

Picturing an Experience of the Past: The Case of *Canada: A People's History*

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of

Art History

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**Canada**

## ABSTRACT

### **Picturing an Experience of the Past: The Case of *Canada: A People's History***

Glenn Leonard Brook, Ph.D.  
Concordia University, 2009

Visual media dominate our daily experience. Still and moving images provide news, entertainment, and the means by which we shape our identity and then display that self-image to others. These acts of visual broadcasting leave a network of traces that allow us to remember what has happened, where we have been, and how we are. The malleability of the archival record also allows the past to be reworked in the service of the present. This dissertation examines how archival and contemporary visual materials are used both to stimulate and to structure memory.

My subject is the English version of the 2000-01 Canadian Broadcasting Corporation televised documentary on the history of Canada, entitled *Canada: A People's History (C:APH)*. The series comprises seventeen episodes, begins with North American pre-history, and finishes with the early 1990s. *C:APH* uses journals, diaries, and letters to present history from the perspective of those who lived it. Reenactments, paintings, sketches, photographs, and archival film and video footage support the textual material.

*Canada: A People's History* emerged when Canada faced increasing social diversification, political unrest, and communication technologies that introduced an increasing level of foreign cultural content. These issues contributed to the fear that a shared sense of Canadian identity was at risk. The hypothesis of this dissertation is that with *C:APH*, an idealized recreation of historical national progress mitigates the anxiety

of a modern Canada for its future. *Canada: A People's History* does this by reflecting the lives of contemporary global migrants in a story of Canada as a nation built by dispossessed peoples struggling to find a renewed sense of home and belonging. *C:APH* emphasizes the sense of belonging and attachment in its picture of Canada by utilizing a personal and a familial point of view.

The first chapter details the context and content of *C:APH*. Chapter Two explains why images can attract our imagination and how the series expresses “Canadian-ness.” Chapter Three elucidates the personal and familial nature of this visual history. Chapter Four shows how *Canada: A People's History* depicts the experience of traveling through history to a utopian national future.



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## INTRODUCTION

The subject of this dissertation is the 2000-01 Canadian Broadcasting Corporation televised documentary on the history of Canada, produced in both English and French, entitled *Canada: A People's History (C:APH)*. The seventeen episodes of the series range from North American pre-history to the early 1990s. Working from journals, diaries, and letters, the series ostensibly presents Canadian history from the perspective of the people who experienced it. *C:APH* comprises reenacted events, actors portraying historical figures, as well as paintings, sketches and photographs. The visual presentation is accompanied by a female voiceover.

The hypothesis of this dissertation is that a modern nation's fear of the future causes it to return to the past so it can bring a reassuring image of itself back to the present. This premise hinges on the contention that the form and content of *Canada: A People's History* are determined by contemporary desires and anxieties, and that the 'people' represent both the cause and resolution of national anxiety. The analysis operates on three levels: the perceiving Subject, the representational form they produce, and the interpretations enabled by their depictions of the past. Otherwise stated: how do we see the past, come to understand what we see in the past, and then speak this knowledge of the past to others who have not experienced this history? The thesis is written in the Department of Art History, and therefore has a tight focus on the visual components of the series. Nevertheless, I recognize that an equally long thesis on the soundtrack could be written.<sup>1</sup>

The dissertation has three overall goals. The first aim is to formulate a theory about the representation of Canadian history that accounts for the entirety of *Canada: A People's History*, and not simply selected episodes or isolated aspects of it. The second objective of the dissertation is to produce a comprehensive analysis of the manner in which visual material is applied to the expression of Canadian history. This second objective includes answering three key questions: what makes the history in *C:APH* look “Canadian,” what makes the past look as if it is happening now, and what appeals to us so much that we are drawn into the past? The third broad goal of the dissertation is to outline the possible outcomes of the particular history that is constructed in *Canada: A People's History*. In short, the dissertation deals with the problem of why *C:APH* shows this particular history, why these particular images are presented in this particular arrangement, and what we end up understanding as a result of what we have seen.

The work of the dissertation is accomplished over four chapters. The first chapter looks at what was involved with the production of *C:APH* as well as the context of the series' production. The second chapter evaluates how the different archival media that are used in *C:APH* operate together to express a Canadian-ness and to attract the interest of an audience. The third chapter describes the familial and communal nature that is expressed by *Canada: A People's History*. And the fourth chapter explains *C:APH* as the visualization of a collective journey that is taken through history to an idealized future. What follows below first outlines the objective and content of each of the four chapters

## CHAPTER ONE

Chapter One is devoted entirely to detailing the conception, planning, and production stages of *Canada: A People's History*, and includes the results of interviews

with executive producer Mark Starowicz, director of research Gene Allen, and senior producer Hubert Gendron. The examination of *C:APH's* production also takes into consideration other historical documentaries that were influences on the series. They are: Peter Watkins's 1964 BBC-produced documentary film *Culloden* on the 1746 Scottish Highlanders' defeat by the Duke of Cumberland; Ken Burns's 1990, eleven-hour documentary entitled *The Civil War*; the six-hour series on the American Revolution entitled *Liberty! The American Revolution*, produced for the Public Broadcasting Service in 1997; and Steven Spielberg's 1998 feature film *Saving Private Ryan*. The chapter will also cover the CBC's role as a cultural institution in Canada, and concerns over how developments in communications technologies impact both the CBC and Canadian cultural autonomy. A discussion of the social, cultural, and political context of the series (prior to and during production) is also included in Chapter One, as is existing academic work published on the series. This work includes one group-survey project at Carleton University, and six academic research papers.<sup>2</sup> Contemporary visual narratives of Canada and Canadian history are also examined. Instances of this are the 1992 National Film Board of Canada three-part documentary titled *The Valour and The Horror* on selected Canadian military actions during the Second World War, the 1988 TVOntario production entitled *Origins: A History of Canada/Origines: une histoire du Canada*, and the 1974 CBC television miniseries *The National Dream: Building the Impossible Railway*.

## CHAPTER TWO

Chapter Two focuses on determining how the various visual material of the series function separately and together to express Canadian-ness while also attracting the interest of viewers. This encompasses identifying the Canadian identity it projects, how

*C:APH* links past to present, and how the series incorporates painting, archival photography, film, and video. The chapter accomplishes its goals over four sections. The opening section analyzes the usage in the CBC series of representations of children and women because, as I argue, these figures drive the expression in *C:APH* of the desire to return to an idealized point of origin. In this sense, the maternal form is a place of bliss and completeness, and the figure of the infant is both the sign of origin and the sign of a hopeful future. In the words of John D. Stahl, the child corresponds to “redemption and hope for the future.”<sup>3</sup> I therefore argue that the attention *C:APH* gives to children who are orphans, refugees, or destitute is an indication of the concern that the series has for Canada’s future: a future that is jeopardized by societal and technological developments that diminish Canadians’ awareness of the national past. For instance, during third episode’s depiction of the Acadian expulsion in 1755 from what will later be known as New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, we are given the perspective of children who witness their home being ransacked and their parents being violently evicted (Figure One). The historical event is shown, but in a way that foregrounds the loss of domestic security and of elders whose wisdom may provide guidance. Another example of the child as figure of a people’s future appears in the eighth episode, when we see the presentation of the Irish immigration to Canada in the 1840s. The story ends with an archival photograph of a child who was orphaned by the death of her parents during the Atlantic crossing: a stray soul orphan whose image may spur a desire in the audience of *Canada: A People’s History* to nurture and protect (Figure Two). We are urged, in other words, to be concerned for the orphaned child (as the figure of an uncertain national future) and to



metaphorically adopt the child. This section of Chapter Two also analyzes twelve more examples from eight episodes.

The second section of Chapter Two looks at how *Canada: A People's History* uses archival objects and images to arouse an interest in its audience for Canadian history. In this section I argue that the desire for an idealized past is attached to the objects of history (for example, antiques and archival pictures, paintings, and sketches). The tintype image of one's great-grandfather, or a pair of a family ancestor's reading spectacles, substitute for the absent person and provide a point of attachment. When we hold the object, we hold the person in our imaginations. In other words, I contend that objects like paintings or photographs are things through which we may imaginatively re-experience the past.

The theoretical foundation for the abovementioned argument comes from Jacques Lacan's ideas on the development of the Subject.<sup>4</sup> Lacan argues that until the ages of six to eighteen months, the child is unaware of any distinction between itself and the world, but that at around this time the child becomes able to recognize itself in a mirror. Interestingly, while the child remains physically helpless, with only a fragmentary self-image (for instance, seeing its hand as an object apart), the mirror image offers an illusion of completeness. This experience sets up a mismatch between what we imagine ourselves to be and what our physical being actually is. In *Canada: A People's History*, the Lacanian slippage between image and self lets us imaginatively experience historical individuals through their images. Simply put, we can pretend to be that person we see in the picture (as though it were a reflection in a mirror).

Lacanian theory also structures my thesis in general, and Chapter Two in particular, because Lacan argues that in order to function in society, the child must learn who they are and who they are not (i.e., the reflection in the mirror). The child learns this at about the same time that they acquire language (and also enter culture). With a child's entry into the pre-existing, external systems of meaning that are language and culture, at around eighteen months, what is seen is now named, and is thereafter referred to in language. A critical aspect of this event is the loss of unity the subject previously believed to exist: the mother now becomes Other to the child.<sup>5</sup> Thus, the speaking subject enters a representational system that both precedes him, pre-determines his expressive potential, and forever haunts him with a desire for a past bliss of unity. The subject is therefore driven by the desire for fullness (and for being self-identical). The return to fullness – before the advent of the other – translates in this thesis into the nation's desire for a pure point of origin. Once the child has entered language and become separated from the mother, the only way back to a point of origin is through referents (names or images for things and experiences that are now absent). Hence, the focus of the second section of Chapter Two, on the visual presentation, in *C:APH*, of evocative objects.

Together with the work of Jacques Lacan, Susan Stewart's theories on nostalgic longing underpin my discussion of how the visual content of *C:APH* conveys the experience of history to its audience. I borrow Stewart's idea of narrative as a "structure of desire that creates the object it wants."<sup>6</sup> What this allows for is not only the imaginative re-experiencing of an absent loved one, but also the creation of a larger figural space that is made up of still images, sound, antiques, and video reenactments.

