



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

Vous l'avez votre catalogue

On le trouve dans les catalogues

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.

Bending the Rules:
The Montreal Branch of the
Woman's Art Association of Canada, 1894-1900

Heather Victoria Haskins

A Thesis
in
The Department
of
Art History

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

August 1995

© Heather Victoria Haskins, 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 ACCORDE UNE LICENCE
IRREVOCABLE ET NON EXCLUSIVE
PERMETTANT A LA BIBLIOTHEQUE
NATIONALE DU CANADA DE
REPRODUIRE, PRETER, DISTRIBUER
OU VENDRE DES COPIES DE SA
THESE DE QUELQUE MANIERE ET
SOUS QUELQUE FORME QUE CE SOIT
POUR METTRE DES EXEMPLAIRES DE
CETTE THESE A LA DISPOSITION DES
PERSONNE INTERESSEES.

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 PROPRIETE
DU DROIT D'AUTEUR QUI PROTEGE
SA THESE. NI LA THESE NI DES
EXTRAITS SUBSTANTIELS DE CELLE-
CI NE DOIVENT ETRE IMPRIMES OU
AUTREMENT REPRODUITS SANS SON
AUTORISATION.

ISBN 0-612-05147-1

Canada

ABSTRACT

**Bending the Rules:
The Montreal Branch of the
Woman's Art Association of Canada, 1894-1900**

Heather Victoria Haskins

The first six years of the Montreal Branch of the Woman's Art Association of Canada are examined in light of women's expected class and gender roles in late nineteenth century Montreal society. The Branch's activities are described, and compared to their aims. The many reasons why handicrafts were supported and promoted are explored. A case study of the Exhibition of Arts and Handicrafts (October 22-November 3, 1900) is used to reveal this support and promotion in action. Attention is drawn to the organization and display of the exhibition, and the role of the lender, as they reflect contemporary social concerns. The Basketwork Section is discussed as it relates to contemporary political and ethnographic concerns for Native Canadians. Despite the appearance of conforming to the status quo, the Montreal Branch's actions bely an ambivalence toward accepted standards of behaviour for women. In effect, they were able to achieve many of their goals by bending the rules.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

for being there: RM
for patience and support: Lynn & Ron Haskins
for advising: Dr. Janice Helland
for proofreading: Dr. Joan Acland and Dr. Catherine Mackenzie

Thank you also to these indispensable professionals:

Joanne Plunkett at the Department of Art History, Concordia University
Pamela Miller at the Archives, McCord Museum
Norah Hague at the Notman Archives, McCord Museum
Fran Hill at the Women's Art Association Archives, Toronto

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Chapter 1: Montreal in the 1890's: Women, Clubs and Art	6
Chapter 2: Aims and Activities of the Montreal Branch	27
Chapter 3: Why Handicrafts?	50
Chapter 4: The Exhibition of Arts and Handicrafts, 1900	58
Conclusion: Bending the Rules	80
Appendices	84
Illustrations	86
Selected Bibliography	99

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- Figure 1. Ishbel Maria Marjoribanks Gordon, Lady Aberdeen
(Morgan, Types of Canadian Women)
- Figure 2. Gallery of the Art Association of Montreal, c.1890.
(photo courtesy Notman Archives, McCord Museum)
- Figure 3. Mary Martha Phillips
(photo courtesy Notman Archives, McCord Museum)
- Figure 4. Mary Alice Peck
(photo courtesy Notman Archives, McCord Museum)
- Figure 5. Studio of Montreal Branch of Woman's Art Association of Canada
YMCA building, Montreal. 1895.
(Montreal Daily Herald, 12 April 1895)
- Figure 6. Exhibition View, Christmas 1894. Montreal WAAC
(Montreal Daily Herald, 12 April 1895)
- Figure 7. Exhibition of Painted China, Montreal WAAC, 1894
(Montreal Daily Herald, 12 April 1895)
- Figure 8. Advertisement for Exhibition of Arts and Handicrafts, 1900
(Montreal Gazette, 19 October 1900)
- Figure 9. Mary Ella Dignam
(Morgan, Types of Canadian Women)
- Figure 10. Exhibition View, Wood and Metalwork Section
Exhibition of Arts and Handicrafts, 1900
(Montreal Daily Witness, 23 October 1900)
- Figure 11. Exhibition View, Needlework and Lace Section
Exhibition of Arts and Handicrafts, 1900
(photo courtesy Canadian Guild of Crafts Quebec)
- Figure 12. Exhibition View, Fans and Miniatures Section
Exhibition of Arts and Handicrafts, 1900
(Montreal Daily Witness, 23 October 1900)
- Figure 13. Exhibition View, Basketwork Section
Exhibition of Arts and Handicrafts, 1900
(Montreal Daily Witness, 23 October 1900)

Introduction

Ever since Linda Nochlin asked her pointed question in 1971, "Why have there been no great women artists?"¹ feminists have been searching for new ways to approach the history of women's involvement in the arts. Rather than follow the research methods of traditional art history, they have attempted to forge a research paradigm which relates to women's particular conditions of production and reception, one which devotes special attention to women's place and role within not only the art community, but also the rest of the society of which they are an integral part.

This thesis looks at the early years of the Montreal Branch of the Woman's Art Association of Canada with this quest in mind. Writing in 1995, from the perspective of a Canadian woman with British roots and leftist politics, my own position is just as much socially constructed as were those of the women about whom I write. I am aware that there are forces which attempt to construct me as 'woman' or 'academic,' and can choose whether or not to conform to them. I cannot know, however, whether women who lived a century ago felt the same.

As part of the on-going search for new research paradigms to use in the writing of a history which includes women and art, I have used a combination of archival material, feminist theory and post-colonial theory in my attempt to situate the activities of the Montreal Branch of the Woman's Art Association of Canada during the first six years of its existence.

¹Linda Nochlin, "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" (1971) Linda Nochlin Women, Art and Power (New York, 1988).

Early in 1994, the Women's Art Society of Montreal, formerly the Montreal Branch of the Woman's Art Association of Canada (1894-1907), deposited their archives at the McCord Museum of Canadian History in Montreal to mark the Society's centennial year. As a result, I was able to spend many pleasurable hours going through Annual Reports, minute books, scrapbooks, catalogues, and other ephemera. I also was able to visit the archive of the main branch of the Woman's Art Association of Canada, 23 Prince Arthur Street, Toronto. Other archives consulted include those of the Montreal Pen and Pencil Club, at the McCord; the Art Association of Montreal, at the Montreal Museum of Fine Art's library; and the Canadian Guild of Crafts Quebec, in Montreal.

A return to the archives is imperative in the task of rewriting the history of art in Canada, where women's contributions have not received the recognition they warrant. The use of archival material is required if one is to avoid perpetuating factual errors, to reduce personal bias, and to 'discover' artists, dealers, or promoters not included in extant texts. J. Russell Harper's Early Painters and Engravers in Canada, includes many women artists who exhibited the Woman's Art Association of Canada, but this fact is not apparent in their exhibition histories. Their names were included in the book because they exhibited at the Art Association of Montreal, or the Royal Canadian Academy.¹ The founding president of the Woman's Art Association, Mary Ella Dignam's exhibitions at the WAAC were included, yet seven years later, in the second edition of Painting in Canada, the sole mention of the Woman's Art Association, misspells her name: "Mary Ellen (sic) Dignam, regarded as the Queen City's art connoisseur and herself a painter, headed the Canadian

¹See entries for Mary Martha Phillips, Margaret Houghton, and Sarah B. Hunter, in J. Russell Harper, Early Painters and Engravers in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970) 249, 164, 167.

Women's Art Association." Harper continues, "This organization, dedicated to improvement of public taste, sponsored an exhibition by Mauve and other Dutch artists whose imported canvases are now deservedly forgotten."¹ With one line, Harper dismisses eighty years of art production and promotion by all the branches of the Woman's Art Association of Canada. This is only one demonstration of how the scant attention women artists do receive in Canadian art history texts can be 'written out,' even by their originators. Using archival information is vital to ensure that a fuller, more inclusive version of Canada's art history gets into print, and stays there.

Newspapers were also an important part of my research. In addition to exhibition reviews and announcements about meetings, reading the rest of the paper provided insight into what Montreal was like in the 1890's.

Part of my personal research paradigm includes the broadening of the basis of investigation to include society-at-large, in this case late nineteenth-century Montreal society. Particular attention is devoted to the social construction of the concept 'woman' from a class perspective, and how gender and class interrelate to affect women's roles and actions. Such an approach required an investigation of politics, economics, social history, and patterns of philanthropy. Looking at archival material in a vacuum would give the same result as looking at the art object in a vacuum. Since neither object nor archive was created in a vacuum, it is senseless to write about it that way.

Homi K. Bhabha's concept of the gap between the performative, or real life stories, and the pedagogical, or institutionalized version of history, is a valuable theoretical adjunct to archival material.² This gap opens a space into

¹Harper, Painting in Canada 2nd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977) 225.

²See Homi K. Bhabha, "DissemiNation: time, narrative, and the margins of the modern nation" Nation and Narration ed. H.K. Bhabha (London & New York: Routledge, 1990) 291-322.

which writing new histories becomes possible, for it admits that differences exist between the history which gets recorded and the reality of personal experience. Bhabha's ideas are especially useful where women, Native Canadians and handicrafts are concerned, areas which have been profoundly overlooked in traditional histories of 'fine' art in Canada.

In addition, Griselda Pollock discusses methodological concepts put forward by Karl Marx, which I also found useful. Marx found that by separating the whole into its component parts, and examining these parts individually, an understanding of each part and its relation to the others and to the whole could be obtained.¹ I do this with the aims and activities of the WAAC in order to better understand how they interact with each other and Montreal society.

A thorough investigation requires a context. The first chapter provides necessary background material to situate the rest of the thesis. A general overview of Montreal in the 1890's is followed by a discussion of the construction of Victorian femininity and how it relates to the role of Canadian women. Next I explore the women's club movement and the art context in Montreal, in order to situate the women artists who formed the Montreal Branch of the Woman's Art Association.

Chapter Two covers the aims and activities of the Montreal Branch, keeping in mind how class and the social construction of women's identity affected these aims and activities. This leads into the third chapter, which is an investigation of the various reasons why handicrafts became an important area for the Montreal Branch by 1900. Chapter Four is a detailed look at the 1900 Exhibition of Arts and Handicrafts. Particular attention is paid to the

¹Griselda Pollock, Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the Histories of Art (London and New York: Routledge, 1988) 3.

exhibition's display, and the role of the lender in light of class, gender and power relationships. I focus on the loan section of Basketwork, the majority of which was produced by Native Canadians. I explore the conditions of production, the display of the work, and its reception. I elucidate my discussion with a brief review of late nineteenth-century anthropology, museum policies and relations between the government and Natives. Newspaper reviews of the exhibition are used to discuss the reception of the show and the chapter concludes with a few comments on the success of the exhibition.

Chapter 1. Montreal in the 1890's: Women, Clubs and Art

Two hundred women met in the parlor of the YMCA one June afternoon in 1894, for the inaugural meeting of the new Montreal branch of the Woman's Art Association of Canada (WAAC). Women artists and art-lovers of Montreal were finally to have an art group of their own. As artists, and as women, they were constrained by Montreal society's ideals and expectations. What was that society like, and why would so many women have been interested in forming an association for women artists?

Montreal was divided in many ways by 1900. Politically the city was divided into over twenty-five wards, each sending several aldermen to City Hall. Linguistically the city was divided by St-Laurent Boulevard, with French being heard most often on the east side and English on the west side. Financially the city was divided again, between north and south. The majority of wealthy Montrealers lived in the 'New Town' or what is today called the Golden Square Mile, north of the CPR tracks, while poorer, working-class people clustered at the bottom of the hill, along the Saint Lawrence River.

Transportation was the major industry in late nineteenth century Montreal. In 1844 the Lachine Canal was deepened to allow ocean-going ships to bypass the Lachine rapids and sail right into the port of Montreal. The flow of ships increased steadily, until Confederation, when Montreal became the main port on the Atlantic seaboard, second only to New York City. By the end of

the nineteenth century, an average of one thousand ships used the port facilities each year.¹

Railroads were built in Canada within a few years of their invention in England. With the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1887, Montreal's position as the transportation hub of the eastern Atlantic was assured. Not only was Montreal connected to both the east and the west coasts by rail, but there were several smaller lines, allowing people and goods to be transported to other towns in Quebec and Ontario, as well as to the United States.²

Manufacturing and various trades accounted for many of the working-class jobs, and it is here that the chasm between the city's new wealth and its poorer constituents insists upon an analysis in terms of race/culture differences. French-Canadians, migrating from the country to the city, filled unskilled positions in industries such as the textile mills, the clothing industry, shoe manufacture, and agricultural industries, as they had neither the training for skilled positions nor the money to open a business.³ Thousands of Irish immigrants, fleeing famine in their country in the late 1840's, found work in construction or shipbuilding.⁴ In the 1850's, hundreds of Scottish highlanders were forced to emigrate to Canada during the estate clearances. One boatload of 332 emigrants from Knoydart, arrived in Montreal in September 1853. They "were allowed each 10 lbs oatmeal on leaving the ship; and owing to the increasing demand for labourers of all description

¹Jean-Claude Marsan, Montreal in Evolution, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1981), 170.

²Marsan, 172.

³Marsan, 177.

⁴Marsan, 176.

throughout the province, they cannot fail to do well."¹ Other Scottish immigrants, aspiring businessmen, were lured by dreams of a fresh start in Canada, away from the powerful London business community.²

Montreal is usually described as the scene of major money-making by magnates involved in railroads, shipping, manufacturing, and banking during the 1890's. It was a time when a tiny portion of Montrealers could reap the profits of Canada's rapid industrial expansion, a time when a businessman wore the moniker 'capitalist' with pride. Phillips Square was the main shopping district, surrounded by Morgan's department store Colonial House, Henry Birks and Sons' jewelers, and Notman's Photographic Studio. Dominion Square was another important part of downtown, surrounded by the Windsor Hotel, Maric-Reine-du-Monde Cathedral, and the now demolished YMCA. St. Catherine Street had metamorphosed from a residential street in the 1870's, into a commercial thoroughfare by the turn of the century. The most prestigious residential address by 1900 was Sherbrooke Street. Besides large homes with stately lawns, it boasted McGill University, the Mount Royal Club, the Museum of Fine Arts, and numerous churches. Residents of the affluent suburb of New Town, an area of about one square mile, included over half of Canada's millionaires.³ The wealthy English-speaking community could enjoy outings to any of four theaters, the Montreal Philharmonic Society's

¹Papers Relative to the Emigration to the North American Colonies, Parliamentary Papers, 1854, XLVI, p.79, quoted in Eric Richards, A History of the Highland Clearances. Volume 1: Agrarian Transformation and the Evictions 1746-1886, (London: Croom Helm, 1982), 451. A less fortunate group, between 400 and 500 in Sollar, were offered free passage to Canada in late July 1849 in exchange for their dwellings and all their belongings. The women protested violently, yelling and throwing stones at the officers performing the evictions. The estate manager agreed to let the people stay over the winter, and the majority emigrated to Canada or Australia in the spring of 1850. 423-426.

²Rémillard, 22.

³François Rémillard and Brian Merrett, Mansions of the Golden Square Mile. Montreal 1850-1930, (Montreal: Meridian Press, 1987), 25.

orchestra, and various sporting events. For the not-so-wealthy, however, life was quite a bit different.

Living conditions in a working-class neighbourhood of the same size as New Town are revealed in a study completed in 1896 by Herbert Ames.¹ This area, in the wards of Sainte-Anne and Saint-Antoine, housed 38,000 English, Irish and French-Canadians. Ames described the neighbourhood's dusty, unpaved roads, unfiltered and untreated water, lack of green spaces and high population density. Fully half of the residents of the area did not possess indoor plumbing.² These living conditions are not that far from those described by Friedrich Engels in his classic study The Condition of the Working Class in England, published in 1844. Engels gives detailed descriptions of the "planless, knotted chaos of houses, more or less on the verge of uninhabitableness, whose unclean interiors fully correspond with their filthy external surroundings."³ Every available space was built upon in working class neighbourhoods, with no running water, and very little ventilation or light.

The death-rate is a common measure of the health of a city. Both Ames and Engels attribute elevated death rates to the unsanitary housing conditions of the working class, and both cite statistics to prove their point. For example, in the city of Manchester in 1843, there was one death for every 30.75 citizens,

¹Herbert Brown Ames. The City Below the Hill. (Montreal, 1897). Ames undertook the study as an "investigation designed to prove that the area was 'eminently suitable for philanthropic investment,' not to show the need for a general reform movement." Ames studied at Amherst College, and was familiar with the social gospel movement towards reform, and various settlements in the New England states. He believed that the wealthy had a responsibility towards their communities, but that philanthropy and profits were not mutually exclusive; for he wrote in the Introduction to his book: "Philanthropy and five per cent in Montreal, as elsewhere, can be combined." Copp, 19-21.

²Copp, 16-17.

³Friedrich Engels, The Condition of the Working Class in England, ed. Victor Kiernan (USA, 1886, London: Penguin Books, 1987), 90.

or 32.52 per thousand.¹ The death rate in 1895 in individual wards of Montreal was similar: the three highest were St. Jean Baptiste: 35.51 per thousand; St. Mary: 33.20 per thousand, and St. Gabriel: 32.32 per thousand.² These figures are actually closer to that of Manchester, fifty years previously, than they are to the city of Montreal's average for 1895 of 24.81 per thousand. It is feasible, then, that the living conditions in the Montreal wards were not that different from those of Manchester, which Engels describes in florid detail.

The impact of Canada's rapid industrial expansion was quite different for the men, women, and children who actually performed the labour than it was for the owners of the companies. For the workers, it meant an average work week of sixty hours, frequent layoffs during the coldest months in winter, and combining the meagre salaries of husband, wife and often children to make ends meet.³ Two-thirds of Montreal's population in the 1890's belonged to the working class, those who earned hourly wages.⁴ This section of Montreal's population doubled between 1870 and 1911, due to European immigration, and migration from rural Quebec into the city.⁵ This rapid population increase allowed for the division of labour, which, when combined with machine-produced goods and the harnessing of the water power of the St. Laurent River, constitute the three main components necessary for modern manufacture, or Canada's own industrial revolution.⁶

¹Engels, 135.

²Ames, 81.

³The 7671 families in Ames' study brought home an average weekly wage of \$11.00. Weekly incomes averaged as follows: men: \$8.25; women, \$4.50; boys over 12 years and girls over 14 years: \$3.00. Ames, cited in Copp, 21-22. Ames defines the 'poor' as those families who earned \$260.00 per year or less. Ames, 68.

⁴Terry Copp, The Anatomy of Poverty: The Condition of the Working Class in Montreal 1897-1929, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1974), 9.

⁵Marsan, 182.

⁶Engels, 82.

Between 1790 and 1840 in England, the composition of the middle class changed as machinery and factories were introduced. Prior to the advent of large factories, members of the lower middle class had some degree of social mobility due to the apprentice system, whereby the tradesman could move from apprentice to journeyman to master craftsman. As machines replaced human labour and factory workers replaced apprentices, the lower middle class disappeared. In its place evolved a waged-labour class, the proletariat.¹ Thus while upper middle class merchants were able to purchase factories, and enjoy increased wealth and social position, the new proletariat effectively lost their social mobility, and any opportunity for social or financial betterment.²

These changes were more or less complete by the 1840's in Britain. By the 1890's, generations of British citizens had been raised within this class system. British emigrants to Canada brought the baggage of the industrial revolution and the resulting class system with them. Depending on their skills and financial status, immigrants arriving in Montreal could move directly into the upper-middle-class, whose members owned the businesses, or into the unskilled, working class.

As Canada was still a colony, immigrants clung to their Scottish, English, or Irish heritage, rather than thinking of themselves as Canadian. To label oneself a 'Canadian' in the 1890's meant one was French-Canadian, and one's family had already been established in Canada for many generations.³

British immigrants also carried their imperialism with them to Canada, which encompasses notions of racial superiority and class consciousness. By the end of the nineteenth century, the British Empire was at the height of its powers. As such, British institutions - law, education, religion - were set up in

¹Engels, 62.

²Engels, 62.

³Rémillard, 12.

all British colonies, including Canada, with the representatives of the British crown becoming the new aristocracy.¹ Since the British were able to 'conquer' distant lands, and bring their version of culture to the 'savages' who lived therein, the British race was considered to be obviously superior.

