture of post-modern museum buildings in Europe, in particular James Stirling's addition to the National Gallery in Stuttgart.

collection reproduces the traditional art historical view of the history of art as a linear stylistic trajectory. This view of the history of art as a progressive artistic development culminating in abstraction, is reinforced in the physical layout of the rooms that house the collection of Canadian artworks. The major moments and monuments of Canadian art history are displayed chronologically across a series of large rooms, while the marginalia, the moments or instances of works which do not fit into the larger teleological narrative of 'Canadian art', are situated in the smaller theme rooms, adjacent to the main rooms, and therefore outside the main exhibition trajectory. One of the most important motivations in this stylistic progression is the development of abstraction, first seen in the stylized landscapes of the Group of Seven, and reaching its apogee in the very disparate work of the Plasticiens and Painters Eleven in the 1950s and 60s. The rise of artistic modernism, as it is traced through the trajectory of the permanent collection, signals the abandonment of European-derived realist art forms and Canada's move towards entry into a universal aesthetic avant-garde. This discursive articulation of transnational art historical and national narratives, seen in terms of a tension between the establishment of a distinct Canadian aesthetic necessary to a national programme and the desire to see the work of Canadian artists exhibited on an international scale - can perhaps best be seen in the shift in the Gallery's organization of its permanent collection

from a strictly Canadian history of art up to the 1960s, separate from the more canonical European and American art of the past, to the integration of the work of Canadian and international artists in the Contemporary Galleries.

The stylistic separation of works into those that form the main history and those works that are outside this history must also, however, be seen as part of the larger project of both the National Gallery and the Canadian art history establishment: namely, the development of an authentically Canadian aesthetic. This quest for a distinctly Canadian artistic vocabulary was the original impetus behind the creation of both the Royal Canadian Academy and the National Gallery, under the assumption that the development of such an aesthetic - and the establishment of a wholly Canadian art movement - would translate into visual terms the affective experience of nationhood. Within the received traditions, this distinct Canadian aesthetic was seemingly only achieved with the Group of Seven, whose explorations of the Canadian landscape - however much that landscape only reflected a small portion of Canadian territory - was seen both by the artists themselves and by posterity as "a direct and unaffected mode of painting derived from an experience of the Canadian land that all Canadians, if they would only look about themselves, would have to acknowledge as being true and worthwhile" (Reid, 1970: 13-14).

The articulation of national identity with the land, however, did not originate with the Group of Seven. Although

for many these artists more closely approximated the rough wilderness that was Canada than the picturesque images produced by their predecessors, the work of earlier artists - from Cornelius Krieghoff's paintings of *habitants* in the nineteenth century and Paul Kane's voyages west to capture "the vanishing Indian", to the romanticized paintings of Lucius O'Brien and Horatio Walker - also took as their subject matter elements of the distinctive Canadian landscape. These early depictions, however, were poetic and idealized visions of the land, virtually indistinguishable from the picturesque and romantic European paintings avidly collected in Montreal and in Toronto. They nonetheless point to the importance of the landscape in artistic articulations of national identity in Canada. Art historians have repeatedly attempted to explain Canadian artists' preoccupation with painting the land:

A number of theories have been advanced to explain this 'landscape' fact in Canadian painting, as also in our literature and music. They usually involve the identification of the essentially individualistic, introspective nature of the Canadian psyche, and the consequent need to see oneself in a one-to-one relationship with nature in all its magnitude. (Reid, 1970: 15)

Others see the preponderance of images of the land throughout Canadian art as a mechanism of domesticating what was for early settlers a harsh and difficult landscape, or even for nineteenth-century nationalists (who asked artists to paint

pictures with no snow)²⁴ as an incentive for European immigration to Canada (Osborne, 1988).

The identification of topographical characteristics with national identity, however, went beyond works of art. The rhetoric of many Canadian nationalists in the decades after Confederation sought to establish a close association of the North with racial superiority. As Carl Berger has shown, many early nationalists believed that Canada's strength lay in its geographical location and climactic conditions; that the cold climate had fostered the development of a strong and pure race already equipped with an ingrained sense of freedom and of self-governance (Berger, 1966: 15). In their arguments for the strong correlation between climate and racial character, these early nationalist tracts manifested in varying degrees a kind of social Darwinism. The more moderate version saw the Canadian climate as conducive to the production of certain characteristics desirable in a free and democratic country. The second, more extreme argument, maintained that the climate functioned as a process of natural selection, and that races indigenous to cold climes were inherently superior to those of warmer areas. This belief was often "proved" in the migration northwards of the human species as it evolved, and in the greater wealth of countries of the North compared with the underdeveloped nations of the south (ibid.: 16).²⁵

²⁴ The proscription against the presence of snow in representations of Canada, can also be found in early CPR films. See Morris (1988).

²⁵ In these characteristics of strength, perseverance and the capability of self-governance, Canadians were seen to be very similar to the original peoples of Scandinavia and Germany, Britain and Northern France: all northern races, and all seen as the direct ancestors of

In the culture, politics and advertising of the early to mid-twentieth century, the landscape, and in particular the mythic North, constituted an important element in the popular imaging of the nation. Members of the Group of Seven recognized the affinity between the northern landscape and popular conceptions of Canada at the same time as they abandoned the picturesque conventions of European landscape painting; a shift which has been chronicled in the Group's mythology as an 'awakening' to the essential character of Canada, "the spirit of our native land". The seven artists' belief in the superior qualities of the Northern climate and the importance of developing an artistic practice that captured the essence of the land, were the fundamental elements that bound them together as a group, and which endeared them to promoters of a "national feeling".²⁶ For the artists of the Group of Seven, the flourishing of Canadian art was only possible once the artistic conventions of Europe lost their dominance. And a truly Canadian art form could only occur out of a spiritual engagement with the environment, an engagement which in the formative years of the Group took place in the Canadian Shield. In an essay in

English and French Canadians. Canada's racial affinity with Britain lay in sharp contrast with the differences between Canada and the United States, a country whose Anglo-Saxon heritage, in the minds of advocates of the more extreme position, was being diluted by an influx of immigrants from warmer climes: races who were inherently lazy and less governable than those individuals of superior northern heritage. See Berger (1966).

²⁶ W. Stewart Wallace wrote of the Group of Seven in 1927: "The work of this group has attracted international attention, mainly because of its strong native character. It tends at times to the crude and bizarre; but at its best it is instinct with the feeling of Canada's "great open spaces", from which indeed it draws its inspiration" (1927: 77).

The Canadian Theosophist, Lawren Harris described the impact of the North on the Canadian artist, a description in which can be found echoes of early nationalists' theories of dominant northern races:

We are in the fringe of the great North and its living whiteness, its loneliness and replenishment, its resignations and release, its call and answer - its cleansing rhythms. It seems that the top of the continent is a source of spiritual flow that will ever shed clarity into the growing race of America, and we Canadians, being closest to this source seem destined to produce an art somewhat different from our Southern fellows - an art more spacious, of a greater living quiet, perhaps of a more certain conviction of eternal values. We were not placed between the Southern teeming men and ample replenishing North for nothing. (Harris, 1926: 86)

The centrality of the Canadian Shield in the work of the Group of Seven is consonant with the exalted position of this small area of Ontario and Quebec within the national symbolic. It is to the Canadian Shield that writers and artists refer when they speak of 'the North,'²⁷ but the contingent nature of this conception of the Canadian north underscores the constructed nature of national identity, and the function of narrative in experiences of nationhood. The centrality of the Canadian Shield, and in particular of Algoma, in the visual vocabulary of the Group of Seven highlights the particular origins and interests of Canada's political and cultural elite. The broad success enjoyed by

²⁷ Cole Harris has characterized Canadian nationalism as an "incantation to the north" with "the north" equated with the Canadian Shield. "The Canadian or Precambrian Shield is as central in Canadian history as it is to Canadian geography, and to all understanding of Canada ... And this alternate penetration of the wilderness and return to civilization is the basic rhythm of Canadian life, and it forms the basic elements of Canadian character" (William Morton, *The Canadian Identity* [1961] cited in Harris, 1966: 28).

the Group of Seven, and the active patronage of the National Gallery, cannot be seen apart from fact that the members of the Group largely painted what Toronto's wealthy art patrons saw outside the windows of their cottages in the Muskokas. This is made abundantly clear in the National Gallery's inclusion in the Canadian Galleries of the murals painted by members of the Group for Dr. James MacCallum's cottage on Georgian Bay (now on permanent display in the Gallery).

The Group of Seven's status as Canada's "national school" is reflected in their prominent location within the permanent display of Canadian art. In the Lorne Building, they were the central pivot of the Canadian Galleries. Emerging from the banks of elevators in the center of the building, the visitor issued directly into the rooms dedicated to the work of Tom Thomson and the Group of Seven. From there, the remainder of the visit took the shape of a warped figure-eight, proceeding towards early Canadian art in one corner of the galleries, then coming back through the Group of Seven rooms to the modernist rooms on the other side.

In the new building, the Group is accorded several large rooms in the northernmost corner of the Canadian Galleries, and is positioned, quite literally, as a turning point in the developmental history of Canadian art. With the European-style landscapes and portraits of the early settler artists and the Academicians behind them, they point towards the flourishing of Canadian art in the abstract works of the

Automatistes and other high modernists with which the Canadian Galleries end. This pivotal position in the development of a specifically Canadian aesthetic, as well as their solidly established status as Canada's first modernists, underscores the Group of Seven's fundamental importance in the display of Canadian art in the National Gallery and its narrative of national identity. Given the consonance of the goals of the Group and the National Gallery - in particular the fostering of a Canadian aesthetic tradition - it is not surprising to see a strong element of cooperation between the Gallery and the Group, especially in later years when some members went on Gallery-sponsored lecture tours of Canada in an effort to bring the narrative of Canadian art to a broad public. As Dennis Reid has commented, "to a large degree the struggles of the Group became the struggles of the Gallery" (1970: 11).

I want to argue that the Group of Seven rooms at the National Gallery are central to an understanding of the narrative of Canadian art history that 'structures' the display in the historical Canadian galleries. My rationale is less an endorsement of the real or imagined aesthetic significance of the Group's artistic production than a recognition of the importance of the Group of Seven myth in the traditional narrative of Canadian art history, a narrative which is reproduced in the Canadian Galleries. The iconic status of the Group's oeuvre in nationalist terms can be found not only in the memorabilia sold in the Gallery's

gift shop, but is one of the principal themes evoked in the Gallery's public articulation of its nation-building mandate.²⁸ Even more relevant is the immense popularity of the Group of Seven rooms among Gallery visitors. Beyond the political and affective place of the Group of Seven within Canadian art history, the aesthetic legacy of the Group of Seven has remained the nodal point around which Canadian artists have historically defined their work - either as a continuation of the goals of the Group (as seen in the work of the Canadian Group of Painters) or as a total rejection of everything the Group stood for. The powerful hold of the Group of Seven on both Canadian art history and the Canadian popular imaginary, however, is due largely to the strong institutional support it received from the National Gallery and the art-collecting Toronto Establishment (as evidenced in the McMichael Collection), and in the Group's ability to harness the aesthetic to national sentiment in an apparently natural manner. As F.B. Housser stated early in his 1926 chronicle of the Group of Seven:

The story is unique in the history of art. It is not, however, so much the story of an art movement as the dawn of a consciousness of a national environment which to-day, is taking a most definite form in the life of the nation. (Housser, 1926: 32)

²⁸ In a brief submitted to the Federal Government's Standing Committee on Communications and Culture in October 1991, Gallery Director Shirley Thomson stated: "These images powerfully evoke Canada. The compelling Joseph Brant, the serene Soeur Saint-Alphonse, the enduring jack pine, the mystic totem pole - these images are familiar and common to all of us." It is interesting to note the way in which "the enduring jack pine" simultaneously stands in for the Canadian landscape, and the paintings of the Group of Seven (Thomson, 1991: 6).

The galleries following the Group of Seven rooms chronicle the development of art in Canada after the break-up of the Group in 1932. Two principal elements determine the axis along which historical Canadian art is exhibited: the first, the stylistic path, traces out the development of modernism in Canadian art as it moves towards abstraction, while the second invokes the question of regional divisions, while highlighting the cultural and economic importance of central Canada. The imperative of aesthetic modernism is first indicated by the placement of the later work of Lawren Harris at the end of the Group of Seven rooms. These barren northern landscapes, spare in shape, cold in colour, flat, are the first suggestion of abstraction in Canadian art. Through the doorway framed by these paintings, a later Harris can be seen: a work in which he has almost fully abandoned figuration, and in the throes of theosophical philosophy, has begun to explore the more spiritual elements of paint and light. While these later Harris canvases prefigure works exhibited in subsequent galleries, the gallery following the last Group of Seven room returns to more traditional figuration in the work of the Canadian Group of Painters. A loosely-knit assemblage of artists from across the country who had taken up the Group of Seven's directive to 'paint Canada,' they produced a number of landscapes and portraits that presented the diversity of Canadian life. However, because the stylistic and ideological aims of the Group of Seven were so intertwined, it was difficult for the artists

that directly followed them to adopt one element without the other.

Following the Canadian Group of Painters, abstraction, or perhaps a more conscious formal modernism, is suggested in a room devoted to the work of the Contemporary Arts Society and of the Surrealism-inspired Alfred Pellan. The Montreal-based Contemporary Arts Society actively sought to bring Canadian art "up to date" on the movements that were shaping the international art world, and which were largely unknown in Canada. The final rooms in the corner of the Canadian Galleries house the work of the Automatistes and the Plasticiens, two groups from Montreal whose work foregrounded the kind of abstraction they saw in the art of Paris and New York. As a result of the social and political climate that defined Quebec in the 40s and 50s, many of the Quebec artistic groups drafted manifestos that countered both the traditionalism of Quebec society - particularly the strong hold of the Church - and the conservatism that dominated art in Canada. Borduas's *Refus Global* (1948), the *Prisme d'yeux* (1948), and the *Plasticien Manifesto* (1955), together with the critical writing and artistic production of the period, constituted an important break with painting in Canada up to that point. Borduas, Riopelle and the Automatistes were particularly interested in making a formal break with the academicism of the Contemporary Arts Society and the Ecole des Beaux Arts. While the abstraction of the Quebec artists marks a move away from the kind of figurative painting of

which the Group of Seven and the Canadian Group of Painters were the best known representatives, the main concern of the Automatistes and the Plasticiens lay in the refusal of the social and political climate in Quebec: a position which had its artistic counterpart in the artists' rejection of figuration. A similar movement underlies the paintings of Toronto's Painters Eleven and the London painters, but as we will see, the impetus behind their adoption of abstraction was the explicit rejection of the aesthetic and social concerns of the Group of Seven.²⁹

While the dominant ordering principle within the Canadian Galleries is a stylistic chronology, the narrative structure of the galleries can also be read in terms of political and geographic parameters. Within the narrative of the development of a Canadian aesthetic, the works on display are mostly those of artists who were living and working in Central Canada. This emphasis is most apparent in the installation of such artists as Emily Carr (from British Columbia) who, despite her ties in Canadian art historical mythology to the Group of Seven, and her membership in the Canadian Group of Painters, has been placed in a small side room, interestingly enough with the work of other women artists.³⁰ Jean-Paul Lemieux, an artist whose work is largely figurative, is similarly placed in a side room dubbed

²⁹ For more in-depth analyses of the work of these artists and movements, see Burnett and Schiff (1983), Leclerc (1993), McKaskell et.al. (1993).

³⁰ An argument could be made that the marginalization of certain artists occurs on the level of gender as well as of geography.

"realist traditions". I want to argue that the principles of inclusion and exclusion that underscore the production of art historical discourse, are inevitably at work in the development of discourse of Canadian art history, and that in these practices, a certain privilege has been granted to artists whose work fits into a grand narrative of artistic progression.

While the content of the Canadian Galleries can to a certain degree be explained by what is available in the Gallery's collection,³¹ the nature of the Gallery's holdings in Canadian art is indicative of the Gallery's collecting practices as a whole, and therefore has great bearing on the nature of the permanent display of Canadian art. As was discussed in the previous chapter documenting the history of the Gallery's collection, the choices made by the curators and the directors over the decades has a tremendous impact on the narrative of Canadian art that is on display. The Gallery's location in Ottawa, and the sizable central Canadian art market accounts for some of the bias apparent in the Gallery's display. While an attempt is made to highlight the regional differences in Canadian artistic production, particularly in the work of the last sixty years, the main narrative thread remains artwork produced in and around Montreal and Toronto.

The final rooms of the Canadian Galleries constitute a second culminating point in the National Gallery's trajectory

³¹ And it must be remembered that a substantial portion of the Gallery's collection is not on permanent display.

of Canadian art: the moment of high modernism, when artists from such disparate groups as the Plasticiens and Painters Eleven explored pure abstraction. Abstraction in this context is constituted as an attempt on the part of Canadian artists to insert themselves within an international art context, a move that is not only formalist in intent, but ultimately entails the rejection of the aesthetic provincialism and chauvinism of the Group of Seven. As such, these final galleries constitute an important counterpoint to the display of the Group in the opposite corner. What marks these final galleries of the Canadian display as important in the narratives of Canadian art history is that here, in the wholehearted embrace of abstraction, these Canadian works can be inserted into a universal aesthetic modernism. This formalist modernism is accompanied, however, in the Canadian situation, by a transcendence of the specificity of nationhood, and a final rejection of the Group of Seven legacy. Like the work of the American Abstract Expressionists which shares some of the same aesthetic preoccupations, the art of the Plasticiens and Painters Eleven (and subsequent abstract artists) marks a significant moment in the move towards high modernism. The rejection of national or provincial discourses in favour of the universal language of aesthetic modernism that transcends cultural and geographical boundaries, points to a significant departure from the fiercely nationalist aesthetic (and ethic) of the Group of Seven. This shift is signaled in the exhibitionary narratives

of the National Gallery as the Canadian Galleries end in the articulation of aesthetic modernism with national autonomy, and the integrated display of the Contemporary Galleries begins.

The 'Problem' of the Contemporary Galleries

While the Canadian galleries have been referred to as the "beating heart" of the National Gallery (Thomson, 1991: 5), the acquisition and exhibition of contemporary art has also held an important place in the Gallery's self-definition. The imperative to show the works of living Canadian artists, and the location of that commitment in the Gallery's founding moment, underscores the principles of acquiring and exhibiting contemporary art, often in the face of public criticism.³² Nevertheless, the invocation of the National Gallery's origins as a "contemporary arts museum" (National Museums of Canada, 1983b: 8) appears throughout Gallery publications - in policy documents as well as exhibition catalogues - often to counter criticism from artists who contend that the Gallery's record of collecting and exhibiting contemporary Canadian art is dismal. The Gallery, however, maintains the stance that contemporary art is necessary to the Gallery's national mandate. In only one

³² A cursory overview of the Gallery's clipping files since the beginning of the century chronicles a leitmotif of public anger and confusion over the 'modern' art acquired by the Gallery. Because of the Gallery's status as a federal cultural institution, these criticisms are often couched in terms of the expenditure of taxpayers' dollars, the ineptitude of public servants (i.e., the Director and the curatorial staff), and the potential disgrace of modern art to the national heritage.

of several such statements, the Gallery's fourth Director, Charles Comfort, wrote in the 1962-63 Annual Report: "the Trustees feel that major works by Canadian artists of the present day should be added to the collection whenever possible, to match the achievements of the past and to set standards for the future" (cited in Boggs, 1971: 56).

The Gallery's collections policy to 1983 stated that the process of selection for the acquisition of contemporary Canadian art consisted in collecting both the works of established artists (or those who had attained a level of artistic and intellectual maturity) and gathering as large a collection of these works as possible in order to "demonstrate their evolution." In addition there is a caveat that the work of newer and more innovative artists should also be acquired to bring in "new points of view." This articulation of the acquisition process is further elaborated in the 1985 policy, where the twofold consideration of artistic practice (older and established and newer and more innovative) is placed within the context of the establishment of an ongoing process of review "whereby the contemporary collection is rounded out in the light of an evolving historical perspective, in order to represent the best of contemporary work" (National Museums of Canada, 1985: unpaginated). Implicit in the acquisition of contemporary works is the process of historicization: of a tacit understanding of their eventual insertion within a broader historical frame.

One of the difficulties inherent in the category of contemporary art is its constantly changing temporal parameters. For the museum, shifting definitions of what is meant by the designations 'modern' and 'contemporary' has its effect on the separation of curatorial domains, and concomitantly on the location of works within the Gallery's displays. While the Gallery defines contemporary art as work produced in the last twenty years, the constitution of that twenty-year period is in an ever-shifting relationship to the remainder of the collection. As has become increasingly apparent in the display of Canadian art, the exhibition of works by those artists who 'slip between the cracks' - in other words, who no longer fit into the twenty-year time frame of the contemporary, but who are not yet part of the 'historical Canadian' collection - is a problem which will have to be addressed by the Gallery's curators in the years to come.³³

(The Lorne Building)

In the Lorne Building, contemporary art was spread out on two floors, and as in the historical collection, a separation was maintained between the work of Canadian artists and non-Canadian, a separation which undoubtedly was due to the division until recently of curatorial responsibility between the areas of contemporary Canadian and contemporary non-Canadian art. In the fifth floor galleries,

³³ Conversation with Diana Nemiroff, September 13, 1995.

a narrative of (largely American) modernism was told, with a particular emphasis on the strong collection of Pop art installations owned by the Gallery. The Canadian art on the fourth floor brought together a changing display of the work of artists from the 1970s and 1980s. From 1983, however, much of the gallery space that was devoted to the exhibition of contemporary art was appropriated for offices and for storage. Particularly as the move to the new building approached, the fifth floor was taken over by storage, leaving only three small galleries around the 'well' for the 1986 exhibition *Songs of Experience*.

In addition to the fourth and fifth floors, however, galleries on the ground floor were used to exhibit work from the permanent collection, and occasionally for temporary exhibitions. One of the advantages of the ground floor galleries was the presence of windows - virtually the only exhibition space to have windows in the entire Gallery - which made possible the 'storefront' exhibition of artwork popular in curatorial practice of the late 1970s and early 1980s. These ground-floor galleries were also used, alone or in combination with the fourth and/or fifth floors, for special theme exhibitions organized by the contemporary art curators, and using objects from the Permanent collection. Some examples of these exhibitions include *Reflections: Contemporary Art at the National Gallery of Canada since 1964* (from 1984) a large retrospective highlighting the collection of Canadian and non-Canadian art from the past twenty years,

and *Installations* (1988), an exhibition of the Gallery's extensive collection of Canadian and international installation art. *Cross Cultural Views* (1986) was another such theme exhibition, which was put together to highlight the recent acquisition of Carl Beam's *The North American Iceberg*, and to bring the work of contemporary Native artists into the mainstream. The paucity of the Gallery's collection of contemporary first nations artwork was overcome by borrowing a substantial number of works from the collection of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs.

These special theme exhibitions are particularly interesting because they fall in between the somewhat inflexible discursive orderings of the permanent collection and the large-scale 'event' of the Temporary Exhibition. In addition, these thematic exhibitions were not accompanied by catalogues - often only a descriptive leaflet was available - further diminishing any claim to permanence. Nevertheless, these exhibitions are an important element in the consideration of the display of the permanent collection of contemporary art because they provide for a flexibility that is not necessarily available in the historicizing imperative of the collection, and they offer the opportunity to examine and evaluate the contents as well as the display of the permanent collection of contemporary art.

While there are certain similarities between the display of contemporary art in the Lorne and Safdie buildings, there is not the coherence and organizational consonance that

exists in the historical Canadian Galleries. I would suggest that the differences in the display of contemporary art in the two buildings might be ascribed to a greater confidence in the position of contemporary Canadian art within the international art community, coincident with the Gallery's move to its new premises.

(The Safdie Building)

The linear trajectory of the permanent collection also undergoes a break in the Safdie building's Contemporary Galleries. This occurs in two different ways: on the ground floor, next to the Canadian Galleries, but only tenuously connected to them (via a small corridor which houses the washrooms between Rooms B107 and A112b), is the display of contemporary sculpture from 1960-1980. To the left, as the viewer enters the Contemporary Galleries, are five galleries devoted primarily to American Pop art installations (including George Segal's *Gas Station* and Claes Oldenburg's *Bedroom Ensemble*) and several galleries of minimalist sculpture. The artists whose work is on display - Warhol, Segal, Oldenburg, Serra, Graves, Judd, LeWitt - constitute some of the more important names on the American contemporary art scene of the 1960s and 1970s. In terms of setting up an art historical frame through which to examine the work of Canadian artists working at the same time, these galleries are perfect. They offer an important grounding in the development of post-Abstract Expressionist modernism, the

latter rooms (Judd, Graves) presenting the internationalism of contemporary art in as visible a way as possible.

As such, these galleries provide an introduction to, and context for, the work contained in the four remaining galleries of Canadian art from the same period. The decision to separate Canadian and non-Canadian art on this floor can be explained as a result of the different exhibition histories of both areas. While Canadian art was becoming increasingly known internationally, there was still not the kind of exchange that would characterise later artistic production. Concomitant with the relative lack of contact between non-Canadian and Canadian artists are the different stylistic concerns of both sets of artists. The minimalist works that are exhibited on the ground floor have no real counterpart in Canada during that time. The separation of work on the ground floor also supports the decision to eschew any kind of linear or chronological display.³⁴ Instead, the strong corpus of largely American art on the left is accompanied by a changing display of Canadian art, that highlights the different regional manifestations of modernism.