We can see the abovementioned processes operating in *C:APH* when we watch the story of a WW I soldier's death and commemoration in Episode Twelve, and when we view Episode Eight's portrayal of the evening that Canadian Confederation is celebrated (July 1, 1867). In the first case, the soldier's father retrieves the son's ring and sends it, along with news of the boy's death, to the mother. *C:APH* illustrates these actions by presenting the golden ring before fading its image into a portrait of the deceased soldier, a picture which is faded into another photograph that shows him holding onto his mother (Figure 3). *C:APH* relates the loss of this individual through the objects (the ring and the photographs) that are all that remain of his presence. In the second instance, the realization of Confederation is marked in *C:APH* by a visual sequence that carries us through the living space of Prime Minister John A. Macdonald. We see the objects of daily life and the personal toiletries that call to mind the physical presence and lives of Macdonald and his wife, Agnes Bernard (Figure 4). Throughout *Canada: A People's History*, visual remainders of experience and presence like the soldier's ring and portrait, or the personal effects of Macdonald, are what carry the emotional and nostalgic charge that transmits the past into our imagination.

The third of four sections in Chapter Two delineates how *C:APH* represents a form of historical theatre that brings the past to life. Here, the objective is to show how archival materials are brought together with reenactments to form historical tableaux. In this manner, the desire for an idealized past is pinned to archival imagery that is arranged to form a space into which we can imaginatively enter. The theory that structures my investigation in this section is derived from the work of Roland Barthes and Stephen Bann.<sup>7</sup>

Barthes's ideas of the *studium* and the *punctum* underscore my argument about how we are personally drawn into the visual field of *Canada: A People's History*. The *studium* refers to the visual field of experience, while the *punctum* refers to the details within that field that catch our eye due to their emotional significance to us. Bann's consideration of the dramatization of history grounds my contention that *C:APH* represents a form of historical theatre, and that this theatricalization of the past is central to the CBC series' effective expression of Canadian history. An important part of Bann's argument is his identification of the value of using widely recognized stories from the past, visualizing them with a plethora of historical detail, and including highly expressive human faces. The formulations of Barthes and Bann work together because we can understand the *studium* as the historical scene that we look at, and the *punctum* as the details that validate the scene's historical authenticity, and as the sights in that scene that trigger an emotional response in us and so hook us into the history.

The ideas of Roland Barthes and Stephan Bann come to the fore in my examination of the presentation in Episode Four of the battle on the Plains of Abraham in 1763, and the story about the 1980 Québec referendum on independence that is shown in Episode Seventeen. (As with other examples cited in this Introduction, these are analyzed at greater length in the chapter itself.) *C:APH*'s presentation of the battle on the Plains of Abraham is constructed primarily with reenactments, but it also includes Benjamin West's *The Death of General Wolfe*, 1771 (National Gallery of Canada) (Figure 5). In many respects, the makers of *C:APH* seem to have taken their cue from West's approach. In both representations the battle is constructed with a surfeit of historical detail that strives to assert the authenticity of the scene, and human faces that emote the

impassioned nature of the depicted event<sup>8</sup> (Figure 6). In Bann's view, realism and emotion are a powerful combination in the representation of history, and he has noted the impact of "illusionistic representation[s] of emotionally laden moments from the past,"<sup>9</sup> in his work on the French painter Paul Delaroche (1797-1856). *C:APH* further augments the effect of realism and human emotion throughout its presentation by using technology to its advantage, moving (for example) from an archival image of an historical figure to the visage of an actor portraying that person and speaking directly to the audience. Not only are we moved by the emotions that the human face expresses, we are also placed face-to-face with the historical protagonist. In the presentation of the 1980 referendum, we are again given the face as a point of contact with history, and the details that authenticate and stimulate (Barthes's *punctum*) are again in evidence. In this instance, as is so often the case in *Canada: A People's History*, the domestic space becomes a theatrical realm that provides the background to a Canadian historical event.

The fourth (final) section of the second chapter describes the relationship in *Canada: A People's History* between its historical theatre and the landscape of Canada. As we follow the dramatic events and actions presented in *C:APH* we witness the land of Canada. The conjunction of events and locations foregrounds the sense that the historical acts of Canadians were determined by the landscape. The purpose of this fourth section is to show how *C:APH* links a challenging passage through the landscape of Canada to the formation of the character of Canadians. As a result, we see ourselves defined by both dislocation (we have to cover great distances to be who we are) and location (since it has always been "here" that the journey has taken place).

My discussion in this fourth section of the chapter incorporates the work of Susan Stewart and Northrop Frye, and is build around the presentation in Episode Six of *C:APH* that shows the experiences of explorer David Thompson (1770-1857). Stewart contends that landscapes function as portraits of nature that we move through. As she states, the landscape “envelopes us, but it is inaccessible to lived experience.”<sup>10</sup> Thompson is one example of the many individuals whose journeys through the landscape of Canada we share in *C:APH*. Along the way, we encounter the components that comprise the series’ vision of Canadian-ness. The Canada that emerges in Thompson’s story is a vast, cold, and dangerous space: one that foregrounds the necessity for communication technologies, and that is assumed to forge the Canadian character (Figure 7). These elements have been highlighted by Northrop Frye, who has referred to communication as an “epic theme...in Canadian history,” and to an “immense searching distance”<sup>11</sup> as a characteristic of Canada. As far as Frye is concerned, Canadian identity is plagued by the question, “Where is here?”<sup>12</sup> In the fourth section of Chapter Two of my dissertation, the presentation of Thompson’s story is identified as the archetypal representation of Canadian-ness: one that is evident in all of the stories of Canadians that we see in the series.

### CHAPTER THREE

The discussion in Chapter Three, which examines the expression of family and community in *Canada: A People’s History*, progresses through four sections. The chapter opens by establishing diaspora as the concept that explains the rhythm of loss and reacquisition that is expressed by the series as a Canadian characteristic. The idea of a scattering that is followed by a gathering (or, expulsion and resettlement) is also applied

to the use of archival materials in *C:APH*. Disparate items are withdrawn from different locations (either within the same archive or from different museums and collections) and then brought together in *C:APH* to form a new representation that may, or may not, reflect the original contexts of its constituent parts. In either case, the point – I argue – is to underline recollection (the bringing back to life of the past) as the main function of *C:APH*. I argue this point with the support of the writings of James Clifford, who asserts that the diasporic consciousness “lives loss and hope as a defining tension.”<sup>13</sup> My investigation in the first section of Chapter Three shows that *C:APH* constructs its history of Canada by including a contemporary experience that is most commonly based in the events of globalism that uproot and relocate people. The audience members of *Canada: A People's History* may recognize their own life experiences in the history of the nation in which they reside. The series does this by presenting us with immigrants, the landless, and the dispossessed who are all moving through the Canadian landscape in the process of building their new lives. In cases of global migrations, instead of an archival fragment – the meaning of which is shaped by the new context that it is placed within – we have a newly arrived immigrant who is defined by a new geographic location. Instances of this can be seen when nineteenth-century European immigrants settle on the Prairies (Episodes Ten and Eleven) and when post-WW II European immigrants arrive in Canada (Episode Fifteen), and also when a Cambodian refugee family is welcomed into Québec in the mid-1980s (Episode Seventeen) (Figure 8). I also link the idea of home that has been formulated by John Berger, as well as Nigel Rapport and Andrew Dawson,<sup>14</sup> to Clifford's idea of the diasporic consciousness, to show how *C:APH* presents social mobility as something that is compatible with home and national belonging.

The second section of Chapter Three deals with the two primary forms of memory that are seen in *Canada: A People's History*, and which carry the traces of the diasporic movements that are present in the series. One form is defined by Maurice Halbwachs and involves two variants called "personal-autobiographical memory" and "social-historical memory."<sup>15</sup> The other is derived from the formulations of Marianne Hirsch and is called "postmemory."<sup>16</sup> The effect of the Halbwachsian form of memory is to locate an individual's personal remembrances in historical memory. For Halbwachs, an individual confirms what they remember, while also confirming their membership in a larger collective, by momentarily situating themselves within the perspective of the group. For example, I witness an historical event on television, and when I discuss my experience with friends, I confirm my memory as I serve as a witness who validates what my friends recollect. The result of this synchronization of memory is that my connection to a larger social network is confirmed by the shared experience of an historical event. In terms of *Canada: A People's History*, this insertion of the personal memory into the group recollection emerges clearly in the CBC series' technique of alternating between archival imagery and reenactments, in the periodic appearance of onscreen actors speaking directly to the audience, and in the incorporation of video material that presents events that audience members may have experienced for themselves. In all of these cases, the weave of archival material (what we can think of as the historical record of the group) and first-hand experience (which represents that of the individual) allows the audience, in Halbwachs's words, to "grasp the historical reality"<sup>17</sup> of what they are watching.

The form of memory that accompanies the Halbwachsian personal-autobiographical and social-historical can be augmented by means of Marianne Hirsch's



concept of postmemory. Postmemory is based in the need to preserve the memories of individuals and communities that did not survive the Holocaust. Since we are left with a visual record of the memories of a lost people, we are in a position to “adopt these memories as...postmemories.”<sup>18</sup> The consequence of Hirschian postmemory is to attach a personal obligation to historical events. In the Halbwachsian instance we can locate ourselves in relation to past events, and in the Hirschian situation we are made to feel a responsibility for the past.

Postmemory is evident in *C:APH* with the reverence that the series places on the creation of a visual record that preserves the images and so the stories of people. We can see this in, for example, the twelfth episode’s story of a mother who worries over the fate of her son who is fighting in the First World War. We are given her point of view as she gazes over her son’s childhood belongings and at a picture of herself with him (Figure 9). As a result, we are encouraged to fret over the fate of a child who is not ours. And at the end of the story, since we remember what we saw, we inherit the mother’s experience. The second section of Chapter Three then concludes by explaining how these two types of memory operate together to familiarize the audience of *C:APH* with Canadian history and to make them feel personally involved the national past.

The objective of the third section of Chapter Three is to elucidate how *Canada: A People’s History* integrates globally-oriented people into a national place by showing their experiences to be typical of people in Canadian history. The analysis that I conduct in this section uses the theories of Nigel Rapport and Andrew Dawson, as well as those of John Berger,<sup>19</sup> to identify the sense of belonging at home in Canada that is expressed by *C:APH*. Rapport and Dawson, and Berger are valuable to my thesis because they all

meditate on the tension between fixity and mobility that exists in contemporary perceptions of belonging to place (for example, to identify oneself as Bolivian by descent and yet to feel a sense of belonging to Canada as home). The representation of Canadian-ness in *C:APH* must, I argue, take this tension into account so that audience members can recognize their global way of life. The other important part of the discussion in the third section of Chapter Three describes the relationship between homes and the landscape that we see in *C:APH* as a metaphor for the collection of family snapshots and visual memorabilia that is placed onto the pages of a family album. Instead of homes that function as sites of belonging in a national landscape, we find ourselves looking at clusters of images that describe Canadians in terms of collective, familial experience.