Female immigrants to Canada retained the ideologies of their country of birth.² Pamela Gerrish Nunn points out that Victorian Britain emphasized greatly the attributes of one's gender; both men and women were expected to perfect the characteristics and talents attributed to their sex. She quotes the following list of women's attributes from an 1856 article entitled 'What a Woman Should be Alphabetically' :

Amiable, Benevolent, Charitable, Domestic, Economical,
Forgiving, Generous, Honest, Industrious, Judicious, Kind, Loving,
Modest, Neat, Obedient, Pleasant, Quiet, Reflecting, Sober, Tender,
Urbane, Virtuous, 'Xemplary, Zealous.³

An intimidating list of qualities, indeed. Nonetheless, they were inculcated by governesses and parents, aided by magazines and books, into girls and young women of the middle class and the bourgeoisie, "because the middle-class woman had nothing other to do than fulfil this requirement."⁴ What a late-twentieth-century observer would deem almost impossible to live up to was expected by society to such a degree that most women participated in the construction of this ideal by attempting to live up to it.⁵

¹This step had been taken after the battle on the Plains of Abraham, in 1760.

²Since most members of the WAAC were anglophone (except perhaps 2) I am dealing with the English experience; also space limitations do not allow for a comparison with the French-Canadian ideal of woman.

³*The Leisure Hour*, December 1856, no. 260, p.816. quoted in Nunn, 10. As the century wore on, more and more books on women's etiquette and behaviour appeared, often penned by women. Among them, Mrs. Ellis' *The Daughters of England*, 1845; Baroness Burdett-Coutts, ed., *Woman's Mission*, London, 1893; Georgiana Hill, *Women in English Life from Medieval to Modern Times*, 2 vols, London, 1896; are but a few examples.

⁴Nunn, 10.

⁵See Rozsika Parker, *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine*, (New York: Routledge, 1989), Chapter 1.

John Ruskin's "Of Queens' Gardens" is very likely the most oft-quoted definition of the ideal of Victorian womanhood. Due to the respect accorded him, both in the literature of the WAAC, and in the Canadian press in the 1890's, this definition is worth repeating. Ruskin felt men and women should work as a unit, each with their own sphere of influence. Man's powers were "active, progressive, defensive, ... he is eminently the doer, the creator, the discoverer, the defender;"¹ even the warrior and the conqueror when necessary. Women, on the other hand, had greater talents for organization, arrangement, and decision. Praise and judgment were also among their assets. Woman's main duty was to maintain the home as an oasis, enabling the family to evade "all injury, ... all terror, doubt and division."² Furthermore, women's skills could and should be expanded into the public sphere: "The woman's duty, as a member of the commonwealth, is to assist in the ordering, in the comforting, and in the beautiful adornment of the state."³

Certainly, the contribution of women to the development of the British Empire was taken quite seriously. The sense of British racial superiority grew in proportion to the economic, military and imperial progress of the British Empire. This led to a concern with the quality and quantity of the citizens within the colonies, which is where women's talents were required. Unmarried women were encouraged to emigrate to the colonies, in order to find a husband "with whom they could maintain both the size of the white British population in the colonies and, equally important, perpetuate the hegemony of British values, while civilizing the men through their womanly

¹ John Ruskin, "Of Queens' Gardens" in Sesame and Lilies, (New York: A.L. Burt, [1871]), 84.

² Ruskin, 85. How he rationalizes this comment with his ideas on the sexual division of labour and talents is beyond me, however.

³ Ruskin, 103.

inspiration."¹ These concepts were instilled in prospective emigrants, by societies such as the United Women's Emigration Association. Speaking before an assembly of women in Glasgow, the Association's vice-president, Mrs. Joyce, explained that those best suited for emigration were "practical, common-sense women ... those with character and capacity, ... perhaps those who might be considered here a little too independent ... [and] especially ... those who had been trained in orphanages and homes..."²

British women newly arrived in Canada, then, realized the importance of their place and role in their new society. As historian Pat Thane points out, "[c]arlier in the century good mothering was proposed as woman's contribution to stability *within* a rapidly changing British society - a stable home was expected to produce secure, responsible citizens. Later its additional role was to help secure Britain's *international* position."³

How did this affect British women in Montreal? If contemporary sources such as the women's pages of the newspapers are any indication, Ruskin's idea of women's place mainly in the home was shared by middle-class immigrants from the UK. These articles reveal an enormous emphasis on the home. Recipes, daily menus, cleaning tips, and the latest fashions and hairstyles figured prominently. Socializing was also done in the home: teas and 'at

¹Pat Thane, "Late Victorian Women" in T.R. Gourvish and Alan Day, eds., Later Victorian Britain, 1867-1900. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988), 183. Thane also notes that this sort of thinking "did open the door to more or less virulent forms of racism." See Vron Ware, Beyond the Pale: White Women, Racism and History for more on the relationship between racism and imperialism.

²"Protected Emigration of Young Women," Glasgow Herald (October 17, 1888), 6. Emigration societies on both sides of the pond worked hard to facilitate female emigration by arranging passage from Britain, and once in Canada, finding accommodation and employment. See, for example, Chapter XIII, "Immigration" in NCWC, Women of Canada Their Life and Work, for the Canadian situation.

³Pat Thane, "Late Victorian Women" in T.R. Gourvish and Alan Day, eds., Later Victorian Britain, 1867-1900, 183. (Thane's italics)

homes,' were announced in the society and gossip columns of the papers.¹ Canadian women were attempting to maintain their homes in such a manner as would allow them, as their British sisters had done earlier, to produce secure and responsible citizens, capable of dealing with Canada's own era of rapid change.

The National Council of Women of Canada (NCWC) was begun in 1893 by Ishbel Maria Marjoribanks Gordon, Countess of Aberdeen (Figure 1).² Its purpose was to unite the many women's clubs in Canada under a national umbrella organization which would strengthen individual club endeavours, and give the NCWC additional lobbying power at the federal political level. Its non-sectarian policy allowed clubs of all denominations and purposes to join the NCWC.³

The concept of woman and her role in Canadian society is made quite clear in many publications of the NCWC. By publicizing its views, the NCWC perpetuated the formation of a particular image for women in Canada. The booklet entitled Women Workers of Canada, compiled in 1898, for example, included a paper entitled "The Labour Question and Women's Work and its Relation to Home Life." The anonymous author canvassed political and social scientists, Labour Council members, and philanthropists for their opinions

¹Women's columns published each Saturday in Montreal papers during October 1900, included: *By A Woman*, *Madge Merton's Weekly Talk with Her Herald Readers* in The Montreal Daily Herald; *Pour Vous, Mesdames* in La Presse; *Through Woman's Eyes*, in The Montreal Daily Star; *In Woman's Realm*, in The Gazette. The Daily Herald also had a daily women's page.

²Lady Aberdeen was the wife of Sir John Campbell Hamilton Gordon, 7th Earl of Aberdeen, Canada's Governor-General from 1893-1898. While in Canada, she founded the National Council of Women of Canada (1893), and the Victorian Order of Nurses, in addition to providing the idea for the Aberdeen Association. She was also awarded an LL.D. from Queen's University. (James Morgan, Women of Canada, 3.)

³See Veronica J. Strong-Boag, The Parliament of Women: The National Council of Women of Canada 1893-1929, National Museum of Man Mercury Series, History Division, Paper no.18. (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1976) for a good overview of women's clubs in Canada during the 19th century as well as the history of the NCWC.

regarding the effect on home life of women working outside the home. She discovered that "[a]ll deplore the tendency of girls to engage in commercial and kindred occupations, and consider that it *has* a deteriorating influence upon the home life."¹ "The natural law, which makes man the bread-winner and woman the home-maker,"² was upset by young women working in stores or factories. Working girls were deprived of the proper influence of their homes at an age when they most needed guidance. Furthermore, they were taking the jobs of young men, who then turned to crime in their idleness. The working woman, it appears, was responsible for her own moral decay, the idleness of young men, the high rate of unemployment and increased crime.

Convinced that working women were causing society's downfall, women's charity organizations devoted much attention to activities associated with the home. One example is the 'Ruskinian' education the author suggested as fit for women :

It would be quite equal in mental development, and infinitely more useful, for a girl to learn the chemistry of food and its relation to the body, the science of ventilation, cleanliness, cookery and needle work, than to wear out brain tissue in puzzling out a lot of abstract questions, which will neither awaken the intelligence nor interest the pupil.³

¹ "The Labour Question and Women's Work and its Relation to Home Life" in Women Workers of Canada, (Ottawa: NCWC, 1898), 254-262. Reprinted in Cook & Mitchison, The Proper Sphere: Woman's Place in Canadian Society, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1976), 150. author's italics.

²Ibid., 150-51. In *Of Queens' Gardens* Ruskin suggests women are also responsible for wars: "There is not a war in the world, ... but you women are answerable for it; not in that you have provoked, but in that you have not hindered" (107). Of course, I could drag this line of thought all the way back to Eve.

³Ibid., 151. Ruskin devotes quite a few pages to the topic of women's education. Science, languages, geography, history, modern novels and especially theology were unsuitable topics for girls to learn in any great depth: "A woman in any rank of life, ought to know whatever her husband is likely to know, but to know it in a different way. His command of it should be foundational and progressive, hers, general and accomplished for daily and helpful use" (92).

Domestic science, or home economics, was to become one of the few employment opportunities for Canadian women after the turn of the century.

The NCWC's ideal for Canadian women in the 1890's, then, was a woman who stayed at home, took care of her family, and participated in society through voluntary, or club work. The twenty-three Local Councils based their policies upon this model. Furthermore, the societies which affiliated themselves with the NCWC necessarily had the same beliefs. Significantly, the Woman's Art Association of Canada was the first such club to affiliate with the NCWC, in 1893.

The founders of the Montreal Local Council of Women (MLCW) were French and English, Protestant and Catholic. Although they were of different languages and religions, their social class - middle and upper - bound them together to achieve common goals. As Lynda Nead reminds us, women used their class position to help emancipate their equals, yet retained a "hierarchical and regulatory" relationship with women of lower classes.¹ Many executive committee members used their own, or their husband's, social class and professional status to their advantage when pushing for reforms.² If as a woman she had an automatic civilizing influence, as a member of the upper class this was doubly so. Among the MLCW's accomplishments were the opening of Milk Stations in the poor districts of the city, where mothers could obtain pasteurized milk and medical assistance, and the opening of the first public bath in Montreal in 1896. The women were also concerned with pay

¹Lynda Nead, Myths of Sexuality: Representations of Women in Victorian Britain, (London: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 197.

²Prominent Montreal society women, such as the first president, Lady Julia Drummond, wife of Bank of Montreal President and Senator George A. Drummond, or professionals such as lawyer Marie Gérin-Lajoie, Dr. Grace Ritchie England, and Carrie Derick, science professor at McGill University, were among the MLCW's members. Maryse Darsigny et al. Ces femmes qui ont bâti Montréal. (Montréal: Les éditions du Remue-Ménage, 1994), 126.

equity and sanitary working conditions for women in factories, hotels and restaurants, and women's suffrage.¹

Women's involvement in philanthropy was inextricably tied to social and political issues involving the city. In Kathleen McCarthy's study of charity and cultural philanthropy in Chicago, each generation of Chicagoans approached charity differently. The first stage was played out by volunteers in the 1850's. The passage of the Illinois Married Woman's Property Act of 1861 enabled women to build their own institutions during the second stage, allowing them to "mingle with the rest of society on safe and neutral ground."² During the 1890's, third stage 'progressives' such as Jane Addams went back to poor neighbourhoods to do their charity work, aided by a first professional social workers. The fourth stage occurred in the 1920's, when professional social workers, teachers and nurses had replaced the volunteers. Civically-conscious upper-class women found themselves writing donation cheques, or participating as fund raisers and agency liaisons.³

These changes occurred gradually in Chicago throughout the eighty years of McCarthy's study, and were affected by changes in the physical city as well as its social, legal, educational and political systems. Similar changes took place in Montreal. The decreasing of day-to-day contact between rich and poor was exacerbated by physical changes in the fin-de-siècle city. These included the growth of the suburbs, high-income neighbourhoods built away from the industrial city center. Remillard notes that the reasons the rich left the city center to settle in New Town or Westmount, were to evade the

¹Darsigny et al, 128. In 1907, the "haute clergé catholique" felt the social reforms proposed by the MLCW too radical; the result was the withdrawal of the French-Canadian members to form the Women's section of the Société St-Jean-Baptiste.

²McCarthy, Kathleen D. Noblesse Oblige: Charity & Cultural Philanthropy in Chicago, 1849-1929. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), xii. I have yet to discover such a study done for Canada, or even for a single city in Canada.

³McCarthy, 1982, xii.

"epidemics, vermin, overcrowding, disagreeable noises and fumes from the new factories"¹ - the same things the philanthropists were working to eradicate. The increase in population and sheer physical size of working-class districts precluded any sort of individualized philanthropic work. The professionalization of philanthropy as a career for women removed the wealthy women who volunteered their time and energy gradually from hands-on experience, to cheque-writing at home. One result of these parallel phenomena was that the upper classes had absolutely no idea how the poor lived. Having money enabled the rich to separate themselves physically from the working classes so they no longer had to see, hear, or smell poverty.²

Ruskin's phrase 'to *assist* in the ordering and the comforting' describes women's charity societies rather well. Quebec's civil code is one reason for this. In the 1890's, a single woman had the same legal rights as a man, but a married woman renounced them at the time of her nuptials. According to Marie Gérin-Lajoie's article on women and the Quebec legal code :

'A husband owes protection to his wife; a wife, obedience to her husband.' And in order that this dependence of the wife may be really effective, and that the protection which the husband gives her may not be a meaningless phrase, the law makes her incapable of acting in any capacity, and deprives her of the exercise of every civil right except that of making a will, which remains inviolable.³

Without her husband's authority, a married woman could not buy or sell property, accept or donate a gift, or transfer her property to her children. As a result, women's clubs often included male members to take care of the legal

¹Rémillard, 20. This also sounds like something Engels wrote about Manchester.

²Herbert B. Ames produced his study in order to bring the plight of the poor to the attention of those businessmen who were in a financial position to do something about it, of course in light of the potential 5% profit.

³Marie Gérin-Lajoie, "Legal Status of Woman in the Province of Quebec," in Women of Canada: Their Life and Work, compiled by the National Council of Women of Canada, (Ottawa, 1900), ; reprinted in R. Cook and W. Mitchison, eds., The Proper Sphere: Woman's Place in Canadian Society, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1976), 101.

or financial affairs. Of note here is that spinsters and widows did have legal rights, thus they could attain a degree of power within a charitable society which was out of bounds to married women.

Although women's charity societies in nineteenth century Montreal had many and varied goals, they shared a common belief in the sanctity of the home, the importance of the woman's role within the home, as well as a deep religious conviction. Together with a firm imperialist credo, these commitments caused anglophone women of the middle and upper classes to create societies and institutions to aid less-fortunate women and children.

These charity societies, whose goals were to correct the social ills of the city center, connected the high-profile, profit-making few, and the impoverished majority. Given woman's inculcated role as civilizer, organizer, comforter and beautifier, it comes as no surprise, then, that it was the wives of businessmen who were involved in philanthropic work. Since poor families were often dependent on the salaries of the mother, the only women left to 'save' society were the wives of well-to-do men. Although it is difficult to say for Canada, Prochaska points out that in England, almost every woman was either a donor or a recipient of charity.¹

In the 1890's, Montreal claimed several women's associations specifically geared towards problems encountered by women in the urban setting. An early example was the Female Benevolent Society, begun in 1815 to help new immigrants in the city. The institution was closed in 1822, but reopened in 1832 as the Montreal Ladies' Benevolent Society, a Protestant institution for women and children in need of temporary refuge.² At the annual meeting of October 3, 1900, it was reported that there were 159 inmates

¹Prochaska, 224.

²Darsigny et al, 74-75.

at the Institute: 16 women, 75 boys, and 50 girls. Prizes given at the meeting reveal character traits the school felt deserved rewards. The Hollis Medal, "for honesty and integrity" was awarded to Alec Silverman, and "the 'Isabella Wheeler' medal for purity and truthfulness" was won by Lily Spear. The division of labour within the organization reveals the realities imposed by Victorian values and the Quebec civil code. The office bearers, acting managers and honorary members were all women; while men formed the Building and Advisory Committee, and filled the positions of solicitor, notary, accountant, medical advisor, and oculist.¹

Other societies involved in social reform were the Young Women's Christian Association,² the Dominion Order of Kings Daughters,³ and the Girls' Friendly Society.⁴ These three deeply religious societies were all branches of national societies; and all endeavoured to help girls or young women from being led astray in the big city. Morals, religion, and paternalistic attitudes were used by the older women who ran these three societies to keep their charges on the right path. In their dealings with women and girls of a lower

¹ Montreal Gazette, (October 20, 1900), 6.

² Montreal's YWCA opened in 1874, a joint project begun by eight married women (Mrs's. John Sterling, Philo D. Brown, Mary Cowans McDougall, C. Ault, J. McIntosh, I. Clarke Murray, Isabella G. McIntosh, and Charlotte E. Major) who wanted to help the many young girls who were moving from the country into Montreal to work as governess, laundress, nurse, salesgirl, or seamstress; (Darsigny et al, 107). Deeply Protestant and paternalistic, the YWCA sought to protect the moral fibre of the city's future mothers, thus there was a strong emphasis on the home in its educational policies (Strong-Boag, Veronica Jane, The Parliament of Women: The National Council of Women of Canada 1893-1929, National Museum of Man Mercury Series, History Division, Paper no.18. (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1976), 63-64.)

³ The Dominion Order of King's Daughters originated in New York in 1886. Its main aim was to develop the spiritual life of underprivileged city girls by such activities as "educational classes, lunch rooms, mothers' meetings, fresh air camps, summer crèches, girls' clubs, and convalescent homes" (Strong-Boag, 66). The Montreal branch of the DOKD, strongly Protestant, was founded in 1888 (Darsigny et al, 103).

⁴ Girls' Friendly Society had Anglican roots in Britain. Its aims were to help orphaned and immigrant girls. The married women who were associates of the GFS were conservative and class-conscious in their attitude toward their charges, main goal was "to stabilize and control working-class life-styles" (Strong-Boag, 65).

class, members used the automatic civilizing faculty accorded them by their class, to help them exercise the duty expected by their gender in ordering, and comforting the less fortunate.¹

The Montreal Women's Club was founded in 1892 by Eliza Anne Reid. This club was organized into three departments: art and literature, home and education, and social science.² In addition to weekly meetings and public lectures, its upper class members expressed concern for civic reform by lobbying city hall to increase the number of parks and playgrounds, and to reduce the number of alcohol permits issued.³ Their accomplishments represent what women of the upper classes were able to achieve.

Women's associations with the public's cultural improvement as their main goal were less common. The Aberdeen Association (AA), was begun in a most informal manner by Lady Aberdeen while vacationing in the Canadian North-West in 1890. She spoke to a group of Winnipeg women, reminding them that Canada's new settlers needed culture, such as literature, even in their remote settings. Her suggestion grew into the AA, which sent literature by the mail to isolated settlers all across Canada. Their aim was to increase the level of culture and at the same time to create and confirm a common national identity for new Canadian settlers.⁴ The national mailing list included the names of 1900 individuals, each of whom received a five-pound package of reading

¹Vron Ware discusses how motherhood is used as a political device to subvert patriarchy by "sanction[ing] an authority relationship between the older middle-class woman and young working woman that, although caring and protective, was also hierarchical and custodial." 156. See also Nead, Myths of Sexuality, chapter 7.

²Women of Canada, 397.

³Darsigny et al, 115.

⁴Strong-Boag, 67-68.

material every month.¹ Montreal had an English and a French branch by 1897, two of sixteen branches across Canada.

The businessmen of Montreal also contributed to the improvement of their society. They were well aware, as Ruskin said, that a country gets started with commerce, but is remembered for its culture. By the 1890's, Montreal had a number of cultural societies with just such an end in view. The Montreal Philharmonic Society, presided over by Hector McKenzie, consisted of a 250-voice chorus and 45-piece orchestra. For a yearly subscription of ten dollars, two people could hear three concerts.²

A group of wealthy, English Montreal gentlemen, led by Bishop Francis Fulford, began an art club in the late 1840's, which was incorporated as the Art Association of Montreal (AAM) on April 23, 1860 in the Quebec legislature.³ Their basic aims were to erect a permanent art gallery for the city of Montreal, and to conduct art classes (Figure 2). By the 1890's, the AAM's patrons and officers were gleaned from English Montreal's wealthiest citizens, such as Mr. J.W. Tempest, who bequeathed \$80,000 to the AAM in his will in 1893.⁴ Exhibitions of oils and watercolours were supplemented with architectural drawings in 1887, and china painting in 1894.