On the second floor, all nine galleries are devoted to contemporary art from approximately the past decade, and feature the work of both Canadian and international artists, including video, in an installation that changes semi-annually. There is a greater flexibility of content built

³⁴ Also, there is neither the space nor a collection of non-Canadian works to support an elaborate chronology of contemporary art since 1960.

into this space, and it is here in the upper galleries that the 'theme exhibitions' discussed earlier are usually shown. The works on display in the upper Contemporary Galleries are organized according to particular themes that serve to showcase both works that are already in the Gallery's collection, and works that are on loan or being considered for purchase. The thematic orientation of the display helps to integrate the work of Canadian and non-Canadian artists, a practice which underscores the increasingly international reputation of Canadian artists, and the greater exchange of artistic concerns that characterizes the period after 1975.

The obvious question regarding the installation of the contemporary art galleries is why the changing view of the relationship between Canadian and non-Canadian art? While in the Historical Galleries, a clear distinction is maintained between the development of Canadian art and the development of European and American art (a development which, as I have argued above, attests to the desire on the part of National Gallery curators to establish a distinct and unique Canadian aesthetic that is inextricably linked to the development of a post-colonial national identity), in the Contemporary Galleries the impetus is largely to show the parallel developments of art on an international scale, and the position of Canadian art within that development.

In this organization, the 'arrival' of Canadian art on the international art scene with the advent of high modernism is underscored. Where previous artistic production from

Canada was seen as provincial, as little more than the imitation of European styles, with contemporary art - in particular with installation art - Canadian artists have achieved a level of success comparable to that of major artists in the United States and in Europe. What occurs in the Contemporary Galleries of the new building is an internationalism that is not present in any other area of the Gallery. While this is particularly apparent in the second floor of the Contemporary Galleries, there is still a sense on the lower floor of a differing relationship between the national and the international. Of course, in contemporary art, the nationalisms which had existed up to the late 60s, particularly around Clement Greenberg's characterization of Abstract Expressionism as "American-style painting", and the inheritance of that national characterization in the work of subsequent American artists, were wiped out in favour of the internationalism of high modernism (which was about the materiality of art, and which therefore transcended nations). The international character of contemporary art highlights the tension in any nation-building context between the universal aesthetic that is intrinsic to Greenbergian modernity, and national interpretations of that universal aesthetic.

Thus, what differentiates the National Gallery's history of artistic production from that of other museums is the split that occurs at this moment of high modernism: from a separate history of Canadian art, the Gallery, with the post-

1960s works, shifts its mode of exhibition by integrating the Canadian works with those from other (western) countries. This shift is significant firstly because it underscores the universal values of high modernism that begin to have their effect on the art world in the 1950s and 1960s; secondly because it indicates the increasing recognition of the works of Canadian artists within international art circles; and thirdly, following from the first and second points, it suggests that Canadian artists are finally rejecting the restrictive nationalist impulse put into place as the mission of Canadian artists by the Group of Seven.

The differences in organization between the Historical Galleries and the Contemporary Galleries revolve around their differing relationship to the discourse of art history and their sensitivity to conjunctural forces within the art field. The Canadian Galleries are already imbedded in a particular relationship to art historical discourse in Canada - a point which can be made in reference to all exhibitions of historical art: there is an "always already" existing relationship between historical art and art history which cannot be avoided, only negotiated or conformed to. In the display of contemporary art, the relationship differs in that the strategies of display function in the formation of the works' inscription into a particular history. The question that remains to be asked with regards to contemporary art, then, is "how does the display of contemporary Canadian art at the National Gallery function in the establishment of a

narrative of Canadian art?", and, as will be argued in the following chapter, that function, that inscription of contemporary art within a narrative of Canadian art history, is most visible in the comparison between the permanent collection and temporary exhibitions of Canadian art.

Chapter Four

Temporary Exhibitions: National Identity in Disarray

The analysis of the permanent collection, undertaken in the previous chapter, demonstrated the important differences between the historical solidity of the display of the Canadian collections, and the provisional status of the works included in the Contemporary Galleries. The Contemporary Galleries, particularly in the new Gallery, bring forward issues which further trouble the narratives of aesthetic modernism and of modernity that are laid out in the Canadian Galleries. The analysis of temporary exhibitions will allow me to better focus on the aesthetic mediations at work in the display of art, and their pertinence for an understanding of the discursive articulations of the national and the aesthetic as they are constituted by the display narrative.

This chapter will thus trace the exhibition of Canadian art in the Gallery's temporary exhibitions through the examination of four group exhibitions of contemporary art on display at the Gallery between 1980 and 1992. The four exhibitions - *Pluralities/1980/Pluralités* (1980), *Songs of Experience* (1986), *The Canadian Biennial of Contemporary Art* (1989), and *Land Spirit Power: First Nations at the National Gallery of Canada* (1992) - constitute important displays of contemporary Canadian art at significant moments in the recent history of Canadian and international art. It must be

said from the outset that these are group exhibitions and that my decision to limit my analysis to these forms of exhibition is significant. Underlying the group exhibition is a process of assessment, an implicit evaluation of the state of Canadian art at a particular temporal juncture. As such, these four exhibitions provide an overview of the National Gallery's appraisal of art practices in Canada during the 1980s and early 1990s, and in tandem with the presentation of Canadian art in the permanent collection, they offer an important glimpse into the Gallery's 'promotion' of contemporary Canadian art and its articulation of a national aesthetic discourse.

The questions that are pertinent to the analysis of the display of art in temporary exhibitions differ from those in the permanent collection: while the basic analysis of displays as discursive orderings holds, the temporary exhibition operates on a different level because of the very temporary nature of the form. There is a lessened requirement for permanence in temporary exhibitions, accompanied by a flexibility that is reflected in the provisional nature of the discursive orderings. The temporary exhibition has built within it room for experimentation, for the assaying of combinations and selections whose authority exists only for the duration of an exhibition. The one element that does provide a certain degree of permanence is the exhibition catalogue which reproduces the works that make up the exhibition, and through the essay, makes explicit the process

of selecting the artists included, the themes and the relationships between works that underscore the exhibition.

As will be argued, the temporary nature of the form does not negate the historical importance of temporary exhibitions in the formation of an art historical canon. Rather, it suggests that temporary exhibitions serve an important first step, a conjunctural selection from which the institution culls its core elements. For what the temporary exhibition does - especially the temporary exhibition of contemporary art - is to bring together the work of disparate artists around a particular theme that varies in scope: from the exploration of specific themes (e.g., art about AIDS) to the more general survey (works of art from the past two years). The disparity of potential themes is one of the strengths of the temporary exhibition as it shows the manipulability of the form, and the lengths to which a curator can go in order to explore an idea. Because they occur over a finite period of time, and even when 'repeated' (as in a touring exhibition), the articulations produced by the exhibition shift with changes in the location and layout of the display. While the imperative to "make history" remains present in the temporary exhibition, it evokes less solidity (permanence) than does the pulling together of a permanent display.

The two functions of the museum - the permanent collection and the temporary exhibition - are essential and only in rare cases can one exist without the other.¹ In more

¹ Two exceptions to this generalization would be the self-contained house-museum (for example the Frick Collection) which does not put on

ways than one, they serve as each other's complement: the permanent collection providing a display of the works that the museum or gallery has deemed to have historical and aesthetic importance, while the temporary exhibition enables a selection of work to be viewed and evaluated within the museal setting. The institutional context of the temporary exhibition as discussed here, positions it between the experimental display of an alternative or parallel space and the market-driven atmosphere of the commercial gallery. Particularly in large institutional spaces such as the National Gallery, the temporary exhibition is the space within which new works are 'assayed' for their aesthetic potential: tested out to see if they will have historical and aesthetic value in the long-term.

In addition to the actual contents of the exhibition itself, the catalogue is an integral element of the discursive articulations produced around the exhibition. As we will see in the analysis of the four exhibitions at the National Gallery, the catalogues often provide a different discursive conception of the way in which the works function together than is evident in the display. In addition, the textual bias of the catalogue enables a more in-depth analysis of the material, an explicit grouping of the work that is often missed by the viewer in the exhibition proper. This is not to say, however, that there is not the same attention to the display or layout of works within the

temporary exhibitions, and the Design Museum in Zurich which has no permanent collection, but which still defines itself as a "museum".

temporary exhibition as in the permanent collection. While not the linear chronological display of artists and schools that is characteristic of the Canadian Galleries, or the thematic groupings of the Contemporary Galleries, the placement of works of art within the temporary exhibition spaces of both the Lorne and the Safdie buildings contributes to a specific sense of movement through space. The spatial aspect of the exhibition, the construction of a specific viewing experience, means that the exhibition is about more than a simple grouping of objects, but that the exhibition itself produces a particular discursive ordering of artistic production. The design of the exhibition's display, then, is a crucial element in the understanding of temporary exhibitions. In what follows, the four exhibitions at the National Gallery will be situated through a brief examination of the history of display practices in the context of western art exhibitions, and the increasing attention paid to the mode of display of works of art.

Discussion of modernist display practices must begin with a consideration of the gallery space of the 1960s, and what Brian O'Doherty (1986) has called "the white cube". The familiar white walls of the commercial gallery gained prominence in the 1950s and 60s with the advent of an international high modernist art practice in which the context and location of exhibition was to have no bearing or influence on the reading (appreciation) of the object. The neutrality of the gallery space was a necessity in a period of Greenbergian

formalism in which only the consideration of visual language in and of itself possessed any aesthetic significance. The use of white walls in commercial spaces was soon transplanted to the museum, particularly for contemporary works, as a commercial aesthetic dominated the appraisal of art and large institutions attempted to negate or play down any distinctive spaces.

The rise of new multi-disciplinary or hybrid artforms and media such as installation, performance art and video, brought with it a critique of both traditional art forms and the institutions which housed them. The time-biased nature of such practices, and their lack of object-status, put into question the museum as the repository and container of art, as well as the art market for its commodification of art; both being seen as legitimators of particular practices. In an effort to secure alternative spaces in which to exhibit, many artists, particularly in Canada, distanced themselves from the traditional museum and gallery system, and established artist-run spaces: cooperative galleries which had the interests of the artists at heart rather than commercial profit or artistic legitimacy. These alternative spaces often championed non-traditional forms, in particular performance and installation, as well as video, and in some cases were politically motivated (e.g. the feminist gallery La Centrale/Powerhouse in Montreal). More generally, however, these spaces were centred in specific communities, and tended to exhibit the work of local artists (Nemiroff, 1994). As

will be shown, the presence of community, at the local as well as at the national level, was an important issue in Canada as it struggled to extricate itself from under the shadow of the more powerful artistic centers of Europe and New York.

During the 1980s, amid the reevaluation of the museum by new media and the exploration of alternative exhibition sites, greater consideration was given to the installation of works of art. The effects of this interest in museum installation practices extended beyond contemporary art to investigations into pre-modern modes of display. This can be seen in particular in the recent vogue of rehangings exhibitions according to older, mainly Victorian styles (as, for example, at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, and the National Gallery of Scotland in Edinburgh). In rooms devoted to historical art, coloured wall fabric and cluster hanging became the norm in museums across Europe, and spoke of a greater attention to 'authenticity' in exhibition display. In the exhibition of contemporary art there was also a reevaluation of hanging practices. For example, the moveable partitions and open access storage that characterised the "decentralised and democratised" Musée national d'art moderne in the Centre Pompidou were replaced by solid walls and a permanent display of works illustrating the history of modern art.² By 1985, the flexible gallery

² These changes were documented and discussed in a special issue of the *Cahiers du Musée national d'art moderne* entitled "L'Oeuvre et son accrochage" (no. 17/18, 1986).

space was deemed unworkable in the context of a major art institution, and a return to solid walls and firm supports was in order.

This is not to argue that this return to a more traditional sense of the structure of exhibition space signalled the end of any consideration of the way in which works were exhibited. On the contrary, the changes at the Musée national d'art moderne were well documented and discussed, and occurred in tandem with the exploration of other sites and forms of exhibition both within and outside the museum. Consideration of these issues took center-stage during the 1980s in the context of some of the major art 'fairs' and exhibitions in Europe such as *Documenta* (held every five years in Kassel, Germany) and the Venice Biennale. In these influential international exhibitions of contemporary art, the curatorial process - the selection of artists and the installation of their work - aroused as much debate as the art itself.

Within these debates the main set of issues revolved around the constitution of the work of the curator. While many of these debates around the role of the curator in the display rhetoric of temporary exhibitions parallel those concerning the curator of permanent collections, the implications are different. Within the context of contemporary art, the curator's role in the permanent display of the museum involves the question of historicism (historical positioning). In temporary exhibitions, for many

artists and critics, the curator's role is inevitably concerned with the discursive implications of inclusion and exclusion, but what remains contentious is what the curator does with the work once the selection process has been completed. What many artists deemed improper in some of these major art fairs was the expansion of the curator's role from coordinator to artist, and the transformation of the exhibition itself into a work of art.

Nevertheless, this active curatorial perspective has had an important effect on the understanding of curatorial practice, and has paved the way for an interest in the examination of the nature of exhibitions as more than a disinterested gathering of works of art. In this focus on the discursive dimension of the exhibition, the mediating role of the curator takes center stage, and with it a consideration of what Evelyn Beer and Riet de Leeuw have called "the art of exhibiting" (Beer and de Leeuw, 1989) emphasizing the mediating role of the exhibition (and its curator) in the constitution of the artwork:

when an object is displayed in an exhibition it is removed from its original isolation or organic network, integrated in a larger system and made to function in an autonomous model of relationships. The consequence is that exhibiting an object is tantamount to legitimizing it as a work of art; the work thus lacks a fixed identity, but acquires one from being exhibited. (1989: 6)

As Bal's discussion of linguistic models of exhibition further suggests, the principles of the display, once understood, provide an important insight into the relationship between artist and curator, but more importantly

between art object and viewer. This attention to the display as a situated exchange on multiple levels, enabled a reconception of the 'purpose' of the exhibition that extended beyond the simple or neutral display of the work of art, to a treatment of the exhibition as a discourse which produces meaning in and around the object. The awareness of curating as an active process, inherent in a discursive conception of the exhibition, is also invoked in Canadian critic Philip Monk's description of curating as a "writing with objects"³ (Monk, 1988: 17).

Ultimately, however, one of the most important elements in the analysis of the exhibition as discourse is the changing nature of artistic practice itself, and the influence of new art forms and media on the art object's relationship to institutional display. The advent of installation and performance art in the 1970s and 1980s and its rebellion against the frame of the institution made for important questionings of the role of the museum, and the installation of works of art. Such practices involved a reconsideration of the relationship of the work of art and the viewer, arguing for a more active or participatory viewing experience. Part of this exploration of the gaze involved a reconsideration of the roles of institutions in

³ The passage in its entirety reads as follows: "If curating, however, could be seen as a type of writing, a writing with objects, then one has the concrete means to demonstrate that history which is lacking. But it is not simply a matter of the presentation of objects. What became an interrogation in my writing, complementary to the history, can be seen in curating to be this: the practice of the (re)constitution of the event" (Monk, 1988: 17-18).

the exhibition of art objects, and a challenging of the primacy of the visual in the apprehension of art. A natural outcome of this process was a questioning of the centrality of the art institution in its myriad forms (museum, commercial gallery, art market), but the museum as a legitimating force in the production of 'Art' remained the focus of critique. Although a similar questioning of the power of official art institutions had already been initiated by such diverse modernists as Gustave Courbet and Marcel Duchamp, it was in the 1960s that avant-garde artists explored the subject on a consistent basis, producing work that critiqued the museum and the 'art system' in general, and attempted to subvert its centrality in the artworld.⁴ These works include critiques of the ascription of status to individual art objects in such works as Piero Manzoni's *Merda d'Artista* (1961) a limited run of sealed cans of the artist's excrement which were signed and numbered, to such critiques of the museal enterprise by Claes Oldenburg in his *Mouse Museum* (1972) which placed everyday objects in a constructed room shaped like Mickey Mouse's head. Marcel Broodthaers provided the most systematic critique of the museum in his *Musée d'art moderne, Département des aigles* (1968-1975) which consisted of a series of fictional museums (or museum fictions) in which the traditional classification systems which underscored the selection and organization of objects

⁴ Of course, this subversion was not entirely successful as the works were eventually recuperated by the institution, thereby losing their oppositional character.

were exchanged in favour of a whole new set of orderings (Bronson and Gale, 1983).

In the consideration of temporary exhibitions at the National Gallery, this exhibitionary and aesthetic history remains central to the analysis of the temporal and discursive conjunctures of the display. Each of these exhibitions addresses differently the tensions between international discourses on the aesthetic and local or 'national' artistic practices, the articulation of national identity at the level of geography, language and ethnicity, elements which, in the context of a broader, 'postmodern' cultural discourse, are articulated to the cross-cultural politics of feminism and to an increasing degree, Native rights. While all four exhibitions approach this constellation of issues differently, as a whole they provide an important counterpart to the discursive orderings proposed in the Permanent collection.

Pluralities

The exhibition *Pluralities/1980/Pluralités*⁵ marked the National Gallery's centenary, and in tandem with the exhibition *To Found a National Gallery: The Royal Canadian Academy of Art 1880-1913* held earlier in the year, was promoted as an indication of the Gallery's commitment to exhibit the work of living Canadian artists, a commitment

⁵ The exhibition was on display at the Lorne Building between 5 July and 7 September, 1980. Although there was early on the possibility that it would be sent to galleries in Louisiana, London, and Berlin, it did not tour.

which dated from the founding of the Gallery in 1880.⁶ Several internal structural changes, however, underscored the problems that plagued the National Gallery's efforts to produce important exhibitions of contemporary Canadian art. The main obstacle facing the centennial exhibitions was the resignation in the previous year of important personnel in the historical Canadian and Contemporary curatorial departments. Leaving the National Gallery were Dennis Reid, Curator of Post-Confederation Canadian Art (to the AGO), Curator of Contemporary Art Pierre Théberge (for the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts), Assistant Curator of Contemporary Canadian Art Mayo Graham, and Bruce Ferguson, who had been hired on a contract basis in the contemporary Canadian art department and who was organizing the Canadian submission to the Venice Biennale. The major contemporary exhibition planned for the centenary was to have been an international exhibition and critical symposium, involving artists, critics and curators from Canada, the United States and France, organized by Théberge. With his departure, responsibility for the exhibition was to fall on the shoulders of Bruce Ferguson, who declined, leaving the half-complete centennial exhibition without an organizer.

Unable to put together an exhibition of such international and critical scope, the Gallery hired Jessica Bradley to coordinate a centenary exhibition of contemporary Canadian art to be curated by four guest curators from across

⁶ See Chapter Two for a discussion of the National Gallery's historical relations with living Canadian artists.

Canada. The four curators - Philip Fry, Professor of Visual Arts at the University of Ottawa, Willard Holmes, a freelance writer and curator, and former curator from British Columbia,⁷ Allan Mackay, Director of Saskatoon's Mendel Art Gallery, and Chantal Pontbriand, Editor of the Montreal-based contemporary arts magazine *Parachute* - were each asked to select five artists for the exhibition. Surprisingly, there were no overlaps in the four curators' selections, and a certain formal coherence was present among the artists, most of whom were working in installation or sculpture. Nevertheless, the selected artists were not made to fit into a pre-ordained or coherent order in the exhibition itself or in the catalogue. A recourse to the motif of 'pluralities', the refusal of "the relevance of categories" cited by Bradley in the catalogue's introductory essay (1980: 10), links the disparate work of the nineteen artists. The selection of artists is thus framed largely as the result of personal choice or taste among the guest curators, rather than as the dictates of an institutional imperative, either aesthetic or nationalistic. As Jessica Bradley states in the Introduction to the exhibition's catalogue:

From the beginning, we agreed that a quota system, based on medium, style, gender and/or regional representation, would neither restrict nor motivate the method of selection. In many respects, the only guiding principles were those of a practical nature: for example, deciding upon the maximum number of artists whose work could be shown in reasonable depth and also our mutual belief that

⁷ Following *Pluralities*, Willard Holmes joined the National Gallery staff in 1980 as Assistant Curator of Contemporary Art. From 1982 to 1985, he was Chief of Exhibitions at the Gallery.

the work should be recent rather than retrospective. The resultant exhibition is pluralistic in many senses, among which are the evident breadth of approaches to making art, as well as the four distinct points of view, manifested through an individual treatment of each artist, rather than a single thematic or theoretical model. (Bradley: 1980: 10)

Bradley's discussion of the issue of the regional diversity of the artists in the exhibition, like the rest of the common characteristics of the works in *Pluralities*, is read less as a product of the National Gallery's nation-building mandate, than as an inherent characteristic of Canada and therefore of Canadian art. And in the context of the exhibition, the attention to regional representation is framed as a fortuitous occurrence, rather than as a politically correct, bureaucratic necessity. I will return to the question of regionalism and representative (representational) diversity in the discussion of other exhibitions at the National Gallery, but an overview of the choices made by each curator constitutes an important reading of the curatorial process in terms of selection, and especially in terms of regional concerns. Of the four curators, only Chantal Pontbriand neglected to pay attention to regional diversity in her selections: of her five artists - Pierre Boogaerts, General Idea, Betty Goodwin, Roland Poulin and Rober Racine - only General Idea are not from Montreal. The remaining curators' choices included artists from central Canada as well as from the East and West Coasts and the Prairies. This kind of representational analysis, however, is less important in this particular exhibition than

is the attention to the similarities which link the choices made by the individual curators. Virtually all the works included for the exhibition are installation or sculptural works, with the exception of the photographic work of Iain Baxter, Jeff Wall and Pierre Boogaerts. The size of the works produced by all three, and the importance of their installation, however, makes it possible to include them within the increasingly broader parameters of installation art. The absence of video and "traditional" painting,⁸ noted by critics of the exhibition, was defended by Bradley in the first instance as the result of the sole inclusion of video in the Canadian submission to the Venice Biennale. The lack of painting meanwhile was explained in the catalogue as "a comment on the strength of painting today rather than a confirmation of the recurrent declarations of the doom regarding its future" (ibid.: 10).

Nevertheless, the attention paid to installation was not surprising given the iconic status of installation work in Canadian contemporary art. And in an exhibition marking the Gallery's centenary, the preponderance of installation helped the Gallery to position itself on the cutting edge and to establish its centrality in Canadian art. The legitimation of the National Gallery's position in exhibiting contemporary Canadian art was especially important in 1980, one year after a damning report from the Ottawa branch of Canadian Artists'

⁸ While David Thauberger produced works on canvas for this exhibition, his lurid paintings of sunsets and kitschy 'nationalist' subjects do not have the monumental quality that is seen to characterize 'traditional painting'.

Representation documented the National Gallery's poor record of exhibiting contemporary Canadian art, and criticized its lack of awareness of the currents of Canadian art across the country.⁹

The motif of pluralism and of anti-categories which characterises *Pluralities* must also inevitably be seen within the context of the emerging aesthetic discourse of postmodernism. While not as explicitly stated as in the catalogues for the exhibitions *Songs of Experience* and the *Canadian Biennial of Contemporary Art*, the curators' recourse to pluralistic art practices, to site-specificity, and to what Bradley described as the temporary suspension of the rules of art, indicate an alignment with such central postmodern issues as the refusal of modernist meta-narratives, an engagement with the site, an awareness of vernacular vocabularies, and the questioning of traditional historical and aesthetic narratives.¹⁰ Bradley's engagement with postmodernism becomes particularly evident in her brief discussion of Canadian art as an art of the margins, one that refuses the imperative of the established art centres of Europe or New York, opting instead to focus on the local, on 'community':

A ... gap may be seen to exist between the contemporary artist who works within an urban art

⁹ The initial CARFAC Report of 1979 written by Jennifer Dickson was followed in 1983 by a more in-depth report (written by Sarah Yates and researched by Dickson), which amplified the initial findings through interviews with artists and museum and gallery personnel from across the country.

¹⁰ An overview of these issues can be found in the essays collected in Foster (1983) and in Connor (1987).

community, or an international art centre, and those who make their art elsewhere. We are presently witnessing the conscious choice of many artists to affirm their origins, either through direct allegiance to their community or country, or indirectly through work which quietly rejects the art gospel of one or two centres. (1980: 14)

One of the more interesting aspects of *Pluralities* is the choice of four curators from outside the institution to organize this centennial exhibition. The pluralism of the exhibition's organization is thus not limited to the nature of artworks selected, but extends to the curators as well and the specificity of their choices. One example of what one reviewer called the eclecticism of the works gathered can be seen in the artists chosen by Philip Fry. Regionally and stylistically diverse, Fry's artists seem only to share an almost obsessive attention to detail: Stephen Cruise's installations of miniature landscapes and interiors, Joe Fafard's folksy ceramic sculptures of locals, Natives, and livestock; David Thauberger's large, kitschy landscape paintings, featuring such national symbols as a Mountie on horseback; and Alex Wyse's whimsical fantasy machines, replete with miniature figures.