The story of David Thompson serves as one example of how *C:APH* connects a wide-ranging journey with the experience of being Canadian and being at home in Canada. In Episode Six we see Thompson's return home after his explorations of the Canadian West. *C:APH* presents this by moving from the exterior to the interior of Thompson's home. In effect, *C:APH* draws a parallel between the interior space of the home and the interior of the individual, and by lingering over the maps and notes the series insinuates that this interior space is inscribed with a narrative of belonging that has been determined by the landscape (Figure 10). Chapter Three also explores how a similar expression can be seen in the fifteenth episode, in which we watch the story of two post-Second World War European immigrant families coming to Canada after having traveled through a wilderness (the ruins of Europe, and the stigma of being displaced persons) (Figure 11).

The fourth (final) section of Chapter Three extends the conclusions established in the third section by elaborating on how the presentation of *Canada: A People's History* can be interpreted as being like the experience of seeing a family album. In this case, each collection of images that illustrate a particular story in *C:APH* is considered to be a group of pictures that are arranged on the page of an album. As we watch the CBC series, in other words, we are looking at the pages of an album being turned one at a time. The pages of the metaphoric photo album represent the landscape of Canada, while the gathering of personal pictures onto these pages signals, I suggest, the attachment of person to place. The album itself thereby comes to tell the story of a nation by bringing together personal archival remains. In this regard, the writings of Marianne Hirsch again prove useful to my investigation, this time by showing how family photographs are reanimated by our knowledge of daily life.<sup>20</sup> This is an important point because *Canada: A People's History* bases its construction on ordinary people's perspectives and memories of Canadian history. In *C:APH* we also see the visual documentation of birthdays, graduations, and weddings. In order to underscore the value in these universal scenes and behaviors, I integrate into my analysis Paul Ricoeur's idea of narrative identity. What is unique about this idea is that it allows for the continuity of the Subject by taking into account the motility of identity: I can experience myself as the same person over time, despite the fact that I may have held widely divergent opinions and beliefs during my life. The practice is important to the dissertation because Canadian identity can be seen as neither "an incoherent series of events nor [as] an immutable substantiality, impervious to evolution."<sup>21</sup> Despite the changing cultures and the passage of time seen throughout *C:APH*, the family-oriented imagery of the series emphasizes

shared experience. We can momentarily and imaginatively see ourselves in the place of historical members of what, in *C:APH*, looks like a great Canadian family.

## CHAPTER FOUR

Chapter Four explains how *Canada: A People's History* gives its audience the experience of traveling in history, as though they were reliving the physical, physiological, and emotional journeys of past Canadians. Historical figures and contemporary audience members alike experience journeys that lead them to new and better lives in Canada. Thus, contemporary migrants to Canada, who retain an attachment to their homelands, can see themselves continuing a national tradition by building a life for themselves in this country. The line of reasoning in the fourth chapter is developed through four sections, and is based on the assertion that *C:APH* can be understood as mimicking the experience of train travel, which has a utopian vision of Canada and a collective belonging as its destinations.

The first section of Chapter Four argues that *C:APH* moves across the television screen like an historical landscape passing by a window through which we are looking. The point is that two spaces are generated – the home in which we watch the series, and the theatrical space of *C:APH* – and that these two spaces are connected by way of the images that we see. The point of connection can be understood as, to borrow Louis Marin's reference, the "fourth, frontal wall of the scenographic cube."<sup>22</sup> In Chapter Four I expand on this with a description and analysis of the complex visual presentation in Episode Four, which uses both an archival watercolor and contemporary video footage to show us the effects of the British bombardment of Quebec during the siege of 1789. I

contend that *C:APH* strives to merge history and our experience of history to the point where we seem to be seeing it with our own eyes.

The second section of Chapter Four builds on the premise of a TV screen as window by detailing how we can understand this window to be in motion, much as would be the case if we were sitting in a passenger car of a train. I argue that we are not only watching a televised history series; we are in the position of historical figures and we are given their visual experience. The consequence of this is a direct, personal encounter with Canadian history, the affective nature of which ties us more closely to the national past. The theoretical foundation of the study that I conduct in this section is derived, in part, from Michel de Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life*.<sup>23</sup> In this volume Certeau considers the relationship that exists between a railway passenger and the landscape through which he travels. In particular, Certeau notes the illusion of movement that is given to the objects in the landscape by virtue of the traveler's changing position. Certeau concludes that mountains, fields, forests, and villages only have "*trompe-l'oeil* movements...[because] vision alone continually undoes and remakes the relationships between these fixed elements" (italics in original).<sup>24</sup> The same process of illusory movement occurs in *Canada: A People's History* when the camera pans over archival still images and when archival material is combined with video footage. Certeau also considers the railway traveler from a perspective that is outside the train. In this case, we can imagine that we are looking at a passenger train as it passes by. The passengers in the train, as far as Certeau is concerned, look like "saints and blessed souls placed in...halo-holes."<sup>25</sup> The halo-hole – a concept that I exploit in Chapter Four – is the framed space of the window through which the passengers look and through which they are seen. In

*C:APH*, instead of passengers in halo holes we see archival pictures of people. A case in point is the presentation in Episode Eleven, which shows us twentieth-century European immigrants traveling to western Canada. This story combines archival photographs of immigrants with video reenactments of a train moving through the prairies. The result of this combination is that the immigrants appear to be moving through the landscape. As part of the same story, we also see a photograph of settlers leaning out of a train window and looking directly at the camera. Here, we seem to be engaged eye-to-eye with what Certeau calls “blessed souls” (Figure 12).

The third section of Chapter Four explains the metaphorical train trip of *Canada: A People's History* as a collective journey undertaken by past and present Canadians. The notion of a journey is used in Chapter Four both as motion through space and as a process of accretion. In this second sense, we amass material records and personal memories that can then be gathered into a form to be followed (or read) in order to reproduce (or remember) the experience of a life that has been lived. The importance of this is that in my analysis personal journeys delineate the nation with the maps of explorers and settlers, and these journeys also leave behind personal documentation like family snapshots and portraiture that can then be shaped into the story of Canada. In short, we are following archival remains in *C:APH* that are arranged to instill in the audience a personal level of understanding of Canadian history. In this third section of Chapter Four, I make the point that the arrangement of archival and recreated scenes in *C:APH* is akin to a map. In other words, we look at the documentation of past lives, and when we do so we encounter and relive the memories encapsulated by the pictures that we see. During the course of my examination I integrate Louis Marin's ideas on how the map contributes

to an imagined experience of space. Marin affirmed that when he followed with his “finger the route of a road...a figure is extracted...even if it is an imaginary one [and so] locus has become space.”<sup>26</sup> Within the experience of *Canada: A People's History*, my claim is that when we follow the visual traces of the past that the photographs, paintings, and drawings represent, we create an imaginary, dimensional space of history.

The fourth and final section of Chapter Four makes the case for utopia as the idealized destination that is framed by *Canada: A People's History*. Canada is thereby imagined as the place of hope in which the landless and dispossessed may begin anew. At the same time, utopia represents a unifying image of a national future towards which all Canadians may be attracted. I do not suggest that utopia is present in *C:APH* as something that is realizable. Instead, I stress that the series offers the desire for a utopian condition, which is a unifying motivation for a people.

The historical immigrants and voyagers that we see in *C:APH* take journeys that bring them into contact with unknown people in unfamiliar lands; and as spectators of *C:APH*, we do something similar when we are carried into the Canadian past. The utopian traveler, like audience members of *Canada: A People's History*, is a traveler in space and time.<sup>27</sup> I argue that the central visual components that pinpoint utopia in *Canada: A People's History* are pictures of the distant horizon, as well as shots of either a rising or setting sun. Chapter Four explores how the reason for their utopian signification is their indefinite place of transition; for example, the horizon line will not come any closer. No matter how far we advance the horizon remains to be desired. The rising or setting sun marks another transitional phenomenon (from night to day, or the reverse). Throughout *C:APH*, Canada is, I argue, positioned as the site towards which all

of the immigrants and diasporic peoples struggle. Canada has supposedly been the place of their dreams (Figure 13). Utopia stands for this place of unification, where we overcome cultural, linguistic, or political divides by joining with others. I put forward this argument in line with Ruth Levitas's description of utopias as "blueprints of the good (or even perfect) society, imagined elsewhere and intended as prescriptions for the near future."<sup>28</sup> The unifying principle advanced by *C:APH* is the project of nation-building that we have witnessed being played out through the CBC series. I examine this by analyzing Episode Ten's presentation of Sir John A. Macdonald's trip through the Rocky Mountains.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The academic perspectives on *Canada: A People's History* include one group-survey project at Carleton University, and six academic research papers: Emily West's comparative examination (2002) of the image of Canadian identity in *C:APH*, Joe Friesen's work (2003) on the series' film grammar, Darren Bryant and Penny Clark's comparison (2006) of emotive empathy and historical empathy on the teaching value of *Canada: A People's History*, Joyce Hobday's study (2006) of the gender and Native identities that are found in the series, Lyle Dick's analysis (2004) of the narrative structure of *C:APH*, and Dick's discussion (2008) of *Canada: A People's History* as the broadcasting of Canadian history in the support of a compassionate nationalism.

Within the framework of two separate Masters-level courses at Carleton University during the winter of 2001-02, students in the Department of History under the guidance of Professor Delphin Muike looked into issues of form and content in *Canada: A People's History*. In 2001, work in the seminar centered on media response to the initial



promotion of the series and its first nine episodes, public reaction to the first season, a survey of the academic community's impression of the first season, and an examination of the series' website. In 2002, the subjects of the second examination were the content of the post-Confederation narratives (episodes 9 through 11), and a survey of consultants employed by the CBC. The project surveyed twenty-five hundred e-mails that were sent by the general public (unsolicited) to the CBC in response to *C:APH*. In addition, three questionnaires were electronically distributed to the scholarly and professional community (academics, archivists, and museum curators). A total of approximately fifteen hundred surveys were sent out and sixty were completed and returned. Negative reaction included complaints about boring narration, loud music, and poor scheduling. Concerns were also raised over accuracy, in particular the segments focusing on Louis Riel (1844-85), and on Nova Scotian politician Joseph Howe (1804-73). In addition, responses to the survey included annoyance over what was not covered in *C:APH*, and what was perceived to be an excessive emphasis on Upper and Lower Canada, to the exclusion of the western and eastern regions of Canada. The absence of Laura Secord (1775-1868) was also deplored. The majority of reactions were positive, however, with many individuals, for example those with Loyalist ancestors, citing their ancestral connections with a sense of patriotism. Favorable responses showed that viewers were glad that the series was televised and that it was a "shared experience" for them, involving home and family.<sup>29</sup> As of this writing, the Carleton website remains unchanged from its original state.