The Art Association of Montreal was not an environment that encouraged female advancement in the fine arts. At the outset, the role of women within the organization was limited to a few anonymous but wealthy female patrons whose contributions greatly enhanced the AAM's coffers.

¹Helen R.Y. Reid, compiler. "Organized Societies" in Women of Canada. Their Life and Work, (NCWC, 1900), 268.

²Lovell's Montreal Directory, 1894. 1041.

³Pierre Leduc, "Les origines et le développement de l'Art Association de Montréal, 1860-1912." M.A. thesis, Université de Montréal, 1963, 13.

⁴William Henry Atherton, Montreal, 1535-1914. Vol. II: Under British Rule 1760-1914. (Montreal: The S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1914), 238.

Women exhibitors increased from one in 1880 to fifteen in 1889. The Spring 1886 exhibition at the AAM included a section entitled 'Works by Amateurs', in which 28 of the 38 paintings were the work of women. Female members appear on the Industrial and Decorative Art committee in 1885. The first woman on the executive council was the assistant secretary, Miss Pangman, appointed in 1891.¹ Thus women could exhibit at the AAM, but played only minor roles in the organization of the association.

The Pen and Pencil Club of Montreal, begun in 1890, was for men only. Members arrived with paintings, drawings, poems, or essays on a topic chosen at the previous meeting. The president would intone "Gentlemen, the bar is now open," and the meeting commenced. The Club was conducted in a genial atmosphere, even though occasionally the musician members had to keep the peace when arguments arose between the writers and the artists.² A long-time member wrote that the Pen and Pencil Club "professes no mission of reform for art, morals or manners, but is concerned only in the occasional gathering together of kindred minds for their own agreeable if selfish entertainment."³ These gatherings held together a core of members for many years, encouraging their various works by discussions, friendships, and occasionally publishing memoirs and poems. This 'gathering of kindred minds' is perhaps the aspect of the Club that the women of the Women's Art Association hoped to emulate in their gatherings: an atmosphere where women could experience the sort of same-sex bonding that was the prime

¹Art Association of Montreal, Catalogues - Spring Exhibitions, 1880-1903. (Montreal, n.d.)

²Leo Cox, "Fifty Years of Brush and Pen. A Historical Sketch of the Pen and Pencil Club of Montreal." (1939) in The Pen and Pencil Club 1890-1959 (Montreal, 1959), n.p.. Drink prices were added formally to the Club's Constitution in 1892: beer: 10¢; spirits: 10¢; soda water: 5¢; and Apollinaris: 15¢.

³J. Harry Smith, "And Another Twenty Years" in The Pen and Pencil Club 1890-1959 (Montreal, 1959), n.p.

motive of the men's clubs. The constitution of the WAAC, however, does not mention drink prices, as does that of the Pen and Pencil Club.

Neither the AAM nor the Pen and Pencil Club, then, were of much help to the women artists of Montreal. However, many women artists moved in the same social circles as AAM or Pen & Pencil Club members. Indeed, many Pen and Pencil Club members were also AAM members. A woman artist knew her place, and her role within the Montreal art community, just as she knew her place and role in society as a whole.

A curious aspect of feminism in the 1890's in Montreal was the apparent lack of questioning of the status quo. Perhaps this was not necessary, because their upper class status allowed them to achieve the same results within the existing system. In this respect I would suggest that despite society's expectations of women, Montreal's women philanthropists used their social class standing, and only secondarily their gender in achieving their aims. Veronica Strong-Boag points out that women were not impervious to the advances made by their fathers or husbands in Canada's business world in the late nineteenth century:

The female relatives of Canada's powerful men, energized by a changing external environment and by their own recent access to higher education and the professions, had few formal ways of expressing their complementary desires for national leadership and influence.¹

Although written with reference to national women's clubs, these words may describe the feelings of the women artists of Montreal, in their desire to have more control over their own artistic destiny. In the same way that women attained a greater degree of self-confidence through their participation in philanthropic societies, women artists gained confidence from exhibiting at

¹Strong-Boag, 410-411.

the Art Association of Montreal, and from there decided that they were ready to begin their own art society.

Chapter 2. Aims and Activities of the Montreal Branch

Women in Montreal were hesitant about forming culture-based clubs before the 1890's. They had been preoccupied with the more pressing needs of civic reform, sanitation, religion, education, and health. Preoccupied with the selfless notion of helping others, it did not occur to them to organize a club for their own benefit or pleasure. Purely social clubs for women would only become more numerous once the voluntary roles they occupied previously in charity organizations were taken over by professionals.¹

By the 1890's, upper class Montreal women had widened their horizons through volunteer work, clubs, university education, art training, travel and sports. All allowed women to exercise their capabilities, and more importantly, to raise their expectations for their own lives. Two associations, both of which are still in existence, resulted. The Ladies' Morning Musical Club (LMMC), and the Montreal Branch of the Woman's Art Association of Canada (WAAC), both were formed in the early 1890's with a view to improving their members as practicing and performing artists.

For all their determination to 'selfishly' better themselves as artists, the notion of woman as comforter and cultural caretaker was just too strong. Both the WAAC and the LMMC began with lofty aims in bettering women artists, but gradually the membership changed from producing artists and performing

¹Canadian professional women began graduating from universities in Ontario in the 1880's, and in Quebec in the 1890's. Social work, as a profession, was not to become popular until the 1910's in Canada. See the Introduction to V.J. Strong-Boag's The Parliament of Women: The National Council of Women of Canada, 1893-1929; also K.M. McCarthy, Noblesse Oblige for a description of this phenomenon in Chicago, or F.K. Prochaska, Women and Philanthropy in 19th Century England, for the English experience.

musicians to art-lovers and organizers. At the same time the proportion of work undertaken for self-improvement declined in relation to the work done to improve others.

In this trend these Montreal societies were not alone. Karen Blair noticed four stages in the evolution of women's amateur arts associations in the United States between 1890 and 1930. The first stage, self-development, occurred in the 1890's, when music, art, literary, and theatrical women's clubs sprang up all across the States. Disapproval of such self-development caused the second stage, the formation of community or social service programs, during the first decade of the twentieth century.¹ These two stages are also evident in the activities of the Montreal WAAC, and the LMMC. They were not coincidental, but part of a North American trend, in which the general public refused to accept women in professional careers in the arts. Blair maintains that the concept of women devoting their lives, not to their families, but towards their own self-improvement, public performance, exhibition, or competition, was both unthinkable and unacceptable.

Female musicians in the west end of the city formed The Ladies' Morning Musical Club in 1892, for the purpose of weekly practice and performance of classical music. The success of their first concert, held on November 17, 1892 in the concert hall of the YMCA, was indicative of the future of the Club. Membership numbered two hundred active and associate members after one year, indicating an interest and a need for a supportive, creative musical environment for female musicians.²

As well as improving themselves as musicians, the Club's main goals included promoting classical music in Montreal. In 1895, the LMMC presented

¹Karen J. Blair, The Torchbearers: Women and their Amateur Arts Associations in America, 1890-1930. (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), 30.

²Darsigny et al, 123-124.

Belgian violinist Eugène Ysaÿe at the Theatre Monument National, before a sold-out house. The success of this concert encouraged the LMMC to continue sponsoring such concerts in addition to their own choral and chamber groups. Club members performed less frequently, however, and by the 1930's, the concerts were entirely professional.¹ The Ladies' Morning Musical Club had become strictly promotional.

This pattern is also noticeable with the Montreal Branch of the Woman's Art Association. Although there were always members who produced artworks, the non-artist members greatly outnumbered them after the first decade of the Association's existence. An examination of the aims and activities of the Montreal Branch will illuminate this phenomenon in greater detail.

A meeting of women artists was held in Mary Martha Phillips' studio on April 16, 1894. Phillips (1856-1937), was actively involved in Montreal's art world, as a painter and as principal of the Montreal School of Applied Art and Design (Figure 3). This meeting was the first step toward the formation of the Montreal Branch of the Woman's Art Association of Canada.² The artists decided to organise themselves as a women's art club, and twenty-one members were enrolled. A five-member organizational committee was chosen, comprised of Eugenia N. Crawford, Sarah B. Holden, Margaret Houghton, Miss Plimsoll and Mary Phillips. Information on this meeting is scant, and it is not certain how or why these Montreal women artists decided to affiliate with the Woman's Art Association of Canada. Some Montreal women painters, such as Mary Phillips and Harriette MacDonnell, had already exhibited at the Toronto

¹"A History of the Ladies' Morning Musical Club" (Montreal, 1992), unp. This booklet was published to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the LMMC. A concert was held on November 17, 1992, for which the LMMC commissioned a string quartet by André Prévost, *Quatuor à cordes no 4(1991-1992)*.

²For a general overview of the WAAC, see Alison Thomson's MA thesis, "A Worthy Place in the Art of our Country: The Women's Art Association of Canada, 1887-1987," Carlton University, 1989.

branch of the WAAC.¹ At any rate, over the next two months, arrangements were made for the Montreal group of women to affiliate with the Woman's Art Association of Canada.

The Montreal Branch's inaugural meeting was held on June 6, 1894, in the YMCA. Mrs. A. Carus-Wilson, B.A., gave the inaugural address. Her comments help to situate the women of the Montreal Branch within the art community of Montreal, as well as within the larger context of Montreal society. Carus-Wilson stated that the Branch intended to "... do for *women* artists what the "Pen and Pencil Club" is already doing for men artists in Montreal; and it will do for women *artists* what the two well-known musical clubs in this city are doing for musicians."² The four major aims of the Montreal branch were then clearly stated:

First, to afford to women who make a profession of art, ... opportunities of meeting each other and taking counsel together over their work; Secondly, to stir up women for whom art is one of several pursuits, to take it more seriously as a pursuit and to aim at a higher standard of attainment; Thirdly to encourage, or if need be, to discourage aspirants to an art career, by bringing them into contact with those who have already achieved something; Fourthly, to induce the general public to care more for pictures and other works of art and to look at them more intelligently. ³

The emphasis is clearly on improving women artists, both as women, and as artists, in the three first aims. The fourth aim, although placed last on the agenda, stems from the civic duty common to women's clubs of the time, and over time, would come to take first priority.

The relationship of the Montreal Branch to existing art societies in Montreal was to be supplementary. The WAAC had "no thought of superseding

¹"Exhibition of Sketches. A Creditable Display by the Woman's Art Club at Toronto." May 16, 1892. Scrapbook, WAAC Archives, Toronto.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

or entering into rivalry with existing unions for the encouragement of art..."¹ In particular, its members did not want to usurp the power of the Art Association of Montreal (AAM), which had been the major art establishment in Montreal since 1847. The first president of the Montreal branch of the WAAC, Mary Alice Peck (Figure 4), noted with reference to the AAM that "an established Art Association was already making good progress in training the artistic taste of the town, holding classes and giving frequent exhibitions ... we soon felt that our work could only overlap that already being well done."² The fact that the AAM was dominated by upper class males is important to keep in mind, for it illustrates how male/female relations in the nineteenth century worked: since the male-run AAM was already taking care of certain art-related areas, a female-run art society would not even attempt to compete against them, or to change anything. Keeping Ruskin's Ideal Woman in mind, it is not surprising that the Montreal branch envisaged its role in the art community of Montreal as a supportive one.

Carus-Wilson then went on to outline how the first step in achieving the new association's goals was to rent rooms, including a studio space. Members would thus have a place to meet, to discuss art, and most importantly, to draw and paint: the studio would enable women to practice their art who did not have studio space at home.

According to the inaugural speech, lessons and exhibitions were not part of the Montreal WAAC's original mandate. Women with no prior art experience, but who wanted to learn to draw or paint could "avail themselves

¹"Address by Mrs. Ashley Carus-Wilson, B.A. on taking the Chair at the Inaugural Meeting on June 6th, 1894, in the YMCA Hall." Drawer 2, Folder 2. Woman's Art Society of Montreal Archives, McCord Museum, Montreal.

²"Address at the Reception given by The Canadian Handicrafts Guild to The Countess of Aberdeen and the Delegates to the International Council of Women." Montreal, June 14, 1909. 2. WAS Archives, McCord Museum, Montreal.

of the various classes &c., already held in Montreal."¹ Drawing courses for women were available at the AAM, at a cost of \$40 per year;² other options included the Montreal School of Art and Applied Design,³ or private lessons.⁴ Those who already had basic art training and experience, could ameliorate their skills at the WAAC by attending sketch 'classes' in which a still-life arrangement, or a model (clothed, of course) would be drawn by the group. Critiques were held monthly.

Studio sessions were not open to honorary members, however. Should an honorary member be inspired to paint pictures, she had to go outside the Association to learn, and then be elected as a professional member, in order to work in their studio. In relying on outside institutions to teach the women the very skill they sought to professionalize and ameliorate, the WAAC was reinforcing existing institutions, and simultaneously retaining its own position as supplementary to those institutions.

¹"Address by Mrs. Ashley Carus-Wilson, B.A."

²Art Association of Montreal, "Report of the Council to the Association for the Year Ending December 1889." (Montreal: J. Theo Robinson, Printer, 1889), n.p. Courses ran for two terms, October to February, and February to mid-May. One term was \$25; a month, \$10. William Brymner, R.C.A., was director of the classes beginning in 1880; the art school began in 1860. The average wage for women working in factories in 1900 was \$190 per year, or \$3.65 per week (Copp, Anatomy of Poverty, 32). Women trained as teachers earned on average \$99 per year in 1899, although exceptions at the High School for Girls in Montreal included salaries as high as \$350, and \$600 per year (D. Suzanne Cross, "La majorité oubliée: le rôle des femmes à Montréal au 19^e siècle" in Marie Lavigne et Yolande Pinard, eds., Les femmes dans la société Québécoise, aspects historiques), 55. From these statistics, then, the yearly fee of \$40 was astronomical for a woman attempting to support herself, or add to her family's income.

³Advertisement in The Gazette, (October 3, 1900), 4. The Montreal School of Art and Applied Design was founded in October 1893 by Mary Phillips, for the purpose of "studying Art with a view to its application in the Art Industries and Crafts, and to promote a knowledge of the Applied Arts." National Council of Women of Canada, Women of Canada: Their Life and Work, (Ottawa, 1900), 218.

⁴For example, Wm. Raphael's Art Classes and Miss M.L. Gordon's Oil and China Painting, advertisements in the *Montreal Daily Star*, (October 3, 1900), 5. There were also free courses in drawing offered by the Conseil des Arts et Manufactures de Québec, geared towards artisans and apprentices, for industrial purposes; it is not clear if women took them for fine art purposes. The Conseil also offered dress-cutting and making classes for women. NCWC, Women of Canada, 219.

Neither were exhibitions to be part of the Branch's activities, according to Carus-Wilson. She noted that there were plenty of other exhibition venues in Montreal, and went on to explain that an exhibition of second-rate work would only reinforce the notion that women made second-rate art, and would not encourage women artists to improve their product. Since "even in London, the amount of good work done by women ... is only enough to furnish a comparatively small show [of] pictures by lady artists annually, there is not much prospect as yet, of a show of pictures by Montreal lady artists, of fair size and first rate quality."¹ In confounding quantity with quality, she draws the conclusion that a small exhibition is a poor one. By these comments, Carus-Wilson, who was not an artist herself, seems to have been under the assumption that Montreal's women artists would have to improve the quality of their second-rate productions before exhibiting anything. These comments demonstrate Carus-Wilson's poor opinion of the talents of Montreal women artists.² The executive of the Montreal WAAC obviously found the quality of their work adequate to be hung on the wall, however, as sketch and ceramic exhibitions were held each year, beginning in October 1894 (See Appendix I).³

Carus-Wilson ended her short discourse with some comments on the fourth aim, how an organization such as the Women's Art Association could

¹"Address by Mrs. Ashley Carus-Wilson, B.A. on taking the Chair at the Inaugural Meeting on June 6th, 1894, in the YMCA Hall." Drawer 2, Folder 2. Woman's Art Society of Montreal Archives, McCord Museum, Montreal.

²Mrs. Carus-Wilson was never a member of the WAAC; her only connection with it that I have seen was the Inaugural Speech, and a lecture in March 1895.

³I haven't found any explanation for this major discrepancy in the Inaugural Speech and the activities of the Branch; possibilities include 1) the idea of not holding exhibitions was Mrs. Carus-Wilson's; and she was not familiar with the vast number of exhibitions put on by the main branch of the WAAC; the WAAC's founder, ME Dignam, had a long exhibition history by 1894, which included Canadian and European venues, thus she understood the value of exhibiting in an artist's career and incorporated it into the bylaws of the WAAC.

benefit someone such as herself, a member of the general public. She quoted John Ruskin's adage that great nations were built on commerce, yet remembered for their art. Canada, as well, should aim for this:

If we would aim at a reputation as enduring, our first step towards it must be the formation of a more intelligent public opinion about art. ... The average rich man is beginning to discover, under the tuition, ... of Ruskin, that without good paintings his house is incomplete; but until he receives some kind of art education himself, he will have little idea of what constitutes a good painting.¹

According to Carus-Wilson, the WAAC had a responsibility to educate the public about art, not just for its own value, but for the sake of the future reputation of the entire country. In particular, the rich must learn something about good art; without the correct trappings of the British aristocracy, Canada's upper crust would not be equipped to represent the country. The nationalistic tone of such comments was common at the time; public art education was but one facet of the overall improvement of the general public in order to build a better country. This improvement was women's domain, thus was included in the aims of the Montreal Branch.

The Association began with two main categories of membership, 'active' and 'associate'. The 1899 Annual Report also referred to them as 'professional' and 'honorary' members, respectively. This change of terminology is not surprising. In England, art critics had long despaired of what to label women who produced pictures. For instance, when the Water-Colour Society was formed in England in 1804, only men could be full or associate members. The four women on the rolls were called 'honorary' when the society was reorganized in 1850, and then changed to 'ladies' in 1851, after the press pointed out that honorary meant amateur. By 1860 women were allowed to

¹"Address by Mrs. Ashley Carus-Wilson, B.A. on taking the Chair at the Inaugural Meeting on June 6th, 1894, in the YMCA Hall." Drawer 2, Folder 2. Woman's Art Society of Montreal Archives, McCord Museum, Montreal.

become 'associates'; and the first full-fledged woman member was not elected until 1890.¹

According to the 'Extracts of the Constitution' reprinted in the Annual Report for 1901, "Professional members shall consist of such women who as artists and serious students may be acceptable to and are willing to subscribe to the objects of the Association ... Honorary Members shall consist of ladies who are interested in the promotion of Art matters."² The level of artistic achievement of the professional member was not delineated; she had only to demonstrate a seriousness in her art production. Officers of WAAC Branches had to be professional members, according to the Constitution. Honorary members could work on committees, and attend monthly meetings and lectures. Both had voting privileges.³ Candidates were proposed at one regular meeting, and a vote was taken at the following meeting, with a two-thirds majority necessary to become a member.⁴

The wording of the Constitution is of particular interest in the description of a professional member as a 'woman,' and an honorary member as a 'lady.' The divide between the professional and honorary members, as described by the membership policy, emphasizes the professional/amateur divide as part of the shifting social construction of femininity. The 'professional artist' was not often associated with the socially-constructed category 'lady' in the nineteenth century. Although a 'lady' was expected to have artistic talents, she was not expected to pursue them as a career. To negotiate both positions simultaneously was difficult and dangerous. For women artists, the choice between "solitary success or supportive

¹Cherry, *Painting Women*, 66.

²WAAC Annual Report, 1901. 54.

³WAAC Annual Report, 1901. 54.

⁴Programme 1899-1900. WAS Archives, McCord Museum, Montreal.

subordination"¹ was sharply curtailed by the pressure to conform to society's expectations and tremendous censure if one did not; a censure which increased in proportion to a woman's social status. Thus, the WAAC would not sully the reputation of an upper-class lady/honorary member, by helping her to attain professional status. Yet a woman who was already a professional artist could improve her skills at the WAAC. This places the WAAC in the precarious position of perpetuating the *status quo* definition of femininity - supporting, organizing, promoting - through its honorary member category, at the same time as it supported the professional woman artist in her career goals, without actually taking the responsibility for her professional formation. The WAAC was promoting a new category, the professional woman artist, within the existing social parameters.