Reconstituting the exhibition in terms of specific choices made by each curator is not possible through a reading of the exhibition's discursive orderings, because the works chosen by each curator were not displayed as a group. More pertinent to the project of this dissertation, however, is the discussion of *Pluralities'* exhibition of Canadian art at the National Gallery of Canada, at a time of structural

uncertainty, and the insertion of outside curatorial voices during an important centennial exhibition. These conjunctures are made most evident in the catalogue. While the four curators chose the works, and wrote essays on each of 'their' artists, there was not the space for them to write a more general essay discussing these choices. The larger curatorial essay was left to Bradley who described the broader process of selection effected by the curators, and the advantages and difficulties of this multiple curatorial voice. Because the curators themselves do not provide an account of their process, the nature of the choices made, and any possibility that these individual curators might comment on the work of their colleagues, is obscured by overarching institutional containment effected by Bradley's essay, and her refusal to engage with the diverse nature of the artists selected by each curator. This particular diversity or 'pluralism' which is key to understanding the curatorial process of this exhibition is ignored in favour of a focus on the individual treatment of each artist. Homologous with its conditions of curatorial formation, the exhibition is organized outside of any predetermined or unified sense of a national flow.

What marks the works in *Pluralities* is their engagement with the site. The choice of rooms was largely left up to the artists, most of whom took advantage of the possibilities offered in creating work specifically for the exhibition. One example of the engagement with the gallery spaces of the Lorne building is Mowry Baden's *Ottawa Room*, a sharply

sloping ramp which rose up the interior space of 'the well', the two-story space that spans both the fourth and fifth floors. Visitors were invited to walk up the ramp in order to experience their changing relationship to the museum's space. In a different interpretation of site specificity, Don Proch took the details of his room at the National Gallery to a field near his home in Manitoba where he recreated the outlines of the gallery, including lights, an air vent, and hired a 'museum type' security guard for a photo shoot to record the event. Proch then made a cast of the field in epoxy resin and sisal. At the National Gallery, Proch placed the reconstructed field in the gallery whose dimensions had been carefully reproduced in Manitoba, and accompanied the whole by photographs of the 'real' field *in situ* in Manitoba; effectively bringing the National Gallery to Manitoba and Manitoba to the National Gallery.

Continuing her transformation of interior spaces in such works as the *Mentana Street Project*, Betty Goodwin's *Passage in a Red Field* made use of a utility room on the fourth floor of the Gallery, to bring daylight into the gallery, bathing a long constructed passageway in a soft glow that reflected the red pigment that coated the walls. Jeff Wall placed four photographs from the *Young Workers* series, shots of the heads of ordinary men and women in heroic poses, above the elevators in the lobby of the Gallery, emphasizing the office-building character of the space. The most complete use of the National Gallery as site, however, was by General

Idea, who transformed the entire Gallery into *The 1984 Miss General Idea Pavilion*, placing information kiosks in the lobby, and in the eighth floor cafeteria, informing visitors who picked up the handset of the activities taking place throughout the Gallery/Pavilion. They also designated Claes Oldenberg's 1963 *Bedroom Ensemble* on permanent display on the Gallery's fifth floor, as Miss General Idea's private suite.

The integration of *Pluralities* within the entire Gallery space is one of the more interesting aspects of the exhibition, and ties in with artists' continuing engagement with the museum in their work. The prominence of installation work in an exhibition such as this points to a critical engagement with the institution, and a reevaluation of the preponderance of the visual in traditional artistic practices. Attention to the institutional space is even more apparent in *Pluralities* as the exhibition spilled over from the temporary exhibition galleries on the fourth floor, and artists were given almost full run of the entire Gallery. The exception is the Gallery's reaction to Garry Neill Kennedy's initial proposal which involved rearranging all the European landscape paintings on the second floor so that their horizons were positioned at his eye level. That proposal having been summarily rejected by the curator of European art, Kennedy claimed any and all space that had not been already been selected by other artists for the exhibition, and left photocopied artist's statements that chronicled the terms of his proposal and its outcome. The reaction to

Kennedy's proposal, however, should be seen less as an unwillingness on the Gallery's part to accommodate the vagaries of contemporary art, than as a sign of the particular inflexibility of the curator of European art.

The disposition of the works in *Pluralities* throughout the Gallery nevertheless suggests a different interrelation between temporary exhibition and permanent display from what these terms themselves might suggest. The 'takeover' of the entire fourth floor for the exhibition was consistent with earlier patterns at the Gallery, due to the limited amount of temporary exhibition space available. *Pluralities*, however, was different in that it also used other spaces throughout the gallery. With the integration of the temporary and largely site-specific works throughout the Gallery, the works in *Pluralities* provide the possibility for reinterpretation of the works that are already on view in the permanent collection: anywhere from General Idea's ironic appropriation of Oldenberg's bedroom for their fictive beauty Queen, to Iain Baxter's exploration of photography's possibilities on the Gallery's sixth floor.

Critical reaction to the show was mixed, most critics berating the show for lacking a strong coherent standpoint on contemporary Canadian art. Equally problematic for many critics was the presence of four curatorial voices or viewpoints that were neither cohesive, nor distinguished one from the other either in the exhibition itself or in the catalogue. This latter comment regarding the absence of

curatorial specificity is taken up by Philip Monk in his reviews of the exhibition for both *Maclean's* and *Parachute* where he outlines the contrasts in the curatorial choices of Philip Fry, characterized as the polemic pitting of humble regionalism against the gallery's internationalism, and Chantal Pontbriand's more intelligent (read intellectual) selections. For Monk, these potentially productive and critical contrasts are lost in the neutrality of the National Gallery's exhibition spaces, reducing the exhibition to nothing more than an eclectic collection of artworks. Such criticism points to the contested nature of the terrain of contemporary Canadian art; as John Bentley Mays stated in a review of the exhibition: "True, *Pluralities* won't teach anybody what contemporary art is all about. That's because nobody knows" (Mays, 1980). However, while the artists selected were subject to criticism from a number of sources, the critical consensus was that the root of *Pluralities*'s failure lay in the absence of a strong, single, curatorial voice because of the, albeit necessary, presence of four curators whose individual voices overtook the entire exhibition.

Such critiques, however, seemed to be directed less to the inherent problems of the exhibition itself, than to the Gallery as a whole, and more specifically acted as a challenge to its qualifications as a centre for the exhibition of contemporary Canadian art. In this vein, Jacqueline Fry has suggested that much of the criticism

directed towards *Pluralities* could be ascribed to dismay on the part of critics who felt that their curatorial models hadn't been followed.¹¹ However, the critiques of *Pluralities*'s lack of direction should be seen largely in terms of the general instability in the Gallery's structure, and the nature of the changes on an aesthetic and institutional level within art formations across Canada.

Songs of Experience

Opening six years after *Pluralities*, *Songs of Experience*¹² was the last temporary exhibition on display at the Lorne Building before the Gallery moved to its new premises on Nepean Point. Curated by Jessica Bradley and Diana Nemiroff, both at that time assistant curators of contemporary art,¹³ *Songs of Experience* moved away from the site-specific installations of the earlier exhibition, and consisted largely of paintings. The fifteen artists - ten women and five men - were selected after travel to urban

¹¹ "It is no accident that the *Pluralities* exhibition provides numerous examples of work concerned with the museum. It is also certainly no coincidence that the exhibition was generally condemned by critics who were not amused by the fact that it did not reflect their own models. One Toronto critic [Philip Monk] even reproached the curators for their lack of direction. . . . Misadventures of this sort crop up in the brief history of contemporary art." (Fry, 1994: 140)

¹² *Songs of Experience* was on display at the National Gallery from 2 May to 1 September, 1986.

¹³ Jessica Bradley was appointed Assistant Curator of Contemporary Art in 1980 along with Willard Holmes who remained in the position until 1982. Diana Nemiroff joined the Gallery on a full time basis in 1984. Bradley's and Nemiroff's title of 'assistant curator' is something of a misnomer since there was no main Curator of Contemporary Art at the Gallery until 1990, when Nemiroff - who had been Acting Curator since 1988 - was appointed to the post. Jessica Bradley left the Gallery in 1987 to pursue other work; she was appointed Curator of Contemporary art at the Art Gallery of Ontario in 1995.

centers across Canada led the two curators to their choice of the final fifteen. The size of the show was an important consideration for the curators, as they sought to carve out a middle ground between "a huge survey in which cohesion and understanding are sacrificed in favour of the excitement generated by the event, and the critical focus of a small show that takes a single issue and plumbs its depths" (Bradley and Nemiroff, 1986: 11).

The focus of *Songs of Experience* was the reconsideration of representation that was taking place internationally, in its particular Canadian manifestation. While the particulars of the question of representation will be addressed below, the choice of representation is an interesting one since it entails the resurrection of painting, a medium that was virtually absent from the earlier *Pluralities*. The 'reappearance' of painting in the mid-1980s was accomplished with the maintenance of many of the critical or oppositional stances of work produced in the preceding decades. As the curators state in their catalogue essay, concomitant with the reevaluation of painting is the exploration of both experience and politics in the work of the artists selected.

To a large extent, such awareness [that the artist is implicated in what they depict] is shared by all the artists we have selected. ... Romantic affirmations of the artist's exemption from the constraints of bourgeois society and the attendant liberty of the spirit this implies may prevail in the popular imagination but have been subjected to too much doubt to remain credible to the thoughtful. Those who have reflected upon their position are aware of the relatively limited scope and effect of their image-making within a culture of mass-produced images. Still the idea of taking

refuge in art for art's sake (as many moderns thought necessary to protect culture from the "ideological confusion and violence of society") seems a hollow one, hardly immune from absorption by the marketplace. Instead, the critical spirit that transformed art's definition of language specific to itself is here turned outward upon the world, in order to begin to come to terms with the vernacular that is responsible for shaping contemporary consciousness. (ibid.: 46-48)

Mediated through the outbreak of theoretical discourses during the 1970s and early 1980s (Marxism, semiotics, psychoanalysis, feminism) the twin concepts of experience and politics serve as an important departure point for a consideration of the works selected for display.

The exhibition began with Renee van Halm's painted construction *Facing Extinction* that explored the imbrication of display and power through an interpretation of the 1936 Olympic stadium in Berlin. Similar examinations of articulations of social control and populations appear in the work of both Jamelie Hassan and Robert Wiens. Hassan's travels have taken her around the world from Lebanon and India to Latin America and Europe. She uses this experience in two works, one video and photographic installation piece entitled *Meeting Nasser* which blurs the distinctions between photographs of a real child meeting the Egyptian President, and a videotape of an identically dressed young girl being coached by an off-camera voice in the words and actions she is required to speak. The imbrication of politics and experience in Robert Wiens's work, on the other hand, integrates his personal experience as a carpenter and as a

participant in social actions in the collusion of hand-carved tables and photographs of demonstrations.

The idea of personal experience and its relation to the political is a well-known central tenet of feminist theory and practice of the past two decades. In postmodern theory, this relationship is reappraised and repeated in a broader, and often gender-unspecific, emphasis on the local and on the individual. This is not to argue, however, that feminism has lost its critical voice in the production of artworks. In *Songs of Experience*, the preponderance of women artists has produced a corpus of work which foregrounds the issues of subjectivity, experience and politics, particularly as they written across the female body. Jana Sterbak's *I Want to Make you Feel the Way I Do* consists of a metal dress surrounded with electrified wire, accompanied by wall text which addresses to the viewer a narrative exploring individual relationships, questions of inside and outside surfaces (particularly the skin), and of identity. Also preoccupied with questions of the female body and its position within masculinist society are Sorel Cohen whose photographic series *An Extended and Continuous Metaphor* explicitly confuses the traditionally gendered positions of (female) model/muse, (male) artist and (male) spectator by using the same model - herself - to occupy all positions, and Joanne Tod who reappropriates traditional easel painting in such works as *Self Portrait as a Prostitute* to comment on relations of power and social expectations along the lines of gender and

age. Mary Scott and Nancy Johnson, in different ways, also take up the question of representation and female subjectivities through the imbrication of the visual and the textual in the two-dimensional works. Johnson's gouache on paper drawings entitled *Appropriateness and the Proper Fit*, function as a series and individually to create small (self-contained) narratives that, through the doubled use of image and text, conveys the collocation of the individual and universal female experience. Scott, meanwhile, foregrounds the importance of language in representation, by the multiple layering of quotations from theoretical and artistic texts over expressionist paintings of human figures. Meaning thus lies not simply in the visual or the textual, but in the interrelation of the two.

Other painters in the exhibition include Andy Patton, Carol Wainio and Wanda Koop, who all explore questions of individual identity and the alienation of the modern world. Wanda Koop's series of four paintings entitled *Reactor Suite* was displayed in the gallery on the fifth floor directly above the well, her large seascapes inhabited by two solitary figures dwarfed by the physical and symbolic presence of nuclear silos providing an interesting counterpoint to Van Halm's narratives of a different kind of annihilation in the well on the fourth floor.

The remaining works in *Songs of Experience* variously explore the issue of memory and of the past, and with the exception of Stan Denniston's photographic reconstruction of

the interconnectedness of memories in *Dealy Plaza: Recognition and Mnemonic*, are all installations. Dave Tomas built a site-specific interior that, through the use of mirrors and textual fragments, recounted and interpreted the history of photography and of photographic history. Stan Douglas' installation *Onomatopeia* juxtaposed a player piano with slide-dissolve images of automatic looms in a wool mill, while a fragment of Beethoven's 32nd Piano Sonata was played. Douglas's work raises the question of the effects of technology at different points in the industrialization of the western world through the juxtaposition of two radically different instances of automatization. Finally, Joey Morgan's installation *Souvenir: A Recollection in Several Forms* that contrasted three disparate elements - a video narrative of memories associated with her mother's perfume bottle, a series of open doors, and finally, the broken remnants of a piano's soundboard in an isolated room, in which music is being played.

The decision to put together a medium-sized show in order to develop a thorough consideration of issues of importance in Canadian art in the early 1980s, however, seems countered by the apparent reluctance of the curators to articulate a specific theme in the catalogue or in the exhibition. The one element providing some form of coherence among the work was the re-consideration of representation as an aesthetic device, which was read as much across the installations as in the many painted works. However, in their

account of the process of selecting artists and works, the curators argue that while they were interested in the way in which the current international reappraisal of representation was taking shape in Canadian art, the exhibition was not specifically 'about' representation:

While the re-evaluation of representation appears to us to be an issue of central importance at the present moment, we have not attempted to put together an exhibition *about* representation. Our choices were not dictated by the desire to illustrate a thesis; at times we were in fact guided in our selection by an intuitive sense of the rightness of a particular expression. Moreover, a didactic consideration of representation is foreign to the work of many of these artists. Having made our selection, we began to recognize that the work of these fifteen artists affirmed the coexistence of several major themes within the current reassessment of representation. (ibid.: 19)

While the difference between an exhibition that is 'about' representation and one motivated by a reevaluation of representation might seem rhetorical, the curators' efforts to establish the distinction suggests an unwillingness to fix the exhibition's parameters.

In its refusal of fixity, the show is symptomatic of a certain kind of postmodernism, particularly the centering of postmodern theory on artistic practice that occurred in the early 1980s. The issues that were central to this early postmodernist discourse - the influence of theoretical paradigms from other disciplines on artistic production, the incorporation of sound and text in works of art to highlight the interpretive process of viewing art, an emphasis on the activity of viewing as central to the work of art, and broader concepts such as hybridity and fragmentation - are

all deployed by the curators to frame the artists and artworks selected for the exhibition. The type of work included in *Songs of Experience* differs from that found in the earlier exhibition, as the installation work that characterized art production in 1980 was replaced by a concern with the reemergence of painting in 1986. The selection of painting-oriented work to begin (Van Halm) and end (Koop) the exhibition makes sense in this context. Also, while *Pluralities* was largely about installation and an engagement with the site-specificity of objects built purposefully for exhibition at the Gallery, the installations contained in *Songs of Experience* were works that had already been on display in other places and therefore were not about the reexamination of the specific site - in this case, the National Gallery - as much as they considered the integration of the physical viewer in the 'reading' of the work. Reiterated from the earlier exhibition, however, was the framing of installation art's hybridity as both characteristic of postmodernity, and as the artform that is most identifiably "Canadian" within contemporary art.

Another facet of the exhibition highlighted by the curators in their catalogue essay was the consideration of the political dimensions of experience evinced by many of the artists. In this they built upon what they frame as another postmodern discourse, a feminism that relies less on essential or biological characteristics, but which, in its focus on the discursive inscription of bodies and

subjectivities, parallels the political dimensions of everyday experience. While not a specifically feminist show, the presence of women in the exhibition was undeniable: a total of ten out of the fifteen artists. In the context of the re-evaluation of representation, the visible presence of women artists is not surprising since the question of representation (in terms of both statistics and visual/textual images of women) had already been a high priority among feminist theorists for the past fifteen years. Works by artists as diverse as Nancy Johnson, Jamelie Hassan and Jana Sterbak highlight the interest in bodies and the cultural framing of women's bodies in mass media, as well as high art, images.

In the catalogue, the curators provide a variety of approaches to the work selected for the exhibition. In addition to an alphabetically organized presentation of analyses or interviews for each artist, the curators have written a lengthy two-part catalogue essay. The first part provides an analysis of the curatorial process leading to the selection of artists, as well as a framing of the issue of representation within the broader frame of art practices internationally. The second part of the essay specifically addresses the artists' work, providing a reading of combinations and comparisons that amplifies the first section's elaboration of larger aesthetic issues. In this case, and in marked contrast to the catalogue for *Pluralities*, the curatorial essay supplies an additional set

of critical mediations to the work and to the exhibition as a whole.

However, in the analysis of articulations of national identity, the interest of *Songs of Experience* rests in the widespread criticism the exhibition generated in the critical and popular press. Even before it opened, Francophone journalists in Quebec were accusing the National Gallery of bias towards Anglophone artists because of the lack of Francophone artists from Quebec in the exhibition. The criticism, particularly from Jocelyne Lepage in the pages of *La Presse*, extended beyond *Songs of Experience* to an indictment of federal cultural agencies generally, for favouratism towards Anglophone artists in the awarding of funding and exhibitions (1986a). In a particularly bloody interview upon the opening of the exhibition (1986b), Lepage grilled Nemiroff on the absence of (Francophone) Quebec artists in *Songs of Experience* at a time when artistic activity in Quebec was at a peak.¹⁴ Nemiroff's defense of the artists selected relied on the stated aims of the exhibition and the lack of 'fit' between the works chosen and the issues preoccupying Québécois artists; in particular, she suggested that the questioning of representation that underlay the exhibition hadn't occurred in Quebec yet. Originally from Montreal herself, Nemiroff's obvious impatience with the linguistic parameters of Québécois nationalist discourse

¹⁴ Perhaps best seen in such exhibitions as *Aurora Borealis* at the Centre international d'art contemporain in 1985, and the work of those artists selected by Chantal Pontbriand for the later exhibition *The Historical Ruse/La Ruse Historique* at Toronto's Power Plant in 1988.

marred her attempts to fend off Lepage's attacks, and undoubtedly only served to undermine any rationale she may have claimed for her selections.

For most critics, the irony (or the inexcusability, depending on the critic's perspective) of the language issue was the very centrality of language to the work in the exhibition; for as part of the examination of representation that preoccupied the exhibition, many of the pieces integrated words, statements, and quotations within the very fabric of the work. What underscored for many the pertinence of the "Francophone" critique, lay in the use by several artists of English translations of French texts as integral elements of the work. In the eyes of the critics, this constituted a linguistic and cultural appropriation which only served to accentuate the marginalized position of Francophones in Canada.

The extremely negative reaction of the Francophone art milieu is quite understandable in the face of an exhibition about or relying on language - especially when this is what specifically characterizes the exhibition - when it is excluded. How can one affirm that language and writing are the cornerstones of culture, of its authority if not its existence, and at the same time refuse Francophone works the opportunity of being seen read or heard? The height of irony: how can one put forward the feminist cause, on the pretense that women are marginalized, and in the same breath ignore one-third of the Canadian population? The situation becomes even more pronounced when language and politics are used to justify part of the selection and, at the same time, to eliminate Francophone works. (Tourangeau, 1986/87: 18)

While language¹⁵ remained the central point of contention of *Songs of Experience*, criticism of the show also revolved around broader criteria in the selection process. As is always the case in group exhibitions, the questions of inclusions and exclusions always figure prominently in reviews as writers attempt to decipher curatorial choices, and present lists of artists that they felt were unjustly ignored. Such was certainly the case with *Songs of Experience*. The series of inclusions and exclusions, bolstered by the absence of both Francophone artists from Quebec, and art from the Atlantic provinces, were accompanied by accusations that the curators were too closely tied to the featured artists of the Toronto art scene. As William Wood argued in his review:

such is the queer way around which things happen in this show, that the question of experience is a matter of *Curriculum Vitae* and bibliography and not a quality of some type of knowledge gained. The curators made the mistake of believing the press given this art, believing that a "critical voice" stood in for the intentions and meanings produced by the works in context. (1986: 79-80)

Ironically in an exhibition that was (not) about representation, the issue of representativity became a central concern in the evaluation of the exhibition, a

¹⁵ In view of the centrality of language in the criticism of *Songs of Experience*, it is interesting to note that only two years before, after much debate, Parliament officially passed a bill (C-58) changing the French name of the National Gallery from "Galerie nationale du Canada" to "Musée des beaux-arts du Canada". The reason for the change centred on the differences in meaning between 'galerie' and 'musée'. In French, the word 'galerie' reflects the National Gallery's relation with living artists, and in particular with the Royal Canadian Academy. The term 'musée', on the other hand, is more in line with the Gallery's current mandate to both preserve the work of the past, and to encourage the artists of the present.

concern that finds itself repeated in any exhibition that attempts to survey Canadian art, although most prevalently in exhibitions orchestrated by national institutions.

Canadian Biennial of Contemporary Art

Three years after the furor following *Songs of Experience* and on the occasion of the opening of its new building, the National Gallery organized another group exhibition of contemporary art, the *Canadian Biennial of Contemporary Art*.¹⁶ In many senses, the *Biennial* could be seen as a response to critics who, in their reviews of *Songs of Experience* exhibition, suggested that the Gallery had little contact with the breadth of contemporary art production in Canada and that the only way to properly remedy the situation would be to have more frequent survey exhibitions of Canadian art, along the annual or biennial model. That the National Gallery would take note of this critique and put together a Biennial exhibition is of interest because in both *Pluralities* and *Songs of Experience*, the usefulness and even desirability of the biennial model was called into question as an appropriate mode of display for contemporary art. In both these exhibitions the concept of the 'survey' that is implicit in the biennial model was seen to imply a circumscribing and a closure of artistic production that the

¹⁶ The *Canadian Biennial of Contemporary Art* was on display at the National Gallery from 6 October to 3 December, 1989. Since the exhibition was conceived as the first of a series of Biennials at institutions across Canada over a ten-year period, the exhibition did not tour.

curators wanted to avoid. Instead, the exploration of particular themes that had significance for artists in Canada, but that were not all-encompassing, underscored the earlier National Gallery exhibitions discussed above.

With the Gallery finally obtaining a home of its own in 1988, however, the time seemed right to hold a national survey of contemporary Canadian art, placing on display the work of 25 artists in a variety of media, produced over the past two years. In addition, this was to have been the first of five biennial exhibitions to be held over a period of 10 years in major institutions across the country: Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver, each producing a national survey of Canadian art from a particular point of view. The end result, according to curator Diana Nemiroff, would be a document of historical importance:

Over the next ten years, the Biennials will offer a series of shifting perspectives on art-making in this country, not one narrative but several and within these, no doubt, others to be spoken elsewhere. The project thus has a consciously historical dimension, for its result will be a cumulative document of the art of the last decade of this century, an occasion to explore our differences and identities. It could be - at a moment when the complexity of the Canadian art scene threatens to fragment into many urban, regional and individual identities - one of those ritual events that allow us to experience our community. (Nemiroff, 1989: 8)

Even before the Ottawa exhibition had opened, however, there were problems, particularly, the perceived slight to the Atlantic provinces who were not selected as one of the regions to participate in the Biennial project. The reasons cited included the absence of an appropriate site that

was large enough to house an exhibition the size of a Biennial, and suggestions that there was not a curatorial staff of the size and experience necessary to mount such a display. Reaction from the Atlantic provinces was swift and angry, with artists, curators and critics citing the episode as yet another example of the centrism of the National Gallery and its continued abdication of its national role by ignoring an entire region of the country. After a series of press conferences and meetings with National Gallery representatives, it was decided that there would be another Biennial exhibition planned, this one to take place in the Maritimes at a location to be determined at a later date. The end result, however, occurred before even the second Biennial exhibition could take place, when Xerox, the sponsor of the series of exhibitions, pulled its funding and the project began and ended in Ottawa. The ramifications of the Maritime protest will be examined in greater detail later; for the moment I will concentrate my analysis on the National Gallery *Biennial* for it is in this one exhibition that the implications of a national art survey, and the institutional role of the National Gallery in the articulation of national identity can be reexamined in light of the discursive regularities in the permanent collection.

The *Biennial* gathered together recent work by 25 artists working in Canada, some of whom were at the beginning of their career, others already well-established. Some had been previously exhibited at the National Gallery; for others it

was the first time. For Nemiroff, the exhibition was intended to show "a collective portrait of their place in time" (1989: 8); literally, a national survey. The criteria used to select the artists remained largely unstated: "works respond to the problem of content, context and meaning with characteristic subtlety and intelligence. This is not an easy time in which to seek conviction, although there are signs of challenge to the pervasive pessimism. The works in the *Biennial* present such challenges" (ibid.: 19). In the catalogue, however, Nemiroff questions the idea of the survey, in particular the underlying totalizing picture that seems implicit in the very notion of the survey. In particular she questions the validity of even searching for a national identity, an overarching sensibility that would characterize individuals and communities from all parts of the nation, seeing in this desire the spectre of the master-narratives of a totalizing modernity that seems politically and aesthetically untenable in the era of postmodernism.