In 2002, Emily West published "Selling Canada to Canadians: Collective Memory, National Identity, and Popular Culture" in *Critical Studies in Media*

*Communication*. There she presented a comparative analysis of the promotion of national identity in the Charles R. Bronfman Foundation's *Heritage Minutes*: sixty-six one-minute vignettes presented on television and in movie theatres since 1991, and *Canada: A People's History*. She contends that each is structured around an appeal "to the 'on the spot' authority of journalistic representation and the emotional immediacy of dramatic story-telling"<sup>30</sup> and she credits "the cultural authority of journalistic representation."<sup>31</sup> West believes that the apparently unmediated journalistic depictions of dramatic stories allow both the *Heritage Minutes* and *C:APH* to "distance themselves from the ideological goals of their productions."<sup>32</sup> However, the ideological significance within the visual construction of the series remains unexplored in West's article. My dissertation fills in this gap, arguing that the ideological vision within the assemblage of visual materials of *C:APH* is presented as desirable and to be emulated by the national community. The dissertation conveys this argument by first establishing the Canadian-ness expressed by the series (Chapter Two), then linking it in to the series' ideals of family and community (Chapter Three), and finally tying these all together in the concluding chapter's exposition of the series' overall imbrication of individual, familial, communal, and national identities.

In 2003, Joe Friesen published "'Canada: A People's History' as 'Journalists' History,'" in *History Workshop Journal*. Friesen focused specifically on live-action footage to the exclusion of still images or their interrelations, and in this way dealt with a narrower range of imagery than I do in this thesis. Basing his research heavily upon interviews, Friesen examines "rules of camera placement, story structure, and voice-over narration,"<sup>33</sup> considering the impact this "screen grammar" of television had on the

presentation of history. And like Emily West, Friesen emphasizes the application of contemporary practices of journalistic integrity and the latter's detached presentation of history. The conflation of journalistic form with verifiable content is, in the end, why Friesen considers the series to be a successful history presentation.<sup>34</sup> A more complete and unified consideration of the series' "screen grammar," or manner of assembling different images into a coherent expression, would lead to delineating the ideological position of the authors. My dissertation resolves this lack in the fourth chapter's analysis of the series' construction of identity.

Darren Bryant and Penney Clark's paper, "Historical Empathy and *Canada: A People's History*," written in 2006, considers the effectiveness of *Canada: A People's History* as a pedagogical tool by examining the balance of affective appeal and historical accuracy that are found in the CBC series. Bryant and Clark take into account storytelling and universal narrative components like good and evil, which they pinpoint as "the importance of Shakespearean themes to develop a strong narrative."<sup>35</sup> While the authors do mull over what we see on the screen, they are more concerned with misrepresentations and with what we do not see. By this I mean that they focus on the question of historical accuracy. Bryant and Clark do believe that *C:APH* "is visually rich, portrays experiences of groups which have often been absent in the past, and makes extensive use of primary sources that do not seem to have been accessible before."<sup>36</sup> What the two authors do not say, and which my work examines in detail, is how these erstwhile absent experiences, rooted in rarely used primary sources, are brought to life and made emotionally persuasive.

In 2006, Joyce Hobday completed a Masters thesis in Education at the University of Saskatchewan, examining the linguistic, and to a lesser degree the visual, formation of female and Native identities within *C:APH*. The material she analyzes includes the images and promotional material on the DVD boxed set, both the opening and closing segments of the series, and the entirety of the tenth episode, "Taking the West" (1873-96). Of special concern to Hobday are the relationships of power between social groups as evinced by the series. As a result of her work, Hobday concludes that despite the inclusion of women and Aboriginals in the series, there is a privileging of "Whiteness and masculinity...present[ing] current power imbalances in society as natural and inevitable."<sup>37</sup> In terms of the series' overall depiction of the past, she determines that history is portrayed as "inevitable," with people having "no control or influence," and that people are therefore "encourage[d]...to accept the current situation, rather than challenging it and seeking alternatives."<sup>38</sup>

In counterpoint to Hobday's conclusion, I draw attention to several examples in *Canada: A People's History* where we appear to see exactly that - people gaining control and influencing the direction of their lives and as a consequence the character of Canada. In Episode Eleven for example, we learn about the efforts of Nellie McClung in 1915 to get women the right to vote in Manitoba provincial elections and to hold elected office. Several instances of self-empowerment are also made plain in the sixteenth episode. Here, we learn that in 1957 Ellen Faircloud became the first female federal cabinet minister, and that in 1961 Claire Kirkland-Casgrain was elected to the provincial legislature in Québec. The story of Kirkland-Casgrain also reveals that at that time, married woman in Québec had the same rights as children, so despite Kirkland-Casgrain

being a lawyer and an elected member of the legislature, her husband had to sign the lease for the apartment that she needed in Quebec City. Kirkland-Casgrain campaigned against this state of affairs and we see an archival film clip of a speech in which she champions the parental power “between a man and a woman in any well-organized family,” over that of “paternal power [which] has been obsolete for a long time.” By 1964, she gets the law changed, and women in Quebec are no longer treated as minors. In its accounts of First Nations, the tenth program of *C:APH*, deals with the difficulties that were faced by the Plains Indians in Canada during the mid-1880s. The food supply had been wrecked by the decimation of the buffalo herds, and the Plains Indians had become dependant upon food delivered by the Canadian government. On the one hand we see a reenactment of impoverished Natives, as well as archival photographs that reveal emaciated individuals, while on the other hand, we are made aware of the government’s indifference. Members of Parliament refer to the Indians as “pensioners doing little for themselves.” Government agents, charged with the welfare of the Natives, greatly reduce the rationing of food with Prime Minister John A. Macdonald’s approval. As the camera gives us reenacted scenes of shrouded Native corpses, we hear that between 1880 and 1885, 10% of the Plains Indian population died of malnutrition and disease. Although these Natives are not shown in the process of actively achieving control over their own destiny, it is clear that terrible wrongs were committed against them. And this kind of awareness can give us reason to sympathize with the historic plight of Natives and to have a clearer understanding of their claims for self-determination in the present. Also, in Episode Seventeen, we see Elijah Harper, member of the Manitoba legislature, stall debate on the Meech Lake Accord past its deadline and to its eventual failure. In the same

installment of *C:APH* the successful struggle by First Nations over land claims at Oka, Québec in 1990 makes it evident that these are a people who are not without the strength of community or the power of attorney in Canada.

Hobday does, however, usefully critique the claim that *C:APH* makes for a history spoken and written by figures from the past by pointing to the percentage of spoken (and therefore written) text scripted by the series' producers, as well as pointing out the series' voiceover by a single narrator and not by a historical voice at all.<sup>39</sup> While Hobday does acknowledge some aspects of the problematic nature of archival imagery (the client who originally requested that the image be produced, the posed nature of many subjects, and the initial cropping of the scene as a form of editorializing), she only briefly touches upon the visual elements, considering them as existing apart from each other and not being things that form a cohesive whole. However, a substantial development of the discussion of visual representation (in general terms and in terms of the portrayal of the past), similar to that found in my dissertation, buttresses Hobday's textual/linguistic critical discourse analysis.

In 2004, Lyle Dick published "'A New History for the New Millennium': *Canada: A People's History*," in the *Canadian Historical Review*. His close reading of the two-volume English book set written by Don Gilmour as companion texts to the series led him to conclude that it represents a biblical narrative form of "Creation, a Fall, [the] struggles of a chosen people...[with] demonic adversaries...[and an] appearance of a Messiah."<sup>40</sup> Dick's specific approach to the narrative structure of the two-volume text, which is restricted to examining the biblical narrative structure that he believes underlies *C:APH*, presents an interesting point of comparison to the work of my dissertation. Dick

highlights a three-part movement from a paradisiacal origin, a journey through difficult lands, and a final appearance of salvation. What is intriguing here is the echo with Mark Starowicz's identification, cited above, of three stages in the immigrant experience at the foundation of Canada, which he pinpoints with the terms "adversity," "passage," and "redemption."

Lyle Dick returned to the subject of *Canada: A People's History* in 2008 with a paper entitled "Representing National History on Television: The Case of *Canada: A People's History*." Dick declares that his intention in this paper is to place the narrative structures, images, music, topics, personalities, and events of *C:APH* "within the specific historical and cultural contexts of its production."<sup>41</sup> The objective of the series, in Dick's view, is to justify the existence of either the CBC documentary unit or the entirety of the CBC.<sup>42</sup> Dick then summarizes the selection of historical events and the ensuing timeline that we see in *C:APH*. He concludes that *C:APH* is an epic history that does not engage in an "actual diversity of voices and perspectives on Canadian history," but rather presents "the valorization of selected historical figures and their perspectives."<sup>43</sup> Dick identifies the Canadian people as the collective hero of *C:APH* as epic history. He also describes the theme of the series as being one of refuge, and the sound and music of *C:APH* to be in the "Wagnerian tradition."<sup>44</sup> Dick and I agree that the social and political climate in Canada of the late 1980s and early 1990s was an important influence on the formation of *C:APH*. In Dick's analysis, the whole point of *C:APH* would appear to be a smoothing over of any ruptures in the national coherence of Canada (and thus, an epic history to present the nation as a grand and inevitable project, the people as collective hero struggling for the realization of the nation, and the central theme of refuge as the

benefit offered by Canada as a nation state). However, in distinction to Dick's approach, I provide a detailed account of why the history presented by *C:APH* as being particularly Canadian in its appearance, of what kind of archetypal hero we see in *C:APH* (a tragic hero), and of how the idea of refuge is intimately tied to people's loss of home and hope, which launches them on a journey to Canada. In addition, I describe how *C:APH* gives visual form to the ideas of refuge, loss, and passage. In contrast to my approach, Dick does give passing treatment to the visual content of *Canada: A People's History*. In his one-paragraph summation of the type, use, and effect of visual materials, he correctly draws attention to the dramatic content of the imagery. However, since, according to Dick, "Starowicz's team...particularly favoured moving images, including dramatic reenactments for the pre-film periods and video footage from the television age,"<sup>45</sup> we are left with the impression that still images are scarce and were perhaps of lesser value to the production of *C:APH*. As my dissertation makes clear, this is not the case. Additionally, Dick's emphasis on the images of war and confrontation in *C:APH* omits all of the family-oriented pictures and representations of the Canadian landscape. What these latter depictions provide is an image of ourselves and our homesite – both of which are critical to fostering our sense of Canadian national belonging.