Membership fees differed according to category. An active, or professional member, resident in Montreal, paid \$2.00 for a yearly membership. Honorary, or associate members paid \$1.00 per year. Non-resident members paid \$1.00 per year. These amounts had doubled by 1900.² A woman could also become a life member or a patroness by paying \$20.00 at any one time. Such a membership policy allowed more women to join the WAAC. Their fees were necessary to help fund the Branch's activities, however this fee also limited membership to those women who could afford it. Women who worked outside the home, whether in factories, schools, or shops, made barely enough to cover basic expenses; joining a club was a luxury they could not afford.

It comes as no surprise, then, that members of the Woman's Art Association tended to belong to the upper levels of Montreal society. The

¹Parker & Pollock, Old Mistresses, 108-109.

²WAAC Annual Reports, 1894-1901.

majority were married to professionals or businessmen who owned their own companies; single women were often professionals themselves. A survey of the husbands and fathers of the WAAC executive in 1899 reveals their social and financial status. The President was Mary Martha Phillips, principal of the School of Applied Art and Design, and a painter. The First Vice-President, Mrs. F.M. Cole was married to F. Minden Cole, an agent for Commercial Union Assurance Co.; Second Vice-President Jennifer Kerry was married to Wm. S. Kerry of Kerry, Watson & Co, wholesale druggists. Corresponding Secretary Adeline B. Crawford's husband was David Crawford, of Crawford & McGarry, Provision Merchants; Eleanor Irwin, the Recording Secretary was the daughter of E. Irwin, owner of E. Irwin & Co, importers of fine millinery, laces and fancy goods, and one of the few businesses in Montreal with a telephone. Mrs. A. F. Dunlop, the Treasurer, was married to A.F. Dunlop, architect.¹ In addition, the general membership included names associated with wealth and success, such as Miss W. McF. Notman, Miss E. Notman, Mrs. Edward Maxwell, and Lady Julia Drummond.²

It also becomes evident from the membership list that the vast majority were anglophone. According to the lists of members in the Annual Reports, there were only a few members with French names.³ Annual Reports and

¹WAAC Annual Reports, 1899; Lovell's Montreal Directory, 1900. Women's first names were rarely printed at that time. Emphasis was placed on whether they were a Miss or a Mrs., with the husband's name used. Much detective work is necessary to find out the 'real' names of these women, and for some I have been unable to locate this information.

²WAAC Annual Report, 1901.

³1894/5-non-resident members: Mrs. Bouthillier, Ste-Therese-de-Blainville and Mrs. Josephine Dandurand, St. Johns, Quebec; also Associate Members Mrs. E. Desbarats, Miss Guerin, and Miss A. Gallette, Lachine. These are the only French names; whether or not these women spoke French I have no idea, except for Josephine Dandurand, who published widely, and began the women's magazine *Le Coin du Feu*. The intermarriage of Irish and French-Catholics also makes it difficult to tell which language was spoken in the home. See R. Rudin The Forgotten Quebecers.

1899: none

1901: Marguerite Thibaudeau (referred to only as Madame Thibaudeau)

minutes of meetings were also in English. The only French ephemerae I came across in the Archives pertained to handicrafts, and these dated after 1900.¹

The proportion of active members to associate members changed dramatically over the first decade of the Montreal Branch's existence (see Appendix II). At the outset, active members outnumbered associate members by a ratio of four to three. By 1897, membership was almost equal in both types, but by 1904, there were six times as many associate members as there were practicing artist members, for roughly the same total number of members as 1897 and 1894. When active members were in the majority, the emphasis was on artist-focused activities, such as the life-drawing class. By the end of the first decade of its existence, the majority of members were associate, thus the activities of the club were centered on organizing lectures and loan exhibitions. This shift in membership may be a symptom of deeper changes within Montreal society, regarding the acceptance of women as artists or promoters of art, as Karen Blair discovered in her study of American women's cultural associations.² More research is required in the area of women's cultural clubs in Canada, in order to identify the underlying reasons for such a change.

The executive of the Montreal branch consisted of a President, two Vice-Presidents, a corresponding secretary, a recording secretary, a treasurer, and an eight-member committee. In addition, each activity was organized by a committee, and headed by a convenor. This hierarchical structure was the

¹Although beyond the scope of my thesis, information about Our Handicrafts Shop was printed in both languages, hoping to encourage French women who lived on farms to create and sell handicrafts through the store.

²Karen J. Blair, The Torchbearers: Women and Their Amateur Arts Associations in America, 1890-1930. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994). Blair covers music, theater, literature and visual art societies, including women's 'department' clubs, in which art was one of many activities, in a study which combines copious archival research with a feminist approach.

same as that of many clubs already in existence, one also patterned after government or business. Although the WAAC was following these traditional structures, the fact that an association of women artists was felt to be necessary reveals that they were not in fact content with the way things were. At the Art Association of Montreal, for example, a woman could exhibit paintings, but could not organize and install exhibitions.¹ With the creation of a separate association for women artists, its members could become directly involved with their professional development as artists. Deborah Cherry relates how women's art groups in Britain began in the 1850's, as a result of exclusion from membership in existing societies, and marginalization by the press. Women artists dealt with the categorization of their art as different in two ways. One approach was to emphasize their female gender in order to "lay claim to a collective identity and to promote the cultural presence of women."² The second approach was a denial of the difference in the art produced by men and women. Rather than begin a gender-specific society, women artists pressured existing societies to change their policies to include women. The WAAC in Montreal belongs then to the first category, those who chose to promote women artists' work through the strength of a collective.

ACTIVITIES OF THE MONTREAL BRANCH

A look at the types of activities undertaken by the Montreal Branch during the first few years will allow us to see to what degree the women fulfilled their aims. Each year's events began on the last Monday of

¹ Women's names do not appear until 1886, when Mrs. J.H.R. Molson, Mrs. G.W. Stephens, and Mrs. Wheeler were members of the Industrial and Decorative Art Committee, with five men; in 1891 Miss Pangman was appointed Assistant Secretary on the Council. Art Association of Montreal, Catalogues of the Spring Exhibitions, 1880-1903. Mrs. Stephens was an active member of the WAAC in 1894/5; significantly, the other women were not members of the WAAC.

²Deborah Cherry, Painting Women, 77.

September, with the Branch's annual meeting, followed on the first Monday in October with the Association's General Meeting in Toronto. All branches sent delegates to Toronto, where they reported on the past year's activities, and set the following year's exhibition dates. The Annual Report was then drawn up and published sometime later in the year.

The Montreal branch held monthly general meetings from October until early summer. The agenda of the meetings was formal, and generally included reading and approval of the minutes, old and new business, and reports from the various committees on their activities. The business part of the meeting was sometimes followed by a lecture or presentation by members. Topics varied from 'Great Portrait Painters' to 'Book-binding and Hand-painting by Women.'¹ In addition to these general meetings, the executive committee held meetings every two weeks.

General meetings always ended with tea and refreshments. The social aspect of the meeting was just as important as the organizational aspect. Both were part of the first three aims of the WAAC, allowing women artists to meet with each other, to discuss their work, and to take their art more seriously.

The rental of a studio was also an integral part of fulfilling these first three aims. Accordingly, members rented studio space on the top floor of the YMCA building in Phillips Square (Figure 5). Active members held three sketch sessions a week during the first winter, during which they took turns posing in costume, while the rest sketched.² Once a month they held a critique.

¹1899-1900: Mary M. Phillips "Great Portrait Painters"; Miss Eglough "Holbein"; Mrs. Cox, address re efforts of NCWC to help Doukhobor women; Alice Peck "Greco-Egyptian Portraits"; Mrs. Borden "Great Landscape Painters." Papers given at general meetings during 1900-01: included: Velina Markland Molson "Basket-Weaving by Indians of the Pacific Coast"; Mrs. Hibbert "Book-binding and Hand-painting by Women"; Mrs. Armstrong "Arts & Handicrafts among our Indians"; Miss Eglough "Early Genre Painters"; Miss Cameron, Royal Victoria College "Life and Paintings of Geo. F. Watts."

²There is no mention of nude models at the WAAC at this time.

Non-resident members could also benefit from this critique by mailing in their work; they would receive written comments with their work by return post. Attendance was so great at these drawing sessions the women felt rather crowded in their space,¹ even though, as previously mentioned, these sessions were only open to the active members, those who had demonstrated their artistic ability as a professional artist or serious student.

By 1897, the still life drawing sessions took place every morning, with only four members attending regularly. Two members participated in drawing from casts each Thursday evening. The Friday afternoon life drawing sessions were the most popular. Sessions averaged fourteen members, who took turns posing, clothed.² In the spring of 1899, when the winter life class ended, a group of the active members began outdoor sketching sessions, which they continued until August.³

The dwindling attendance at sketch sessions is in accordance with the decrease in the number of active members. Whereas active members composed 56% of total membership in the first year of its existence, by 1901, they represented only 13%. Despite small numbers, sketching classes have always remained part of the Branch's activities.⁴ This indicates how serious active members were in their desire to improve themselves by studio practice, discussion and interaction with other women artists.

The first public activity organized by the newly-formed Montreal Branch of the Woman's Art Association of Canada was a sketch exhibition. It was held in their studio space, on the top floor of the YMCA building, from

¹Mrs. James H. Peck, "Report" [at First Annual Meeting, Sept. 30, 1895], WAS Archives, McCord Museum, Montreal.

²AR 1897, 18.

³AR 1899(p.25) The number of members involved is not mentioned in the Annual Report.

⁴The Montreal Branch split from the national association in 1907, and reformed as the Woman's Art Society of Montreal, where studio work continues to this day. Celina Bell, "100 Years of Women in Art" The Gazette (January 8, 1994), H5.

October 22 through 26, 1894. In her President's report for that first year, Mary Alice Peck noted that although they had no experience in organizing exhibitions, and only \$9.00 in their coffers, the women persevered to the point of hanging some late sketches after the exhibition had opened. Attendance was encouraging: two hundred visitors in five days.¹ One newspaper reported that there were "some excellent oils and clear water-colors, and much interesting work in black and white."² Evidently Mrs. Carus-Wilson's fears of Montreal women artists producing second-rate work were completely unfounded.

Exhibitions were held regularly after that. Generally, a ceramic and a sketch exhibition were held in the autumn, and an exhibition of finished paintings was held in the spring. In addition to this, the Montreal branch held a Christmas show and sale almost every year (Figure 6). Exhibition dates for all branches were set at the Annual Meeting of the WAAC in Toronto, to enable work to be viewed in more than one city. For example, in the autumn of 1895, ceramic exhibitions were held in successive months beginning in October, in Toronto, London, and Montreal (Figure 7). Accordingly, members sent their work to Toronto in October, from whence it was sent to London for that branch's exhibition, and then to Montreal in December.³ The benefits of a travelling exhibition were many. The women artists could see what their sisters in other cities were doing, which encouraged them in their endeavours and kept them informed of art trends in other cities. The public benefitted,

¹ Mrs. James H. Peck, "Report" [at First Annual Meeting, Sept. 30, 1895], WAS Archives, McCord Museum, Montreal.

² "Woman's Art Association. A Sketch Exhibition Opened Yesterday Afternoon." Montreal Daily Herald (October 23, 1894), 2.

³ The travelling exhibitions of the WAAC may have been the first in Canada. The Royal Canadian Academy held its annual exhibition in different cities each year, but did not circulate the same exhibition to different cities. J. Russell Harper, Painting in Canada: a History, 2nd ed., (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), 184.

also, in being able to view a broad spectrum of work done by women. This was an important and necessary step toward the public and professional recognition of women artists, the necessary corollary to the aims of the Montreal Branch.

In addition to exhibiting paintings, design was also heralded by the WAAC as an area in which women artists could channel their career aspirations. Design related to the home, in particular, was the perfect forum for a woman's artistic talents. According to an English article published in 1872:

Why should not the instinctive taste and natural grace of woman be reflected in the hues and harmonies of colour and form on the walls of her rooms, on the curtains arranged by her deft fingers, on the soft carpet beneath her feet, and in the thousand forms of comfort, convenience, or elegance which surround her?¹

Judy Atfield and Pat Kirkham wrote 120 years later, in their introduction to A View From the Interior: Feminism, Women and Design. "It is noticeable that women predominate in the area of domestic design, to which they are considered more 'naturally' suited and where many have felt more 'at home'."² Although tongue-in-cheek, the feminist approach to design history taken by Atfield and Kirkham's volume reveals that women's roles as designers were in fact part of the social construction of their identities as women, in particular the identification of women with the home. The WAAC's support of women designers of articles for the home and interiors is in accord with these concepts. An unnamed member of the Montreal branch was willing to aid in interior decoration of homes, by designing "wall-papers, oil-cloths, fabrics, furniture, pottery, etc." as "the ordinary run of people do not

¹"Art Work for Women I" *Art Journal* (1872), 65. Quoted in Anthea Callen, Women Artists of the Arts and Crafts Movement 1870-1914. (New York, Pantheon Books, 1979), 25.

²Judy Atfield and Pat Kirkham, eds., A View From the Interior: Feminism, Women and Design. (London: The Women's Press, 1989), 2.

understand what forms and what colors do harmonize."¹ In its support of women designers of decorative household articles, the WAAC fulfilled its third aim, to look at art as a possible career for women. They did so in a way which would not stray too far from the expected role of women in late nineteenth century Montreal. By cleverly using the feminine stereotype to their advantage, the WAAC facilitated access to the design market for the aspiring woman designer.

The next step taken by the Montreal branch in encouraging women designers was a series of competitive design exhibitions, held during the late 1890's. Dominion Cotton Mills offered a design commission prize at a competitive design exhibition, which was held in February 1899.² Other design competitions were held in September 1898, and October 1900. A competition was perhaps not that 'ladylike' but when combined with the more acceptable forum of an exhibition, the WAAC was able to provide women designers with both an opportunity to create, and a place to exhibit those creations. In addition, designing products for the home was an acceptable outlet for a woman's design skills. An exhibition also revealed the women's talents to the public.

The fourth aim of the Montreal Branch was to educate the public about art, in order that they could better appreciate pictures, and "look at them more intelligently."³ Exhibitions offered one type of public art education. Another way of teaching art appreciation was the art lecture. When the WAAC formed in 1894, the Art Association of Montreal had already been holding art classes and exhibitions for over thirty years. In their desire not to duplicate the work

¹"The House Beautiful. The W.A.A. to Take Up House Decorating." Montreal Daily Herald ill. supp. (April 12, 1895), 1.

²AR 1899, p.25 The winner is not named in the Annual Report, nor is the nature of the design commission explained.

³Inaugural speech.

of the AAM, the women decided that "[t]here was, however, other work for us, the giving of art lectures..."¹ They began immediately. That winter, a series of a dozen public lectures was held. Lecturers were found among the city's artists, professors, and intellectuals; topics were many and varied. In the first series, Rev. W. S. Barnes spoke on "Portraiture of Christ;" Dr. Charles Colby chose "Norman Architecture;" and Mrs. Logan gave a dissertation on the "Relation of Present French Art to Present French Literature."² Encouraged by their success, a lecture series became a regular part of the yearly itinerary.

By holding public lectures, the WAAC was ostensibly fulfilling its fourth aim, that of educating the public about art, or 'developing art taste' as it was described at the time. But who were the public who could benefit from these lectures? Lectures were held on Tuesday afternoon, with a fee of 25¢ charged for non-members.³ As a gesture of cultural philanthropy these public lectures had limited effect. An hourly-waged labourer trying to make ends meet on \$10 per week would probably not attend; even if they could afford the quarter, it is more likely they would be either still at work, finishing their ten-hour days. A woman teacher at a grammar or common school could not afford to attend an art lecture, either. According to an article published in *The Educational Record* in March 1893, after paying room and board, the average female teacher had less than \$65 each year for all her clothing, medical, and personal expenses.⁴ An art lecture was affordable for the merchant classes

¹Mrs. James H. Peck, "Address" (ICW Conference, June 14, 1909), 2-3. WAS Archives, McCord Museum, Montreal.

²WAAC Annual Report, 1895. 6. The WAAC raised \$26.75 by selling tickets for lectures that year. (I think tickets were 25¢ each, but I don't remember where I saw this...)

³"Women Artists of Canada" Montreal Daily Herald April 12, 1895, supp. p.1.

⁴More accurately, between \$11 and \$63, from net yearly salaries of \$245 to \$392. Miss E. Binmore, "Financial Outlook of the Women Teachers of Montreal" *The Educational Record*, (Quebec, March 1893), XIII:3, 70-74. Reprinted in Cook & Mitchinson, Woman's Sphere, p.187.

and professionals, but both would have been at work on a week-day afternoon. This left anyone who had afternoons free, and enough money to pay for the ticket: very likely middle and upper-class women.

The WAAC sold \$26.75 worth of tickets for their first course of twelve lectures. At 25¢ each, a total of 107 non-members attended the series, or an average of nine for each lecture, for members were admitted free. Although the stated aim was the benefit 'the public,' in reality benefit was gained by only a few well-off women.

The women's desire to increase their knowledge of art history became evident by the end of the 1890's. To cater to this wish, the Montreal Branch began a weekly 'Art Reading Club' which was very well attended from its first year.¹ The convenor of the Club, Jennifer W. Kerry, sent a flyer to all members in June 1899, outlining topics for the autumn session. The women read the suggested texts over the summer. In the fall, each one chose a topic, and delivered a paper in front of the group, illustrated with prints or copies of works discussed.² The members were able to use the art and reference books in William Scott's library to aid them in their research.³

The 1899 topics were 'Great Portrait Painters' in the autumn, and 'Great Landscape Painters' during the winter. The following winter, under the same convenor, the women read and discussed 'Great Animal Painters,' including Rosa Bonheur, Lady Butler and Henriette Ronner; and 'Genre Painters'. After the turn of the century, the scope of the reading class expanded beyond

¹WAAC AR 1899.

²Portfolio, WAS Archives, McCord Museum, Montreal.

³WAAC, AR 1901, 35. WAS Archives, McCord Museum, Montreal.

painting, to include Sculpture, Modern Illustrators, including American and Canadian; Distinguished Modern Decorators, and Great Cathedrals.¹

The broad spectrum of art-related topics indicates a great desire to learn. The women benefitted in many ways from the Reading Class. Researching, writing and delivering of papers in front of a group of one's peers would have done much to increase self-confidence and public speaking abilities. Furthermore, the ensuing discussion and critique of papers allowed members to formulate opinions, criticize constructively and openly, as well as to accept criticism and learn from it. In her Report of the Reading Class for the 1900-1901 session, Kerry noted that during the discussions, "a marked improvement is noticeable; the feeling of restraint, which at first prevailed, has quite disappeared; opinions are fairly and freely expressed, making the discussion, not the least valuable part of the work."² Members benefitted by the Reading Class whether they were artists or not, by learning skills which a housewife would not ordinarily have had the opportunity to acquire such as public speaking, debating, and critical and analytical skills.³

Of the four main aims of the Montreal branch, three were geared towards improving women artists, through exhibitions, design competitions, and sketch classes. However, the number of active members dwindled over the first six years of the Branch's existence, becoming a distinct minority by 1900. The fourth aim of encouraging a love and appreciation for art in the public,

¹WAAC, Annual Reports, 1899-1904. It is perhaps of significance that the women studied animal and genre painting, two forms which were more accepted (and expected) of women. The Reading Class' topics would make an interesting area for further study.

²WAAC, AR 1901, 35.

³Pat Thane notes in her article "Late Victorian Women" that women of the upper classes were often denied serious education if they did not require it in order to work, as a teacher, for example. She connects the "psychic ill-effects of the frustration" (191) at not being allowed higher education to the high number of women's psychological breakdowns during this time. See also Elaine Showalter, "Victorian Women and Insanity" Victorian Studies 23:2 (Winter 1980).

was ostensibly fulfilled by art lectures, and exhibitions. This public, however, had to be available during the daytime for exhibitions, and on Tuesday afternoons for lectures; furthermore there were fees for lectures, and some exhibitions.¹ It becomes clear that only members of the middle and upper classes had the possibility of improving themselves, whether due to temporal or financial constraints. In retrospect, Mrs. Carus-Wilson's comment about the importance of the rich man's art collection takes on new connotations as a symbol of social class.

The trend towards the building of a new art culture by and for the elite has been traced in the United States. The wealthy funded, organized, and attended art galleries, museums, and symphonies. Referring to the situation in Boston, Paul DiMaggio points out that the motives for beginning Boston's Museum of Fine Arts and orchestra were more aligned with self-interest than with education and social control: "these founders, these cultural capitalists were certainly smart enough to realize that the masses weren't going to be socialized by institutions that they didn't have effective access to. The orchestra was really an institution for the Boston upper class, and for parts of the Boston middle class, and not for the working classes."² Attending the orchestra, or visiting the Art Gallery became an affirmation of one's upper class status.