It is under the mantle of postmodernism that Nemiroff describes the work in the exhibition as manifestations of "local practice": of a cultural production that speaks to and from a particular community - defined here in urban terms - rather than as part of a universal aesthetic language. The question of identity and the aesthetic is an issue that underscores all the temporary exhibitions examined thus far, but in the *Biennial*, this preoccupation is seen explicitly in national terms. For Nemiroff, the ascription of national

identity comes not from an essentializing unified identity, but in the multiple and complex identities that emerge across the country and that are located in specific communities.

Typically [for Canadians], this sense of being marginalized has led to efforts to demonstrate our sameness, our identification with international artistic trends, our participation in the processes of power. Against the abstract and universalizing premises that such a strategy implies, a different tendency has been visible for a while. This new strategy involves attending to the local, to the bounded place in which we find ourselves, one filled with a multiplicity of voices. It is at the level of local practice that difference can be heard and theory can be grounded in issues affecting the production and distribution of art and its public reception. (1989: 17)

The national survey of art production that is the *Biennial*, thus differs from the earlier series of annual and biennial exhibitions organized by the National Gallery between 1926 and 1968 which were explicitly about finding the "Canadian" in Canadian art. And for Nemiroff, the abandonment of such nationalist pursuits is an indication that Canadian artistic production has 'arrived' on the international art scene: an arrival which can perhaps best be seen in the integration in the new building's permanent display of contemporary art from Canada with that of the rest of the world. Concomitant with the increasing visibility of Canada's artists around the world, then, is the importance of viewing Canadian art within an international context.

Despite her admonitions against essentializing Canadian art through attributions of a national style, Nemiroff characterizes Canadian art as the art of the margins, an art that is outside the centers geographically - being outside

the New York-Europe tandem - and stylistically. This latter characterization is couched in an argument about the 'marginality' of postmodern art practices, of which the artists in the show are significant Canadian examples. The contradiction inherent in positioning such a universally valid set of practices as 'marginal' is only one of the difficulties of using postmodernism to describe decentralizing or oppositional discourses. While an understandable position in face of increasing pressure on culture to define and foster Canadian identity - a position underscoring the Federal Museums Policy which was under discussion during the planning stage of the *Biennial*, and before Parliament when the exhibition opened - Nemiroff's holding up of Canadian art as being a marginalized practice appears as essentializing as earlier modernist searches for a unifying national aesthetic character.

This discursive articulation is reproduced in the organization of the catalogue which presents the artists as part of a cross-Canada tour organized along the Trans Canada highway and the railroad (an important national symbol of unity), with each artist seen as emerging out of an urban center which is described in detail. The emphasis on the cities, and the imbrication of artist and setting creates a different kind of essentializing which, while avoiding the overarching narrative of the national, nevertheless limits and circumscribes the question of identity. In an exhibition of Canadian art, and given the question of essential national

character that continues to plague Canadian art, the reliance on the local to 'locate' artistic practice seems to accomplish the same kind of essentializing. And when the 'local' is used to frame a cross-Canada view of artistic production, there appears to be little differentiation between Nemiroff's reference to the local and the thorny question of essentialist characterizations of a regional sensibility.

Still, I wonder whether the apparent failure to find identity in a distinctive iconography or even in a distinctive practice (such as the often-mentioned affinity of Canadian artists for the new media of communications technology) need imply acceptance of the leveling sameness that plagues our post-industrial societies. The cultural community's vigorous opposition to the free trade agreement between Canada and the U.S. is evidence of a common perception of a cultural distinctness which is worth preserving. As feminism has suggested, locating and valuing difference means posing the questions differently and thus arriving at different questions to ask. (ibid.: 16)

The *Biennial* was the first exhibition of contemporary art to be held in the new National Gallery; and because of its size, it filled not only the Temporary Exhibition galleries, but spilled over onto the second floor of the Contemporary Galleries, the ones usually set aside for works from the last decade. In this respect it differed from the exhibitions in the Lorne Building that took over the entire galleries of contemporary Canadian art, and which therefore allowed little comparison between what was considered within a historical or more permanent context, and those that were not. The advantages inherent in a specifically designated Special Exhibitions space in the Safdie building generates

already a different relationship between the temporary exhibition and the permanent collection than could ever exist in the Lorne building. Within this context, what differentiated the layout of the *Biennial* was its continuation outside the special exhibitions space into the upper galleries of the contemporary block. For those two months, the display was truly contemporary in nature.

Unlike the earlier exhibitions, the survey nature of the *Biennial* makes unnecessary the insertion of the work within a specific thematic frame. The organization of the catalogue as a cross-Canada journey, with brief 'visits' with each of the artists does not have the analytic punch of the catalogues for *Songs of Experience* or even *Pluralities*. It would seem that in her desire to heed the 'decentralizing call' of postmodernity, Nemiroff chose to abandon the authoritative curatorial stance that accompanies the interpretative role of the traditional curatorial essay. Given the absence of an obvious thematic ordering, I will discuss the work in the *Biennial* in the briefest of terms, following their location in the special exhibition and contemporary gallery spaces.

Entering the exhibition, the visitor's first glimpse of artwork is Liz Magor's large sculptural wall-hanging *Child's Sweater c. 1970* that, like the twenty-year-old photographs used to create the *Field Work* series, make reference to the cultural life of West Coast Native tribes. On either side of Magor, are two installations by Toronto artist (and librarian) Ian Carr-Harris: *McClung, Nellie L. "Clearing in*

the West; my own story" which brought together pieces of clothing as a biographical accompaniment to the open book on the table, and *The Anchor Bible. Judith* which juxtaposed the severed head of Holofernes with an annotated translation of the biblical Book of Judith. Moving into the next room, Mary Scott's large and deeply-textured fabric wall-hangings from the *Imago* series framed the first of two pieces by Katie Campbell in the exhibition. *Dyad* explores the relationship of mother and child through the medium of analogous structures, while in an adjacent room, Campbell's other work, *Magnet*, examines the social construction of sexual identity by placing identical photographs of babies side by side, and 'sexing' them only by 'mirrored' images of male and female genitals. Joey Morgan's complex installation *Have you EVER Loved Me?* is composed of a series of images collaged from newspaper reports, a table and chairs, and photographs of buildings and angels, that are brought together by means of a looped soundtrack of overlapping music and voices, creating a self-contained, almost dreamlike world. Will Gorlitz's immense paintings from the *Catharsis* series are concerned with the complexity of reading, both literally in the images of books and papers in the paintings, and figuratively in the absence of a clear narrative that would decipher the meaning of the works themselves.

In the room facing Gorlitz, and equally impenetrable in meaning, was Genevieve Cadieux's large photograph of an unidentified scar suggestively titled *Trou de mémoire, la*

beauté innatendue. Across from Cadieux, and demonstrating a consonant interest in representations of the body, Shelagh Alexander's untitled collages edit together images appropriated from films to construct a series of 'stills' that examine the cinematic treatment of the female body. In a similar vein, Jana Sterbak's *Remote Control* - a large metal hoop skirt on wheels that can only be moved by electronic controls - continues her examination into the social constriction of women that underscored the work she exhibited in *Songs of Experience*. In the next room, Robin Collyer's metal "house" structures are framed by Eleanor Bond's immense painted utopian cityscapes and Shirley Wiitasalo's smaller, brighter, atmospheric paintings. The final room of the temporary exhibition space provided an intimate context for a series of stills from Stan Douglas's *Television Spots*, twelve short films designed as PSAs to be inserted between mainstream television programmes and working to deconstruct the hyperreality of the televisual space.

Entering the Contemporary Galleries, the first work seen is Ian Wallace's large photopiece *At the Crosswalk*, flanked by four photographs from the series *In the Museum (the Musée d'Orsay)* which juxtapose photographs of artworks with their installation in the Paris museum. To the left of Wallace,¹⁷ Lani Maestro's installation *The Heart Is Stronger than the Hand* juxtaposes veiled photographs of mutilated bodies which Maestro brought back from the Phillipines, to symbolic

¹⁷ Room B208 on opposite side was blocked off.

objects of faith and healing. In the next room, Collette Whiten's small-scale petitpoint reproductions of contemporary newswire photographs were dwarfed by the huge steel slabs leaning against the gallery walls on which they were shown. Jan Peacock's installation *The Road Rises to Meet You* underlines individuals' lack of control over their lives through juxtaposed images in slide and video form of 'bliss' (a couple embracing) and 'dread' (violent landscapes). Jocelyne Alloucherie's large sculptural objects suggestive of everyday domestic shapes occupy the centre of the room, while fellow Montrealer Gilles Mihalcean's series of phallic objects arranged on a diagonal across the room, are evocative fragments suggestive of the importance and the elusiveness of memory.

Through the window in this gallery can be seen two of Barbara Steinman's four photographic lightboxes positioned under the windows overlooking the large courtyard. The interest of these images of women framed by architectural spaces lies in the impossibility of seeing the work in its totality, thereby underlining the active process of viewing. In the gallery adjacent to the courtyard is one of Kim Adams' truck sculptures, the other one standing outside on the plaza in front of the Gallery. On the other side of the courtyard, in the gallery opposite Alloucherie and Mihalcean, Guy Bourassa's *Modèle/Mesure* consists of a series of everyday objects placed on wheeled dollies in a reinterpretation of the formal preoccupations of modernist sculpture. Jerry

Pethic's two works explore the spatial illusions that occur in the overlay of photographs with circles of convex glass. Métis artist Edward Poitras contrasts literal and symbolic representations of the enslavement of First Nations in the signing of treaties with western (white) culture. Finally, Michael Fernandes recreates, through audio and visual means, the urban context in an installation that is experienced differently by each viewer.

As an explicit survey of Canadian art, *The Canadian Biennial of Contemporary Art* is an important exhibition in the analysis of the National Gallery's multiple articulations of national identity. Nemiroff's awareness of the national if not nationalist implications of such an exhibit is clear in her consideration of national identity in the exhibition's catalogue. She resorts to a doubled sense of the local, on the one hand acting as a valorization of a situationally specific art practice that resists the centralizing lure of the international art market, and on the other, manifesting itself as a simultaneous rejection of totalizing nationalist myths while wanting to maintain or advocate the specificity of the 'here'. Seen within the frame of major decisions on a political, social, policy and aesthetic level, this wariness of nationalizing myths and the advocacy of decentralization is an understandable response to a situation in which the National Gallery's national mandate is under increasing scrutiny. That the Gallery did not include the Atlantic provinces in its touring series of Biennials, is all the more

surprising given the attention paid in the selection of artists for the exhibition to the question of regional representativity, and in the ordering of the catalogue along regional and geographic lines. As the critical reaction to *Songs of Experience* suggests, however, the question of representativity in the Gallery's exhibitions is an issue whose complexity is difficult to negotiate, and impossible to resolve. As Johanne Lamoureux has noted, the Gallery's interpretation of its national mandate in terms of a statistical representation is what gives such exhibitions its 'Canadian' character.

Il s'agirait maintenant de réfléchir sur le véritable enjeu et le signal politique émis par cette remarquable *statistical correctness*. Loin de n'avoir été que le *modus operandi* commode et opportuniste d'une sélection difficile dont l'intérêt véritable, la proposition fondamentale, demanderait à être mis à jour à un autre niveau, la complexité et la minutie de la représentation statistique pourraient bien avoir été le thème dominant de cette exposition: son motif proprement *canadien*. (1990: 50)

Ultimately, as Lamoureux's argument suggests, the question of representativity - at the level of gender, race, region or language - in its distinct manifestations across these four exhibitions, only emphasizes the tensions between a legislated identity and an understanding of national identity at the level of an affective belonging.

Land Spirit Power

The exhibition *Land Spirit Power: First Nations at the National Gallery of Canada*¹⁸ presented, in the main temporary exhibition rooms of the Gallery, the work of eighteen artists of First Nations ancestry from Canada and the United States. The exhibition was organized by a curatorial team composed of Diana Nemiroff, Charlotte Townsend-Gault an anthropologist and art critic, and Robert Houle, an artist and curator, and the only member of the team to be of Native ancestry. The current dilemma of contemporary art by First Nations artists manifested in the tension between traditionalism and a modern or post-modern aesthetic practice, is reproduced in the selection of the works for *Land Spirit Power*. Artists such as sculptors Faye HeavyShield and Truman Lowe, and painters Kay WalkingStick and James Lavadour, are largely interested in exploring questions of Native identity through the means of abstract form. Alex Janvier, "Canada's first Native modernist," combines an attention to First Nations culture and myth with an 'Indian kitsch' style of painting. The work of these artists reflects a certain reliance on modernist aesthetic idioms reminiscent of early art programmes in Canada and the United States which encouraged Western

¹⁸ *Land Spirit Power* was on display at the National Gallery in Ottawa from September 25th to November 22nd, 1992. The exhibition has subsequently traveled to the MacKenzie Gallery in Regina (Fall 1993) and to the Nickle Arts Museum in Calgary (Fall 1994). For the purposes of the present project, I am only concerned with the exhibition as it took shape at the National Gallery.

modernism over traditional modes of representation.¹⁹ Other artists such as Jimmy Durham and James Luna and use found objects - utility pipes, feathers and rocks in Jimmy Durham's piece, and a variety of objects (underwear, toy cars) in the four sacred colours in the work of James Luna - to create powerful installations around Native identity. Hachivi Edgar Heap of Birds uses a series of text panels to comment on the often deadly encounters of American force with the people of the Cheyenne nation.

Carl Beam, who has the distinction of being the first contemporary artist of Native ancestry whose work was bought by the National Gallery,²⁰ presented a series of photo-text pieces entitled *The Columbus Chronicles* which layers images of Natives and other marginalized peoples over those of insects and butterflies in an effort to explore the containment and classification of non-white peoples within the knowledge systems of the West. Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun complemented his paintings of the West's desecration of the land with a virtual reality project that recreates the environment of the Longhouse, suggesting the potential appropriation of western technology for Other ends. In a similar vein, Domingo Cisneros's installation entitled *Quebranto*, a Spanish word meaning loss or lamentation, composed of both 'natural' objects such as furs, bones and

¹⁹ Joy Gritton has described the almost exclusive teaching of New York Modernist aesthetics at the Institute of American Indian Arts in Gritton (1992).

²⁰ *The North American Iceberg* (1985), purchased by the National Gallery in 1986.

weeds, and 'man-made' objects of entrapment such as metal chains, traps and yokes, powerfully suggests the encroachment of western industrial society on the land and the consequent devaluation of indigenous peoples' ties to the land, as well as of their own experience and values. Also included in the exhibition were more apparently traditional works: the ceremonial masks and sculptures of Dempsey Bob and the transforming masks and button blankets of Robert Davidson and Dorothy Grant, works which underscore the imbrication of tradition and contemporary concerns in the work of Native artists through the reworking of a traditional idiom in contemporary terms.

Rebecca Belmore's installation, *Mawu-che-hitoowin: A Gathering of People for Any Purpose*, invites visitors to sit in chairs borrowed from women from her community and to listen to the women's recorded narratives through headphones. This work strongly emphasizes the daily interaction between the two worlds, not only by bringing the women of her community into a non-Native space through their telling of their stories, but by asking the non-Native museum visitor simply to listen. Finally, Teresa Marshall's 1990 work *Elitekey*, presents a group of concrete sculptures - a canoe, a figure in Micmac dress, and a Canadian flag at half mast, the maple leaf cut out from its centre. This work, more than any other in the exhibition, addresses the contradictions experienced by Natives faced with western cultural values, configured as the only legitimate values. For Marshall, the

removal of the national emblem expresses not only her own inability to consider herself a "Canadian citizen", but the inability of Canadian society to fully include her within the national-popular.

Seen as a whole, *Land Spirit Power* makes evident the stylistic diversity in the production of contemporary Native artists: the traditionalism of Dempsey Bob, Dorothy Grant and Robert Davidson, the modernism of Kay WalkingStick, James Lavadour, Truman Lowe, Alex Janvier and Faye HeavyShield, and the post-modern aesthetic of Lawrence Paul Yuxweluptun's virtual reality project, Domingo Cisneros, James Luna, Carl Beam, Jimmie Durham, Hachivi Edgar Heap of Birds and Rebecca Belmore. This aesthetic diversity not only emphasizes the heterogeneous experiences of Native peoples, exploding the monolithic stereotype of 'the Indian', but also makes evident the complex ways in which two traditions - the Native and the non-Native - intersect in the lives of First Nations peoples today.

In this the exhibition has accomplished much: neither insisting that the artists conform to a traditional artistic vocabulary that is somehow more 'authentic', nor constructing an exhibition that ignores traditional elements. As such, the exhibition has shown an awareness of much recent critical work on contemporary art by First Nations artists, in particular the way in which these artists have explored the intersections of different cultural and aesthetic traditions, the accommodation of traditional themes or concepts with a

western vocabulary, and the imaging of contemporary statements with traditional idioms. As Robert Houle states in his catalogue essay:

No apologia is needed for any Native aesthetics at work in the creative process of these artists; that their indigenous inheritance is part of a continuum, especially within the context of the modernist heritage which informs all contemporary art is univocal. Nevertheless, they straddle not only two cultures, but two histories; the first, the modern/postmodern dichotomy, and the second, that tension between the contemporary world, and that of the ancient ones. (1992: 71)

This coexistence of traditions and cultures, however, has proven problematic for some collectors and critics who want to maintain fixed classifications on artists and their works, and more precisely who want cultural production by First Nations artists to be readily identifiable as "Indian". This insistence on fixed and stable identity positions is not restricted to classifications of indigenous peoples, but is part of a broader institutional tendency - most apparent in museums of anthropology - to construct easily identifiable 'others' against which the status quo (the white middle-class masculinist artworld) can define itself.²¹ The contradictions - or the need to negotiate - between an expected and therefore saleable authenticity and an art practice that

²¹ Jean Fisher has argued this point admirably: "There is a readily available market for work bearing the signs of 'Indianness' as understood by whites, either in terms of 'tradition' or a re-ethnicised modernism. Understandably, much Native American work falls into such categories since to do otherwise is to risk losing the only Indian identity that white culture will safely recognise. At the same time, the political reality is such that it is precisely through insisting on traditional Indian identity that indigenous peoples' proper legal and land rights can be secured; the expression of cultural difference is fundamentally concerned with political and physical survival." (Fisher, 1987: 74)

incorporates elements from a number of visual and cultural traditions, not only inhabit the art works themselves, but underscore the conditions of exhibition of First Nations art in large institutional spaces.²² Conventional modes of display of aboriginal art, such as the massive '*Primitivism*' in *20th Century Art* exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1984, and *The Spirit Sings* at Calgary's Glenbow Museum in 1988, continue to display the cultural production of First Nations as though it existed outside of history. In different contexts and through different means, both exhibitions perpetuated the belief that aboriginal art, and the people that produce it, live in a timeless 'primitive' past, and especially in the case of *The Spirit Sings*, that the producers of such historically valuable objects have no connection to the peoples who are their descendants - especially as these descendants move into the modern world and somehow lose their 'authenticity'.

However, it must be acknowledged that there has been some change in Canadian museum's and galleries' attitudes towards both historical and contemporary work by First Nations artists. The controversy over *The Spirit Sings* led to a reexamination of the relations between First Nations and Canadian museums, resulting in the creation of The Task Force on Museums and First Peoples co-sponsored by the Assembly of

²² I am most concerned here with major (one might almost say 'establishment') museums and galleries. These issues are not as central in smaller public and private galleries or artist-run centres where the institutional narratives are less monolithic, and where there is the possibility for greater cooperation and negotiation between artist and curator, and institution.

First Nations and the Canadian Museums Association. In its Report, the Task Force sought to identify ways in which First Nations and Canadian museums could work together to bring Native cultures and histories to a broader audience. To this effect, the Task Force made several recommendations: that aboriginal peoples be more closely involved in the interpretation of their culture and history by Canadian institutions, as well as be provided with improved access to collections and to training as museum personnel. Also recommended was prompt action in the repatriation of Native artefacts and human remains, and increased support for the establishment of Native-run museums and cultural centres. Although not the direct result of the Task Force, *Land Spirit Power* can be seen as an effect of the general climate of dialogue that had made the Task Force possible. Unlike earlier exhibitions of indigenous art in Canada and internationally (*Primitivism, The Spirit Sings*), *Land Spirit Power* refuses the timelessness of the 'primitive', and the perpetuation of a monolithic conception of Native cultural production.²³

²³ In this it is similar to another exhibition of contemporary First Nations art, *Indigena: Perspectives of Indigenous Peoples on Five Hundred Years*, which ran almost concurrently with *Land Spirit Power* at the Canadian Museum of Civilization (April 16-October 12, 1992) and was curated by Gerald McMaster and Lee-Ann Martin - both of First Nations ancestry and long active in contemporary discussions of Native identity. *Indigena* was a much more political event; explicitly organized as a critical response to 'celebrations' of the quincentenary of Columbus' arrival in the Americas, the works addressing the political and cultural ramifications of 500 years of colonization on indigenous peoples and their cultures. For McMaster and Martin, the politicization of the exhibition was essential - particularly in the wake of *The Spirit Sings* and its curators' claim that politics and culture were incompatible. *Indigena* in contrast, provided First Nations with a forum in which to

1992 proved to be an important year in Canadian politics. Not only was the country celebrating the 125th anniversary of its 'creation', but a massive state-sponsored search for Canadian unity and identity resulted in a new Constitutional Accord which was put to a national referendum at the end of October. The decisive failure of the Charlottetown Accord notwithstanding, the constitutional process brought to the forefront the terms under which questions of national identity would be negotiated. Foremost among these - after the distinct society status of the province of Quebec - was the positioning of First Nations within the Canadian political landscape. Numerous clashes (both violent and non-violent) between Natives and non-Natives had pushed the "Indian question" from a peripheral irritant to white hegemony, to an important national issue. And the process of renegotiating relations between whites and Natives that had garnered national public attention beginning with the dramatic rejection of the terms of the Meech Lake constitutional accord by First Nations member of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly Elijah Harper, gained international prominence with the Oka stand-off in the Summer of 1990, and culminated in the very visible presence of representatives of the Assembly of First Nations at the constitutional negotiating table in Charlottetown in 1992. In addition to these issues of national concern, 1992 also marked the quincentenary of Columbus' arrival in the 'New World', an

speaking out about their histories and cultures, providing alternative readings to what had been proposed elsewhere in the museum.

occasion that was observed with varying levels of discomfort throughout North and South America, but which nevertheless prompted a number of exhibitions, conferences and writings addressing Native identity, self-representation, colonialism and self-determination.

An analysis of *Land Spirit Power* must be seen in terms of the attention paid to the positioning of First Nations politics within the discourse of Canadian national identity and unity in 1992. Seen within, if not as part of, the attempt to bring First Nations issues and concerns into discussions of the nature of the Canadian nation, *Land Spirit Power* has important political as well as aesthetic ramifications. In addition to these broader political issues, the nation-building mandate of the federal museums has important implications for the insertion of *Land Spirit Power* within the exhibition history of the National Gallery. In the Foreword to the exhibition catalogue, Director Shirley Thomson situates *Land Spirit Power* within the continuum of exhibitions at the National Gallery that explored recent developments in Canadian art, thereby placing the exhibition as an important marker in the institution's continued attention to discourses of contemporary art and cultural identity. Perhaps most importantly, however, given the nationalist mandate of the National Gallery, Thomson positions *Land Spirit Power* within the context of Canadian politics, in particular the putative inclusion of First Nations' representatives at the constitutional bargaining

table in 1992, and the importance of holding such an exhibition during the temporal frame of Canada's 125th birthday.

Land, Spirit, Power continues the lively inquiry initiated at the National Gallery in the 1980s by such exhibitions as *Pluralities*, *Songs of Experience*, and the *Canadian Biennial of Contemporary Art*. The organization and presentation of *Land, Spirit, Power* at the National Gallery of Canada as Canada celebrates its 125th birthday is a particularly welcome occasion. As the first international exhibition of contemporary art by artists of Native ancestry to be held at the National Gallery, it serves to recognize the contributions of a remarkable group of artists, and marks an important step towards the openness of spirit that we hope will characterize the next 125 years. (Thomson in Nemiroff et al., 1992: 7)

As Canadian art museums - and the National Gallery in particular - assert the legitimate place of Canadian artists within the broader Western high art canon, the work of First Nations artists occupies a problematic place vis-à-vis a distinctly Canadian aesthetic tradition: at times included - as in the case of *Land Spirit Power*, temporarily in place within the Gallery's walls - at other times remaining on the margins of Canadian cultural production. Despite recent amendments to the Gallery's acquisitions policy that have resulted in the purchasing of several contemporary artworks by First Nations artists, a cursory glance at the National Gallery's permanent collection (particularly in the Historical Galleries) suggests that First Nation peoples provide adequate subject matter for the works of white Canadian artists, but seemingly remain incapable of producing

any work that can be placed within the gallery's walls.²⁴ In addition, there is an essentialism regarding First Nations' alignment with the land that is to a large extent reproduced in current attempts to recuperate Native culture as an integral element of *Canadian* national identity, a position which assumes that First Nations peoples, by virtue of their geographical location, are automatically *Canadians*.