Other projects of mounting history on television, comparable to *Canada: A People's History*, have drawn some attention from the academic community. Instances of such presentations are Brian and Terrance McKenna's *The Valour and the Horror* (1992), Ken Burns's *The Civil War* (1990), and Simon Schama's *A History of Britain* (2000-02).<sup>46</sup> The reaction to the McKennas' three-part documentary on Canada's involvement in WW II, entitled *The Valour and the Horror*, has been centered on



questions of historical accuracy.<sup>47</sup> On the subject of the mini-series' form and content, Jeannette M. Sloniowski takes note of the fact that *The Valour and the Horror* "documents the much-neglected feelings of the ordinary military personnel," and features "the affectively charged combinations of image and music [that] are hard to resist emotionally."<sup>48</sup> Sloniowski also makes reference to the "affective potency of dramatization...[and] personalization of history"<sup>49</sup> that we experience in *The Valour and the Horror*. But questions still remain: what is it in these images that makes them so potent, and how do the recreations and still imagery function to present the past in such a charged manner?

Although the next two examples of history on television bear many similarities to *Canada: A People's History*, I feel that it is safe to say that these history mini-series have not spawned a body of literature that approaches the subject of historical representation in the way I do. Broadcast over five consecutive evenings in 1990, Ken Burns's eleven-hour depiction of the Civil War (1861-65) involved twenty-four historians as consultants, some of whom appeared on screen. Yet despite the presence these scholars, *The Civil War* has been chastised for a revisionist approach that gave the conflict "an overarching moral purpose it lacked at the time."<sup>50</sup> The series has also been taken to task for the proportioning of events: for example criticisms have been made of "its cursory portrayal of Reconstruction...or the need for a fuller representation of the role played by African Americans."<sup>51</sup> The success of *The Civil War*, however, has been attributed to what Gary R. Edgerton refers to as a "bottom-up perspective"<sup>52</sup> that privileges the perspective on the war of ordinary people like farmers and common soldiers, as well as African-Americans and women. The narrative mode that frames these perspectives is, in Edgerton's view, a

Homeric one that incorporates considerable poetic license. For example, we hear a letter read in voiceover while we look at a series of images that do not factually relate to the events recounted by the letter. The visual support is directed at eliciting “an air of melancholy, romance, and higher purpose.”<sup>53</sup> Thus, as far as Edgerton is concerned, Burns can include “disagreements [that] ultimately take place within a broader framework of agreement on underlying principle”; in this sense, *The Civil War* is liberal pluralist consensus history.<sup>54</sup> The story of the Civil War as experienced in Burns’s production, is compelling because the past comes to us through a personal point of view, as well as the perspective of great men, and because the story strikes an emotional chord in us.<sup>55</sup>

Simon Schama views his project, *A History of Britain*, a fifteen-part series done for the British Broadcasting Corporation (September 2000 – June 2002), as “compellingly dramatic television...that would touch the heart and tease the brains.”<sup>56</sup> Schama points out that, “[W]e took care to focus on small details of the experience of ordinary people.”<sup>57</sup> The ninth programme, “Revolutions,” uses this ground-level point of view to create a visceral presentation of the execution of Charles I (1600-49). We only see the eyes of the executioner behind his mask, before we are shown the faces of the spectators reacting to the moment of death. As Philip Harling notes, *A History of Britain* “takes ‘pains to relate all the big doings to lived human experience...with themes [that] are carefully and unfailingly related to the human condition.’”<sup>58</sup> The material used to accomplish this is the letters, journals, and objects that people in history have left behind. To date, no detailed, comprehensive research of the visual composition of *A History of Britain* has been located.

My holistic approach to the study of visual history is something that the aforementioned history series call for and have yet to receive. My dissertation also surpasses existing work on *Canada: A People's History* because it provides a theoretical framework that applies to the visual content of all seventeen episodes of *C:APH*, and accounts for all aspects of the visual representation of Canadian history that is offered by the series. The method that I use is original because it details how memory and emotion work together in the visual construction and reception of Canadian history, and because it provides an explanation for the highly personalized vision of national history that is offered by *Canada: A People's History*. Unlike existing work on the series, I show how *C:APH* facilitates the recognition and recreation of history in the mind of the viewer. What this process allows for is a multiplicity of perspectives, and therefore histories, that are all framed by the national story. What my dissertation reveals is how national belonging is visualized in response to a world of global movements and connections that is starkly different from the world of Canadian nationalism's birth at the end of the nineteenth century.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Two theorists are particularly prominent: Bill Nichols, and Errol Morris. The work of Nichols includes: "The Voice of Documentary," in *Film Quarterly* 36.3 (Spring, 1983): 17-30; "History, and Narrative in Documentary," in *Film Quarterly* 41.1 (Autumn, 1987): 9-20; *Representing Reality: issues and concepts in documentary*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991; "The Voice of Documentary," in *New Challenges for Documentary*, 2nd ed. (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 2005): 17-33. Errol Morris maintains a website that includes an extensive archive of his writings. A two-part essay on reenactments merits special mention: <http://morris.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/04/03/play-it-again-sam-re-enactments-part-one/> (retrieved August 31, 2009), and <http://morris.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/04/10/play-it-again-sam-re-enactments-part-two/> (retrieved August 31, 2009). Other sources that would be valuable to a study of the soundtrack and of reenactments in documentary film are: Michel Chion, *Audio-Vision*. Claudia Gorbman, trans. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994; Alexander Cook, "The Use and Abuse of Historical Reenactment: Thoughts on Recent Trends in Public History," in *Criticism* 46.3 (Summer, 2004): 487-496; Anton Kaes, *From Hitler to Heimat: The Return of History as Film* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989; Mark Kerins, "Narration in the Cinema of Digital Sound," in *The Velvet Light Trap* 58 (Fall, 2006): 41-54; Katie King, "Historiography as Reenactment: Metaphors and Literalizations of TV Documentaries," in *Criticism* 46.3 (Summer, 2004): 459-475; and Jay Ruby, "The Image Mirrored: Reflexivity and the Documentary Film," in *New Challenges for Documentary*, 2nd ed. (Manchester; New York: Manchester University Press, 2005): 34- 47.

<sup>2</sup>The academic work includes: Joyce Hobday, "The Myths that Bind Us: A Critical Discourse Analysis of *Canada: A People's History*," Unpublished Master's of Education thesis. (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan, 2006), Lyle Dick, "'A New History for the New Millennium': *Canada: A People's History*," *The Canadian Historical Review* Vol. 85 No. 1 (March, 2004): 85-109, Joe Friesen, "'Canada: A People's History' as 'Journalists' History," *History Workshop Journal* No. 56 (2003): 184-203, Darren Bryant and Penny Clark, "Historical Empathy and *Canada: A People's History*," in *Canadian Journal of Education*. 29.4 (2006): 1039-1064, Emily West, "Selling Canada to Canadians: Collective Memory, National Identity, and Popular Culture," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* Vol.19 No.2 (June, 2002): 212-229, and Lyle Dick, "Representing National History on Television: The Case of *Canada: A People's History*," in *Programming Reality: Perspectives on English-Canadian Television*. Zoë Druick and Aspa Kotsopoulos, eds. (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfred Laurier Press, 2008): 31-49.

<sup>3</sup>J.D. Stahl, "Moral Despair and the Child as Symbol of Hope in Pre-World War II Berlin," in *Children's Literature*, Vol. 14 (1986), 83.

<sup>4</sup>See: Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits: a selection*. Trans. Bruce Fink. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 2004; and J. Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. Edited by Jacques-Alain Miller; translated from the French by Alain Sheridan. London: Hogarth Press, 1977.

<sup>5</sup>The term 'Other' is capitalized to indicate that it does not denote merely another person; it can also be used to refer to language, desire, and the ideal ego, and as demand. As a term in the Lacanian lexicon, it is perhaps the most multivalent and difficult to pin down.

<sup>6</sup>Stewart, Susan. *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Baltimore: London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), xii.

<sup>7</sup>For example: Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*. Translated by Richard Howard. New York: Hill and Wang, 1981; and Stephen Bann, *Paul Delaroche: History Painted*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997.

<sup>8</sup>Benjamin West's painting has provoked a torrent of ink. For example: Peter Cannon Brookes, "From the 'Death of General Wolfe' to the 'Death of Lord Nelson': Benjamin West and the Epic Composition," in *The Painted Word: British History Painting: 1750-1830*. P. Cannon-Brookes, ed. (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1991): 15-22; Alain d. McNairn, "Benjamin West and the Death of General Wolfe," in *The Magazine Antiques* 150.5 (November, 1996): 678-685; Vivien Green Fryd, "rereading the Indian in Benjamin West's *Death of General Wolfe*," in *American Art* 19.1 (Spring, 1995): 73-85; Dennis Montagna, "Benjamin West's *The Death of General Wolfe*: A Nationalist Narrative," in *The American Art Journal* 13.2 (Spring, 1981): 72-88; Barbara J. Mitnick and William Aryes, "Picturing History," in *The Magazine Antiques* 164.5 (November, 1993): 662-671; Ruthven Todd, "Benjamin West vs. The History Picture," in *Magazine of Art* 41.8 (December, 1948): 301-305; Martin Postle, "Reynolds, West, George III, and George IV," in *Apollo* 138.379 New Series (September, 1993): 118-123; and Jules David Prown, "Benjamin West and the Use of Antiquity," in *American Art* 10.2 (Summer, 1996): 29-49. West's dramatization of Wolfe's death also crops up in: Nancy K. Anderson, "'Curious Historical Artistic Data': Art History and Western American Art," in *Transforming Visions of the American West*. J. D. Prown, et.al. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992): 1-36; Helmut von Erffa and Allen Staley, *The Paintings of Benjamin West*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1986; Jules David Prown, *Art as Evidence*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001 (esp. Chapter Seventeen); and in Simon Schama, *Dead Certainties*. Toronto: Vintage Books, 1992 (esp. Chapter Two).

<sup>9</sup>S. Bann, *Paul Delaroche: History Painted*, 119

<sup>10</sup>S. Stewart, *On Longing*, 102.

<sup>11</sup>Northrop Frye, *The Bush Garden*. (Concord, Ontario: House of Anansi Press, 1995, [1971], 11 and 10.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid*, 222.