The Art Association of Montreal falls under this rubric, as well. Founded and run by Montreal's wealthier English-speaking males, the AAM was part of the beginning of an elitist art culture in Montreal. Access to its gallery,

¹Some Annual Reports were missing in the WAS Archives, thus my information on this is scant. A thorough perusal of Montreal papers would probably glean this sort of information, if ever I have the time to do so.

²Lon Dubinsky, "Philanthropy: The Power of Benevolence" CBC Ideas, October 24, 1984. transcripts Toronto: CBC, 1985. 7. See Paul DiMaggio, "Cultural Entrepreneurship in 19th Century Boston: The Creation of an Organizational Base for High Culture in America." Media, Culture and Society. 4:1, 1982.

exhibitions and art courses was limited to those who could pay the fees. Whether a conscious effort at exclusion or not, it does appear that self-interest played a role in the AAM's policies.

As women, the members of the WAAC entered this art arena in 1894 in a somewhat precarious position. Many of their executive were also members of Montreal's upper classes, thus were familiar with the AAM and its place as Montreal's leading palace of art. Not wanting to tread on any toes, the WAAC was extremely ladylike: by exhibiting ceramics and unfinished sketches, and holding lectures, they were not duplicating the AAM's activities. They were, as stated in the Inaugural Speech, playing a supportive role. They were also, however unwittingly, supporting the AAM's creation of an elitist art culture in Montreal, in that the public they were reaching was one with a certain pecuniary ease, a 'public' drawn from their own social class.

Since it was much more socially acceptable to organize art exhibitions or lectures than to produce paintings and sell them, this may explain why there were more associate members of the WAAC after only six years.¹ In order to truly become better artists, members of the WAAC first had to change society's expectations of women - men's as well as their own - from supporters to producers of art, capable of original and creative expression. By their actions, it appears that the WAAC was not ready for this by the end of the nineteenth century. What they were ready for, was another area of promotion, untouched by the AAM, thus safe for their intervention: the handicrafts.

¹It doesn't explain what happened to the many active members the Montreal Branch had attracted initially, though. Either practicing women artists quit, and rejoined as associate members, as Mary Phillips did, or perhaps they did not join at all. In any event more research is needed in this area.

Chapter 3. Why Handicrafts?

During their first six years, the Montreal Branch of the Woman's Art Association of Canada fulfilled their four major aims to a great extent. They held life drawing and still life sessions, went on sketching outings and conducted a reading class. They held two or three yearly exhibitions, monthly critiques, and weekly public lectures. Toward the end of the 1890's, however, the WAAC's Annual Reports contain many comments regarding the state of home handicrafts in the Dominion of Canada. Handicrafts were seen as perfect for women to produce and promote, as they were made in the home, using skills which were extensions of activities expected of women, such as sewing or weaving. By creating handicrafts in their homes, married women could be with their families, and at the same time contribute to the economy. Single women could escape the indignity of working for pay in the public forum. More importantly, neither would be taking jobs that should be filled by men.¹ That women should remain in the home was a priority of the National Council of Women of Canada and its affiliates, among them the WAAC. The activities of the Montreal Branch regarding the promotion of the home handicrafts are evidence of the members' support of these views. In addition, these women wielded the power that went with their social position to support the status quo, which in turn served to emphasize class differences. Strong-Boag notes that

¹"Introduction" in The Proper Sphere. Woman's Place in Canadian Society, R. Cook and W. Mitchinson, eds. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1976), 3. See also "The Labour Question and Women's Work and its Relation to Home Life" in the same volume, 149-155.

NCWC'ers were determined that social improvement would guarantee social control. Citizens were to be encouraged and at times coerced into adopting attitudes which would augment and serve the existing social order. ... Many of the federation's programmes set out to ensure that women shared in both the responsibilities and rewards of social domination.¹

For affiliates such as the WAAC, handicrafts were not only educational, they were a tool for social control. The archive of the Montreal Branch of the WAAC substantiates the urgent need to devote attention to Canada's handicrafts. These reasons are important to explore, in light of societal, gender, and class issues.

The WAAC became involved in promoting handicrafts partly because they did not want to duplicate the work of the Art Association of Montreal. A woman in the 1890's in Montreal was expected to play a supportive role in her club work just as she did at home, and the work of the WAAC was no exception. In a speech given in 1909 recalling how interest in handicrafts began at the Montreal Branch, Mary Alice Peck states: "...we soon felt that our work could only overlap that already being well done, ... There was, however, other work for us, the giving of art lectures, and the encouragement of the minor arts, which at that time were not receiving the attention that is being accorded to them to-day."² Her words reiterate what Mrs. Carus-Wilson had said in her Inaugural Speech, fifteen years previously.

According to their own literature, the WAAC undertook the promotion of handicrafts for the moral and educational benefit to the nation, to revive disappearing techniques of native Canadians, and to encourage women to remain in the home. When taken together, these various reasons add up to an image of women working within the existing social and political structures,

¹Strong-Boag, 6.

²Mrs. J. Peck, "Address at the Reception given by The Canadian Handicrafts Guild to The Countess of Aberdeen and the Delegates to the International Council of Women," Montreal (June 14, 1909), 2-3.

and contributing to it by using handicrafts as a tool of social control. But first, we must investigate the reasons individually.

For the WAAC, nationalism was tied in with moral and educational improvement. By improving the quality of its citizens, Canada as a whole would rise in its own esteem, and in that of the world. Education was the key to improving Canadians, providing "the vital link between two very important elements - the concern to encourage an indigenous culture and the desire to build a strong national identity."¹ The WAAC's contribution to the improvement of the social fabric of Canada was in the sphere of the 'minor arts,' or handicrafts. Their exhibitions offered physical examples of Canadian cultural production, which at once educated those who had never seen such things, and encouraged those with artistic talents. As Mary Alice Peck stated,

It was of vital importance to arouse the interest of the public, to secure that interest in this endeavour, and at the same moment to inform the public as to the immense value of the Minor Arts not only to the development, mental and physical, of the craftsmen and women scattered throughout our vast land, but also as an asset to the Dominion itself; this was the primary object and the most difficult problem to be solved.²

The lofty ideal of changing society in order to improve its artistic products originated with the English craft revival. One way of doing this was a return to hand-made goods. The satisfied producer of hand-made fabric, furniture, or dishes would produce beautiful articles, which would bring increased pleasure to the user. Ruskin put it this way: "Industry without art is brutality," which, as Gillian Naylor points out,

¹ Maria Tippet, Making Culture: English-Canadian Institutions and the Arts before the Massey Commission, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 35. I interpret Tippet's use of the word 'indigenous' here as produced in Canada, but by English-Canadians, not Natives. In the WAAC's promotion of a national cultural production, Native Canadians were very much in the forefront.

² M.A. Peck, Sketch of the Activities of the Canadian Handicraft Guild and of the Dawn of the Handicraft Movement in the Dominion, (Montreal, 1929), 1.

marks his divorce from conventional theory, and adds a new dimension to social thinking, for both [Ruskin] and William Morris passionately believed that beauty was as necessary to man's survival as food, shelter and a living wage, and that this essential could only be achieved within a society in which all men would work, take pleasure in their labour and share their delight in its results.¹

In Canada, the craft revival was based on this concept, but was not exactly the same. Although Ruskin was known, and mentioned often in the literature of the WAAC - in fact a full set of *Modern Painters* were among the first books donated to the Montreal Branch's library² - the members were not concerned with changing societal institutions. Rather, it seems that improvement of individuals through education would achieve the cumulative result of a better educated public, and hence a better country. By visiting exhibitions of art or handicrafts, the public would be educated, and artists would be inspired to produce better work. In both instances, the English and Canadian ideals agree.

They differ, however, in the area of economics. Ruskin felt that beauty should be an integral part of every person's daily experience, and could enrich the individual, both in the production and consumption of handicrafts. The WAAC, on the other hand, refer frequently to the benefits of earning money from the sale of the craft. The commercial potential of handicrafts is mentioned over and over in the WAAC's literature,³ emphasizing the great effect of the expanding capitalist system in Canada. It also reveals the women's coherence with the ideals of capitalism as the only route to success and happiness.

¹ Gillian Naylor, The Arts and Crafts Movement: A Study of its Sources, Ideals and Influences on Design Theory. 2nd ed. (London: Trefoil Publications, 1990), 26-27.

²AR1901 p.36.

³Woodcarving, bookbinding, stained glass and other crafts are all "remunerative from a commercial standpoint and desirable from the standard of culture." "President's Memoranda" AR 1899, p.6.

According to much of the WAAC's literature, Canada's handicrafts were in a sorry state. A flyer advertising the 1902 Exhibition of Canadian Handicrafts states the case flatly: "Owing to many causes incident to modern life, the thoroughness and appropriateness of [the Home Arts] are deteriorating. This is, both artistically and commercially, a loss to the country."¹ It was pointed out that in Europe and the United Kingdom, the time and money invested in these home arts was well spent, since more people were employed in craft-related jobs, and the general level of taste had been improved. These same goals were sought for Canada, with particular emphasis on the production of crafts in the home.

The key word in all the WAAC's publicity regarding the revival of Canada's and in particular, Quebec's handicrafts was 'home.' A pamphlet promoting the work of the Home Arts and Handicrafts Committee of the Montreal WAAC, formed after the 1900 exhibition, suggested some reasons for producing home industries in rural Quebec, such as the creation of a " 'by product' of the farm; To bring in ready cash ; [and] To give the women paying employment in their own homes - thus preventing emigration to the cities and large manufacturing centres in the States."²

Another pamphlet includes the following statement:

A year's experience has taught many valuable lessons of possibilities and impossibilities in the management of the work, which is of national benefit; but one fact becomes clearer and more insistent, ... that the encouragement of an industry within the home, solves in great measure the problems of how to keep the brightest, most intelligent of our young women, yes and young men too, where they ought to be, on the farm at home.³

¹Mrs. James H. Peck, "Scheme for the Promotion of Home Arts and Handicrafts." c.1902. WAS archives, D2F5, McCord Museum, Montreal.

²"Home Arts and Handicrafts Committee" c.1903. WAS Archives, D2F5, McCord Museum, Montreal. Many Quebecers went to the New England states to find work in textile mills.

³WAAC, Montreal Branch, "Committee of Arts and Handicrafts," c.1904. WAS Archives, D2F5, McCord Museum, Montreal.

At the time, women working outside the home was seen as bringing society to its knees; by working at home, women in particular could accomplish several things at once. Producing some sort of handicraft would allow her to keep busy at home where she belonged, and not upset society's pattern. She could earn some extra money, contribute financially to the economy, assure that the technique of her craft would not be forgotten, and increase Canada's level of culture by adding to the volume of hand-made, artistic articles. Of note is that in all their ephemera, the pleasure a woman might have in creating her work is not mentioned; her motivation and reward must be exterior to her own self. To produce crafts for financial, national, or promotional reasons were all that counted.

In this aspect, the Canadian craft revival is very different from the English one, where the pleasure in production was just as important as the pleasure in consumption of the article. In his novel News From Nowhere, William Morris illustrates the importance of pleasure in work by the invention of a society which has no government, no currency, no education system, no superfluous production, and no World-Market, enabling all members to pursue the type of work they enjoy.¹ Morris wrote and lectured widely on the importance of the handicrafts. In one lecture he stated his case clearly: "We do most certainly need happiness in our daily work, content in our daily rest; and all this cannot be if we hand over the whole responsibility of the details of our daily life to machines and their drivers."² In Canada, nationalism and capitalism were used to promote the handicraft ideal, rather than pleasure and beauty.

¹William Morris, "News From Nowhere" in May Morris, ed. Collected Works of William Morris, Vol. XVI (New York: Russell and Russell, 1966), 92-93.

²William Morris, "The Revival of Handicraft" in Art and Society, Lectures and Essays by William Morris ed. Gary Zabel, (Boston: George's Hill, 1993), 134.

What did the members of the WAAC have to gain by their work? The class and cultural background of the women involved in promoting home handicrafts must be considered in this regard. Even though women's position in society a century ago is seen as one of powerlessness, this is generally discussed in relation to the power wielded by men, and in comparison with late twentieth century standards. Within their own gender, the power wielded by women of the English-speaking upper class in Montreal was actually rather great. The members of the Woman's Art Association were all from this sector; even the two French-Canadian members were also from the upper classes.¹ The social control exerted, however unwittingly, over their own gender, stems from promoting the bourgeois ideal of femininity and respectability, with the medium of handicrafts. This ensured that the status quo would not be upset, which in turn reinforced their own position of advantage with regard to money and power.

The members of the Montreal branch of the Women's Art Association can also be said to subvert this ideal in their insistence on the economic value of handicrafts. Regardless of the addition to national culture, the women who produced these handicrafts could sell them for cold, hard cash, which would give them a measure of economic independence. As wealthy women, they knew and understood the value and the power of money. For many of them, as married women, they also knew and understood the economic dependence engendered by one's marital status.

¹Josephine Marchand Dandurand, one of the first non-resident members, wrote extensively on women's rights, and founded the women's paper *Le Coin du Feu*; Marguerite Lamothe Thibaudeau was an active member in 1900, and convened the Lace and Needlework Section of the 1900 Exhibition; she raised over \$50,000 for the Notre Dame Hospital and was involved in many other women's philanthropic endeavours. Both women merit attention for their involvement in the improvement of the condition of women in Montreal, both English- and French-speaking. Notable also is that Dandurand's husband, Raoul, was a lawyer and senator; Marguerite Lamothe married Rosaire Thibaudeau, a businessman and also a senator. Again, it appears, class is thicker than gender.

The importance of home handicrafts, for the Montreal Branch of the Woman's Art Association of Canada, touched on areas ranging from the stability of the family to nationalism and economic independence for women. Slightly different from the English craft revival, Canada's handicraft revival followed the English trend of holding exhibitions to publicize the handicrafts. The first major exhibition of handicrafts was mounted by the Montreal branch of the WAAC in 1900.

Chapter 4. The Exhibition of Arts and Handicrafts, 1900

The Montreal Branch of the Woman's Art Association of Canada mounted an Exhibition of Arts and Handicrafts in October 1900 (Figure 8). Their purpose in doing so was "that interest may be aroused in retaining, reviving and developing the Art Industries and Crafts."¹ The exhibition's organization, display, and press reception will be discussed in detail, in an attempt to understand the women's motives for such an undertaking.

Their motivation came from within the WAAC, as well as from the society in which the women lived. The dominating force of Mary Ella Dignam (1860-1938), the founding president of the WAAC, must be considered in the chain of events which led up to the Exhibition of Arts and Handicrafts in Montreal in 1900 (Figure 9). Dignam received art training in Ontario, New York, and Europe, where she spent six years giving guided tours of important artistic monuments to groups of Canadian women, artists and tourists.² Upon her return in 1886, Dignam quickly realized that Toronto did not afford adequate opportunities for women artists. She later remarked, "I found I had to do something to open the door for women and the only way seemed to be the organization of the Women's Art Association."³ Her belief that art had a role to

¹"Exhibition of Arts and Handicrafts" unpub. WAS D2F5.

²Allison Thompson, A Worthy Place in the Art of the Country. The Woman's Art Association of Canada, 1887-1987 MA Thesis, Carleton University, 1989, 54.

³Violet Dickens, "Half Century of Leadership in Canadian Art," Boston Christian Science Monitor (13 March 1936), n.p. quoted in Anne M. Page, Canada's First Professional Women Painters, 1890-1914: Their Reception in Canadian Writing on the Visual Arts, MA Thesis, Concordia University, 1991, 15.

play in public education, social improvement, and nationalism was in keeping with the ideals of the NCWC, and the women's club movement in general.

In June of 1899, Dignam attended the International Congress of Women, in London, England. At this time she met members of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society, who promised "assistance ... towards any movement to hold an exhibition of Handicrafts or for the establishing of any craft in particular by our Association."¹ It comes as no surprise then, to read Dignam's comments in the 1899 WAAC Annual Report:

The feeling has grown very strongly during the year that this Association should do more than here-to-fore in the encouragement of Handicrafts. That there is a large field for many art industries, which, if properly directed and encouraged, should become important products of the country is evident.²

She cited lace-making, artistic embroideries, wood carving, bookbinding and stained glass as activities which were "remunerative from a commercial standpoint and desirable from the standard of culture."³ Handicrafts, then, had the potential of being financially viable as well as culturally enriching for their producers.

Dignam's strongly-held opinions greatly influenced the WAAC and its branches. Accordingly, the Toronto branch's 12th Annual Exhibition included a handicraft section alongside the paintings. Newspaper reviews praised the show for both its aim and its content. One reviewer noted that "in exhibiting these various handicrafts it is the intention of the Woman's Art Association to draw attention to the wide field of such work there is for women of artistic bent in Canada. Such an exhibition cannot fail to be educational and beneficial in its influence."⁴ Another reviewer commented that "the revival of interest

¹Annual Report, 1899, 10.

²AR, 1899, 7.

³AR, 1899, 7.

⁴Katherine Leslie, "Woman's World" the Toronto World, 23 February 1900: 5.

in handicrafts has been so marked of late in England and on the Continent that the women of Canada determined to awaken a like interest amongst the lovers of art..."¹

This interest in the handicrafts had indeed been awakened among the members of the WAAC, and the Montreal branch was no exception. Following the success the Toronto branch's exhibition, the Montreal WAAC decided at an executive meeting held on April 27, 1900, to hold a large handicraft exhibition, if suitable space could be found. The moral and educational benefit of such an exhibition would ensure techniques were not forgotten, particularly the "primitive and characteristic national work" produced by Indians and French Canadians. They also sought to encourage country women to produce crafts in their spare time, and to allow craft workers to compare their work with other current and past work.²

These aims fall under the rubric of cultural philanthropy: all viewers, whether they belonged to one of the WAAC's target groups or not, could benefit from exposure to contemporary and historical examples of crafts from many countries. The genuine concern felt by the organizers resulted from their knowledge of current Canadian art trends, as well as their sense of noblesse oblige. The special mention of natives and French Canadians reinforces the imperialist subtext of cultural philanthropy in Canada.

¹"On Dit" February 23, 1900. Scrapbook, WAAC Archives, Toronto. The aims of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society, London, England may have inspired Dignam in this regard: "The [Arts and Crafts Exhibition] Society hopes to encourage personal work and craft by offering opportunities for exhibition of any possible kind of handiwork, or design for such, ... to promote a better understanding, on the part both of workmen and the public, of the meaning of design as applied to different kinds of material; to ameliorate the condition of the craftsman; and finally to protest against the existing separation of art and industry, and the application of the former term only to pictorial expression." Mabel Cox, "The Arts and Crafts Exhibition" *The Artist* (October 1896), 9.

²"Exhibition of Arts and Handicrafts" WAS Archives, McCord Museum, Montreal.

As chance would have it, Henry Morgan & Co. was in the process of constructing a five-storey addition to its department store, Colonial House, which included an art gallery on the top floor.¹ Apparently Mary Phillips was shopping at Colonial House and Morgan offered to show her the new gallery. Upon hearing of the WAAC's dilemma, James Morgan donated the use of his new gallery: they would be granted the inaugural exhibition. A rather chivalrous act on Morgan's part, but not one without some forethought. By opening the art gallery and its adjoining Tea Room with the WAAC's exhibition, a steady stream of visitors from the middle and upper classes of Montreal - potential purchasers - would have to pass through his department store on their way to the fifth-floor gallery.² It was to be a mutually beneficial arrangement, one which exposes the collaboration between men and women of the middle and upper classes to achieve separate ends by the same means.

According to the Minute Book, Morgan's offer was unanimously accepted at a special Executive Meeting of the WAAC on July 13th; according to a booklet written by Mary A. Peck in 1929, Morgan offered the use of the gallery in September, and the women organized the whole exhibition in six weeks.³ Since the WAAC adjourned for the summer months, it is likely that the use of the gallery was finalized in July, as per the Minute Book, but that serious work on the exhibition was done in September and October, when all

¹ A four-page illustrated section on the Woman's Art Association of Canada, in the Montreal Daily Herald of April 12, 1895, included an article entitled "A Suggestion," which called for "some enterprising landlord" to erect a building wherein "the top flats, lighted from the roof principally, would make excellent studios." The anonymous writer noted that shops could fill the lower floors, and studios the upper ones, and went on to suggest that "[t]he building should be heated by one apparatus, so that artists could have light, heat and water included in the rental. The best locality for both artist and shops is between Union Avenue and Mountain Street."

² Virginia Watt, archivist, Canadian Guild of Crafts Quebec, mentioned this to me in conversation, March 7, 1995.