The incorporation of First Nations for Canadian nationalism sits uneasily with many of the artists participating in *Land Spirit Power*. As Teresa Marshall comments in the exhibition catalogue:

[speaking of her installation piece *Elitekey*] I've also borrowed from the "Canadian symbol," the flag, which serves as the symbolic umbrella of what it means to be a Canadian. As a First Nations citizen I don't stand under that umbrella. It serves as an icon of oppression, assimilation, injustice, and racism that intends to deny First Nations people the inherent right to self-identity and human rights. To emphasize this, I've removed the leaf from the flag. (ibid.: 197)

Without a strong or overt political message, however, the exhibition as a whole was easily inscribed within the broader discourse of Canadian nationalism that was taking place during that time.

²⁴ Paradoxically, as Valda Blundell has argued, Native culture has long functioned to represent Canadian culture both to Canadians and abroad, and to serve as internationally recognized symbols of Canadian-ness, constituting its "borrowed identity" (Blundell, p.49). *Land Spirit Power* can be seen to function discursively in much the same fashion within the context of celebrations of Canada's 125th birthday, and during the negotiation of national identity that preceded the referendum on the Charlottetown constitutional Accord. This function is especially apparent when *Land Spirit Power* is contrasted with the exhibition *Indigena* which, due to its critical nature, refuses to be taken up by such celebrations of Canadian nationhood.

The artwork in *Land Spirit Power*, however, is also framed within the discourse of high art which constitutes the art gallery. Although the exhibition itself makes evident the pluralistic nature of current cultural production by artists of First Nations ancestry, as well as the importance of the spiritual and the lived realities of indigenous peoples as they are imbricated in their artwork, there is still the sense in which this is erased through its inscription within the aesthetic. The curators chose not to lay bare the curatorial process, instead effacing themselves almost completely from the exhibition, and letting the artists' statements, reproduced on the Gallery walls, guide the viewer through the exhibition. Although this strategy demonstrates an understandable unwillingness on the part of the curators to speak for disenfranchised communities, the final result maintains the traditional aesthetic belief that "art can speak for itself". Although the timelessness of 'the primitive' is refused in *Land Spirit Power*, it has been replaced by another kind of timelessness, that of high art. Whereas in *Indigena*, time and place - 1992, Canada's 125th birthday, the legacy of Oka, etc. - were made overt, and in fact were central motivators of the exhibition, in *Land Spirit Power*, this location is hidden, marginally visible in some of the works but absent from the exhibition as a whole. Especially in the more modernist artworks which dominated the show, the timelessness of the museum's universalist

aesthetics rendered useless any attempt to bring out the specific concerns of contemporary Native artists.

This is not to suggest that the institutional context should constitute the overriding frame of analysis for the exhibition, or that the ideological underpinnings of the institution necessarily determine what is exhibited within the museum's walls. As was evident in *Indigena*, it is possible for the exhibitionary narrative to negotiate, if not rupture, the ideological frame proposed by the institution, and that this rupturing can be accomplished as much at the level of the exhibition itself as within the objects on display. However, much as the curators of *Land Spirit Power* wanted to break away from traditional universalizing narratives of First Nations cultural production by effacing themselves from the exhibition site, and by allowing the voices of the artists to dominate the display, the end result was the replacement of one universal narrative, the anthropological, with another: that of the aesthetic. And perhaps more importantly in the context of the exhibition of art by First Nations artists, the political underpinnings of much of the work included in *Land Spirit Power* disappeared under the overarching frame of the aesthetic.

The erasure of the political in the exhibition *Land Spirit Power*, then, ultimately facilitated its incorporation within the discourse of Canadian nationalism that pervaded 1992. Housed in Canada's National Gallery, and positioned within a continuum of exhibitions addressing the nature of

contemporary Canadian art, *Land Spirit Power* can be seen as a significant attempt to play down any nationalist claims that First Nations might be making in their push towards self-government, in favour of a broader discourse of unified Canadian nationhood epitomized in such rhetorical slogans favoured by Canadian politicians as "unity through diversity". As one reviewer has asked in an essay on the exhibition, "whose nation" is at stake in *Land Spirit Power*?

As the analysis of these four exhibitions suggests, the question of 'whose nation', in other words of national identity, appears as an issue for the curators of the four exhibitions, as well as for the critics. As surveys of Canadian art, these exhibitions must balance the representational imperative that underscores the national mandate of the National Gallery, against an account of artistic activity in Canada. An additional facet of this tension occurs as postmodern artistic practices refuse the centrality of particular identity positions, chief among them the modernist discourse of nationality, in favour of the margins. Within the larger context of international economic markets and artistic centres, however, Canada already occupies a position on the margins, a position which can only be questioned in relation to the centrality of the 'Canadian' position when compared with the emerging national discourses of Quebec and the First Nations. Thus, the range of articulations of the aesthetic to national identity within the four temporary exhibitions discussed above, as well as

between these exhibitions and the permanent collection of Canadian art, emphasize that defining Canadian identity is as problematic when the idea of a central unified discourse has been discounted, as when identity was thought to lie in a set of essential characteristics.

Chapter Five

The Exhibitions' Narratives: Articulating National Identity

The role of the museum display in articulating a specific discursive ordering of the aesthetic with national identity has preoccupied much of this thesis. The disciplinary frame of art history, as Donald Preziosi has suggested, enables the viewer "to story oneself in the semiological labyrinth of the history of culture presented as a genealogy of art" (Preziosi, 1992:70). In such a *national* institution as the National Gallery, this inevitably involves the insertion of the viewer into the narrative development of the nation: either as tourist, observing from outside a coherent elaboration of the development of a Canadian artistic practice, or as a citizen, seeing oneself inscribed into (or conversely excluded from) an ongoing narration of the nation.

[M]useums can be powerful identity-defining machines. To control a museum means precisely to control the representation of a community and some of its highest, most authoritative truths. It also means the power to define and rank people, to declare some as having a greater share than others in the community's common heritage - in its very identity. ... [T]hose who best understand how to use art in the museum environment are also those on whom the museum ritual confers this greater and better identity. It is precisely for this reason that museums and museum practices can become objects of fierce struggle and impassioned debate. What we see and do not see in our most prestigious art museums - and on what terms and whose authority we do or don't see it - involves the much larger questions of who constitutes the community and who

shall exercise the power to define its identity.
(Duncan 1991: 102)

The specificity of discursive formations in Canada, and the position of the National Gallery in the construction as well as the maintenance of a national stance in relation to the history of art in Canada bears particular consideration in relation to the literature on museums discussed earlier. It is not enough in this case to accept unmodified the thesis put forward by Duncan and Wallach that the universal survey museum produces a ritual which locates the production of the nation's artists as the culmination of western art and civilization. While such principles can be said to underlie the basic organization of the art museum, in Canada, the relative youth of the nation and the marginal position of its artistic production in international art circles until recently, make it difficult for the work of its greatest artists to be placed as the culmination of any larger artistic trajectory. However, within a specifically Canadian discourse, as my analysis of the organization of the National Gallery's permanent collection has demonstrated, building a narrative of Canadian art that follows a separate evolutionary trajectory has specific implications for the history of art in Canada, and for the articulation of the aesthetic to notions of national belonging. While tracing the development of artistic modernism in Canada, the display of the permanent collection can also underscore the significance of the artworks by making the evolution of art in Canada

stand in for, and act as an aesthetic parallel to, the development of Canada as a post-colonial nation.

Equally important in this discussion, however, is the recognition that 'the national' is not a homogenous or unified entity. Recalling Schlesinger, the formation of national identity takes place within a series of definitional and counter-definitional struggles which function to produce specific articulations of national belonging. These struggles over the shape of the national formation provide the nodal points around which the nation and its citizens are affectively constituted. As has been argued throughout this thesis, an important locus of such struggles is articulated across cultural institutions and practices. Both as objects having a particular relationship to a developmental national aesthetic tradition, and as institutions which function as mechanisms for the building of a sense of nationhood, 'the cultural' is more than an assemblage of artefacts. Like the nation, the cultural field is fractured across different realms, and as such constitutes an important site for definitional and counter-definitional struggles. What this chapter will examine, then, is not only the location of cultural objects within a 'site' (the exhibitionary spaces of the National Gallery), but the way in which the aesthetic is inserted within the nation-building discourses of the state, and of the museum.

In historical terms, the imbrication of a governmental discourse on nationhood with the aesthetic function of the

museum can be seen in the Gallery's early decision to concentrate on the collection of Canadian art, with a particular focus on the work of living Canadian artists. The complex transformation of this collection into the articulation of national identity can be seen in all its complexity in the different discursive orderings of the permanent collection and the temporary exhibitions. At the National Gallery, the definitional struggles around national identity take place through a questioning of what constitutes Canadian art, and the ways in which that art should be situated within a broader discourse of artistic production. And, as the discussion of permanent displays and temporary exhibitions suggests, these two exhibitionary modalities provide an important departure point for an examination of the real 'complexity' of the exhibitionary complex.

The Modalities of Display in the Permanent Collection and the Temporary Exhibitions

In light of the definitional struggles over the nation that occurred during the 1980s and early 1990s, what does the analysis of the permanent collection and the four temporary exhibitions tell us about the articulations of national identity and the aesthetic at the National Gallery during that period? To best understand these articulations, the differences between the permanent collection and the temporary exhibition as modes of exhibition must be examined. At this juncture, the relationship between permanent and temporary exhibitions will be examined both in general terms

and within the specificity of the National Gallery of Canada between 1980 and 1992. The most obvious distinction between the two lies in the specificity of the exhibitions' location within the larger institution, a difference that should be viewed in temporal terms. By its very name, the permanent collection signifies the solidity of its presentation of artworks. The temporary exhibition, on the other hand, is much more fleeting: a short-lived assemblage of objects under a particular motif. As I argued in Chapters Two and Three, the activity of collecting - the accumulation of particular objects - and the display of those objects within the walls of the institution is what defines the museum. This definitional activity occurs not only in terms of the museum's identity (as a museum of fine art, of decorative art, or of ethnography), but also in terms of the way in which the gallery seeks to position itself within the broader context of similar institutions. For example, the National Gallery is both like and unlike the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York; it is like the Met in that both are museums of fine arts, and both (with differing results) aspire to show the history of art through the display of its collection; it is unlike the Met, however, in its focus on Canadian art, and in its status as a *national* institution, with an accompanying mandate that extends beyond the aesthetic to include the preservation and promotion of national culture.

Thus the scope of the National Gallery's mandate is broader than that of other fine arts museums or galleries, whose principle function explicitly consists in the taxonomic display of works of artistic importance. While this is not an argument in support of the art museum as a neutral container for works of art, it does suggest that the National Gallery's specificity as a federal cultural agency brings with it particular mediations of the aesthetic that do not figure in the institutional discourses of other Canadian art institutions. As the three federal Museums Acts passed since 1913 have stipulated, the National Gallery must promote, collect, and care for the work of Canadian artists, and make it available to the Canadian public. Thus, the central element of the National Gallery's enterprise is the maintenance and development of Canada's fine arts heritage, or, in the words of the Gallery's current director, "to make visible to Canadians the supremely important part artists play in creating our national identity, our 'Canadian-ness'" (Thomson, 1991: 6). While the question of aesthetics and of aesthetic quality will be addressed subsequently in this chapter, it must be stated at the outset that in a situation where the national heritage plays such a central part in the institution's definition of itself, the notion of quality and of judgements based on criteria of value, however these are defined and however problematic those definitions might be, can appear to be circumscribed in a situation where national character is deemed of equal if not greater importance than

the aesthetic. This is not necessarily to argue that the Gallery's activities are entirely compromised by such federal legislation as the 1990 Federal Museums Act, but to suggest that the Gallery's collecting and exhibition activities are mediated by its nationalist mandate.

One tension negotiated in the National Gallery's permanent collection is the relation between the universal discourse of the aesthetic and the discursive ordering of Canadian art history displayed within its walls. This tension is made physically evident in the historical Canadian galleries, where the display of objects is organized along a trajectory that is both separated from the rest of the historical artistic production and, more importantly, is organized as the development of a progressively more unique aesthetic, reflecting the nation's growing social and political autonomy. As I argued in Chapter Three, the organization of the display in both the Lorne and Safdie buildings follows a path that outlines a historical chronology of art in Canada. The linear trajectory that organizes this display guides the viewer through a succession of time periods and artistic schools that underlines a view of Canadian artistic practice as sequential or cumulative in nature.

The implicit closure of such a display is made evident in the almost identical layout of the historical Canadian galleries in the Lorne Building and in the new Gallery, an identity that extends to the temporal parameters that define

the collection. Such a temporal stability does not occur in the Contemporary Galleries. The replicability of the sequence in the Canadian galleries underlines the solidity of the historical narrative that frames the Gallery's collection of Canadian art, supporting Donald Preziosi's claim that the modernist discourses of the museum and of art history make objects "stay and lie orderly". In other words, the museum's display constitutes a particular ordering within which individual objects are inserted; and while specific artworks may change over the years, the basic narrative of the development of a unique and distinctly Canadian aesthetic tradition remains intact.

A necessary component of the Historical Galleries, then, is the modernist discourse of the aesthetic that relies on an immanent stylistic development. That the historical Canadian galleries evolve separately from the rest of the historical collection does not negate the self-perpetuating nature of the modernist history; rather, in some senses it serves to underscore the universality of the art historical narrative by transposing its organizing frame onto one specific national manifestation. As was shown in Chapter Two, the organization of a modernist aesthetic trajectory in the museum has important consequences for the construction of a knowledgeable citizenry within the discursive space of national culture. The centrality of this separate national manifestation of modernist aesthetics in the period between 1980 and 1992 is underscored by the presentation of

historical Canadian art in locations that are entirely detached from the rest of the collection. Whereas during the 1960s and 70s, a small collection of historical Canadian paintings was on display on the ground floor galleries of the Lorne Building (works by artists from the Group of Seven and Emily Carr for the most part), by 1980, this space had been claimed by contemporary art and the historical works were sent upstairs to the third floor. Similarly, the collection of works by Royal Canadian Academy artists was exhibited separately on the fifth floor of the Lorne Building, before being incorporated into the historical chronology of Canadian art that characterizes the Canadian Galleries.

This trajectory or developmental history is not as clear-cut in the galleries of contemporary art, and also differs from the Lorne to the Safdie buildings. In the Contemporary Galleries, another narrative is being told: that of the arrival of Canadian art onto the international art scene. And this narrative can be seen to have as much art historical power or solidity as the developmental narrative in the Historical Galleries. Where the Historical Galleries tell the story of Canadian art's emergence out of a derivative past to find its own unique and therefore national(ist) voice, in the Safdie building, the narrative in the Contemporary Galleries tells the story of Canadian art's full-scale entry, on its own terms, into the international art world - no longer a derivative of the art of more powerful neighbours or former colonizers, but an artistic

production that can compete on the same level as the art of the rest of the Western world.

As I have argued, this structuring is accomplished through the simultaneous use of two display strategies. On the one hand, the work up to approximately 1975 is situated on the ground floor of the Contemporary Galleries and continues to a certain extent the separate display of Canadian art by grouping together the representative work of American (New York) high modernism (LeWitt, Graves, Segal, Warhol, etc.) in one half of the galleries, followed by a changing display of the work of some Canadian contemporaries in the remaining galleries. This organization of the display maintains the separate yet parallel trajectories that characterize the display of the historical collections. Thus, the two display areas are organized to reflect the contemporaneity of artistic practices in Canada and elsewhere, but they do not suggest direct stylistic or formal affinities between the works on either side. Also, any sense of a linear or chronological development is abandoned in favour of a display that highlights the complexity of artistic production in Canada during this period. The changes in the display in a certain sense mark the contrast between Canadian art and what came out of the international art market located in New York. However, unlike the historical collections, the parallel display of Canadian and non-Canadian work on the ground floor of the Contemporary Galleries enables visual comparisons that operate on a level

of simultaneity, reflecting in many ways the development of artistic production in the Canadian and the international context. In the upper galleries, meanwhile, the display of art from the past decade and a half combines the work of Canadian and non-Canadian artists in a series of thematic displays that changes every six months. This organization reflects the changes in the art market, and the greater exchange between artists that has occurred internationally since the mid-1970s. This expansion is also, to a certain extent, underscored by what might be termed the global ramifications of certain themes that characterize a postmodernist aesthetics, such as the awareness of historical narratives, the question of identity, etc..

That these particular discursive orderings occur only in the new building suggests that the changes in perception and reception of Canadian art at home and abroad have altered significantly since the early 1980s - making the integration of the work of Canadian and non-Canadian artists to a degree that was not possible in the older building. The integrated nature of the display of the contemporary collection in the Safdie building can be the result of a number of factors, including a changing institutional structure which in 1980 entailed the reorganization of the contemporary curatorial staff, most notably eliminating the separation of responsibility for contemporary Canadian, and contemporary non-Canadian. Other contributing factors include the obvious possibilities offered by a substantial increase in exhibition

space with the construction of a new building. But perhaps the most important factor that effected a change in the ordering of the Contemporary Galleries was the changing status of Canadian contemporary art within the international art market.

Canadian art has been exhibited internationally since the nineteenth century, with the success of painter James Wilson Morrice being only one example. In the 1920s, the Group of Seven enjoyed an immense popularity in the British Empire Exhibitions, a series of exhibitions for which the selection of Canadian works was made by the National Gallery. Since then, the National Gallery separately and in tandem with other governmental and cultural organizations, has arranged exhibitions of Canadian art abroad, particularly in large international fairs such as the Venice Biennale. It was only at the end of the 1970s, however, that Canadian artists achieved substantial international success. One of the elements that contributed to this success was the identification of installation art as a typically 'Canadian' art form. While comparisons with the Group of Seven's success in Britain in the 1920s and 30s is tempting, particularly around the issue of their work as evidence of an essential Canadian character, the 'Canadian-ness' of installation art was not seen in terms of its embodiment of an inherent national character, but as an art form that was practised by many of the 'best' Canadian artists. As René Blouin argues in his curatorial essay for the exhibition *Aurora Borealis* in

1985, installation emerged as the strong point in Canadian art during the 1970s, and continues to resonate as a marker of Canadian art in exhibitions internationally¹ (Blouin and Thériault, 1985: 165).

In tandem with the centrality of installation art in international perceptions of contemporary Canadian art is the tension within postmodern aesthetics between an art practice that is both local and international in scope. While the focus of postmodern practice is on the local and the particular, the grand postmodern themes of representation, the return to painting, the rise of installation and 'new media', the awareness and appropriation of history, the questioning of identity, etc., are being explored by artists all over the West. This is a broader, almost universal position, belying to a certain extent the specificity of a discursive position that seeks to counter the meta-narratives of modernism.

However, the questions surrounding the exhibition of contemporary art in the National Gallery have as much to do with the philosophical discussion of the nature of the postmodern, as with debates around the temporality of classifications of modern art. Within the Gallery itself, the delineation of the contemporary and its position within the institution's exhibitionary programme is constantly shifting. While the connection with living artists is a central

¹ "It should be noted that works presented in *Aurora Borealis* were all created by Canadian artists, but they do not point to a Canadian specificity. They simply indicate the importance of installation in the history of recent Canadian art " (Blouin and Thériault, 1985: 165).

component of the Gallery's collecting and exhibiting activities, the definition of the modern and the contemporary is always evolving, as can be seen in statements concerning contemporary art in the Gallery's internal policy documents:

the contemporary area is unusual within the collection in that its time-frame is continually shifting. The line between what is "modern" and what is "contemporary" is flexible. It depends upon aesthetic concerns as much as upon strict chronological ones. (National Museums of Canada, 1985: unpaginated²)

The definition of contemporary art at the National Gallery in temporal terms is work that has been produced over the past twenty years, a conception which has built into it the abstract nature of such temporally-based art historical classifications. This awareness of the shifting nature of the contemporary, however, is tempered by the Gallery's commitment to the museal assumption that what is modern will become historical, thus couching even its exhibition of contemporary art in terms of an overall historical frame.

As the above quote suggests, the particular problematic of the positioning of contemporary art in the museum revolves around the difficulties of situating such work within a historically-based classificatory scheme. Because of the relative nature of the time-frames that govern such conceptions as 'the modern' and 'the contemporary', the insertion of works which fall under these categories into the museum's historical narrative is subject to constant

² The Gallery's Collections Policies have had only minor changes over the past fifteen years. One notable exception has been the attention paid to contemporary art, which was expanded from only a short paragraph in the 1981 and 1983 Policies, to several pages in 1985 and later.

reevaluation. Whereas the temporal parameters that circumscribe the historical Canadian collection (roughly the seventeenth century to the 1970s) have remained relatively static over the last fifteen years, the categorization of objects as modern or contemporary has altered significantly, and is particularly visible in the changes in scope between the Lorne Building's Contemporary Galleries, and the contemporary 'block' of the Safdie building. One example of the effect of changes in temporal definitions in the display of recent art is the prominent location of Jackson Pollock's painting on glass No.29 (1950) on the fifth floor of the Lorne Building, with the other contemporary international art works. In the Safdie building, it has been moved along with some of the other important works by modernist American artists, many of the them recently acquired, to the European and American Galleries.

The discursive ordering of contemporary art must also be read in terms of processes of mythification that underscore a modernist notion of the avant-garde. Even in postmodernism's rejection of master-narratives, the conception of the avant-garde - of what is new and innovative - still functions as a critical tool through which certain artists and their production are enshrined as important, while others are relegated to the margins. Even those works that attempt to resist the hegemonic narratives of modernist aesthetics are ultimately subject to evaluation and eventual insertion into historical formations of judgement. This process of

legitimation and classification that orders objects in the museum can be seen as a twofold operation. It is as much a function of the already existing linear art historical narratives that are constitutive of the museum's display, as a function of the very existence of the museum and its role in the preservation of works of art. The following passage provides one art historian's perception of the effect of situating the contemporary work of art in the museum and in history:

New art is observed as history the very moment it is seen to possess the quality of uniqueness (look at the bibliography on Picasso or Henry Moore) and this gives the impression that art is constantly receding from modern life - is never possessed by it. It is receding, it seems, into a gigantic landscape - the landscape of ART - which we watch as if from the observation car of a train. ... In a few years [something new] is simply a grotesque or charming incident in the whole - the whole which we see through the window of the observation car, which is so like the *vitrine* of a museum. Art is behind glass - the history glass. (John Summerson (1961), cited in Preziosi 1992: 370)

Thus the tension in the museum's display of contemporary art effectively reproduces the tension between contemporary art and history discussed earlier.

Regardless of the different strategies used to situate the historical and the contemporary Canadian art collections, the eventual effect of both elements of the permanent collection is similar: to provide a certain historical solidity, or a historical grounding, to the works on display. This historical solidity is also national in scope because of the physical separation of the displays of Canadian art up to the 1970s from the rest of the collection. As I have shown,

the mechanisms through which the nation is articulated changes from the historical collection to the contemporary. Regardless of whether the work is contemporary or has already been given historical sanction through time, the permanent collection provides an authenticity and legitimacy to the work, and in a way that does not occur to the same degree in the temporary exhibitions.

All history is perforce a production - a deliberate selection, ordering and an evaluation of past events experience and processes. Any museum, in incorporating selections and silences is an ideological apparatus. In addition, every museum generates ways of not seeing and inhibits the capacity of visitors to imagine alternate histories or social orders, past or future. (Preziosi, 1989: 70)

In what follows, however, it will be argued that the different articulations between the historical and the contemporary that occur in the permanent collection are not transparently reproduced in the temporary exhibitions. While the issues that have preoccupied the above discussion of contemporary art remain pertinent, the specific modalities of the temporary exhibition - the difference in their organizational and temporal frames - distinguish these exhibitions of Canadian art from potential counterparts in the permanent collection.

The collection, then, constitutes an important discursive function, establishing a particular relationship with the broader parameters or limits of aesthetic discourse: in other words, the art objects collected by the Gallery, and displayed within its walls, produce a particular stance on

and in relation to the aesthetic that is significantly different from that found in temporary exhibitions. As was shown in the analysis of the National Gallery's permanent display of its collection of Canadian art, the basic premise underlying the display is the demonstration of the development of an autonomous aesthetic tradition in Canada. In the display of contemporary art, while the discursive orderings do not follow the same evolutionary chronology, a similar inscription of the artworks within a celebratory nationalism occurs through an emphasis on the international stature of contemporary Canadian art.

Temporary exhibitions, for their part, are markedly different phenomena. Of limited duration, often shown only in one or two institutions that might be located on different continents, and organized over a period of years by a curatorial team intent on exploring a particular theme, epoch or artist from a particular angle, the temporary exhibition offers a greater flexibility than the permanent collection. In addition, the temporary exhibition enables a more in-depth treatment of the artwork: whether a retrospective of a living artist, a vast monographic examination of an established 'genius', or a large thematic exhibition, these 'events' enable a more concentrated focus on the material object.

The exhibition in this case no longer duplicates the functions of a survey text, with representative examples of predetermined important moments in the history of art laid

out in a chronological and/or stylistic trajectory. The temporary exhibition exists more as a scholarly text, as an opportunity to conduct extensive research, to formulate a thesis, and to then illustrate the steps of the argument through the display of salient artworks. In addition, the temporary exhibition enables the institution to bring in works from other institutions or from private collections, works that a cash-strapped museum would be otherwise unable to acquire.

As the phenomenon of the 'blockbuster' event has shown,³ the temporary exhibition can also bring a certain prestige to the institution, upholding, asserting or increasing its institutional stature by bringing important art objects to its galleries. In some instances (most notably in Montreal's Museum of Fine Arts) the blockbuster exhibition is thought to popularize the museum, bringing a new audience to its doors and assuming that once they have traversed the doors of Culture, this new public will return with increased frequency.