<sup>13</sup>James Clifford, "Diasporas," in *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*. (Cambridge, Mass., London, England: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 257.

<sup>14</sup>For example: Nigel Rapport and Andrew Dawson, eds. *Migrants of Identity: Perceptions of Home in a World of Movement*. Oxford; New York: Berg, 1998.

<sup>15</sup>Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*. F. J. Ditter and V. Yazdi, trans. (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1980), 52

<sup>16</sup>As examples: Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: photography, narrative, and postmemory* (Cambridge; Massachusetts; London: Harvard University Press, 1997); and M. Hirsch, "Past Lives: Postmemories in Exile," in *Poetics Today*. 17.4 (Winter, 1996): 659-686.

<sup>17</sup>M. Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, 58.

<sup>18</sup>M. Hirsch, "Past Lives: Postmemories in Exile," 659.

<sup>19</sup>For example: John Berger, *And Our Faces, My Heart, Brief as Photos*. London: Writers & Readers, 1984.

<sup>20</sup>Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: photography, narrative, and postmemory* (Cambridge, Massachusetts; London: Harvard University Press, 1997), 256.

<sup>21</sup>Paul Ricoeur, "Life in Quest of Narrative," in *On Paul Ricoeur: Narrative and Interpretation*. David Wood, ed. (London; New York: Routledge, 1991), 32.

<sup>22</sup>Louis Marin, "The Frame of Representation and Some of its Figures," in *Rhetoric of the Frame: Essays on the Boundaries of the Artwork*. Paul Duro, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 80.

<sup>23</sup>Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Steven Rendall, trans. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid*, 111-2.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid*, 113.

<sup>26</sup>Louis Marin, *Utopics: The Semiological Play of Textual Spaces*. Robert A. Vollrath, trans. (New Jersey: Humanities Press International, Inc., 1990), 42.

<sup>27</sup>Krishan Kumar highlights these aspects of utopia in his *Utopianism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991.

<sup>28</sup>Ruth Levitas, "Introduction: the elusive idea of utopia," in *History of the Human Sciences*. vol. 16.1 (2003), 4.

<sup>29</sup>([http://www.carleton.ca/historycollaborative/index.html?http&&&www.carleton.ca/historycollaborative/introduction\\_site.htm](http://www.carleton.ca/historycollaborative/index.html?http&&&www.carleton.ca/historycollaborative/introduction_site.htm))

<sup>30</sup>Emily West, "Selling Canada to Canadians: Collective Memory, National Identity, and Popular Culture," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* Vol.19 No.2 (June, 2002), 212.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid*, 221.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid*, 227.

<sup>33</sup>Joe Friesen, "'Canada: A People's History' as 'Journalists' History," *History Workshop Journal* No.56 (2003), 185.

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid*, 191.

<sup>35</sup>Bryant and Clarke, "Historical Empathy and *Canada: A People's History*," 1047.

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid*, 1059.

<sup>37</sup>Joyce Hobday, "The Myths that Bind Us: A Critical Discourse Analysis of *Canada: A People's History*," Unpublished Master's of Education thesis. (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan, 2006), 2.

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid*, ii.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid*, 35.

<sup>40</sup>Lyle Dick, "'A New History for the New Millennium': *Canada: A People's History*," *The Canadian Historical Review* Vol.85 No.1 (March, 2004), 95.

<sup>41</sup>Dick, "Representing National History on Television," 32.

<sup>42</sup>Dick's phrasing is elusive on this point: "In an atmosphere of crisis, the documentary unit of CBC-TV discerned the potential to propose a large-scale television series on Canadian history, which was readily endorsed by the corporation's executives...affording the opportunity to generate revenues and boost ratings while enhancing patriotism" (33). Dick's reference for this is the assertion by Mark Starowicz that the referendum held in Québec in 1980 was a "shock" that had given "us all a brush with history." M. Starowicz, *Making History: The Remarkable Story Behind "Canada: A People's History"*. (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 2003): 28.

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid*, 37.

<sup>44</sup>The assertions by Dick of the epic nature of *C:APH*, the people as collective hero, and refuge as a central theme are all based on the textual structure and content of the series. The inclusion of music and sound is brief and presents a simple description; for example: "For more somber sections of the narrative, the music modulated to muted passages played by solo violins," 41.

<sup>45</sup>*Ibid*, 42.

<sup>46</sup>As of this writing, no treatments have been located which detail the visual aspects of the PBS production *Liberty! The American Revolution* (1997), the TVOntario mini-series *Origins: A History of Canada* (1987), the CBC-Television documentary productions called *Tenth Decade* (1971) and *The Champions* (Parts One and Two: 1978, Part Three: 1986), and the British Broadcasting Corporation's production called *Culloden* (1964). In Chapter One of my dissertation I deal with each of these series' visual construction and how they compare to *Canada: A People's History*.

<sup>47</sup>Good coverage of this issue can be found in Graham Carr, "Rules of Engagement: Public History and the Drama of Legitimation," in *The Canadian Historical Review*. 86.2 (June, 2005): 317-354.

<sup>48</sup>Jeannette M. Sloniowski, "Popularizing History: *The Valour and the Horror*," in *Slippery Pastimes: Reading the Popular in Canadian Culture*. J.M. Sloniowski and Joan Nicks, eds. (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier Press, 2002), 161.

<sup>49</sup>*Ibid*, 165.

<sup>50</sup>Christopher Shea, "Taking Aim at the 'Ken Burns' View of the Civil War," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. (March 20, 1998), A16.

<sup>51</sup>Gary R. Edgerton, "Mediating *Thomas Jefferson*," in *Television Histories: Shaping Collective Memory in the Media Age*. G. R. Edgerton and Peter C. Rollins, eds. (Lexington: The University of Kentucky Press, 2001), 172.

<sup>52</sup>Gary R. Edgerton, "Ken Burns's Rebirth of a Nation: Television, Narrative, and Popular History," in *The Historical Film: History and Memory in Media*. Marcia Landy, ed. (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2001), 305.

<sup>53</sup>*Ibid*, 307.

<sup>54</sup>*Ibid*, 312.

<sup>55</sup>Some examples of the reaction to Ken Burns's *The Civil War* are: Jane Turner Censer, "Videobites: Ken Burns's *The Civil War* in the Classroom," in *American Quarterly* 44.2 (June, 1992): 244-54; Ellen Carol Dubois, "The Civil War," *American*



*Historical Review*. 96:4 (October, 1991): 1140-42; A. Cash Koenier, "Ken Burns's *The Civil War*: Triumph or Travesty?" in *The Journal of Military History*. 55 (April, 1991): 2225-33; and Hugh Percell, "America's Civil Wars," in *History Today*. 41 (May, 1991): 7-9.

<sup>56</sup>Simon Schama, "Fine-Cutting Clio," in *The Public Historian*. 25.3 (Summer, 2003), 18 and 21.

<sup>57</sup>*Ibid*, 19.

<sup>58</sup>Philip Harling, "A History of Britain," in *The Public Historian*. 26.2 (Spring, 2004), 127.