³ M.A. Peck, Sketch of the Activities of the Canadian Handicraft Guild and of the Dawn of the Handicraft Movement in the Dominion. (Montreal, 1929) 1.

members were back from vacation. Indeed, the minutes for the first fall general meeting, held on October 2nd, noted that an executive meeting on September 4 had finalized convenors of committees, dates, and opening hours for the exhibition.¹

In planning the exhibition, the first concern discussed was "to interest friends outside of the Association and to secure leaders or convenors of committees to accept entire responsibility of such committees."² The seven convenors chosen were all active or life members of the Association; their committee members did not have to belong to the WAAC, however.³

Committees were set up to take care of the guarantee fund, the catalogue, advertising and publicity. Insurance for the loan exhibits was secured from the Union Insurance Company, which donated a \$10,000 policy.⁴ It is evident from the highly organized and businesslike way in which the women went about running the exhibition that their scant six years of putting on exhibitions had been an invaluable experience.

Throughout October, announcements were put in the papers requesting that articles for each section be sent to the convenor in charge.⁵ The response was so great that the original opening date of the exhibition had to be postponed for two days to allow the women extra time to arrange the many items.

¹Minute Book, 1894-1900. WAS.

²Minute Book, July 13, 1900. WAS.

³Lace and Needlework - Marguerite Thibaudeau; Wood and Metalwork - Mary Alice Peck; Ceramics and Pottery - Mrs. R. C. Smith; Bookbinding and Leather - Mrs. Anson D. McKim; Fans, Miniatures and Antique Jewelry - Mrs. Charles Spragge; Designs, Sketches and Illustrations - Mrs. G. B. Burland; Basket-work and Weaving - Velina Nesmith Markland Molson.

⁴"The Great Exhibition. Large Meeting was Held Yesterday at the Studio of the Women's Art Association," Montreal Daily Herald (October 3, 1900), 6.

⁵See issues of the Montreal Daily Herald throughout October 1900.

The catalogue is an invaluable source of information about the exhibition. The first half is a list of every item, including the names of each artist or lender. The second half consists of additional information about specific exhibits, and short essays on techniques. Advertisements were inserted in the second half of the catalogue, on the left side of each opened page, in order to finance the undertaking.

The Art Gallery of Colonial House was a large, T-shaped space, with buff-coloured walls, trimmed with a wide green dado, marbled columns, and an arched roof. One of the smaller galleries had walls of green brocade, and a ceiling "beautifully frescoed in panels showing little cupids sporting among flowers."¹ When the exhibition opened for the private view at three o'clock on Monday, October 22, 1900, all 2400 items were in place (Figure 10). An orchestra was playing in the background to complete the effect.

As in Britain, the opening of an art exhibition by persons of high rank was accepted practice in Canada. The WAAC thus procured Lord Strathcona, Principal Peterson of McGill University, and Canon Racicot of Laval University, to open their exhibition.² Together, these three men lent authority to the exhibition by their gender and their position. They represented, collectively, the major universities in Quebec, the two major religions, and the Crown. This served three purposes. Firstly, such a masculine triumvirate would reassure the public of the educational value of the exhibition. Secondly, it lent an authority that was necessary in women's club activities, in order for them to be taken seriously. Every review of the exhibition mentioned the names of these gentlemen, regardless of their comments on the exhibits. Thirdly, inviting men to open the exhibition would

¹"Arts and Handicrafts. The Exhibition Promises to be Most Successful," Montreal Daily Witness 22 October 1900: 5.

²"Women's Art Exhibition" Montreal Daily Herald October 24, 1900.

reassure the male art community of their supremacy, and thus of women's supportive role within that community. The members of the WAAC worked within the existing social system, in accordance with the privileges of their gender and class, to accomplish something new. That they could organize such a large exhibition, yet still require a few men to open and 'authorize' it is indicative of women's status in Montreal society in 1900, a status which they nonetheless used to their advantage.

The organization and display of the exhibition was a massive undertaking. The seven sections were divided into loan and sale groups. They included articles from all over the world, dating from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century. The articles were classified by type, regardless of the gender of the artist. Thus, all pieces of lace would be exhibited together, regardless of country or date (Figure 11). This was standard museum practice at the time. At the Horniman Museum, in London, England, for example, "Glass table cases in one room contained Swiss, African, Esquimaux (sic), Indian, Japanese and Chinese ivory carvings and a collection of Meerscham pipes..".¹ Typological classification of items was generally used by local museums, in an attempt to show the relationship between race and culture. The viewer would draw conclusions about the various races by the juxtaposition of cultural artifacts.²

Although the women of the WAAC did state in their advertising for the exhibition that public education was their main goal, they were not as blunt as General A.H.L.F. Pitt-Rivers, who told the Society of Arts in 1891 that his museum's typological exhibits were "designed to educate 'the masses' to accept

¹Annie E. Coombes, "Museums and the Formation of National and Cultural Identities" Oxford Art Journal 11:2 (1988), 60.

²Ibid, 60.

the existing social order."¹ Knowing that the majority of museum-goers did not have the historical background knowledge to question what was presented before them, Pitt-Rivers was able to create his own version of history, through his own private collection in his own museum. The WAAC's Exhibition of Arts and Handicrafts was also a constructed version of history, constructed according to the articles which were loaned or produced for the exhibition.

The display of cultural artifacts removes them from their own cultural and historical contexts, and causes them to stand as metonyms for an entire culture; furthermore it reorders them according to the priorities of the exhibitor.² While Pitt-Rivers consciously organized his museum following the progression from simple to complex, following Herbert Spencer's writings,³ the women of the WAAC exhibited what was offered to them on loan by the private citizens of Montreal. A closer examination of loaned articles and their lenders reveals how these private collections demonstrated the class differences between the lender and the viewer, in addition to any educational value.

The loaned items that comprised seventy per cent of the exhibition came from private Montreal collections. Some were objects in daily use, others family heirlooms, or items amassed on voyages as part of the nineteenth century quest to understand 'exotic' cultures. As in typical ethnological

¹Ibid, 61. Pitt-Rivers delivered many lectures on this topic, noting that "the masses are ignorant ... the knowledge they lack is the knowledge of history" thus leaving them wide open to accept the material presented to them in the museum as the truth.

²Susan Stewart, On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), cited in James Clifford, "On Collecting Art and Culture," in Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures R. Ferguson, et al., eds. (New York: the New Museum of Contemporary Art and Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1990) 144.

³AHLF Pitt-Rivers, "On the Evolution of Culture" (1875) in M.W. Thompson, General Pitt-Rivers: Evolution and Archaeology in the Nineteenth Century. (Bradford-on-Avon, Moonraker Press, 1977), 142.

museum display, items were meticulously labelled (Figure 12). Whether or not the correct date or medium was included, the name of the lender was invariably present.

Information regarding the history of the article was included in the catalogue when it was known. One example was exhibit 187 in the Wood and Metalwork section, loaned by Mrs. J. S. Archibald. The catalogue entry read as follows: "Oak spinning wheel. Brought from Londonderry, Ireland, with his household effects by Samuel Archibald, Esq. He settled in Truro, N.S., in 1762, and the wheel has been the property of his family ever since."¹ Family history played an important part in the educational experience of such an exhibition, for the viewer learns as much about the Archibald family as about their spinning wheel. The lender's superior social status included the imperialist responsibility of educating others. The collection and display of objects are seen as "crucial processes of Western identity formation,"² of which class position is a part. The viewer is reminded that the article on display belongs to someone's private collection, someone whose upper class status has conveyed enough value on it to deem it worthy of being exhibited. James Clifford explains how

[t]he object had ceased to be primarily an exotic 'curiosity' and was now a source of information entirely integrated in the universe of Western Man. The value of exotic objects was their ability to testify to the concrete reality of an earlier stage of human Culture, a common past confirming Europe's triumphant present.³

In other words, exhibiting objects from another culture demonstrated unequivocally the lender's superiority over that culture, by virtue of having appropriated the educational and cultural value of the object. This also

¹ Exhibition of Arts and Handicrafts, Catalogue, (Montreal, 1900), n.p. WAS.

² Clifford, 144. Clifford cites the work of Susan Stewart, Phillip Fisher, Krzysztof Pomian, James Bunn, Daniel Defert, Johannes Fabian, and Rémy Saisselin in this regard.

³ Clifford, 150.

demonstrated, according to capitalist values, the lender's superiority over the viewer, by virtue of ownership and knowledge.

Having a private collection also meant that the lender had 'taste,' something which the viewer was meant to acquire by attending such an exhibition. For the WAAC, helping the viewer to 'retain and develop all artistic taste' went along with their notion of what was morally good for the public. Sally Price sums up Sir Kenneth Clark's definition of taste as follows: "the Aesthetic Order upon which our Culture reposes is solid and legitimate, and in harmony with the ideals of a moral Social and Political Order."¹ Even though Clark was writing much later, his integration of aesthetics and morals as the proper basis for society was a concept shared by the WAAC, and indeed, many women's clubs in late nineteenth century Canada.²

One can only assume that there was also some degree of pride involved in seeing one's personal items on display in an exhibition, to see one's name listed in the catalogue and the newspaper. This is reinforced by the fact that among hundreds of lenders, only one or two insisted on anonymity. The lenders of articles, then, in addition to lending their artifacts, also 'lent' prestige to the exhibition by virtue of their class position, family history, and the ownership of such articles.

The artists who contributed the rest of the work in the exhibition received considerably less press coverage. They consisted of members of the Association as well as both male and female local artists, female students of the Montreal School of Applied Art and Design, local high school students, designers at local companies, and several Catholic religious communities. The

¹Sally Price, Primitive Art in Civilized Places, (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), 10.

²See V. Strong-Boag, The Parliament of Women: The National Council of Women of Canada, 1893-1929; Ramsay Cook and Wendy Mitchinson, The Proper Sphere: Woman's Place in Canadian Society, Chapter 6.

Women's Institute in England, and the Toronto Branch of the WAAC also sent exhibits. A review in the *Montreal Daily Press* noted that "no allowance need be made for the sex of the craftswoman, for the result of her work deserves to be judged on the same plane as the craftsman's."¹ Few photographs exist of the 1900 exhibition, but we do know that the emphasis was on the medium, or type of work, rather than the gender of the producer, or the lender.

Certain exhibits were arranged and labelled according to cultural groups, in particular the Doukhobors, Catholic and Anglican Sisters, and various Indian nations. Among the work for sale in the lace and needlework section were sofa cushions in Turkish embroidery, by the Sisters of St. Margaret, portieres and quilts "made by the Native women of the Parish of Tadousac, Quebec" and embroidered pillow slips by the Doukhobor Industrial Community, alongside fascinators by Madame Warnault, and wool hearthrugs by D. Paulet.² That some exhibitors warranted being named individually and others did not raises many issues that I cannot investigate here. However, I will focus my discussion on the exhibition and reception of work by Natives, for the WAAC was very concerned with 'rescuing' their culturally-specific handicrafts.

In order to place the WAAC's exhibition of Native artifacts within its Canadian context, we need to trace exhibition policy back through museums to its roots in ethnology. In Canada, ethnology had its first major advance in 1884, when the British Association for the Advancement of Science met in Montreal, and appointed a Committee on the North-western Tribes of Canada, for the purpose of "... 'record[ing] as perfectly as possible the characteristics and conditions of the native tribes of the Dominion' before their 'racial

¹"Arts and Handicraft..." *Montreal Daily Press*, 22 October 1900: 11.

²"Exhibition of Arts and Handicrafts," (Montreal, 1900) unp. WAS.

peculiarities' became indistinct through absorption, and their arts, customs, and beliefs had been obliterated by contact with civilized man."¹ Franz Boas was the major contributor to this Committee. Boas' work refuted the notion of a unilinear cultural evolution terminating with 'civilization' as represented by European and North American industrialized nations. He also disagreed with the comparative ranking of cultures into a hierarchy, from savage to civilized such as Pitt-Rivers used, as well as with the notion that 'primitive' tribes were living examples of the earlier stages of development of 'civilized' societies.² These concepts were accepted and followed in museum display. In 1887 Franz Boas published a paper in which he denounced museums for arranging their displays according to these theories. The paper sparked a scholarly debate between Boas and several museologists, during which Boas held forth that museums ought to "display the cultural items of societies and show how these diffuse to neighboring societies,"³ an approach which was quite different to the typological classification into hierarchies normally practiced.

By exhibiting Native handicrafts, the WAAC hoped to rekindle interest in producing this type of work, and also to demonstrate to the non-Native population that such work existed. The Basketwork and Weaving section, convened by Velina P. Markland Molson, was organized to serve this purpose. Originally from Portland, Oregon, Molson collected and studied native Indian

¹BAAS Report, 1887, p.173, quoted in Douglas Cole, "The Origins of Canadian Anthropology, 1850-1910" Journal of Canadian Studies VIII:1 (February 1973), 40. In the United States, the Smithsonian Institution was lobbying the government as early as 1849 to fund research expeditions for the same reasons, noting that "[i]t is the sacred duty of the country, ... to relate the manners and customs of Indians to the civilized world." Ronald P. Rohner and Evelyn C. Rohner, "Introduction. Franz Boas and the Development of North American Ethnology and Ethnography" in The Ethnography of Franz Boas, trans. Hedy Parker, (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1969), xxvi.

²Rohner & Rohner, xiv-xix.

³Rohner & Rohner, xviii-xix.

baskets, and had published a book about them in 1896, entitled Basketry of the Pacific Coast, before moving to Montreal in 1898.¹ In their efforts to 'rescue' Native Canadians' cultural artifacts, the Woman's Art Association fell prey to these same theories of cultural evolution as evidenced by contemporary museum practice. The labels on the exhibits reveal this. For example, when the Indian Nation was known, this information was included: "Yakatat Indian basket, very old; very good dyes, unfading." When the Nation was not known, the country was substituted: "Very old Canadian basket," or left out altogether: "Old porcupine work."² By ignoring the identity of the producer, the individual's subjectivity is denied. According to Chris Weedon, "[t]he political interests and social implications of any discourse will not be realized without the agency of individuals who are subjectively motivated to reproduce or transform social practices and the social power which underpins them. Individuals can only identify their 'own' interests in discourse by becoming the subject of particular discourses."³ Viewed in this light, the WAAC's goal, or discourse, of retaining and reviving Native Canadian's interest in their own handicrafts is unattainable, as long as 'Natives' are not allowed individual agency.

Of course there is a very good reason why individual artists were not named: this information was not known. When the items were acquired, the maker was not as important as the object, thus information on who made the items is scarce.

¹Bernard K. Sandwell, The Molson Family, (Montreal, 1933), 141.

²Exhibition of Arts and Handicrafts, 1900, unp. WAS Archives, McCord Museum, Montreal.

³Chris Weedon, Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory, (Cambridge, MA and Oxford: Blackwell, 1987), 97.

The WAAC's concern over the state of Native handicrafts was warranted, especially in light of the newspaper reviews. Of eight articles which reviewed the exhibition in any length, only two devoted so much as a paragraph to the basketwork section. The Montreal Daily Herald's "As Seen by Her" column reported: "Visitors to the basket-work section are amazed at the variety displayed. The work of Indian women shows an instinct for form and coloring, though rude and uncultivated."¹ This sort of language was typical of the imperialist attitude towards the natives of the countries Britain colonized. Current practices in anthropology, those which Boas spent his career denying, touted the progressive amelioration of a culture toward the apogee of perfection, as evidenced by the British race. The 'uncivilized' peoples of Canada were seen by their colonizers as representing various states of 'degeneration.' The concept of degeneration was first linked with biology, by the Italian criminologist Cesare Lombroso, who wrote in 1863 that degenerate beings were "characteristic of earlier primitive stages of human development."² Psychologists termed the 'degenerate' mind as "a throwback to an earlier (more primitive, and inferior) stage of human development."³ With Charles Darwin's publication of The Descent of Man in 1871, the 'degenerate' surpassed simple biology or psychology, and became implicated in human evolution, thus encompassing all cultures, and women in particular:

It is generally admitted that with woman the powers of intuition, or rapid perception, and perhaps of imitation, are more strongly marked than in man; but some, at least, of these faculties are

¹[Madge Merton] "Dept. for Women Readers. As Seen By Her," The Montreal Daily Herald 31 October 1900: 6.

²Christine Battersby, Gender and Genius: Towards a Feminist Aesthetics, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989), 118.

³Battersby, 120.

characteristic of the lower races, and therefore of a past and lower state of civilisation.¹

Darwin places 'the lower races' and women in the same category, which makes it somewhat ironic for the WAAC to be concerned with resurrecting lost handicraft techniques of Native Canadians. Whether or not the women members knew about Darwin's ideas, the exhibition places them in the upper class camp of educating and controlling those in lower classes, which again underscores the hegemony of class over gender where social control is concerned.

Ignorance of Native craft techniques was not limited to Canadians of European descent, however. A group of women from the Caughnawaga Reserve visited the exhibition several times, and remarked to Mary Phillips that "all their people who did good work were dead."² A brief foray into the history of relations between Natives and the Canadian government reveals some reasons why this was so.

Although the first Europeans had benefitted from Native knowledge of the land and survival techniques, by the mid-nineteenth century, "the Indians were progressively being treated as plain savages, an uncivilized people whose adherence to their traditional culture was hampering their assimilation into the mainstream of Canadian society."³ Accordingly, in 1857

¹Charles Darwin, The Descent of Man (1871), 858, quoted in Battersby, 118. Interestingly, Friedrich Nietzsche's view of degeneracy works the opposite way to Darwin's. Nietzsche felt that ever since the Greeks, civilization has become increasingly 'decadent', thus the further back in time one goes, the more evolved humans were. Darwin felt that humans showed less evolution the further back in time one looks. Darwin and Nietzsche do agree, however, on woman's lesser place than men in the evolutionary scale; neither admits that a woman is capable of producing a work of art, for example. See Battersby, 113-123.

²Minutes of General Meeting, November 13, 1900. Minute Book, 1900-1904. WAS.

³Joanne MacDonald, " 'The Whites are Thick as Flies in Summertime:' Indian/White Relations in the Nineteenth Century," In the Shadow of the Sun. Perspective on Contemporary Native Art, Canadian Museum of Civilization, eds. (Hull: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1993), 27.

the Canadian government passed An Act for the Gradual Civilization of the Indian Tribes in Canada.¹ A revision in 1884 banned the West Coast Indian pollatch and the Kwakiutl *tananas* dance; another in 1895 prohibited the sun dance, performed by Natives on the prairies, because "farming and dancing were incompatible."² Government officials took assimilation very seriously. The superintendent of Indian education stated in 1910: "Our purpose in educating Indians is to make them forget their Native customs and become useful citizens of the Dominion..."³ When ceremonies and dances were no longer practiced, any special artifacts, clothes, or instruments were no longer needed, and these were eagerly collected by government officials.

The Church was also implicated in the cultural erasure of Native Canadians. Once Natives were converted to Christianity they no longer needed their ceremonial accoutrements. Missionaries were also among the first collectors of Native artifacts, accepting this additional booty along with their expanding flock.⁴ Furthermore, Native children were sent to church-run boarding schools, where their own culture and language was not a part of the curriculum. Consequently, children did not learn their own cultural traditions. Adults could not practice them either, and a great many cultural artifacts found their way into private or public collections, far from their site of origin.

One such collection belonged to Velina Markland Molson,⁵ and was included in the Basket Work section of the 1900 exhibition. Although

¹MacDonald, 38.

²Macdonald, 39. Indians on the West coast who resisted assimilation were subtly reminded that the government's cannons could eliminate all the Indians on the Coast in less than a year. MacDonald, 36.

³McMaster, 96.

⁴MacDonald, 34.

⁵Velina (Nesmith) Markland Molson's collection of over 200 Indian baskets numbers was donated to the McCord Museum, Montreal in 1920.

ephemera pertaining to the exhibition emphasizes the revival of interest in traditional Native crafts, for both Natives and non-Natives, the use of the collections of non-Natives to do so is problematic. The WAAC was using the very material culture removed from Natives as a result of the government's assimilation project to rekindle their interest in it.¹

Giving culture back can be seen, in retrospect, as a desire to improve the quality of life of Natives. It can also be interpreted as reinforcing the Woman's Art Association's social and cultural superiority. The government had attempted to assimilate Native peoples into British educational, religious, and social systems, by denying them their own, centuries-old, cultural practices. By exhibiting Native handicrafts in a fine-art setting, the WAAC was doing what Claude Lévi-Strauss would propose in 1943: "...certainly the time is not far distant when the collections of the North-west Coast will move from anthropological museums to take their place in art museums ..."² As Michael Ames points out, exhibiting Indian work in a fine art setting changes its classification "from the exotic status of 'primitive art' ... to the more dignified status of 'fine art'."³ For all intents and purposes, the Art Gallery on the top floor of Colonial House, a department store, became a palace of art for two weeks in 1900. Under the auspices of the WAAC, handicrafts were exhibited in a fine-art setting.