The catalogue is one of the most important components of the temporary exhibition form because of the latter's mobility and its limited duration: it provides a permanent record of the objects gathered together for that particular event. In addition, the catalogue extends the circulation of the core ideas/elements of the exhibition through time and to a broader public than would be able to attend the show. Of

³ See Conforti (1986) for an analysis of the origins of the blockbuster form, and of their effect on the production of temporary exhibitions.

course, the catalogue provides only a mediated perspective on the exhibition, because artworks are available in reproduction, often only in black and white. Also, the catalogue rarely provides a sense of the exhibition as exhibition; only rarely is the layout of the objects or the design of the exhibition made evident.⁴

The catalogue also provides another kind of mediation, that of the essay. As was discussed in the analysis of the temporary exhibitions, the curatorial essays provide a different order of discursive positioning of the works in the exhibition. Curatorial essays range from an explanation of the selection process as in the *Pluralities* exhibition, to the exploration of thematic issues that are relevant to the exhibition as a whole, as can be seen in the discussion of the reevaluation of representation that characterised the art of the mid-1980s in the *Songs of Experience* catalogue. Catalogues moreover enable the curator to frame the exhibition in terms of particular aesthetic practices, theoretical paradigms, institutional histories, or socio-political conjunctures - interventions that are often not possible within the physical confines of the exhibitionary space. While often figuring as an extended theoretical essay, then, the catalogue offers a different point of entry into the works selected for display, and a more in-depth understanding of the exhibition as exhibition.

⁴ A notable exception in the Canadian context is the catalogue to the exhibition *Aurora Borealis* which included a map of the exhibition.

An examination of the catalogues for *Pluralities* and *Songs of Experience* will help understand the range of mediations brought to the exhibition by the catalogue. The centennial exhibition *Pluralities* was curated by four invited curators from outside the institution, each of whom chose five works to be included in the exhibition, which was coordinated by Jessica Bradley. In the catalogue, each curator wrote lengthy essays on the artists that they had selected. Depending on the curator, the essays ranged from a simple description of the work in relation to the artist's oeuvre, to a more detailed analysis, establishing the artist within broader theoretical or philosophical enterprises. The essays were signed by the curator, identifying each one's selections. The entries, however, were arranged alphabetically, obscuring the relationships between the artists chosen by individual curators, as well as limiting possible analyses of the relations or dichotomies between curatorial groupings. While establishing these links was not crucial to an appreciation of the exhibition or the work of the nineteen artists,⁵ its absence minimizes the nature of the curatorial operation, and its centrality to the discursive orderings of the exhibition. Functioning to tie the entire exhibition together, Jessica Bradley's essay works well in elucidating the process of selecting the artists by the invited curators, and briefly discusses the relationship

⁵ Originally, there were twenty artists in the exhibition, five artists per curator, but Alvin Balkind had to pull out at the last minute, leaving nineteen participants.

between artists in the exhibition. However, her essay does not attempt to reflect on the nature of the choices made by each curator, at least not in terms of the overall aesthetic of the exhibition, arguing instead that the artists should be treated individually - in other words, outside of the curatorial process.

While the provision of descriptive or biographic analyses of the artists and their works, and even their organisation alphabetically, is a mainstay of catalogue production, it is surprising that the *Pluralities* catalogue does not delve further into the aesthetic implications of the curatorial decisions. A fitting contrast in this respect is the catalogue to the exhibition *Songs of Experience*. The comparison is useful because the two catalogues are markedly different in appearance - *Songs of Experience* is glossy and has colour photographs of the artworks; *Pluralities* looks like it was produced in a limited amount of time with very little money (which it was). The catalogues, however, also differ in purpose. Because the exhibition *Songs of Experience* was organized around a specific theme, that of representation (the curators' protests notwithstanding), the catalogue provides a necessary theoretical and analytic investigation into the issue of representation itself, as well as the selected artists' engagement with it in their work. And while the artists' statements and biographies are also organized alphabetically in the *Songs of Experience* catalogue, the detail with which the curatorial essay examines the selection

of the artists, the motivation behind the exhibition, and the multiple themes produced in the combinations of works in the exhibition, make it an integral component in an understanding of both the works and the exhibition as a whole. Since these combinations and orderings are not literally transposed in the display, the catalogue (and the same can be said for the catalogues for the *Biennial* and *Land Spirit Power*) provide an important, additional, entry point into the exhibitionary narrative.

Finally, the exhibition catalogue is specific to the temporary exhibition,⁶ and points to that form of exhibition's particular engagement with the aesthetic. Unlike the collection, which remains a stable archive to which works are regularly added, temporary exhibitions are for the most part composed of objects from outside the collection - either borrowed from other institutions or from private collectors. The 'naturalness' of the art historical narrative that is constructed in the permanent display of Canadian art makes the textual interpretation or analysis of the kind found in curatorial essays unnecessary. As was suggested in Chapter Two, the work selected for display in the Canadian Galleries is given aesthetic legitimacy by the solidity of the art historical classification system that defines the museum's collection. The permanence of the discursive ordering is made

⁶ The National Gallery is in the process of producing a series of tomes which list in alphabetical order the entire collection of historical Canadian art, but this does not perform the same recording function as the catalogue for a temporary exhibition. In fact, by offering a whole, public recording of the Gallery's collection, this series reproduces the archival character and function of the permanent collection.

obvious by the absence of changes in the display in the move from the Lorne to the Safdie buildings. The selection and combination of works in the temporary exhibition, however, make the exhibition catalogue a virtual necessity, as a visual and textual record of the works chosen for the exhibition, and as an analytic frame through which the works and the artists selected can be positioned. As the analysis of the four exhibitions demonstrated, even within the general field of contemporary Canadian art, the temporary exhibition allows for an investigation into a wide range of issues and themes to an extent that is not possible within the permanent collection.

The tensions between the permanent and the temporary can be seen as parallel to the way in which Homi Bhabha argues for the double writing of the nation. There are important ways in which that which is implicit in Bhabha's use of the term 'double writing' - the coexistence of two temporalities in the narrative of the nation - can be projected onto a consideration of the exhibitionary complex of the museum. To review Bhabha's basic argument, he contrasts the pedagogical as the time of the nation, "a movement of becoming designated by *itself*, encapsulated in a succession of historical moments that represents an eternity by self-generation" (1990: 298), with the performative which disrupts the self-generation of the pedagogical by locating the meaning of nationhood or nationality in the experiences and interventions of smaller

subject formations. If we extend this framework onto our understanding of the relationship between the permanent collection and temporary exhibitions, we find certain parallels between the historical solidity of the permanent collection and the pedagogical time of the nation, and between the performative possibilities found in the local experiences of individuals and the transformative possibilities of the temporary exhibition. This is not to argue that Bhabha's project can be simply superimposed onto a different object, but to suggest that important productive parallels exist in the doubled experience of nationhood suggested in his analysis, and the differing presentations of Canadian art generated in the coexistence of the permanent collection and the temporary exhibition.

This conjuncture of the permanent and the temporary - the splitting along pedagogical and performative lines - is not as clear-cut as it first appears. The historical narrative that underscores the exhibition of historical Canadian art in the permanent collection becomes more fluid in the Contemporary Galleries. Here, the historicizing imperative, the ordering of objects and artworks to establish a coherent trajectory, disappears under the weight of contemporaneity. The changes in display in the Contemporary Galleries, often radical changes that serve to showcase recent purchases, bring objects together without placing them within an already historicized framework. In other words, the underlying ordering of the display can range from

contemporary First Nations art, to the work of recent Toronto painters, to the consideration of a specific theme; and as was argued earlier, these will not be inscribed within a chronological or historical narrative of artistic production. While their inclusion in the permanent collection imparts a certain historicizing of the objects, they do not function in the same linear or narrative fashion as do the historical works.

This is where the complexity of the relationship between the permanent collection and the temporary exhibition is most evident. Because the works in the Contemporary Galleries are not 'fixed' in a historical trajectory, they are increasingly subject to the same kind of testing or exploration that underscores the presentation of art in temporary exhibitions. Often the works that are included in the Contemporary Galleries are being considered for purchase, and are placed on display in order to see how they 'fit' both into the exhibition space, and with the other works on display. In many cases, works that are included in temporary exhibitions will be considered for purchase, and will eventually end up in the Gallery's permanent collection.⁷

What is implicit in the display of contemporary works of art in the permanent collection, is the knowledge that these works will eventually be positioned within the historical

⁷ Here one can see the overlap in the curator's functions of both organizing temporary exhibitions and purchasing works for the collection. In the period covered by this study of the National Gallery, curatorial responsibility in the areas of contemporary art and historical Canadian art have largely been the same two people: Diana Nemiroff and Charles Hill.

narrative of Canadian art history through the mediation of time. However, the form that this insertion will take is not necessarily evident; thus, while there is a certain assurance that works of art acquired by the Gallery have aesthetic and historical value and will eventually become part of Canadian art history, there is an accompanying uncertainty regarding the form this history will take, and the work's position within it. This double certainty / uncertainty makes for an open conception in the display of these works. The sense of openness also is underscored by the semi-annual modification of the display, and the thematic rather than historical or chronological ordering of work on the second floor. The temporary exhibitions discussed here are, on the other hand, much more closed than one would initially assume: because of their status as surveys, of presenting an overview of Canadian artistic production at a particular moment in time, these exhibitions tend toward a certain degree of finality.

Exhibitions of this type - large shows that bring together the work of disparate artists from a broad range of practices, geographic locations and aesthetic preoccupations - necessarily assume some coherent idea or premise under which this varied work can be understood. When the exhibitions are national in scope, when they bring together only the work of Canadian artists, the unifying element to the exhibition is already present. Any other link provides a second order of understanding of the works assembled, which can ultimately only be seen in relation to the works'

"Canadian" status . The closure that is effected in these temporary exhibitions is therefore directly related to their positions as surveys of the nation's artistic production at a specific point in time. It is, then, only in the conjunctural specificity of each exhibition that the articulations of the aesthetic and the nation of the temporary exhibition can be understood.

The *Canadian Biennial of Contemporary Art* provides an example of the kind of closure I am discussing. Explicitly configured as a survey of recent Canadian art, the exhibition was underscored by an assumption that it could provide the kind of total view of artistic production that a survey exhibition entails. Given that the *Biennial* was supposed to change locations across Canada over a ten-year period, that totality was provisional, existing only for the duration of the two-year period when the *Biennial* 'belonged' to the National Gallery. The organization of the catalogue as a trans-Canadian tour, and the articulation of aesthetic practice to local experience, assumed in this ordering as well as in the text itself, reinforced the sense of (regional and national) accountability that often accompanies the survey exhibition. In addition, the aesthetic legacy of the annual and biennial exhibitions organized by the National Gallery until 1968, and the historical stature of those exhibitions in establishing contemporary Canadian art and artists, also adds to the element of closure effectuated by the exhibitions.

This institutional mediation is yet another tension with regards to the framing of exhibitions of Canadian art at the Gallery. The limited temporality that is effected in the temporary exhibitions is nonetheless negotiated by its positioning within the walls of the National Gallery. As such, the potential weight given to the exhibition is markedly different from similar kinds of survey exhibitions on display in independent galleries (e.g., The Power Plant in Toronto), or in extra-institutional spaces such as the Centre international d'art contemporain's exhibitions of *Les Cents jours d'art contemporain*, of which the most memorable perhaps was *Aurora Borealis* from 1985. While similar exhibitions in these spaces can be equally comprehensive or far-reaching in scope, they have a different inflection in terms of a discussion of Canadian art than do those organized by and on display at the National Gallery. As the contemporary critiques of *Songs of Experience* and of the *Biennial* demonstrate, there is an underlying nationalist imperative that underscores these exhibitions at the National Gallery, which does not necessarily exist in exhibitions at other institutions. What remains to be seen is the way in which the specific articulations of this nationalist imperative occur in the Gallery's permanent collection, and in the exhibitions discussed above.

Articulating National Identity

Bhabha's conception of the pedagogical and the performative writing of the nation provides a means of assessing the different ways the permanent collection and temporary exhibitions each articulate the specificity of national identity and the aesthetic. For the permanent display of historical Canadian art, the chronological organization depends on a conception of the linear progression of history, on the stylistic development of artistic practice from the earliest painters to modernism. The reliance on traditional art historical categorizations to structure the display leads the viewer through a series of artistic progressions largely organized around artistic schools, or around a style or subject matter that is thought to identify a particular geographical area. The transposition of these categories from a universal 'art language' to the particular history of Canadian art bespeaks the concern within the permanent collection to legitimate its version of the history of art through an appeal to a more universal mode of classification and ordering. The specificity of the Canadian history of art, in particular its assertion of a 'national' style which reached its apogee with the Group of Seven, is then mapped onto the larger frame of the aesthetic.

The coherence of this national aesthetic and its implications for the exhibitionary narrative of historical Canadian art, should also be seen in terms of Schlesinger's argument regarding the significance of definitional struggles

in the formation of national identity. In this vein, the work of the Group of Seven provides a model for an understanding of Canadian art as embodying certain national principles. The ability of the paintings of the Group to capture the essence of the Canadian character is nevertheless central to the conception of art in Canada. Even when artists abandoned the formal search for the essential character of the nation, works of art by Canadian artists continued to be written into history in terms of this search. The establishment of an identifiable character of Canadian artistic production - a 'national' aesthetic - whether it is seen in terms of the concern with a particular subject matter (the landscape), or with a particular art form (installation, for example), nevertheless remains a quest for an essential character.⁸

Of equal consideration in the permanent collection - in particular in the Historical Galleries - is the stability of the conception of the nation that is implied. The parallel narratives of a developmental history of art in Canada with the establishment of an autonomous nation underscores the installation of art objects in the Gallery. These two central modernist discourses of progress are the foundation upon which the Canadian galleries, and the National Gallery's institutional identity, rest. In addition to its inscription within a national frame on an institutional level, the display contained in the National Gallery's Canadian rooms accomplishes a similar narrative of progress.

⁸ The question of essentialism, albeit within the context of feminist theory and practice, is convincingly debated in Fuss (1989).

The elements central to the articulation of Canadian identity in the Historical Galleries do not have the same resonance in contemporary art, but are nonetheless invoked in the four exhibitions under discussion. In what follows, the particular discursive regularities of Canadian art will be examined in order to trace out the ways in which they are variously deployed in the permanent collection and in the temporary exhibition. The question that emerges pertains to the nature of the discursive orderings that are mapped onto the exhibition of contemporary Canadian art. In this way, it is not a question of finding a narrative of national aesthetic in contemporary art that replaces the landscape-based nationalism of the Group of Seven, but to identify the regularities across the four temporary exhibitions that allow the mapping of the nation onto the aesthetic.

Because of the prominent position accorded the Group of Seven in Canadian art history, as well as in the National Gallery's permanent collection, the landscape has provided a central figure around which cultural production in Canada has been viewed. As I argued in Chapter Three, the recourse to the landscape to 'define' nationhood did not originate with the members of the Group of Seven, although their particular treatment of the landscape was appropriate for a time when the establishment of a national distinctness and autonomy was crucial. Figures of geography and the landscape in early Canadian film, literature, advertising, and the political tracts of the Canada First movement were articulated to the

formation of a unified Canadian identity. That this centrality of the landscape in the Canadian imaginary continues to exist to this day can be seen in its deployment in a number of scholarly, critical, and political venues. From Margaret Atwood's *Survival* (1972) and Gaile McGregor's *The Wacousta Syndrome* (1985), to a 1993 *Globe and Mail* op-ed piece and television ads for Canadian beer, the trope of the land, of geography, as the unifying element of contemporary definitions of national identity continues to figure in the work of many literary and cultural critics, and in popular culture.⁹

This appeal to the unificatory potential of the landscape can even be found in Canadian cultural policy. In the 1992 Report of the Standing Committee on Communications and Culture, *The Ties that Bind*, the land figures as one element that can give Canadians a sense of national unity over and above the elements that divide us:

It may seem trite, but it is true to say that one of the principal common bonds helping to tie this country together is our very diversity; not only our regional, ethnic, and linguistic diversity, but also the magnificent diversity of our landscape which is the grand natural environment that we all share as a common heritage. ... When we think of the many picturesque geographic features of Canada, we do so with a sense of belonging or sharing, virtually with a sense of owning. That is the feeling that we must also share about our fellow citizens and their cultural distinctions; each influences the other and each is part of us all. From these kinds of sentiments and emotions comes a

⁹ An important component of Atwood's and McGregor's conception of the land in Canadian identity, is the gendered nature of that conception. This gendering is also found in the highly masculinized description of the Group of Seven's paintings, which was directly related to the myth of their 'conquest' of nature through travel and paint.

sense of common Canadian citizenship, of belonging, of identity and of national unity. (1992: 19)

Among other things, this passage reveals the ends to which the landscape can be put in the constitution of a national sensibility. The land, geography, is transformed into culture: it is the stuff which forms 'our national heritage'; it can somehow be 'owned' and appropriated for the purposes of securing some form of affective identification with the abstract concept of nationhood. And in this linking of the eternal landscape with a temporally and spatially bound conception of the national formation, the idea of Canada as a nation, with all the concomitant notions of tradition and historical continuity, is legitimized by some sense of foundation in the past.

The question remains, however, as to why the landscape is invoked with such regularity and on so many different fronts. One reason might be the perception of its 'neutrality' (for lack of a better term): because of its 'naturalness', the land is conceived as ideologically unmotivated (empty). While it has of course been used for political ends - and the work of the Group of Seven is paradigmatic of this usage - it is perceived as a *tabula rasa*, a pure and empty container, within which messages can be freely inscribed. As Alex Wilson has argued, the 'availability' of the land for multiple purposes in Western culture - and specifically in Canadian culture - brings with it a sense of conquest and of ownership. This conquest mentality partially underscores the Group of Seven's use of

landscape in their art, and is the central element in Atwood's and McGregor's framing of national identity. For Wilson, this calls attention to the immanence of representations of nature: "all image nature as rough and pure, inanimate, uninhabited, unexplored - and in every important way separate from and subservient to human experience" (1990: 235-6).

Relatively few contemporary artists, however, engage with the trope of the landscape with anything but a certain irony or reflexivity. Thus David Thauberger's paintings in *Pluralities* explored the iconic nature of the landscape in Canada's articulation of national identity, and Greg Curnoe has addressed on a number of fronts the stature ascribed to the landscape. Also, as the work included in *Land Spirit Power* shows, contemporary First Nations artists articulate a very different connection to the land, a relationship that has nothing to do with the appeals to ownership and heritage voiced in the *Ties that Bind* report with reference to the nation. This attention to landscape and to geography, however, no longer holds the same depth of national feeling, no longer figures as a transparent representation of the nation with the same immediacy it had for the Group of Seven and the Canadian Group of Painters. In much contemporary Canadian art, the landscape - geography - is often couched in irony or imbricated with other discourses of technology, of the environment, or of an engagement with the landscape tradition in Canadian art history. In terms of the

exhibitions considered here, geography plays an important part in the organization of the catalogue for the *Canadian Biennial of Contemporary Art*, an organization that is couched in terms of the TransCanada highway, a mode of transportation that has taken over from the railroad as the symbol of Canadian unity. Thus, it is not surprising that the landscape has largely been replaced by regionalism as the element that would wed artistic practices across Canada.

Regionalism offers a different articulation of space than geography and, because of its inherent complexity, it has within it the possibility to negotiate the imperative towards securing a unified 'Canadian' character, while maintaining the provision for the articulation of a common sense of identity in Canada. The concept of regionalism allows the vast geographical territory that is Canada to be broken down into smaller, more manageable parcels which are perceived to have greater homogeneity on the levels of geography, culture and language. Within a postmodern context, the appeal to regionalism is all the more useful in terms of avoiding a monolithic or overarching narrative that presumes significance for all time and in all places. Politically, regionalism has served to highlight the concerns of the margin in the face of the more politically and economically powerful center. In this context, marginal status produces a homogeneous sensibility and solidarity that can be used to ensure that the needs of these regions are kept in the national agenda.

As a political and cultural force, regionalism has greater currency and believability in Canada than nationalism ever could because of its invocation of a local coherence that cannot be effected on a broader scale. However, implicit in the attempt to secure a regional sensibility are the same dilemmas and exclusions that confront the desire for a unified national identity. Writing about recent painting in Toronto, artist and critic Andy Fabo bemoans the contradiction between the openness of art making, and the need for closure and certainty by the critic. For Fabo, this is particularly problematic when attempts are made to speak of this art as somehow 'representative' of painting in Canada or in Toronto.

Identifiable buildings and locations would seem to be the most superficial indicators of regionalism. If there is a common bond that transcends the individual markmaking of these paintings, tying their work into a regional sensibility, it remains unspoken. (1984: 73)

Attempting to secure a regional sensibility in art production is thus as problematic as the search for a national aesthetic; and what often occurs is a slippage between the search for a regional sensibility and attention to regional representation. It is the tension between these two concepts that is of particular interest: the tension between the essentialism inherent in the concept of regional sensibility, and the attempt to disrupt the hegemony of the center that is characteristic of nationalism and internationalism, and that lies at the base of the concept of regional representation.

This tension is at the heart of exhibitions of Canadian art, because of the perceived necessity for Canadian artists to position themselves within national and international art worlds. In particular for the National Gallery whose mandate necessitates that exhibitions of Canadian art be evaluated according to its representation of the national character, articulating a sense of place becomes a litmus test for all work that passes through its doors. As many critics have noted, the close proximity to the United States - and in particular the close proximity of two of Canada's major cities, Montreal and Toronto, to New York City - not to mention the relatively minor art market that exists in Canada - has resulted in New York occupying the position of arbiter of contemporary Canadian art, rather than the National Gallery, or any other institution or critic in Canada. In addition, the desire among Canadian artists to 'make it' in New York has suggested to at least one critic, that attention to details that might assert a 'regional' (read 'Canadian') sensibility are being abandoned in favour of a more 'international' flavour. Robert Kleyn (1985) has characterized this tendency as the "site miscellaneous" quality of contemporary Canadian art because it is unlike other internationally successful art which is able to reclaim its national origins once it has been given legitimacy in New York.

Common to [Canadian artists] is the tendency to consider themselves and their art international first and Canadian second. When art does become international, it will have no difficulty

acknowledging its original site. Not so for Canadian art. This can be generalized as a uniquely Canadian phenomenon: precisely the product of a site, a groundstation for the continual build-up of American nationalism, Hollywood personalities, acid rain. The site miscellaneous quality of Canadian art can be treated as a difference to be explored and exhausted, then turned to advantage since it does appear and is recognized. (1985: 29)

Kleyn's argument underscores the particular contradictions of Canadian art: on the one hand, refusing to situate itself as part of a national aesthetic manifestation on the same level as the Group of Seven, while on the other, having that lack of specificity or absence of a formal national character become an identification of nation-ness. In addition, Kleyn argues, the establishment of a Canadian uniqueness is difficult to maintain in a milieu that is not highly differentiated from the one at home.

Kleyn's essay, however, poses the central problematic underlying the process of defining Canadian contemporary art: what makes an artist Canadian? Is it birth, or the place where the art is made? Is its identity located in a formal quality in the work, or in a particular use of media? As he succinctly states the issue: "If a Canadian artist in Rome is forever Canadian, why is an American artist in Halifax no longer an American?" (ibid.: 27). As the biographical data on the artists selected for the four temporary exhibitions suggests, places of origin have only a relative bearing on the constitution of artists as Canadian, or more specifically on artists' inclusion in an exhibition of Canadian art. Many of the artists included in these exhibitions were not born in

Canada, and some are not permanent residents.¹⁰ I am not trying to make an argument supporting a consonance between nationality and origin, particularly in light of the literature discussed in Chapter One. However, the question of definitions of national identity, as they relate to the artists and their work, have as much to do with points of origin as they do with quests for identifiable aesthetic characteristics. Kleyn's discussions of the vagaries of identifying Canadian artists only underscores the questions that are raised by the exhibitions themselves:

The image of art in art, the image of the artist become fundamental in a period when art can no longer be defined, only observed. Plagued by questions of identity, Canadian art often proposes prescriptive frameworks which easily lead to deciphering rather than interrogating the authority of the representation behind the presentation. This identity is posed in terms of recognition, recognition outside Canada. (ibid.: 29-30)

The pursuit of regionalism as an identificatory category, however, can be seen as one more instance of the tension between legislated identity and affective notions of belonging that troubles discussions of Canadian identity. In the National Gallery's 1985 *Collections Policy and Procedure*, there is the assertion that the Gallery's collection of contemporary Canadian art must "recognize and reflect the regional variety of Canadian art", including the acquisition of "representative examples of contemporary Inuit and Indian

¹⁰ Mia Westerlund (in *Pluralities*), for example, was born in New York and lived there at the time of the exhibition. The reasoning behind her inclusion in an exhibition of Canadian artists, was that her formative years, artistically, took place while she was living in Toronto (1964-1976).

art" (unpaginated). The 1985 policy develops more fully what had been implemented in the 1981 and 1983 Policies which simply stated, "The gallery should collect works in all media and from all regions of the country in order to represent fully the state of artistic creation in Canada at any given time." The concern with regional representativity underlies all policy documents written during the period under consideration. From Applebaum-Hébert to the more recent *Ties that Bind*, the imperative of statistical representation along regional lines - often reconfigured as politically defined provincial divisions - motivates cultural policy, particularly in its use in nation-building.