Figure 1



Figure 2

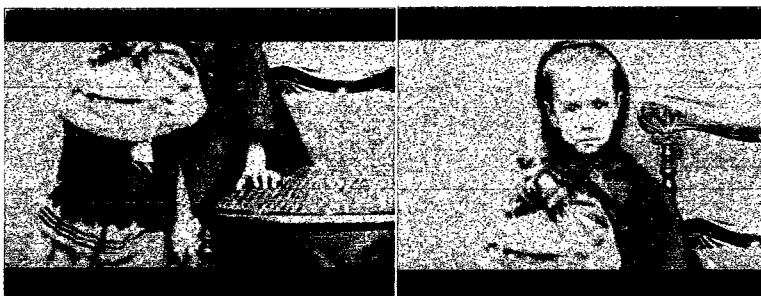


Figure 3

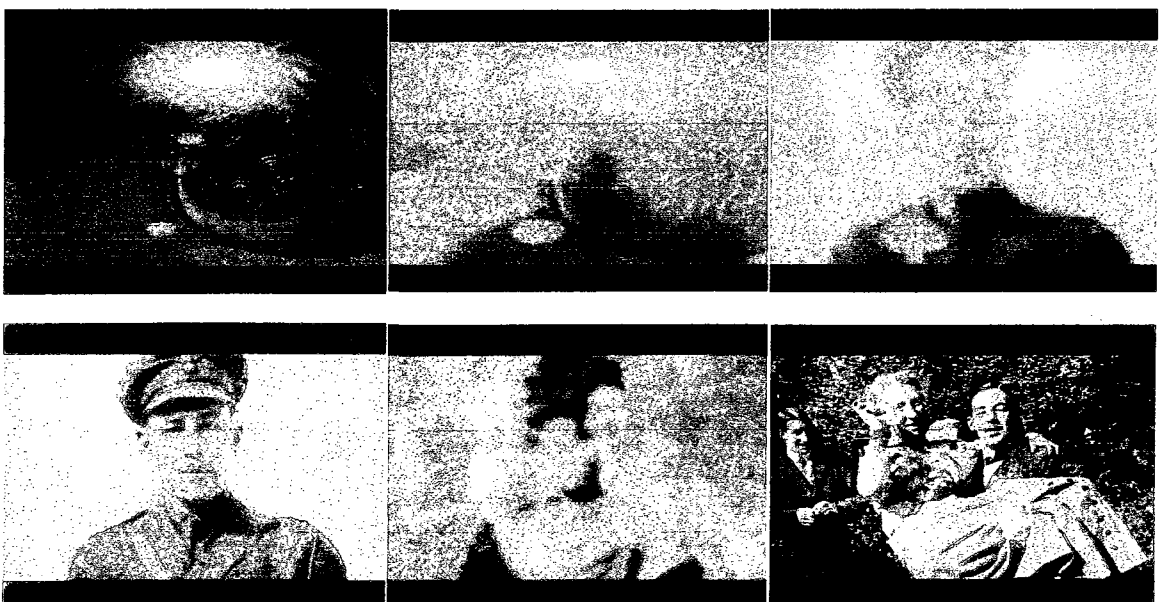


Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6

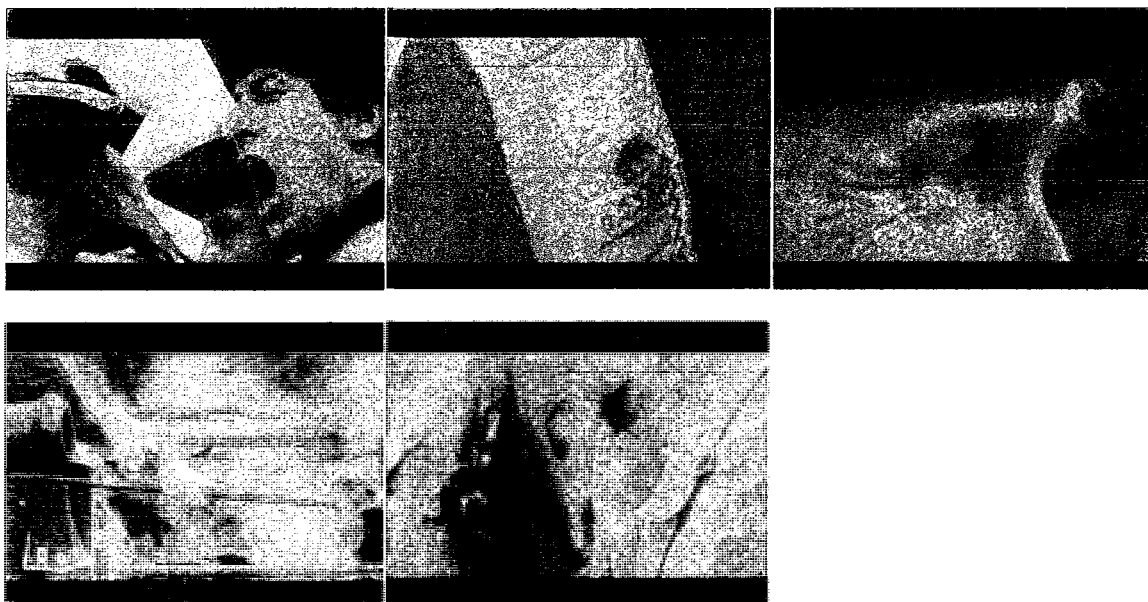


Figure 7

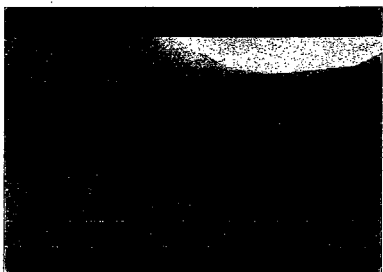


Figure 8

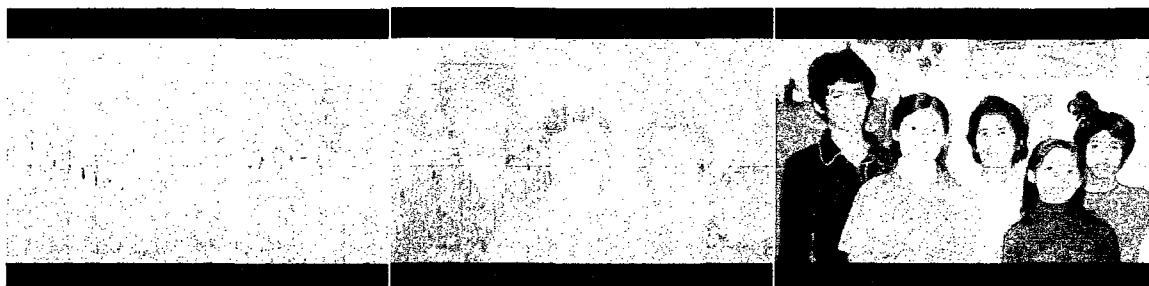


Figure 9



Figure 10

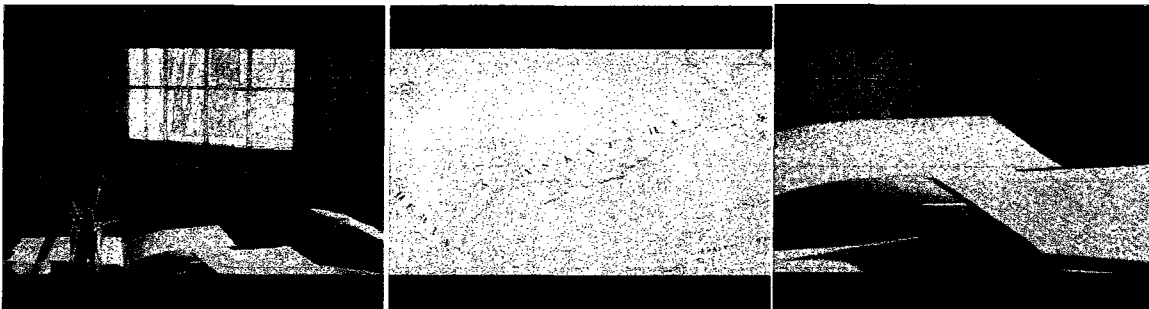


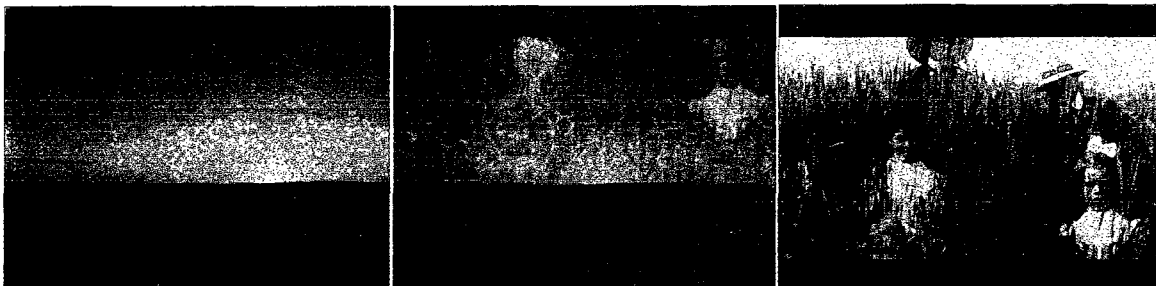
Figure 11



Figure 12



Figure 13



## CHAPTER ONE

This chapter establishes the background and overall content of *Canada: A People's History (C:APH)* by first delineating the context of the series' origin, and detailing the issues and problems surrounding its production and development. This first stage of the chapter comprises a detailed presentation of the series' conception, planning, and production stages, enhanced by interviews with executive producer Mark Starowicz, director of research Gene Allen, and senior producer Hubert Gendron. Here, areas of specific concern include: sources and influences of financial support (business and government), and the nature and significance of the collaboration between the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and Société Radio-Canada. Part of this opening section is a discussion of the series' significant information technology, social, and political contexts. The latter three areas include the advances in satellite broadcast technologies that impact the cultural sovereignty of Canada, the increasing diversification of the Canadian social landscape caused by global human migrations, and the changing political relations between Ottawa, the provinces, and First Nations. Chapter One also puts forward a discussion that compares *C:APH* to previous presentations of Canadian history and Canadian identity. The chapter closes by looking at how the series is first introduced to the audience in order to determine what relationship is initiated between viewer and *C:APH*, and how that might prefigure the vision of Canadian history that is about to be seen. Thus, Chapter One identifies how *Canada: A People's History* sees itself as a performance of Canadian history, evaluates the intent of *C:APH*, and assesses possible meanings conveyed through the series' construction of Canadian history.

## Section 1 – The context

An important position adopted by the dissertation is that the background and context of *Canada: A People's History* spurred its production and largely shaped the forms given to the historical and contemporary identities seen within its frame. The period from which *C:APH* emerged was one of social, political, and cultural unrest that coincided with financial concerns at the CBC, and dramatic changes in information technology that threatened to impact both the cultural sovereignty of Canada and the CBC as a cultural institution. The growing prevalence of multiculturalism within Canada was at the same time a product of globalization and a reflection of Canada's past. All of the abovementioned factors pressured the nation defined as, according to Anthony D. Smith, "a named cultural unit of population with a separate homeland, shared ancestral myths and memories, a public culture, common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members."<sup>1</sup> The various forces (from global migrations and technological developments to linguistic and regional demands) threaten to pull apart the geographic site of nation as a singular point of identification. Rather than a people united at this site by shared memories and commonly held myths, national identification becomes dependent upon multiple points of attachment and memory - many of which lie outside the national space.

A key example of the political turmoil that influenced the form and content of *Canada: A People's History* was the effort to repatriate the constitution (it was rooted in the British Parliamentary legislation of the 1867 British North America Act) that began in the late 1970s and continued into the early 1990s. Meetings held between federal and provincial powers to determine changes to the constitution only resulted in an unratified

Meech Lake Accord in 1982; ratification faced a 1990 deadline imposed by the Supreme Court of Canada. Underlying the political debate were the pressures created by the interests of an increasingly diverse Canadian population.

A crucial source of diversity in Canada was globalization, a fact noted in the 1994 Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences: "Globalization is erasing time and space, making borders porous, and encouraging continental integration...national sovereignty is being reshaped and the power of national governments to control events reduced."<sup>2</sup> People carry an unending stream of personal belongings and beliefs with them and therefore introduce ideas, values, history, and identities into their point of arrival. In short, they bring with them a way of life that is not (yet) Canadian. An analytical survey conducted in January 1989 identified the public's "rising concern about what is perceived as the growing influence of ethnocultural organizations,"<sup>3</sup> and identified "a strong feeling among the general public of a 'Canadian way of life' which was increasingly seen as being threatened by the values of new immigrant groups."<sup>4</sup> An active immigrant presence coupled with the demands for recognition by women's groups and cultural minorities prevented agreement on the Meech Lake Accord, and it failed in June of 1990. Further attempts in the form of the Charlottetown Accord of 1992 were also unable to reach agreement. Two referenda on independence for Québec, in 1980 and 1995, added to constitutional insecurity. The historical form of the relationship between Canada and First Nations was also changing. Disputes over land and resource use occurred during the late 1980s in the Northwest Territories, British Columbia, and the Atlantic Provinces, led by the Dene, Haida, and Mi'kmaq, respectively. Finally, a 1990 land dispute between the Québec town of Oka



and the adjoining Mohawk community of Kahnasatake became a confrontation between Natives and the Canadian military.<sup>5</sup>

Beyond the influx of global migrants, the most direct impact on Canada, in terms of globalism, was the influence of America as an economic and cultural powerhouse. A prime case in point is the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) between the USA, Canada, and Mexico that came into effect in January 1994. The agreement was seen variously as a plan for what Cameron Duncan identifies as the “One America”<sup>6</sup> of American economic supremacy, and one that was mostly disadvantageous to Canada. From this point of view, the ability of the Canadian government to control foreign investment would be limited. The Canadian Labour Congress saw it as a “disaster for working Canadians.”<sup>7</sup> The ultimate outcome of NAFTA for Canadian arts and culture was a decline in funds and political interest in supporting and developing Canadian cultural production.<sup>8</sup> Within the framework of this dissertation, the deflation of monies and motivation for Canadian cultural institutions and production has a lot to do with the gradually deteriorating state of the CBC itself during the late 1980s and most of the 1990s. In fact, budget cutbacks and staff reductions occurred during the series’ production. By 1998, two years before the launch of the series, CBC staff had been reduced by more than 3,000 positions, and the corporation had suffered \$400 million in budget cuts.<sup>9</sup>