¹See Joanne MacDonald, " 'The Whites Are Thick As Flies in Summertime': Indian/White Relations in the Nineteenth Century." In the Shadow of the Sun. Perspectives on Contemporary Native Art, Canadian Museum of Civilization, eds. (Hull: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1993), 39.

²Quoted in Michael Ames, "How Anthropologists Help to Fabricate the Cultures They Study" in Museums, the Public and Anthropology: A Study in the Anthropology of Anthropology, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1986), 51.

³Ames, 51-52.

Yet it is doubtful that these women thought of Natives as their intellectual equals.¹ The WAAC's acts, revisited after a century, do seem to presage things which occurred some forty to fifty years later. By the 1970's, West Coast native art was a hot commodity on the international art market; indeed by 1980, contemporary Indian art - including carvings, prints, etc. - had been institutionalized enough to become part of the pedagogical view of 'Art' in Canada.²

From a post-colonial perspective, the WAAC's emphasis on reviving the 'pure,' pre-contact cultural artifacts of Native Canadians reflects a certain lack of responsibility for the effects of colonialization. It demonstrates a preference for Native culture before contact with Europeans, thereby condoning the assimilation which had occurred. Following this train of thought, Native cultural artifacts, when exhibited, are frozen in time and place, creating the 'museum as cemetery' effect wherein the entire culture is interred along with the items. This can be also seen as social control over the Natives. Once they are assimilated into Euro-Canadian ways, the final nail in the coffin is an exhibition of their cultural production in a museum setting.³

Yet the WAAC's stated purpose in exhibiting these crafts was to rekindle life into them, and to encourage Natives to keep practicing their craft techniques. While the government was busy legislating Native Canadians away from their cultural heritage, the WAAC was equally busy mounting exhibitions to teach it back to them. What is actually created is a great deal of ambivalence.

¹See the section on Indian Women in the NCWC's Women of Canada (1900) for a contemporary perspective.

²Ames, 55.

³See Jacques Hainard and Roland Kaehr, "Temps perdu, temps retrouvé..." Gradhiva 1 (Autumn 1986), discussed in James Clifford, "On Collecting Art and Culture" 167 n.36.

Newspaper reviews reflect this ambivalence also. Three of eight newspaper reviews did not even mention the baskets, although they mentioned all the other sections; three others dismissed the collection with a single line of text, as 'interesting' or 'unique'. The *Daily Witness* included a drawing of the section (Figure 13). The fact that the media glossed over the 250 baskets reveals that the press did not share the same convictions regarding educating the public about Native or other basketry techniques.

The basket-work section was not the only one to receive little or no attention in the papers. The textile work of Doukhobor and French-Canadian women was also a great concern of the WAAC. Ephemera announcing the exhibition confirms this, yet their work received very little press attention. Generally one expects the newspaper reports to be a mainstream consensus; if so, the fact that the WAAC's most important concerns were not reported in the papers means that these concerns were not mainstream. That they showed any concern at all for Native Canadians' traditional techniques sets them apart, and at odds with the work of the male establishment, in particular the government's Department of Indian Affairs.

What we have then is two seemingly contradictory versions of the same history. Homi K. Bhabha has theorized precisely such differences as the result of a split created between the pedagogical, or a nation's history as written by its institutions, and the performative, the same nation's history, as experienced by its people on a daily basis. These two histories have the potential to be vastly different, and may be illustrated by the case of Native Canadian handicrafts, as I have presented here. Bhabha writes "It is through this process of splitting that the conceptual ambivalence of modern society

becomes the site of *writing the nation*.”¹ To apply this idea to Canadian Native handicrafts in 1900, the ‘conceptual ambivalence’ created by the ideological chasm between the government’s laws and the WAAC’ exhibitions created the space into which I am writing this version of history. It is a version which prioritizes the performative, a strategy extremely useful to feminist interventions into the history of art, for it reveals a very different story from the one which is perpetrated by traditional art history.²

Can such an exhibition be termed successful? Newspaper coverage was generous and complimentary, omissions notwithstanding. Ticket sales were brisk, with many people returning two or three times. One source quoted an attendance figure of eight thousand.³ Sales of work amounted to \$433.25, of which the WAAC took 10%, paying the artists \$389.93 altogether. Profit made on the Exhibition of Arts and Handicrafts was \$777.33. This amount included ticket and catalogue sales. The profit was intended to further the promotion of the handicrafts. For 1900, this was an enormous amount of money. Newspaper advertisements reveal that wool blankets could be had for \$2.50 a pair, four-quart enamel preserving kettles for 18¢, or a first class ocean liner trip to England for \$50.00. Thus the public, the press, and the profits all responded in a positive manner.

The WAAC’s opinion of their success was noted in their minutes, and in the Annual Report of 1901:

¹Homi K. Bhabha, “DissemiNation: time, narrative, and the margins of the modern nation” in Nation and Narration, ed. H.K. Bhabha, (London & New York: Routledge, 1990), 297. Bhabha’s italics.

²‘Traditional art history’ in Canada has not seen fit as yet to publish a book on the Woman’s Art Association of Canada.

³Mary Alice Peck, Sketch of the Activities of the Canadian Handicraft Guild, (Montreal, 1929), 1. WAS.

[The Exhibition] Committee sees great value in such Exhibitions from a purely educational standpoint; they feel that by the opening of opportunities for improving the Arts and Handicrafts of our Indians and the residents of country districts, at present far from suitable markets, a good work has been inaugurated, which it behoves our Association in all its Branches to carry forward.¹

Carry forward it did: a Home Handicrafts Committee was formed shortly after the close of the 1900 exhibition to continue the work.² This Committee grew into the Canadian Handicraft Guild, which is still in existence today. The interest in handicrafts which first manifested itself with the 1900 exhibition extended from the members of all branches of the Woman's Art Association, to the many people who were encouraged to create handicrafts, and to the public who visited the exhibition. The longevity of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild alone speaks volumes.

The Exhibition of Arts and Handicrafts was much more than an artistic, or an educational opportunity. It demonstrates the links among women, class, and cultural philanthropy, through the use of handicrafts rather than paintings, or fine art. The exhibition was Montreal's first of handicrafts presented in a fine art setting.³ Due to their functional character, handicrafts were not generally associated with culture. By such an exhibition, the viewer saw that crafts could be beautiful, not just functional, and might cultivate an appreciation for them. Making comparisons between ancient and contemporary handicrafts would also educate the artist viewer, thus the combined effect of this philanthropic gesture would benefit both the public

¹AR, 1901, 38.

²Minutes book, January 8, 1901. WAS. A second exhibition, this time of only Canadian work, was held in February 1902. Soon afterward the Committee opened Our Handicraft Shop, began mounting exhibitions of handicrafts, and sending them nationally, and internationally. The enormity of their tasks caused the formation of the Canadian Handicraft Guild.

³Industrial exhibitions had been held in Canada as early as the 1840's in Halifax.

and the handicrafts, in the larger nationalist goal of molding Canada into a better country.

Conclusion: Bending the Rules

The first six years of the Montreal Branch of the Woman's Art Association of Canada were important years. During this time, both the artist members and associate members engaged in activities which stretched the social definition of their roles as women. While on the surface the aims and activities of the Montreal Branch of the Woman's Art Association of Canada seem to adhere to socially prescribed behaviours for women, there were several occasions where they bent the rules a little to achieve their goals.

Arriving at conclusions about the Montreal Branch necessarily includes their own context. An overly-analytical 1990's feminist critique might see only the restrictive nature of upper-class women's social construction, combined with Quebec's stifling legal code and seemingly unattainable Victorian virtues. Certainly the women involved had to cope with these factors, yet by exploiting their constrictions in a positive way, they were able to attain their goals.

Women artists who chose careers as painters in Canada found in the Woman's Art Association a supportive environment in which to improve their skills. By promoting women as designers, through competitions, exhibitions, and commissions, a new career possibility was opened up. In addition to art historical facts, the Reading Class enabled associate members to learn to write a research paper, as well as analytical, critical, and public speaking skills. Organizing exhibitions, writing catalogues, and hanging paintings were also new experiences for women, none of which was part of the Victorian ideal of womanhood.

Let us look at one example more closely. Promoting handicrafts as a means to economic independence for women at home, at a time when the economic independence of women who worked outside the home was seen as contributing to all manner of social evils, appears to be contradictory. By working for cash inside the home rather than outside it, the WAAC was both conforming to society's prescribed role for women, and stretching that role to include something new, economic independence. This is where I turn to post-colonial theory to help understand this issue. The difference between the performative actions of the Montreal Branch and the pedagogical, or social construction of 'woman' circa 1900, allows a space in which small, but important steps were made. Promoting economic independence for women was certainly one of those steps. So was speaking in front of a crowded meeting, competing for a design commission, or criticizing an art paper.

The issue of social class complicates the situation somewhat, however. On the one hand, belonging to the middle-upper or upper classes allowed the aspiring woman artist to achieve greater things - education abroad, for example - because of her own or her family's wealth or social connections. On the other hand, upper class status worked against the woman artist, for the concept of the professional artist was completely at odds with the definition of an upper class 'lady.' Her art was supposed to be an accomplishment of an amateur sort. By moving the practice and professionalization of women artists into the acceptable forum of the woman's club, the Woman's Art Association was able yet again to make progress. Yet because of the equation of upper class with amateur, Canada's pedagogical art history has not deemed this progress important. At times, the exclusiveness of social class thwarted the aims of the WAAC, however. For example, the lecture series was held on weekday afternoons, with an entrance fee charged. This effectively limited attendance

to those persons with the time and the means to attend, generally women of the upper-middle-class. Although the stated purpose of art lectures was to further art education in Montreal, only persons of the same class and gender as those organizing the lecture could attend. Such ambivalence came up over and over.

Having stressed the importance of archival material, and considering temporal contexts, I must also point out the danger in relying too heavily on archival material. In her study of women's autobiographies, Carolyn Heilbrun writes, "And, above all other prohibitions, what has been forbidden to women is anger, together with the open admission of the desire for power and control over one's life (which inevitably means accepting some degree of power and control over other lives)."¹ Heilbrun also discovered a 'gap' between what women wrote and what they actually did. This gap is produced by women's attempting to conform to society's expectations of them in their written records, even when their actions did not conform. Although there is no proof for this where the Montreal Branch of the WAAC is concerned, I wonder how much of what really went on has been left out of their archives. There is little hand-written correspondence left, which allows for a clearer and at times more detailed version of events. The majority of available material consists of printed, official matter, such as Annual Reports. In these, the desire for power or control is never mentioned, yet the very act of forming a club with a hierarchical organization, belies such desires.² By going along with the status quo, Montreal's upper class women were able to savour a taste of power and control over others.

¹ Carolyn Heilbrun, Writing a Woman's Life (New York: Ballantine Books, 1988), 13.

² Strong-Boag, Parliament of Women, 6-7.

The 1900 Exhibition of Arts and Handicrafts also reveals differences between the way things 'ought' to be done, and the way the WAAC did them. The area of exhibition display demonstrates another of the 'small steps' I mentioned earlier, taken in the space opened by difference. The exhibition was mounted according to the typological display policy followed by museums of ethnology, yet the exhibition was conducted as though it were one of 'fine' art, not ethnology. It was held in an art gallery, opened by members of high society, and serenaded by a small orchestra. This was a different way of looking at handicrafts, achieved by bending the rules of exhibiting ethnological specimens into those of exhibiting paintings.

In the last chapter I discussed the ambivalence between the status quo approach to ethnology, museum display, or Native Canadian handicrafts, versus the Woman's Art Association's actions in the same areas. It is on this ambivalent note that I shall sum up. Although they worked within their own socially-constructed gender and class brackets, the Montreal Branch of the Women's Art Association of Canada achieved many of their goals by bending the rules. Whether I criticize their social class nepotism, or praise their challenges to the definitions of 'artist' and 'woman,' the fact remains that these events occurred; and the most important thing as far as I am concerned is to include these events in the history of art in Canada.

APPENDIX I
MONTREAL BRANCH
WOMAN'S ART ASSOCIATION OF CANADA
EXHIBITIONS 1894-1900

October 22-26, 1894	Sketch exhibition, YMCA studio
December 1894	Christmas sale/exhibition
May 11-16 1896	First Annual Exhibition, Montreal Branch Hall & Scott's Rooms, 2271 St. Catherine Street 44 oils; 43 water colours
November 7-14, 1896	Unframed Sketch exhibition
November 14, 1896	Private Sketch exhibition, members only, studio
December 6-19, 1896	Ceramic Exhibition, AAM's small gallery
December 11-18, 1897	4th Annual Ceramic Exhibition Studio, Masonic Temple, 807 Dorchester Street 245 articles, incl. Historical Dinner Set; Sales: \$213.90
September 1898	Design Competition
Nov 26-Dec 3, 1898	5th Annual Ceramic Exhibition Studio, Masonic Temple, 807 Dorchester Street 18 exhibitors; 134 pieces china
January 10-14, 1899	Annual Sketch Exhibition Studio, Masonic Temple 6 Montreal members, 36 sketches; also work from Toronto & Kingston; total 113 sketches
February, 1899	Competitive Design Exhibition (Dominion Cotton Mills)
November 18-29, 1899	6th Annual Sketch & Ceramic Exhibition, WAAC Studio, 5 Alexandria Rooms, 2204 St. Catherine catalogue issued; 28 exhibitors, 102 sketches; ceramics: 16 exhibitors, 156 pcs china
October 22-Nov 3, 1900	Exhibition of Arts & Handicrafts, Montreal 2400 items; attendance c.8000; profit \$777.33

APPENDIX II
MONTREAL BRANCH
WOMAN'S ART ASSOCIATION OF CANADA
MEMBERSHIP 1894-1904

YEAR	ACTIVE	ACTIVE %	ASSO	ASSO %	LIFE	LIFE %	NON- RES	NON- RES%	TOTAL
1894	79	56%	57	41%	1	1%	3	2%	140
1895	82	42%	88	45%	3	2%	21	11%	194
1896									
1897	58	45%	55	43%	3	2%	11	9%	127
1898									
1899	28	40%	40	56%	3	4%			71
1900									
1901	13	13%	80	83%	4	4%			97
1902									
1903									
1904	28	22%	95	74%	5	4%			128

ACTIVE - Active/Professional Members

ASSO - Associate/Honorary Members

LIFE - Life Members

NON-RES - Non-Resident Members

source: WAAC Annual Reports

Figure 1



Ishbel Aberdeen

Ishbel Maria Marjoribanks Gordon, Lady Aberdeen
(Morgan, Types of Canadian Women)

Figure 2



Gallery of the Art Association of Montreal, c.1890.
(photo courtesy Notman Archives, McCord Museum)

Figure 3



Mary Martha Phillips
(photo courtesy Notman Archives, McCord Museum)

Figure 4



Mary Alice Peck
(photo courtesy Notman Archives, McCord Museum)

Figure 5



Studio of Montreal Branch of Woman's Art Association of Canada
YMCA Building, Montreal. 1895.
(Montreal Daily Herald, 12 April 1895)

Figure 6



Exhibition View, Christmas 1894. Montreal WAAC.
(Montreal Daily Herald, 12 April 1895)

Figure 7



Exhibition of Painted China, Montreal WAAC, 1894.
(Montreal Daily Herald, 12 April 1895)

The Exhibition of Arts and Handicrafts

**BY THE
WOMAN'S ART ASSOCIATION**

Will open in the Art Galleries of the
COLONIAL HOUSE, Phillips Square,
ON ..

MONDAY, OCTOBER 22nd, AT 8 P.M.

On succeeding days till November 3rd.

The Exhibition will remain open from
9 a.m. to 10 p.m.

**ADMISSION 25 CENTS
8 TICKETS \$1.00.**

Special rates for blocks of 50 tickets to
employers of labour or to schools and institu-
tions may be arranged for with

W. EGLAUGH,
549 Cadieux Street. Hon.-Treas.

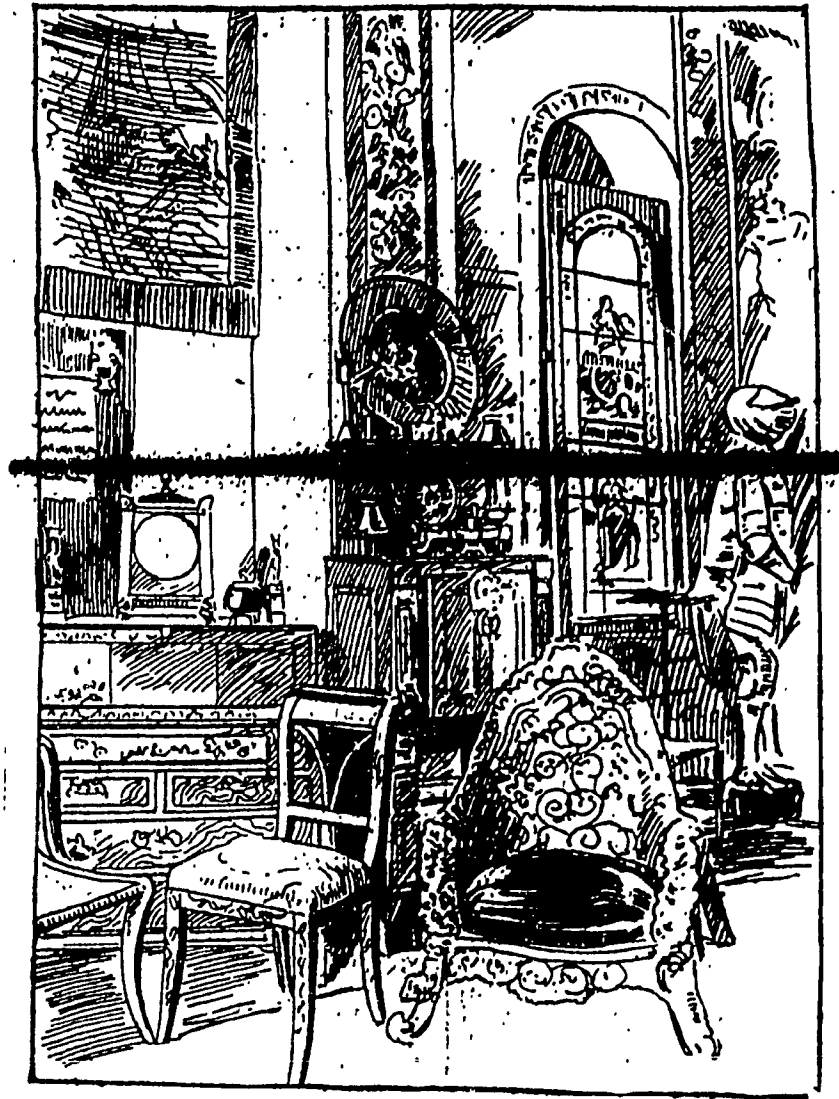
Figure 9



M. E. Dignam

Mary Ella Dignam
(Morgan, Types of Canadian Women)

Figure 10



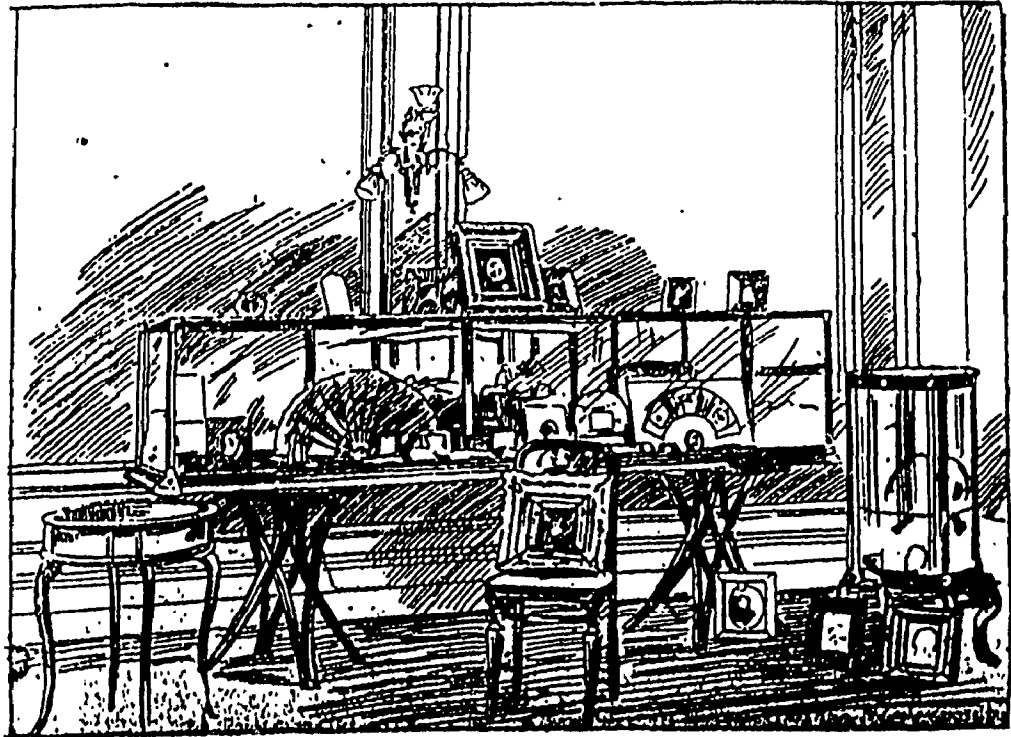
Exhibition View, Wood and Metalwork Section
Exhibition of Arts and Handicrafts, 1900
(Montreal Daily Witness, 23 October 1900)