Ultimately, however, the question of regionalism is played out most fully in the temporary exhibitions, both as a way of selecting and ordering the works included in the exhibition and, amongst critics, as a yardstick against which to measure the National Gallery's performance of its national mandate. As a criterion of selection, the question of regional sensibility is reflected in the inclusion of artists from across Canada. The intentionalism of this attention to regional representation varies from exhibition to exhibition. In *Pluralities*, the decision to invite curators from various regions (Montreal, Ottawa, Saskatoon and Vancouver) suggests an awareness of a decentralized conception of art in Canada. The selection of artists by those curators, however, while providing a regional overview of artistic production across Canada, cannot be seen as a purposeful attention to

representativity, but more of a fortuitous occurrence given the nature of the selection process, and the autonomy of the curators from institutional mandates. As the catalogue states:

Whether acute or subliminal, regionalism has always been an inescapable factor in Canadian life, and thus in Canadian art; it is destined to remain inextricably bound to climate, geography, and population, as well as cultural and political history. A defense of individual experience against the dictates created by the tide of contemporary art could also be seen in the light of an age which subsumes local dialect through the international language of the media; in which continents are crossed in hours, and are usually perceived by the cultural personality of their capitals alone; and in which art itself is seen in magazine reproductions before it is experienced first hand, if ever. (Bradley, 1980: 14)

It is in the *Canadian Biennial of Contemporary Art* that the issue of a regional sensibility has the most play. The use of the metaphor of the Trans-Canada highway to structure the exhibition's catalogue, and as a vehicle to narrativize the curatorial process, gives a sense of the diversity of artistic practices across the country, while simultaneously providing an image of the unificatory potential of technology, a point which will be discussed in greater detail below. The organization of the catalogue by cities, and by the specific location of artists' work as emerging out of the urban center, carries with it an important consideration of the region as a central organizing metaphor, especially in view of the rejection of any kind of national essence that might now underpin the work of Canadian artists. By explicitly linking artistic practice to specific locations,

however, the essentialism of finding a *national* character in Canadian art is displaced onto the search for a local (regional) essence.

As a measure around which criticisms of the exhibitions were motivated, regional representation has been central to the evaluation of exhibitions organized by the National Gallery. In the *Biennial*, the neglect of the Atlantic provinces as a host for one of the proposed traveling biennials prompted a broader critique of the selection process of the works included in the National Gallery Biennial. Artists from Newfoundland, in particular, were outraged that no curator came to view the art being produced in the province, only to be faulted for not making themselves better known. Newfoundland's artists were further insulted when, in the map that provided the cover for the exhibition's catalogue - a map in which the 'centre' was empty - Newfoundland was entirely cut off. In *Songs of Experience*, many critics felt that the choice of artists, and of representation as the central theme, resulted in an uncritical reflection of what was going on in the art scene in Toronto at that time: a criticism that was bolstered by the observation that most of the artists in the exhibition were represented by one of three large Toronto galleries. Beyond the question of formal considerations, however, it was felt that, in terms of numbers, the centre - i.e., Montreal and Toronto - was unfairly privileged over the other cities and regions of Canada. The severest criticism leveled at

Songs of Experience, however, was aimed at the absence of Francophone artists among the fifteen selected, and this brought the question of representativity in exhibitions of Canadian art to a completely different level.

As a discursive regularity that overlaps the consideration of regionalism in the negotiation of national identity, the question of language and representation has occupied centre stage in discussions of national unity and identity since the Task Force on Bilingualism and Biculturalism made it an issue in the 1960s. While regional diversity in the rest of the country has largely been based on geographic and economic - if not territorial - conditions, in Quebec, language has figured as the primary locus of cultural distinctness and political autonomy. The specific articulation of language and culture in Quebec nationalism differentiates it from the rest of Canada, where the question of language (or even of dialect) is just one more element in the production of local or regional sensibilities. In Quebec, language is the central tenet of cultural identity and values, extending not only across cultural production, but to the situatedness of Québécois artistic practices within a particular intellectual and cultural history.

The importance of the imbrication of language and culture in Québécois culture came to the fore in the criticism generated by the absence of Francophone artists from Quebec in *Songs of Experience*. The main elements of the debate involved not only the apparent disregard of French-

speaking artists from Quebec but also the crucial issue in the appropriation and translation of French texts into English in the work of the (Anglophone) artists selected. As the debate was played out, it became evident that at the core was the issue of representativity, and that the National Gallery's mandate, which in the words of the 1990 Museums Act involved "promoting the heritage of Canada and all its peoples" was both a political and a cultural imperative. However, as Johanne Lamoureux has suggested, the impetus of cultural institutions, national or otherwise, to occupy a position of "statistical correctness" does not necessarily mean that the representation of marginalized voices ensures attention to what they are saying, and does not contribute to a better understanding of the complexity of artistic production in Canada:

En complexifiant avec la statistique l'emprise antérieure de la géographie nationale, Nemiroff [in the *Biennial*] rectifie la représentation (binaire) antérieure du pays, jugée non sans motif dépassée, et établit dorénavant la représentativité sur des bases démographiques autant que territoriales. On notera aussi le postulat implicite que les données démographiques et l'orchestration des enjeux qui leur sont liés travaillent la communauté des arts visuels selon le même pourcentage et selon les mêmes priorités que celles indiquées par les statistiques de la société canadienne en général. La communauté artistique est donc pensée comme un macrocosme qui reflète fidèlement la société que par ailleurs elle déconstruit ou analyse, dénonce ou parodie. (1990: 52)

As the recurrence of the issue of representativity in both modes of display at the National Gallery suggests, the statistical imperative has a strong hold over the way in which the nation is configured. Delimited by language or

regional character, the articulation of these social and political formations in terms of national representativity makes them containable within the broader framework of national identity in Canada. In addition, the question of language must be seen through the screen of official bilingualism, manifested in the National Gallery, as in all other federal agencies, in the dual language of exhibition catalogues and other documents. Again, as the critical reactions to *Songs of Experience* make evident, the translation of words is not enough when the specificity of an entire cultural history has been ignored. The apparent assumption that the translation can stand in for appropriated and therefore marginalized voices is characteristic of federal cultural agencies and of cultural policy in general, which assumes that adhering to the precepts of official bilingualism will automatically satisfy the political and aesthetic situatedness of Québécois practice.

So what of national identity as a unifying concept in Canada? While most writers have been content to examine national identity as a historically specific question which has increasingly less relevance to contemporary identities, there remains a feeling - if not a desire - for some trope or figure that might serve as a unificatory discourse. One of these is technology.

There is a long tradition of philosophical definitions of Canadian identity in terms of technology, particularly evident in the writings of George Grant, Harold Innis, and

more recently, Arthur Kroker. Informed by the rise of cultural technologies, and the subsequent protectionist governmental reaction to what was seen as the American encroachment on Canadian culture, early writing on the nation-building potential of technology provided an important counterpoint to the tradition of seeking a unificatory discourse in geography. More recently, the interest of many contemporary Canadian artists in the uses of new media - particularly video and virtual reality - has led some critics to confer on technology the status of a national cultural characteristic. The search for a new locus for the development of a homogeneous identity, even as we announce its impossibility in the renunciation of modernist meta-narratives, is countered by the importance ascribed to technology in postmodern practice and its putative ability to create the 'global village'. However, the uses to which technology has been put by Canadian artists and philosophers, and the historical perception of Canada as a technological empire - from the Railways to Virtual Reality - puts technology in the potential position of a unifying theme.

In his essay "Northern Noises" (1994), Bruce Ferguson examines the search for a unifying national discourse by outlining what he sees as the two grand narratives of aesthetic modernity in Canada: geography and technology. The first narrative, what Ferguson terms "The Grand Silence," follows on the modernist notion of the single alienated subject, and considers Canadian artists' historical

preoccupation with the visual representation of the land. The other exemplary narrative of Canadian modernism according to Ferguson is "The Technological Empire" which extends from the establishment of the railway as a means of physically uniting the country, to current debates on the function of the CBC.

Here, the subject is inscribed by and enmeshed in an environment of (past) transportation and (present) telecommunications in a country always in the hopeful state of becoming a unity through institutional networks. "The Technological Empire" finds the subject of its discourse more complexly alienated from the country due to its sheer cultural diversity and overwhelming physical dimensions. One scenario tries to overcome the rupture by utilizing positivistic measures of technocracy. Or, conversely, the expanded technocratic system is seen as the very cause of social alienation. However, in both the technophilic and technophobic responses, "The Technological Empire" remains the more fully articulated narrative of Canadian modernism to date. (1994: 67)

While nature and technology might appear at first glance to be polarized as discourses, for Ferguson they both speak to a particular conception of the alienation of the modern subject and "both are jingoistic in their affiliation to a national construction of this alienation"(ibid.: 68).

Ultimately, however, pointing to the coexistence of geographical and technological discourses in articulations of Canadian identity is not a new argument. As Ferguson rightly indicates, the impetus for the first 'technological' development in Canada, the railway, was precisely the need to overcome the limitations imposed by geography on national building. That this technological solution has now become a potent geographical symbol is made evident in the popularity

of the (now-defunct) Western train line, that enables riders to "see" the diversity of the Canadian landscape. As Alex Wilson reminds us,

Any discussion of how to represent the land in contemporary Canada must recognize how thoroughly technologized Canadian society is. We inhabit the margins of American empire, and American modernity (and post-modernity) saturates our culture. Living in the time and space that we do - an urbanized society strung along the US border, with a vast and sparsely settled hinterland - our experience of the natural world is mediated by an accumulation of agricultural, resource and transport technologies. (Wilson, 1990:.241)

For other writers seeking an overarching thematic that can be located across the work of Canada's artistic production, the regularities of Canadian culture are variously located in a concern with irony (Linda Hutcheon), memory (Mark Cheetham), or invisibility (Anthony Wilden). That ultimately all these categories are elements of 'universal' postmodernist discourses does not lessen the effectiveness of their application within the Canadian context, or the claims they make to constituting the 'real' representation of Canada.

What the examination of these figures of national identity offers an analysis of the display of art in the National Gallery, is an understanding of the tensions between a legislated identity and an affective belonging. An inherent danger of listing a series of characteristics that can be used to define nationhood is that one might be seen as more 'authentic' or 'real' than another, and thus worthy of greater consideration. The figures that have been elaborated

as central to an understanding of articulations of national identity in Canada - geography, regionalism, language and technology - should not be seen as exhausting the possibility that other tropes exist, but as a range of elements that have characterized a series of exhibitions within a particular cultural setting. As a national institution, the National Gallery has a mandate of inclusion on the basis of representation. And the power of that mandate can be seen in the critical reaction to both the *Songs of Experience* and the *Biennial* exhibitions, which were seen to have 'failed' largely because they neglected to include representatives from all regions of Canada (or rather, because they failed to include the 'correct' representation from all regions).

As a particular set of discursive orderings, the exhibitions that have been considered in this thesis have proposed a specific articulation of Canadian art. While of interest in and of themselves, they have particular relevance in terms of their formulation of a perspective on Canadian art only when they are seen in tandem with the display of the permanent collection. The regularities that inform these orderings - the points of similarity and of contradiction which underscore the work chosen for display - demonstrate that there is not one narrative of Canadian identity at work at the National Gallery. Rather, it is in the imbrication of permanent collection and temporary exhibition, of historical solidity and temporal specificity, that the Gallery's nation-building mandate can be seen in all its complexity. As the

interplay between the temporary exhibitions suggest - their appearance at particular temporal junctures, their articulations of political issues, their integration of earlier criticism - it is only in their conjunctural relationship that their position within the national cultural field can be gauged. As this analysis demonstrates, the articulations of national identity at the National Gallery can only be seen in terms of the complexity of tensions between aesthetic, political and nationalist discourses.

Conclusion

We believe that the national Gallery of Canada in bringing together the best works of artists through time and across the country makes visible both what we hold and value in common and the rich diversity of our viewpoints and traditions. As one form of cultural expression, the visual arts serve as a record of who and where and how we were. Today that record is part of our common heritage, an expression of our national identity in the landscape, peaceful or rugged, majestic or humble, and in the faces of the settlers, ecclesiastics, homesteaders, coureurs des bois, soldiers and native people who have preceded us. (National Gallery Director, Shirley L. Thomson, 1991: 6)

This thesis explored the articulations of national identity at the National Gallery of Canada. In particular, it examined the various sites that compose the institution as an exhibitionary complex. In order to extend the analysis beyond a synthesis the Gallery's nation-building mandate, I conceived of this enquiry in terms of a discursive analysis of a series of exhibitions within a twelve-year period. Of particular interest in this research was to find an analytic model that would enable me to look at the specific articulations of the aesthetic and nationhood as they took place at the National Gallery between 1980 and 1992. By concentrating the analysis on the display of Canadian art in both the permanent collection, and across four temporary exhibitions that took place at Gallery, I posited a view of the museal and its activities that rested on the specific discursive orderings of the exhibitions themselves. From the

examination of both exhibitionary forms, I was able to propose a reading of the discursive articulations of the aesthetic and the nation as they occurred at the National Gallery between 1980 and 1992.

I first looked at the literature on the nation for an analysis that took into account the processes of national formation rather than a homogeneous and solid view of the nation or of nationalism. The characterization of the nation as an imagined community proposed by Benedict Anderson was a first step in a broader consideration of the formation of national identity, rather than an analysis of 'the nation' as a conceptual or culturally specific entity.

Of greater interest to the project of this thesis was the analyses put forward by Philip Schlesinger and Homi Bhabha. For Schlesinger, the formation of national identity is seen in terms of its collective character (i.e., as a form of collective identity), and as such, is constituted across a series of definitional and counterdefinitional struggles. The idea of struggles over conceptual and affective definitions of identity (be it national, racial or gendered) is echoed in the work of Homi Bhabha who sees the writing of the nation occurring across the temporal frame of the pedagogical (a static and self-generating conception of the nation) and the performative (which he describes in terms of a process of affective investment in the nation). The concept of affect as theorized by Lawrence Grossberg was particularly useful in understanding the mediating role of culture in the formation

of national belongings. Of related interest was Gramsci's formulation of the national-popular as a way into the constitution of discourses of nationhood and national identity through culture.

To better understand the role of cultural institutions in the construction of nationhood, I then examined recent writing on the museum, specifically around its almost simultaneous origins with the nation. Of particular interest in this literature was the writing that focused on the interrelation of objects on display and the museum's publics. While Carol Duncan and Alan Wallach have been considering this question since the early 1980s, it is the work of theorists such as Tony Bennett and Mieke Bal who address the discursive implications of exhibitions and exhibitionary narratives, which has greater pertinence to this project. Of particular interest is the writing of Dutch scholar Mieke Bal who proposes "narratology imbricated with rhetoric" as a means through which to understand the display narratives of museums. The importance of this project is that it allows a reading of the exhibition in discursive terms. As part of the analysis of the discourses of the institution, I examined the disciplinary formation of art history particularly for its structuring of the display in the permanent collection. As Donald Preziosi has argued, an analysis of the modalities of art history as a discipline is important for an understanding of art history's role in the ordering of the aesthetic in the museum. As the analysis of the permanent collection of the

National Gallery showed, however, the development of an artistic tradition in Canadian art brings with it a different articulation of the nation.

Central to the discussion of the exhibition of historical Canadian art was the linear narrative of artistic production that was proposed in the permanent collection of historical Canadian art. As the layout of the galleries and the disposition of the paintings suggest, the permanent collection is organized along the lines of a developmental history of Canadian art, particularly seen in terms of the emergence of a distinct Canadian aesthetic. This aesthetic organization also underscores the parallel development of Canada as an autonomous nation. The organization of contemporary art, however, was not framed by an overarching historical narrative. Rather, as the analysis of the different orderings in the Lorne and the Safdie buildings showed, contemporary art evidences a different conception of a national artistic production. The ordering of the display of contemporary art in the Safdie building places works by Canadian artists alongside the work of non-Canadian artists, underlining the end of the need for a separate national trajectory. Rather, this display emphasizes the increasing prominence of Canadian art on the international art scene, and thus the absence of a need for Canadian art to produce at a formal level, a 'Canadian' aesthetic.

This does not mean that contemporary Canadian art (or National Gallery exhibitions of this work) is no longer

implicated in the building of national identity. As the analysis of the four temporary exhibitions demonstrated, questions of the nation and of national identity recur across the survey exhibitions of contemporary Canadian art. But the articulation of Canadian-ness in these exhibitions no longer takes place at the formal level of the artworks themselves. Instead, it is the ordering of the exhibitions, the processes of inclusion and exclusion that accompany the group show that make evident the issues around which national identity and the aesthetic are articulated. Specifically, these articulations should be seen in terms of representation, and the representativity of the exhibitions (and the debates over the nature of these representations) along the lines of region, language and in a reinterpreted sense of geography. While these are not the essential characteristics that had defined Canadian art during the period of the Group of Seven, they are still important for the way in which they highlight the terms of the debate around national identity and affective belonging.

In the analysis of exhibitionary discourses within the museum, I argued that the choice and selection of artworks for exhibition are part of a larger frame of analysis which is the museal enterprise more generally and, of utmost importance, the discipline of art history itself. This is where the differences between the historical Canadian galleries and the Contemporary Galleries are most apparent: the Historical Galleries are framed by the disciplinary

formation of art history, in particular, the focus of art history in Canada, which involves the establishment of a Canadian aesthetic that situates Canada as a post-colonial nation. The Contemporary Galleries, on the other hand, are more greatly involved in the process of art history-making - in other words, since contemporary art is not yet subject to 'historicization' (of being placed in history), the relevant frame is the art market and the idea of the collector, practices which are more involved in the process of *making* art history, than of situating oneself within an already existing discipline or narrative.

An additional frame is that of the National Gallery itself, and in particular its status as a national institution with the accompanying aura of leadership in the realm of the visual arts. Also important to consider is its historical stature as a major institution within the Canadian art world. While I am in no way suggesting that the institution dictates the meaning of what is contained within its walls, the institutional nation-building discourse of the National Gallery necessarily adds a particular tenor to the exhibitions contained within, adding another layer of meaning onto the reading of the exhibitions of Canadian and contemporary art on display therein.

What I hope this thesis demonstrates is that the mechanisms through which the National Gallery articulates Canadian identity are not as monolithic and hierarchical as its federal mandate suggests. Rather, as the analyses of the

permanent display of Canadian art and the various temporary exhibitions organized by the Gallery show, this articulation occurs in the conjuncture of the permanent collection and the temporary exhibition, of historical Canadian and contemporary Canadian, and with the broader social, political and aesthetic discourses that frame our relations to the nation. As I concluded in the final chapter, the articulations of national identity and the aesthetic can only be understood in the imbrication of the exhibitionary discourses of the permanent collection and the temporary exhibition. It is in this conjuncture that the aesthetic, as it is constituted in the National Gallery, can mediate between the legislated identity inscribed in governmental politics, and an affective understanding of national belongings that are constituted across the social formation of the nation.

Bibliography

- Acland, Joan. (1989) *Architecture and Ideology The National Gallery of Canada: (A Reading of the Architecture Using Feminist and Postmodernist Theory)*. Unpublished M.A. Dissertation, Concordia University.
- Allor, Martin and Michelle Gagnon. (1994) *L'État de culture : généalogie discursive des politiques culturelles québécoises*. Montréal: GREEC.
- Althusser, Louis. (1971) *Lenin and Philosophy and other Essays*. New York and London: Monthly Review Press.
- Anderson, Benedict. (1991) *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Revised edition. London and New York: Verso.
- "Atlantic Canada invited to take part in Biennial" (1989), *The Globe and Mail* [Toronto], December 13.
- Atwood, Margaret. (1972) *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature*. Toronto: Anansi Press Limited.
- Babinska, Anna. (1980) "Pluralities 1980 Pluralités at the National Gallery", *artmagazine*, Vol. 12, No. 51, November/December, pp. 33-8.
- Baele, Nancy. (1983) "Some Artists Want Gallery to Change Course", *The Ottawa Citizen*, May 3.
- Bal, Mieke. (1994) "Telling Objects: A Narrative Perspective on Collecting", in John Elsner and Roger Cardinal, (eds) *The Cultures of Collecting*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.
- _____. (1992) "Telling, Showing, Showing Off", *Critical Inquiry*, No. 18, Spring, pp. 556-594.
- _____. (1991) *Reading "Rembrandt": Beyond the Word-Image Opposition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- _____. (1985) *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*. Translated by Christine van Boheemen. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- _____. (a) *The Discourse of Museology*. Unpublished manuscript, no date.
- _____. (b) *The Semiotics of the Museum*. Unpublished manuscript, no date.

- Bann, Stephen. (1984) *The Clothing of Clio*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Barnard, Elissa. (1989) "Invitation Fails to Salve Galleries' Pride", *The Chronicle-Herald* [Halifax], December 7.
- Barrett, Michèle. (1991) *The Politics of Truth, from Marx to Foucault*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Beer, Evelyn and Riet de Leeuw (eds). (1989) *L'Exposition imaginaire: The Art of Exhibiting in the Eighties*. Gravenhage.
- Belting, Hans. (1987) *The End of the History of Art: Reflections on Contemporary Art and Contemporary Art History*. Translated by Christopher S. Wood. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.
- Benjamin, Walter. (1969) *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*. Edited and with an introduction by Hannah Arendt. Translated by Harry Zohn. New York: Schocken Books.
- Bennett, Tony. (1995) *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics*. London and New York: Routledge.
- _____. (1992) "Useful Culture", *Cultural Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 3, pp. 395-408.
- _____. (1989) "The Exhibitionary Complex", *New Formations*, Vol. XX, No. 4, pp. 73-102.
- _____. (1988) "Museums and 'the people'", in Robert Lumley (ed.) *The Museum Time Machine*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Berger, Carl. (1966) "The True North Strong and Free", in Peter Russell (ed.) *Nationalism in Canada*. Toronto: McGraw Hill.
- Berland, Jody. (1989) "Weathering the North: Climate, Colonialism and the Mediated Body", *Provincial Essays*, Vol. 8, pp. 31-43.
- Bhabha, Homi. (1990a) "DissemiNation: time, narrative, and the margins of the modern nation", in Homi Bhabha (ed.) *Nation and Narration*. London and New York: Routledge.
- _____. (1990b) "The Third Space", in Jonathan Rutherford (ed.) *Identity, Community, Culture, Difference*. London: Lawrence and Wishart.
- Blom, Willem A. (research curator) (1964) *The National Gallery of Canada, Illustrated Guide to the Collections*. Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada.

Blouin, René and Normand Thériault. (1985) *Aurora Borealis*. Montreal: Centre International d'Art Contemporain.

Blundell, Valda. (1989) "The Tourist and the Native", in Bruce Cox, Jacques Chevalier and Valda Blundell (eds) *A Different Drummer: Readings in Anthropology with a Canadian Perspective*. Ottawa and Carleton: The Anthropology Caucus.

Boddy, Trevor. (1988) "Critique: Architecture on the Fast Track", *The Canadian Architect*, June, pp. 44-9.

Boggs, Jean Sutherland. (1988) "The New National Gallery of Canada", *Apollo*, No. 127, May, pp. 308-10.

_____. (1971) *The National Gallery of Canada*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.

Bommes, Michael and Patrick Wright. (1982) "'Charms of Residence': The Public and the Past", in R. Johnson, G. McLennan, B. Schwarz and D. Sutton (eds) *Making Histories: Studies in History-Making and Politics*. London: Hutchinson.

Bowen, Lisa Balfour. (1980) "Foreign Experts Like our Art but Wide Audience Lacking", *The Toronto Star*, November 15.

Bradley, Jessica. (1980) *Pluralities/1980/Pluralités*. Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada.

Bradley, Jessica and Lesley Johnstone (eds). (1994) *Sight Lines: Reading Contemporary Canadian Art*. Montreal: Artextes editions.

Bradley, Jessica and Diana Nemiroff. (1986) *Songs of Experience*. Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada.

Bronson, AA and Peggy Gale (eds). (1983) *Museums by Artists*. Toronto: Art Metropole.

Burgin, Victor. (1986) *The End of Art Theory: Criticism and Postmodernity*. Houndmills and London: Macmillan Education Ltd.

Burnett, David and Marilyn Schiff. (1983) *Contemporary Canadian Art*. Edmonton: Hurtig Publishers Ltd. in co-operation with the Art Gallery of Ontario.

Cameron, Duncan F. (1971) "The Museum, a Temple or the Forum". *Curator*. Vol. XIV. No. 1. p.17.

Campbell, Robert. (1983) "Canada: National Gallery that Is a Symbol of National Pride", *Architecture*, Vol. 77, September, pp. 98-103.

- Canada. (1992) Parliament, House of Commons Standing Committee on Communications and Culture, *Culture and Communications: The Ties that Bind*. Ottawa: House of Commons.
- Canada. (1990) Department of Communications, *Canadian Museum Policy*. Ottawa: Communications Canada.
- Canada. (1989) *Bill C-12, An Act Respecting Museums*. Second Session, 34th Parliament, 38 Elizabeth II. Ottawa: House of Commons.
- Canada. (1988) *Challenges and Choices: Federal Policy and Program Proposals for Canadian Museums*. Ottawa: Communications Canada.
- Canada. (1986) *Report and Recommendations of the Task Force Charged with Examining Federal Policy Concerning Museums*. Tabled September 25. Ottawa: Department of Communications.
- Canada. (1983) *A Building Programme for the New National Gallery of Canada*. Ottawa: Canada Museums Construction Corporation.
- Canada. (1982) *Report of the Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee*. Ottawa: Department of Communications.
- Canada. (1967) *Statutes of Canada. An Act to Establish a Corporation for the Administration of the National Museums of Canada*. Assented to 21st of December. Ottawa: Parliament of Canada.
- Canada. (1913) *Statutes of Canada. An Act to Incorporate the National Gallery of Canada*. Assented to Sixth of June. Ottawa: Parliament of Canada.
- Canadian Museums Association. (1988) "Museums and the First Nations", *Muse*, Special Issue, Fall.
- CARFAC. (1990) "Our Policy Regarding the National Gallery", *Art Action*, Spring/Summer.
- Carpenter, Ken. (1980) "Contemporary Art at the National Gallery of Canada: Some Issues of Policy", *artmagazine*, May/June, pp. 34-9.
- Celant, Germano. (1982) "A Visual Machine: Art Installation and its Modern Archetypes", *Documenta 2*, Vol. 7.
- Charland, Maurice. (1986) "Technological Nationalism", *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory*, Vol. X, No. 1-2, pp. 196-220.

Chatterjee, Partha. (1993) *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Cheetham, Mark. (1991) *Remembering Postmodernism: Trends in Recent Canadian Art*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.

Clifford, James. (1988) *The Predicament of Culture, 20th Century Ethnography, Literature and Art*. Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press.

Collins, Richard. (1990) *Culture, Communication, and National Identity: The Case of Canadian Television*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Conforti, Michael. (1986) "Hoving's Legacy Reconsidered," *Art in America*, Vol. 74, No. 6, June, pp. 18-22.

Connor, Steven. (1989) *Postmodernist Culture: An Introduction to the Theories of the Contemporary*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Coombes, Annie E. (1992) "Inventing the 'Postcolonial': Hybridity and Constituency in Contemporary Curating", *New Formations*, No. 18, Winter, pp. 39-52.

Coombes, Annie E. (1988) "Museums and the Formation of National and Cultural Identities", *The Oxford Art Journal*, Vol. 11, No. 2, pp. 57-68.

Corner, John and Sylvia Harvey. (1991) *Enterprise and Heritage: Crosscurrents of National Culture*. London and New York: Routledge.

Crean, Susan M. (1976) *Who's Afraid of Canadian Culture?*. Don Mills, ON: General Publishing Co. Limited.

Crimp, Douglas. (1993) *On the Museum's Ruins*. With photographs by Louise Lawler. Cambridge, MA, and London: MIT Press.

_____. (1987) "The End of Art and the Origin of the Museum", *The Art Journal*, Vol. 46, Winter, pp. 261-266.

Crook, Barbara. (1983) "Artists' Report Raps National Gallery", *The Ottawa Citizen*, June 30.

"Débats/Issues - Biennale canadienne d'art contemporain", (1990) review, *Parachute*, No. 58, pp. 52-4.

Dickson, Jennifer. (1979a) "ARThink", *Ottawa Review*, November 29-December 8.

_____. (1979b) *A Study of the National Gallery of Canada. For Canadian Artists' Representation*, March-June.

Dompierre, Louise and Alvin Balkind. (1987) (in cooperation with Bruce Ferguson and Blaine Allan) *Toronto: A Play of History (Jeu d'histoire)*. Toronto: The Power Plant.

Donato, Eugenio. (1979) "The Museum's Furnace: Notes Towards a Contextual Reading of *Bouvard and Pécuchet*", in Josué Harrari (ed.) *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Downton, Dawn Rae. (1990) "Tempest at Toad Hall", *Arts Atlantic* 37, Vol. 10, No. 1, pp. 47-8.

Duncan, Ann. (1989) "Curator Put New Life into Canadian Biennial", *The Gazette* [Montreal], October 14, p. H5.

Duncan, Carol. (1995) *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Museums*. London and New York: Routledge.

_____. (1991) "Art Museums and the Ritual of Citizenship", in Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine (eds.) *Exhibiting Cultures, The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*. Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press.

_____. (1989) "The MoMA's Hot Mamas", *Art Journal*, Summer, pp. 171-8.

_____ and Alan Wallach. (1980) "The Universal Survey Museum," *Art History*, Vol. 3, No. 4, Winter, pp. 448-468.

_____ and Alan Wallach. (1978) "The Museum of Modern Art as Late Capitalist Ritual: An Iconographic Analysis," *Marxist Perspectives*, Winter, pp. 28-51.

Elsner, John and Roger Cardinal (eds). (1994) *The Cultures of Collecting*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994.

Fabo, Andy. (1984) "Nationalism / Internationalism / Regionalism", *C magazine*, No. 3, Fall, pp. 71-74.

Falk, Lorne. (1986) "Country Music", *Vie des arts*, Vol. 31, No. 124, Fall, pp. 26-9.

Ferguson, Bruce W. (1994) "Northern Noises", in Jessica Bradley and Lesley Johnstone (eds) *Sight Lines: Reading Contemporary Canadian Art*. Montreal: Artextes editions.

Fisher, Jean. (1987) "The Health of the People is the Highest Law", *Third Text* 2, pp. 63-75.

Fleischer, Alain. (1986) "Portrait d'un musée ou la photogénie des lieux", *Cahiers du musée national d'art moderne*, 17/18, pp. 198-203.

- Fleras, Augie and Jean Leonard Elliott. (1992) *The 'Nations Within', Aboriginal-State Relations in Canada, the United States, and New Zealand*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.
- Forgacs, David. (1984) "National-Popular: Genealogy of a Concept", in *Formations of Nation and People*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Foucault, Michel. (1991) *Remarks on Marx: Conversations with Duccio Trombadori*. Translated by R. James Goldstein and James Cascaito. New York: Semiotext(e).
- _____. (1980) *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews & Other Writings, 1972-1977*. Edited by Colin Gordon. Translated by Colin Gordon et al. New York: Pantheon Books.
- _____. (1978) "Politics and the Study of Discourse", *Ideology and Consciousness*, No. 3, pp. 7-26.
- _____. (1977) *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*. Edited by Donald F. Bouchard. Translated by Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- _____. (1972) *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*. Translated by A.M. Sheridan Smith. New York: Pantheon Books.
- _____. (1970) *L'Ordre du discours*. Paris: Editions Gallimard.
- Freedman, Adele. (1980) "The National Gallery Flounders in Red Tape", *The Globe and Mail* [Toronto], November 22.
- _____. (1979) "The Mess at the National Gallery", *The Globe and Mail* [Toronto], June 7.
- Fry, Jacqueline. (1994) "The Museum in A Number of Recent Works", in Jessica Bradley and Lesley Johnstone (eds) *Sight Lines: Reading Contemporary Canadian Art*. Montreal: Artexes editions.
- Fuss, Diana. (1989) *Essentially Speaking: Feminism, Nature and Difference*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Gellner, Ernest. (1983) *Nations and Nationalism*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Ghafouri, Mehdi. (1987) "The Museum Building and Its Architectural Expression", *Parachute*, No. 46, pp. 94-101.
- Gilroy, Paul. (1991) *'There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack': The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Godfrey, Stephen. (1989) "Exclusion From Biennial Prompts Protest", *The Globe and Mail* [Toronto], December 6.

Gramsci, Antonio. (1971) *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, edited and translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith. New York: International Publishers.

_____. (1985) *Selections from Cultural Writings*, edited by David Forgacs and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, translated by William Boelhower. Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press.

Grant, George. (1995) *Lament for a Nation, The Defeat of Canadian Nationalism*. Carleton Library Series No. 50 edition. Ottawa: Carleton University Press.

Gravel, Claire. (1989) "La Crise du sens de l'art actuel", *Le Devoir* [Montreal], October 7.

Greenberg, Clement. (1973) "Modernist Painting", in *The New Art: A Critical Anthology*, edited by Gregory Battcock, revised edition. New York: E.P. Dutton, pp. 66-77.

Gritton, Joy. (1992) "Cross-Cultural Education vs. Modernist Imperialism: The Institute of American Indian Arts", *Art Journal*, Vol. 51, No. 3, Fall.

Grossberg, Lawrence. (1992) *We Gotta Get Out of This Place: Popular Conservatism and Postmodern Culture*. London and New York: Routledge.

_____. (1988a) *It's a Sin: Essays on Postmodernism, Politics, and Culture*. Sidney: Power Publications.

_____. (1988b) "Postmodernity and Affect: All Dressed Up With No Place to Go", *Communication*, Vol. 10, pp. 271-293.

_____. (1984) "Strategies of Marxist Cultural Interpretation", *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 392-421.

Hall, Stuart. (1993) "Culture, Community, Nation", *Cultural Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 3, October, pp. 349-363.

_____. (1990) "Cultural Identity and Diaspora", in Jonathan Rutherford (ed.) *Identity, Community, Culture, Difference*. London: Lawrence and Wishart.

_____. (1988) *The Hard Road to Renewal: Thatcherism and the Crisis of the Left*. London and New York: Verso.

_____. (1985) "Signification, Representation, Ideology: Althusser and the Post-Structuralist Debates", *Critical*

Studies in Mass Communication, Vol. 2, No. 2, June, pp. 91-114.

_____, Bob Lumley and Gregor McLennan (1978) "Politics and Ideology: Gramsci", in Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (eds) *On Ideology*. London: Hutchinson.

Handforth, Robert. (1980-1) "Pluralities/1980/Pluralités", *artscanada*, No. 238/239, December/January, pp. 35-9.

Haraway, Donna. (1991) *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. New York: Routledge.

_____. (1989) *Primate Visions: Gender, Race and Nature in the World of Modern Science*. New York and London: Routledge.

Harper, John Russell. (1977) *Painting in Canada, A History*. Second edition, Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Harris, Cole. (1966) "The Myth of the Land in Canadian Nationalism", in Peter Russell (ed.) *Nationalism in Canada*. Toronto: McGraw Hill.

Harris, Lawren. (1926) "Revelation of Art in Canada", *The Canadian Theosophist*. Vol. 7, No. 5, July, pp. 85-8.

Harrison, Julia. (1988) (with Bruce Trigger and Michael Ames) "Point/Counterpoint: Museums and Politics: *The Spirit Sings* and the Lubicon Boycott", *Muse*, Vol. VI, No. 3, pp. 12-25.

Hennion, Antoine. (1993) "L'Histoire de l'art : leçons sur la médiation", *Réseaux*, No. 60, pp. 9-37.

Hill, Charles. (1991) "The National Gallery, a National Art, Critical Judgment and the State", in Michael Tooby (ed.) *The True North : Canadian Landscape Painting 1896-1939*. London: Barbican Art Gallery.

_____. (1980) "To Found a National Gallery: The Royal Canadian Academy of Arts 1880-1913", *National Gallery of Canada Journal*, No. 36, pp. 1-8.

Hobsbawm, E.J. (1990) *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, myth, reality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

_____, and Terence Ranger (eds). (1992) *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press / Canto edition.

Holmes, Jeffrey. (ed.) (1983) *A Little Applebert, A Concise Version of the Report of the Federal Cultural Policy Review Committee*. Ottawa: Canadian Conference of the Arts.

- Horne, Donald. (1986) *The Public Culture: The Triumph of Industrialism*. London, Sydney: Pluto Press.
- _____. (1984) *The Great Museum: The Re-presentation of History*. London and Sydney: Pluto Press.
- Houle, Robert. (1991) "Sovereignty over Subjectivity", *C magazine* 30, Summer, pp. 28-35.
- Housser, F.B. (1926) *A Canadian Art Movement: The Story of the Group of Seven*. Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada.
- Hutcheon, Linda. (1991) *Splitting Images, Contemporary Canadian Identities*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.
- Innis, Harold A. (1986) *Empire and Communications*. Edited by David Godfrey. Victoria and Toronto: Press Porcépic.
- Jameson, Frederic. (1981) *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*. London: Methuen.
- Jenson, Jane. (1993) "Naming Nations: Making Nationalist Claims in Canadian Public Discourse", *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, Vol. 30, No. 3, pp. 337-358.
- Jhappan, Radha. (1993) "Inherency, Three Nations and Collective Rights: The Evolution of Aboriginal Constitutional Discourse from 1982 to the Charlottetown Accord", *International Journal of Canadian Studies*, No. 7-8, pp. 245-259.
- Joubert, Suzanne. (1980-1) "Pluralités et catégories", *Vie des arts*, Vol. 25, No. 101, hiver, pp. 71-2.
- Karp, Ivan, Christine Mullen Kreamer, and Steven D. Lavine (eds) (1992) *Museums and Communities: the Politics of Public Culture*. Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- _____, and Steven D. Lavine. (eds) (1991) *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*. Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Keziere, Russell. (1980) "Ambivalence, Ambition and Administration", *Vanguard*, Vol. 9, No. 7, September, pp. 8-13.
- Kleyn, Robert. (1985) "Canadian Art or Canadian Artists?", *Vanguard*, Vol. 14, No. 1, February, pp. 27-31.
- Kroker, Arthur. (1984) *Technology and the Canadian Mind: Innis/McLuhan/Grant*. Montreal: New World Perspectives.

- Laing, Carol. (1986) "Débats/Issues - Songs of Experience", review, *Parachute*, No. 44, pp. 67-9.
- Lamoureux, Johanne. (1990) "La Statistique canadienne : A State Ethics", *Parachute*, No. 60, pp. 49-52.
- Leclerc, Denise, and Marion H. Barclay. (1992) *The Crisis of Abstraction*. Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada.
- Lepage, Jocelyne. (1989) "La Biennale canadienne d'art contemporain, l'art 'made in Canada' : plutôt froid", *La Presse* [Montreal], October 28, p. K2.
- _____. (1986a) "L'Aide fédérale aux arts plastiques, le Québec est nettement défavorisé", *La Presse* [Montreal], January 25.
- _____. (1986b) "Les Pieds dans les plats", *La Presse* [Montreal], May 10.
- Lumley, Robert. (ed.) (1988) *The Museum Time Machine*. London and New York: Routledge.
- MacKay, Gillian. (1989) "The Shock of the New", *Maclean's*, October 23, p. 75.
- _____. (1986) "Visual Bravado from a New Generation", *Maclean's*, May 19.
- Malraux, André. (1967) *Museum Without Walls*. Translated by Stuart Gilbert and Francis Price. Garden City NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc.
- Mays, John Bentley. (1993) "Master Plan", *Canadian Art*, Vol. 10, No. 3, Fall, pp. 34-39.
- _____. (1989a) "What's a Biennial Without a Few Prizes", *The Globe and Mail* [Toronto], October 14, p. C5.
- _____. (1989b) "Canadian Prominent is Two Flashy Exhibits", *The Globe and Mail* [Toronto], August 21.
- _____. (1986) "From Coast to Coast, a Firm Consensus on the Avant-garde", *The Globe and Mail* [Toronto], December 27.
- McClellan, Andrew. (1988) "The Musée du Louvre as Revolutionary Metaphor During the Terror", *Art Bulletin*, Vol. 70, No. 2, June, pp. 300-313.
- McGregor, Gaile. (1985) *The Wacousta Syndrome: Explorations in the Canadian Landscape*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

McKaskell, Robert, Sandra Paikowsky, Virginia Wright and Allan Collier. (1993) *Achieving the Modern, Canadian Abstract Painting and Design in the 1950s*. Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery.

McMaster, Gerald and Lee-Ann Martin (eds). (1992) *Indigena: Contemporary Native Perspectives*. Vancouver/Toronto: Douglas and McIntyre, and Hull, QC: Canadian Museum of Civilization.

Monk, Philip. (1988) *Struggles with the Image: Essays in Art Criticism*. Toronto: YYZ Books.

Monk, Philip. (1980a) "Pluralities: Experiment or Excuse?", *Parachute*, No. 20, pp. 48-9.

_____. (1980b) "A Clearinghouse of Trends", *Maclean's*, July 28.

_____. (1980c) "Here's to a Rebirth of Past Glory", *Maclean's*, April 7.

Morris, Peter. (1978) *Embattled Shadows, A History of Canadian Cinema 1895-1939*. Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press.

Moxey, Keith. (1994) *The Practice of Theory: Poststructuralism, Cultural Politics, and Art History*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.

Nairn, Tom. (1981) *The Break-up of Britain: Crisis of Neo-Nationalism*. Second expanded edition. London: New Left Books.

National Gallery of Canada. (1993) *Revised Collections Policy*. Ottawa.

National Gallery of Canada. (1991) *Collections Policy and Procedures, Part I and II*, Ottawa.

National Museums of Canada. (1986a) *Museums in Canada: The Federal Contribution*. Response to the Task Force on the National Museums of Canada, December, Ottawa.

National Museums of Canada. (1986b) *To Safeguard and Share the National Heritage*. Brief presented to the Task Force to Review the Role of the National Museums of Canada, May, Ottawa.

National Museums of Canada. (1985) Policy, Planning and Evaluation Group, *Codex Musealis, Collections Policy and Procedures*. Issue No. 3, Ottawa. (Unpaginated excerpt: Library collections of the National Gallery of Canada.)

National Museums of Canada. (1984) *After Applebaum-Hébert*, Ottawa.

- National Museums of Canada. (1983a) Policy, Planning and Evaluation Group, *Codex Musealis, Collections Policy and Procedures*. Issue No. 2, Ottawa.
- National Museums of Canada. (1983b) Policy, Planning and Evaluation Group, *Public Programming Policy*, Ottawa.
- National Museums of Canada. (1981) Policy, Planning and Evaluation Group, *Codex Musealis, Collections Policy and Procedures*. Issue No. 3, Ottawa.
- National Museums of Canada. (1972) *National Museums Policy*. Ottawa.
- Nemiroff, Diana. (1994) "Par-al-lel" in Jessica Bradley and Lesley Johnstone (eds). (1994) *Sight Lines: Reading Contemporary Canadian Art*. Montreal: Artextes editions.
- _____. (1989) *Canadian Biennial of Contemporary Art*. Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada.
- _____, Robert Houle and Charlotte Townsend-Gault. (1992) *Land Spirit Power: First Nations at the National Gallery of Canada*. Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada.
- O'Doherty, Brian. (1986) *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space*. Santa Monica CA: Lapis Press.
- Osborne, Brian. (1988) "The Iconography of Nationhood in Canadian Art", in Dennis Cosgrove and Stephen Daniels (eds) *The Iconography of Landscape*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Panet-Raymond, Silvy. (1980-1) "Pluralities 1980", *Artscribe*, No. 26, Winter, pp. 55-6.
- Pevsner, Nicholas. (1976) *A History of Building Types*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Podedworny, Carol. (1991) "First Nations Art and the Canadian Mainstream", *C magazine* 31, Fall.
- Poinsot, Jean-Marc. (1992) "L'Art contemporain et le musée : la fabrique de l'histoire ?", *Les Cahiers du Musée d'art moderne*, No. 42, hiver, pp. 17-29.
- _____. (1986) "Les Grandes expositions : esquisse d'une typologie", *Les Cahiers du Musée d'art moderne*, No. 17/13, pp. 122-145.
- Pollock, Griselda. (1988) *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the Histories of Art*. New York and London: Routledge.

Pontbriand, Chantal. (1988) *The Historical Ruse: Art in Montreal*. Toronto: The Power Plant.

_____. (1986) "Editorial: Songs of Experience", *Parachute*, No. 44, pp. 67-9.

Portman, Jamie. (1986) "NCC has 'Vision' for Capital Region", *The Ottawa Citizen*, February 22.

Preziosi, Donald. (1992) "The Question of Art History", *Critical Inquiry*, 18, Winter, pp. 363-386.

_____. (1989) *Rethinking Art History: Meditations on a Coy Science*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Probyn, Elspeth. (1994) *"Love in a Cold Climate": Queer Belongings in Quebec*. Montreal: GREEC.

Raboy, Marc. (1984) "Public Television, the National Question and the Preservation of the Canadian State", in Phillip Drummond and Richard Paterson (eds) *Television in Transition: Papers for the First International Television Studies Conference*. London: British Film Institute.

Reid, Dennis. (1980) "Exhibitions at the National Gallery", *Canadian Collectors*, No. 15, March/April, pp. 39-43.

_____. (1970) *The Group of Seven*. Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada.

Roberts, Rob. (1989a) "Local Art Czars Slam National Gallery Rep", *The Daily News* [Halifax], December 8.

_____. (1989b) "The Brush Off: National Gallery Reaches Out to Calm an Enraged Atlantic Art Community that was Excluded from Prestigious Exhibit", *The Daily News* [Halifax], December 7.

Robertson, Clive. (1994) "Re-mandating the Local? Museum Acquisitions and the Contextualization of Canadian Contemporary Art", *Parachute*, No. 76, October, November, December, pp. 68-71.

Rosenberg, Pierre. (1989) "L'Apport des expositions et de leurs catalogues à l'histoire de l'art", *Les Cahiers du Musée d'art moderne*, No. 29, automne, pp. 49-56.

Rushing, W. Jackson. (1993) "Contingent Histories, Aesthetic Politics", *New Art Examiner*, Vol. 20, No. 7, pp. 14-20.

_____, and Kay Walking Stick (eds). (1992) "Recent Native American Art", *Art Journal*, Special Issue, Vol. 51, No. 3, Fall.

Rybczynski, Witold. (1993) *A Place for Art: The Architecture of the National Gallery of Canada*. Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada.

Sabat, Christina. (1989a) "Visual Arts in Review", *The Fredericton Gleaner*, October 14.

_____. (1989b) "Visual Arts in Review", *The Fredericton Gleaner*, October 7.

Schafer, Paul D. and André Fortier. (1989) *Review of Federal Policies for the Arts in Canada (1944-1988)*. Ottawa: Canadian Conference of the Arts.

Schlesinger, Philip. (1991) *Media, State and Nation, Political Violence and Collective Identities*. London: Sage Publications.

Schmertz, Mildred. (1988) "Collective Significance", *Architectural Record*, Vol. 176, October, pp. 120-9.

Schwartzwald, Robert (ed.). (1990) *an/other Canada. another Canada? others Canadas*. Special Issue, *The Massachusetts Review*, Vol. XXXI, No. 1-2, Spring-Summer.

Seling, Helmut. (1967) "The Genesis of the Museum", *Architectural Review*, Vol. 141, No. 840, February, pp. 103-114.

Simon, Jean-Paul. (1993) "Médiations et histoire sociale de l'art", *Réseaux*, No. 60, pp. 39-60.

Stacey, Robert. (1991) "The Myth - and Truth - of the True North", in Michael Tooby (ed.) *The True North: Canadian Landscape Painting 1896-1939*. London: Barbican Art Gallery.

Stewart, Susan. (1993) *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Stoullig, Claire. (1986) "La Presse et l'accrochage", *Cahiers du musée national d'art moderne*, 17/18, pp. 184-187.

Spicer, Edward H. (1992) "The Nations of a State", *Boundary 2*, Vol. 19, No. 3, pp. 26-47.

Task Force on Museums and First Peoples. (1992) *Task Force Report on Museums and First Peoples*. Ottawa: Assembly of First Nations and the Canadian Museums Association.

Thomson, Shirley. (1991) *Evidence*. Presented to the Standing Committee on Communications and Culture, March 10. Ottawa: Department of Communications.

Tooby, Michael. (1991) "Orienting the True North", in Michael Tooby (ed.) *The True North: Canadian Landscape Painting 1896-1939*. London: Barbican Art Gallery.

Tourangeau, Jean. (1986-7). "Sins of Experience", *Vanguard*, December/January, Vol. 15, No. 6, pp. 14-22.

Valaskakis, Gail Guthrie. (1993) "Parallel Voices: Indians and Others - Narratives of Cultural Struggle", *Canadian Journal of Communication*, Vol. 18, No. 3, pp. 283-297.

Vergo, Peter (ed.). (1989) *The New Museology*. London: Reaktion Books.

Wallace, W. Stewart. (1927) *The Growth of Canadian National Feeling*. Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada Limited.

West, Cornell. (1990) "The New Cultural Politics of Difference", in Russell Ferguson, Martha Gever, Trinh T. Minh-ha and Cornell West (eds) *Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures*. New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art, and Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

White, Hayden. (1973) *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe*. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press.

White, Stephanie. (1985) "Museums and Their Buildings: Our National Galleries", *Vanguard*, Vol. 14, No. 1, February, pp. 8-12.

Whitelaw, Anne. (1989) *The Postmodern Museum: A Reconsideration of the Role of the Art Museum in the Late Twentieth Century*. Unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Essex, Colchester, England.

Wilden, Anthony. (1980) *The Imaginary Canadian*. Pulp Press.

Williams, Raymond. (1981) *Culture*. London: Fontana.

_____. (1983) *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. Revised edition. London: Fontana.

Willis, Anne-Marie and Tony Fry. (1988) "A Strategy of Appearances", *Ten-8*, No. 30, Fall.

Wilson, Alexander. (1990) "Art Geography and Resistance", in Robert Schwartzwald (ed.) *an/other Canada. another Canada? others Canadas*. Special Issue, *The Massachusetts Review*, Vol. XXXI, No. 1-2, pp. 233-248.

Wood, William. (1986) "Skinjobs", *C magazine*, No. 11, pp. 78-87.

Wright, Patrick. (1985) *On Living in an Old Country: The National Past in Contemporary Britain*. London: Verso.

Yates, Sarah. (1983) (with research by Jennifer Dickson) *A Study of the National Gallery of Canada*. Ottawa, CARFAC.

Zemans, Joyce. (1995) "Establishing the Canon: Nationhood, Identity and the National Gallery's First Reproduction Programme of Canadian Art", *Journal of Canadian Art History*, Vol. 16, No. 2, pp. 7-35.