Figure 11



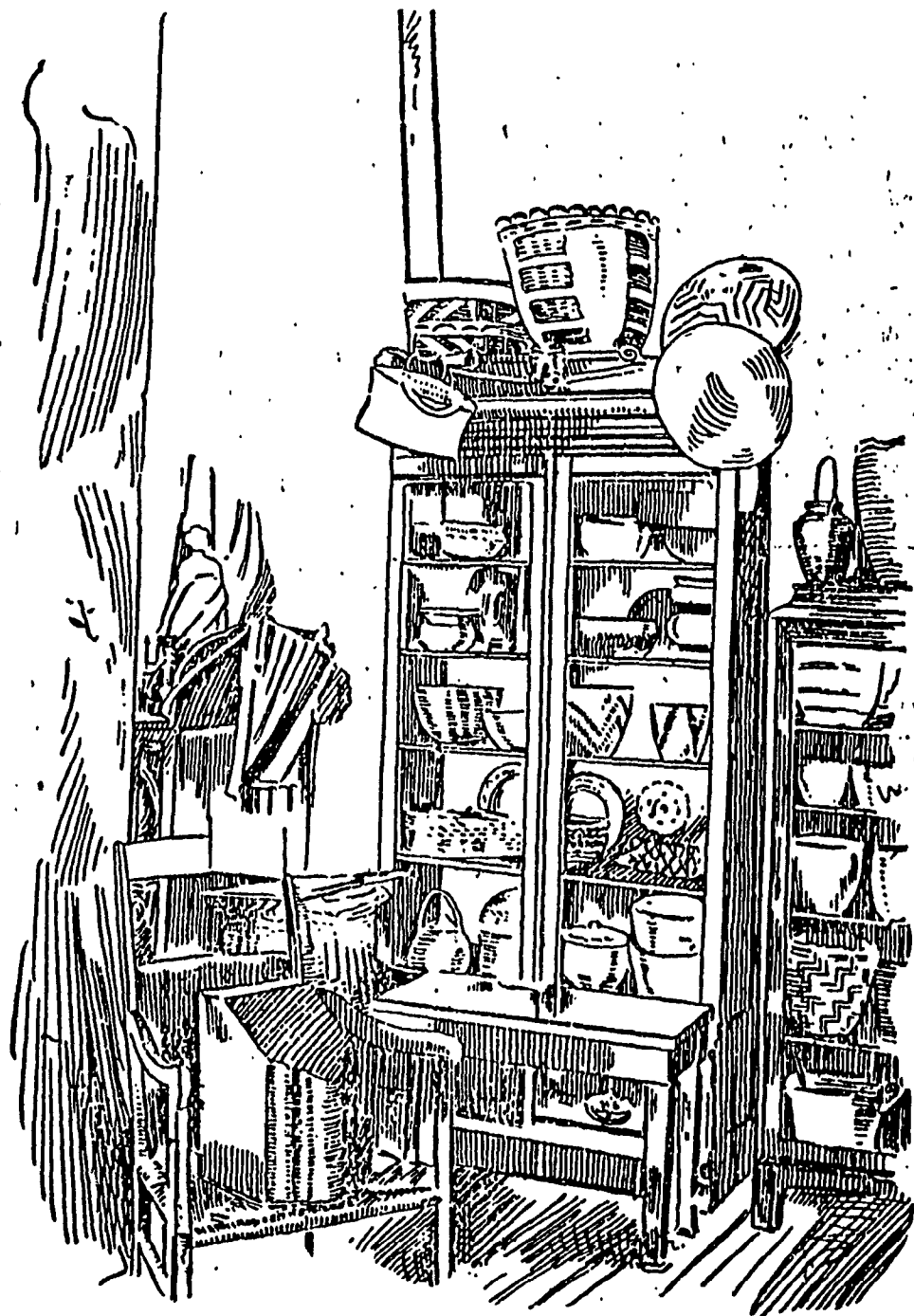
Exhibition View, Needlework and Lace Section
Exhibition of Arts and Handicrafts, 1900
(photo courtesy Canadian Guild of Crafts Quebec)

Figure 12



Exhibition View, Fans and Miniatures Section
Exhibition of Arts and Handicrafts, 1900
(Montreal Daily Witness, 23 October 1900)

Figure 13



Exhibition View, Basketwork Section
Exhibition of Arts and Handicrafts, 1900
(Montreal Daily Witness, 23 October 1900)

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

WOMAN'S ART SOCIETY ARCHIVES

McCord Museum of Canadian History, Montreal

"Address by Mrs. Ashley Carus-Wilson, B.A. On taking the Chair at the Inaugural Meeting on June 6th, 1894, in the Y.M.C.A. Hall." ts.

Woman's Art Association of Canada Annual Report of the Association and its Branches. 1895, 1897, 1899, 1900, 1901, 1904, 1905, 1906.

"Earliest Minute Book. June 1894." ms.

"Report by Mrs. James H. Peck. Pres, Montreal Branch, W.A.A.C. 1894/5." ts.

Programmes. 1895, 1896, 1897, 1899, 1900.

Catalogue of First Annual Exhibition of the Montreal Branch of the WAA, at Hall & Scott's Rooms, No. 2271 St. Catherine Street. MDCCCXCVI. Catalogue.

Annual Sketch Exhibition. January 10-14, 1899. Catalogue.

"Minute Book 1900-1904" ms.

Exhibition of Arts and Handicrafts. WAAC 1900 Montreal. Catalogue.

Scheme for the Promotion of Home Arts and Handicrafts. c.1902. Flyer.

Committee of Arts and Handicrafts. c.1902. Flyer.

Home Arts and Handicrafts Committee. c.1902. Subscription form.

Molson, Mrs. Dinham. Secretary's Report for First Annual Meeting - Canadian Handicrafts Guild, January 12th, 1906. ms.

Canadian Handicrafts Guild Exhibition March 2-16, 1907. Catalogue.

Peck, Mary Alice. Address at the Reception Given by The Canadian Handicrafts Guild to The Countess of Aberdeen and the Delegates to the International Council of Women, Art Gallery, Montreal, June 14, 1909. Booklet.

Peck, Mary Alice. Sketch of the Activities of the Canadian Handicraft Guild and of the Dawn of the Handicraft Movement in the Dominion, 1929. Booklet.

OTHER ARCHIVAL SOURCES

McCord Museum of Canadian History. Pen and Pencil Club Records. The Pen and Pencil Club 1890-1959. Booklet.

McCord Museum of Canadian History. Pen and Pencil Club Records. "Constitution" ts. 1892.

Women's Art Association of Canada Archives, Toronto. "Scrapbook, 1889-1900."

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES

"A Successful Opening." Montreal Daily Witness 23 October 1900: 1.

"A Week at Montreal." Glasgow Herald April 5, 1882: 8.

"Annual Sketch Exhibition." Montreal Daily Herald 9 November 1896: 5.

"Arts and Handicraft." Montreal Gazette 5 October 1900: 3.

"Arts and Handicrafts. Lord Strathcona will Formally Open the Exhibition." Montreal Daily Witness 20 October 1900: 5.

"Arts and Handicrafts. Private View of the Exhibition Held by Woman's Art Association." Montreal Daily Press 22 October 1900: 11.

"Arts and Handicrafts. The Exhibition Promises to be Most Successful." Montreal Daily Witness 22 October 1900: 5.

"As Seen By Her." The Montreal Daily Herald 30 October 1900: 6.

Bell, Celina. "100 Years of Women in Art." The Gazette 8 January 1994: H5.

"Canadian Affairs." Glasgow Herald November 9, 1898: 4.

"Chat With An Artist - There Can be no Art Appreciation Without Art Education." Toronto Globe 27 June 1889.

"Decorative Art Society Will Hold a Doll Fair on December 15th." Montreal Daily Herald 10 November 1900: 18.

"Great Exhibition. Large Meeting was Held Yesterday at the Studio of the Women's Art Association." Montreal Daily Herald 3 October 1900: 6.

Hill, Harriet. "Facts and Fancies." The Gazette 5 November 1953: 12.

"Ladies' Benevolent. Annual Meeting of the Institution Held Yesterday." Gazette 3 October 1900: 6.

- Leslie, Katherine. "Woman's World" Toronto World 23 February 1900: 5.
- "Morgan's New Wing Open to the Public." Montreal Daily Herald 27 October 1900: 13.
- "Personals." Montreal Daily Star 26 October 1900: 11.
- "Protected Emigration of Young Women" Glasgow Herald October 17, 1888: 6.
- "Une exhibition artistique." La Presse 23 October 1900: 2.
- "Women and Art Promotion." Montreal Daily Herald 16 May, 1896: 8.
- "Women's Art Association. A Sketch Exhibition Opened Yesterday Afternoon." Montreal Daily Herald 23 October 1894: 2.
- "Woman's Art Association of Canada. Notes of Its History and Prospects---The Co-operative System Applied to Art --- Several Branches are at Work." Toronto Mail 5 January, 1895.
- "Women's Art Exhibit. A Large and Excellent Collection of Canadian Artistic Productions - Handicraft Work Developing Encouragingly." Toronto Globe 27 February 1900: 5.
- "Women's Art Exhibition." Montreal Daily Herald 24 October 1900.
- "Women's Art Work. A Notable Exhibition at the Art Gallery. Those Who Aid Charity." Montreal Herald 9 December 1896: 5.
- "Women Artists of Canada." Montreal Daily Herald 12 April 1895: 1-4.
- "Women Artists. They Form a Branch of the Art Association." Montreal Daily Herald 7 June 1894: 3.

PRIMARY SOURCES

- Ames, Herbert Brown. The City Below the Hill. 1897. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972.
- Art Association of Montreal. Annual Report. Montreal, 1889.
- Art Association of Montreal. Catalogues - Spring Exhibitions 1880-1903. Montreal, n.d.
- Atherton, William Henry. Montreal, 1535-1914. Vol. II: Under British Rule 1760-1914. Montreal: The S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1914.

- Briscoe, Margaret Sutton. "Club Women." Toronto Saturday Night 11:52 (12 November 1898): 7.
- Cox, Mabel. "The Arts and Crafts Exhibition." The Artist (October 1896), 9-40.
- Engels, Friedrich. The Condition of the Working Class in England. 1845. Victor Kiernan, ed. London: Penguin Books, 1987.
- , The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State. 1884. Peking: Foreign Language Press, 1978.
- Grenfell, Helen L. "The Influence of Woman's Organizations on Public Education" Journal of Education 66:5 (25 July 1907): 127.
- Lay Figure. "Women as Artists." Studio 20 (July 1900): 138.
- Lovell's Montreal Directory. 1894, 1899, 1901, 1902.
- Morgan, Henry J. The Canadian Men and Women of the Time. A Handbook of Canadian Biography of Living Characters. 2nd ed. Toronto: William Briggs, 1912.
- , Types of Canadian Women and of Women Who are or Have been Connected With Canada. Vol. 1. Toronto: William Briggs, 1903.
- Morris, William. "News From Nowhere." Collected Works of William Morris. Vol. XVI Ed. May Morris. New York: Russell and Russell, 1966.
- , "The Revival of Handicraft." Art and Society. Lectures and Essays by William Morris. Ed. Gary Zabel. Boston: George's Hill, 1993.
- Randall, E.A. "The Artistic Impulse in Man and Woman." Arena 24:4 (October 1900): 415-420.
- Ruskin, John. Sesame and Lilies rev.ed. New York: A.L. Burt, [1871].
- "Studio-Talk, Montreal." Studio 26 (1902): 147, 310-311.
- "Studio-Talk - Canada." Studio 20 (1900): 192, 195.
- "Studio-Talk - Canada." Studio 31 (1904): 270-271.
- National Council of Women of Canada, comp. Women of Canada: Their Life and Work. 1900. National Council of Women of Canada, 1975.

SECONDARY SOURCES

- Abrahamson, Una. God Bless our Home: Domestic Life in Nineteenth Century Canada. Toronto: Burns & MacEachern Limited, 1966.
- Ames, Michael M. Museums, the Public and Anthropology: A Study in the Anthropology of Anthropology. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1986.
- Atfield, Judy and Pat Kirkham, eds. A View from the Interior: Feminism Women and Design. London: The Women's Press, 1989.
- Battersby, Christine. Gender and Genius: Towards a Feminist Aesthetics. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989.
- Bhabha, Homi K. "DissemiNation: time, narrative, and the margins of the modern nation." Nation and Narration. Ed. H.K. Bhabha. London & New York: Routledge, 1990.
- Blair, Karen J. The Torchbearers: Women and their Amateur Arts Associations in America, 1890-1930. Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994.
- Boris, Eileen. Art and Labor: Ruskin, Morris, and the Craftsman Ideal in America. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986.
- Brault, Jean-Rémi, ed. Montréal au XIX^e siècle: des gens, des idées, des arts, une ville. Actes du colloque organisé par la Société historique de Montréal, Automne 1988. Ottawa: Leméac Editeur, 1990.
- Callen, Anthea. Women Artists of the Arts and Crafts Movement 1870-1914. New York: Pantheon Books, 1979.
- Cherry, Deborah. Painting Women: Victorian Women Artists. London and New York: Routledge, 1993.
- Clifford, James. The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art. Cambridge, MA and London, England: Harvard University Press, 1988.
- Cole, Douglas. "The Origins of Canadian Anthropology, 1850-1910." Journal of Canadian Studies VIII:1 (February 1973): 33-45.
- Collard, Elizabeth. Nineteenth-Century Pottery and Porcelain in Canada. 2nd. ed. Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1984.
- Collectif Clio. L'histoire des femmes au Québec depuis quatre siècles. 2nd ed. Montreal: Le Jour, 1992.

- Cook, Ramsay and Wendy Mitchinson, eds. The Proper Sphere: Woman's Place in Canadian Society. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1976.
- Coombes, Annie E. "Museums and the Formation of National and Cultural Identities." Oxford Art Journal 11:2 (1988): 57-68.
- Copp, Terry. The Anatomy of Poverty: The Condition of the Working Class in Montreal 1897-1929. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1974.
- Darsigny, Maryse, et al. Ces femmes qui ont bâti Montréal. Montréal: Les éditions du Remue-Ménage, 1994.
- Davin, Anna. "Imperialism and Motherhood." History Workshop Journal 5 (Spring 1978): 9-65.
- Dubinsky, Lon. Philanthropy: The Power of Benevolence. Toronto: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1985.
- Harper, J. Russell. Early Painters and Engravers in Canada. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970.
- , Painting in Canada: a History. 2nd ed. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977.
- Heilbrun, Carolyn. Writing a Woman's Life. New York: Ballantine Books, 1988.
- Hobson, J.A. John Ruskin, Social Reformer. 3rd ed. London: James Nisbet & Co., 1904.
- Holowach-Amiot, Elaine. The Women's Art Society of Montreal. Montreal: McCord Museum of Canadian History, 1994.
- Houghton, Walter E. The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830-1870. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1957.
- Joseph, James A. The Charitable Impulse. Wealth and Social Conscience in Communities and Cultures Outside the United States. New York: The Foundation Center, 1989.
- Kealey, Linda, ed. A Not Unreasonable Claim: Women and Reform in Canada, 1880s-1920s. Toronto: The Women's Educational Press, 1979.
- Ladies' Morning Musical Club, Montreal, 1892-1992. [Montreal, 1992.]
- Leduc, Pierre. "Les origines et le développement de l'Art Association de Montréal, 1860-1912." M.A. thesis, Université de Montréal, 1963.
- Linteau, Paul-André. Histoire de Montréal depuis la Confédération. Montréal: Les Editions de Boréal, 1991.
- MacDonald, Joanne. " 'The Whites Are Thick As Flies in Summertime': Indian/White Relations in the Nineteenth Century." In the Shadow of

- the Sun. Perspectives on Contemporary Native Art. Ed. Canadian Museum of Civilizations. Hull: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1993. 27-46.
- Marsan, Jean-Claude. Montreal in Evolution. 1974. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1981.
- McCarthy, Kathleen D. Noblesse Oblige: Charity and Cultural Philanthropy in Chicago, 1849-1929. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1982.
- , Women's Culture: American Philanthropy and Art, 1830-1930. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1991.
- McMaster, Gerald. "Tenuous Lines of Descent: Indian Art and Craft of the Reservation Period." In the Shadow of the Sun: Perspectives on Contemporary Native Art. Ed. Canadian Museum of Civilization. Hull: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 1993. 93-120.
- Naylor, Gillian. The Arts and Crafts Movement: A Study of its Sources, Ideals and Influence on Design Theory. 2nd ed. London: Trefoil Publications, 1990.
- Nead, Lynda. Myths of Sexuality: Representations of Women in Victorian Britain. London: Basil Blackwell, 1990.
- Nunn, Pamela Gerrish. Victorian Women Artists. London: The Women's Press, 1987.
- Page, Anne M. "Canada's First Professional Women Painters, 1890-1914: Their Reception in Canadian Writing on the Visual Arts." MA Thesis. Concordia University, 1991.
- Parker, Rozsika. The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine. 1984. New York: Routledge, 1989.
- and Griselda Pollock. Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology. New York: Pantheon Books, 1981.
- Pollock, Griselda. Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the Histories of Art. London and New York: Routledge, 1988.
- Price, Sally. Primitive Art in Civilized Places. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1989.
- Prochaska, F.K. Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth Century England. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980.
- Remillard, François and Brian Merrit. Trans. Joshua Wolfe. Mansions of the Golden Square Mile, Montreal 1850-1930. Montreal: Meridian Press, 1987.

- Richards, Eric. A History of the Highland Clearances. Volume 1: Agrarian Transformation and the Evictions 1746-1886. London: Croom Helm, 1982.
- Rohner, Ronald P. and Evelyn C. Rohner. "Franz Boas and the Development of North American Ethnology and Ethnography." The Ethnography of Franz Boas. Comp. and Ed. R. Rohner. trans. Hedy Parker. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1969.
- Rudin, Ronald. The Forgotten Quebecers. A History of English-Speaking Quebec 1759-1980. Québec: Institut québécois de recherche sur la culture, 1985.
- Sandwell, Bernard K. The Molson Family. Montreal: 1933.
- Shaw, Rosa L. Proud Heritage: A History of the National Council of Women of Canada. Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1957.
- Strong-Boag, Veronica Jane. The Parliament of Women: The National Council of Women of Canada 1893-1929. National Museum of Man Mercury Series, History Division, Paper No. 18. Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1976.
- and Anita Clair Fellman, eds. Re thinking Canada: The Promise of Women's History. 2nd ed. Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd., 1991.
- Tippett, Maria. Making Culture: English-Canadian Institutions and the Arts before the Massey Commission. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990.
- Thane, Pat. "Late Victorian Women." Later Victorian Britain, 1867-1900. Ed. T.R. Gourvish and Alan Day. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988.
- Thompson, Alison. "A Worthy Place in the Art of Our Country: The Women's Art Association of Canada, 1887-1987." MA thesis. Carleton University, 1989.
- Thompson, E.P. The Making of the English Working Class. London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1964.
- Thompson, M.W. General Pitt-Rivers: Evolution and Archaeology in the Nineteenth Century. Bradford-on-Avon: Moonraker Press, 1977.
- Ware, Vron. Beyond the Pale: White Women, Racism and History. London: Verso, 1992.
- Weedon, Chris. Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory. Cambridge, MA and Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1987.
- Wolff, Janet. Aesthetics and the Sociology of Art. 2nd ed. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. 1993.