The political, social, and cultural tumult of the late 1980s to mid-1990s was not the only factor behind the formation of the series. The Internet and the proliferation of cable and satellite television services in Canada were also strong influences that contributed to a perceived need for a series like *Canada: A People's History*. Political

agreements between nations, like NAFTA, establish policy that determines content, while technological developments drive the distribution of foreign (or native) cultural wealth. Perrin Beatty, President and CEO of the CBC, was aware of these two threats to Canadian cultural sovereignty and national identity. In 1998, Beatty expressed his concern that "Canadians are in the throes of unsettling changes. We have only to look at recent political developments...the CRTC gearing up for a major public hearing later this year on Canadian content; [and] our difficult negotiations before world trade bodies over issues like intellectual property."<sup>10</sup> In an address to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage on April 2, 1998, he stressed worries over "dissolving national borders," a "challenged cultural sovereignty," and "greater choices...[that] reduce our sense of shared experience." He then offered his audience *Canada: A People's History*. "I'd now like to outline our main strategic directions...most importantly...producing *A People's History of Canada*, the most ambitious history project ever undertaken in this country."<sup>11</sup> In many respects, series executive producer Mark Starowicz echoed the words of upper management at the CBC. By 2000, with statements like, "Domestic space is being segmented and transnational space is emerging, but in private hands, and outside the control of the nation state,"<sup>12</sup> Starowicz was expressing sentiments very similar to those of Beatty. Further, Starowicz concluded in 2000 that "the digital revolution is about content - cultural software - to feed this infinite spectrum, and to assert our presence and our identity in it."<sup>13</sup> He was convinced that Canadians must "insist on the affirmation of our experience, our stories, to ourselves and to the world."<sup>14</sup> Integrated with the perceived need to actively promote "cultural

software” was Starowicz's concern that “[t]oo few people out there know Canadian history.”<sup>15</sup>

As a factor shaping *C:APH*, technology is involved in terms both of delivering Canadian history and the history of Canadian itself. In this sense, building the Canadian nation, and defending it, has depended upon technology. For instance, a lynchpin in the formation and defense of Canada was the conception, planning, and construction of the transcontinental railway: what Pierre Berton has famously referred to as the “National Dream.” On a pragmatic level, the railway did facilitate the defense of Canada by easing the transport of troops, notably during the Métis disturbance in 1885 at Batoche, in the Saskatchewan District of the Northwest Territories. As a system that transported people and materials, the railway also speeded the occupation of the West. The concerns over developments in communication technologies and the worry for dissolving national sovereignty are intertwined.

However, while communication technology can be argued to have been a constructive element in Canadian nation building, it persists unchecked in more recent times as a detrimental influence. On the one hand, commenting on *The National Dream: Building the Impossible Railway*, a CBC television series produced in 1974, Maurice Charland wrote that “[t]his CBC epic reminds us that Canada exists by virtue of technologies which bind space and that the railroad permitted a transcontinental economic and political state to emerge in history.”<sup>16</sup> Charland also presented the convincing argument “that the rhetoric of the CPR, seeking to constitute a state, becomes the rhetoric of the CBC, seeking to constitute a *polis* and *nation*.”<sup>17</sup> On the other hand, however, Charland made clear that the CBC was “instituted to occupy and defend

Canada's ether and consciousness."<sup>18</sup> The downfall of the CBC's objective lies in the potency of the American broadcast system and its ability to fill Canadian airspace with American culture due to both signal and economic strength. Thus, the role played by technology in the enormous space of Canada is still active, but it risks becoming a nationally corrosive factor. As the CBC notes, the "power of the new technology [is] to abolish distance and ignore national boundaries."<sup>19</sup> Historically, communication technology, in the form of a transcontinental railway, facilitated the formation of a unified sense of Canada despite its great size. In the present day, telecommunications not only close these internal gaps, they also remove the gap separating national and global space. Contemporary telecommunications, in other words, introduce global visual identifications into the Canadian national place.

The comments made by Beatty and Starowicz, noted above, highlight an important feature of the technological and social landscape that contributes to a unified national image. Developments in digital technology and hardware like the Internet, specialty channels (especially one like the History Channel), personal computers, DVDs and VHS tapes, satellite systems, and pay TV are identified by the CBC as elements that produce "a wholly viewer-responsive home video centre."<sup>20</sup> The shift that is accented here is revealed by the description "viewer-responsive." This is emphasized by Beatty's assertion that formats like DVD and VHS, combined with the ability to download, copy, and share files, mean that "individuals can have much greater control over all elements of the creative process."<sup>21</sup> People have a greater choice in a fragmented visual marketplace and, with greater self-control, are capable of producing on their own a more malleable and self-satisfying imagery. The CBC consequently becomes more dependent

on a populace that is increasingly able to control what comprises their visual diet (given a much wider, global market of cultural production to choose from). Ultimately, the risk is that an abandonment of Canadian cultural products destabilizes Canadian national unity. For Beatty, "What hangs in the balance is nothing less than our ability to ensure that our citizens will continue to know their own history, to explore their own cultures, to preserve their own heritage."<sup>22</sup> There is the possibility that a concern for the CBC's continued viability was threaded into Beatty's remark, because a dwindling national audience means reduced federal funding.

The role of *C:APH* in the interconnection of state, people, and history, is central to this dissertation. *C:APH* does not preach to a harmonious national choir, but faces a cacophony of newly arriving voices contesting an increasingly divided terrain. As observed by the CBC, "We are a relatively small people scattered over a vast land mass, across a land that backgrounds and shapes people's lives...[and this] is an irresistible attraction in Canada."<sup>23</sup> In the face of global migrations and technological transfigurations, *C:APH* must present the land once again as the attractor. To reiterate Anthony D. Smith, cited above, the land is elemental to the preservation of the nation as a distinctive homeland. The land, in this sense, quite literally provides the ground for the formation of a visually re-imagined community.

The essential form and content of *Canada: A People's History* was determined by the issues and events outlined above. An epic presentation of national history on both English and French networks, which spoke to Canada's cultural diversity with a multifaceted narrative, would broadcast a common history that might unite the populace and thereby create a common front to the cultural penetration of the global village. The

overwhelming emphasis in *C:APH* on people and their actual experiences of Canadian history reflects the power shift pointed to by both Beatty and Starowicz. Information technologies, they believed, were moving the control and distribution of cultural production to the people and away from the nation. The unifying principle of *C:APH* is that every individual is the whole nation. The nation depends on the imagined participation of the people to a much greater degree than ever before, and is concerned with forces beyond its control: free-flowing data, trade agreements impacting its cultural sovereignty, and the mass translocations of people that change its cultural constitution. To these are added particularly Canadian concerns like First Nations land claims and Québec independence. *C:APH* represents a turn to the past in a celebration of a people and a place and envisions them in a manner that benefits a contemporary nation.

History and commemoration have become, it would appear, an obsession of the contemporary age. Andreas Huyssen points to the burgeoning memory industry, particularly from 1989, that is built of retro fashions, repro furniture, mass-marketed nostalgia, memory practices in the visual arts, as well as the “‘self-musealization’ by video recorder, memoir writing, and confessional literature ...[and] the increase of historical documentaries on television.”<sup>24</sup> Coupled to these acts is the growing number of “politically painful anniversaries, commemorations, and memories.”<sup>25</sup> The three elements that are brought together, according to Huyssen, are memory, entertainment, and trauma.<sup>26</sup> Yet in spite of Huyssen’s assertion, in Canada history appears to be a lost art and one that is also lost on Canadians. As examples, the Dominion Institute’s series of Canada Day quizzes, and the heritage tests conducted in 1991 by the Association for Canadian Studies, came to the same conclusion as Keith Spicer, chair of the 1991 Task

Force on Canadian Unity, who stated that Canadians are sadly lacking in knowledge of themselves. He wrote in his report: "Citizens have told us countless times about their lack of knowledge and reliable information about their history, their country, and their fellow citizens."<sup>27</sup> The connection with Canadian history has become tenuous to the point where one historian has dramatized the issue, believing history to have been "killed." J. L. Granatstein, author of *Who Killed Canadian History?* (1998), accuses the educational system of having "given up teaching anything we might call Canadian or national history."<sup>28</sup> Rather than schools, he feels journalists and private foundations promote history on television or in print.<sup>29</sup> Standouts in Granatstein's book are Pierre Berton's *The National Dream* (1970) and *The Last Spike* (1971). It is important to note that Berton's two texts were translated into the CBC television miniseries *The National Dream: Building the Impossible Railway* (1974).

Granatstein laments the loss of a grand narrative vision of national history. In their view, a sweeping vision of history has been replaced by the "new" history (an oxymoron if ever there was one). Granatstein is not alone in mourning the loss of a grand vision of Canadian history. In 1991, Michael Bliss criticized the trend toward specialization at the cost of a national field of historical vision. He argued that as a result, "we do not know who we are as Canadians."<sup>30</sup> Ramsey Cook introduced the phrase "limited identities" into the discussion of Canadian history in 1967 to refer to the regional, ethnic, and class identifications that were then coming into prominence. Two years later, J.M.S. Careless popularized the idea of limited identities, arguing that they threatened "to take over and settle the matter of a Canadian identity by ending it outright."<sup>31</sup> A once unified history splinters into women's history, regional history,

economic history, and cultural history. What goes missing in the rupturing of history's staging is the scripting of a unifying nationalist myth that can bind the country together. Whether we can in reality generate a single myth that would unify the nation is another question. What remains important is the idea that such an attitude is possible – that we can actually strive for and ultimately imagine a collective identity for ourselves. A pertinent question to ask at this point is whether the disintegration of history into specialized parts can be viewed as a reflection of its audience (many interests beget many views), or whether the splintered perspective of history creates the different self-perceptions of these groups.

One case of the new kind of history writing, produced in 1993, is the two-volume text *History of the Canadian Peoples*.<sup>32</sup> As the title may suggest, it is a history written from “the people’s” perspective, with the past coming to life through the eyes of “ordinary” people and not those of the “elite.” We can understand the categories of ordinary and elite, and see how *C:APH* collects them together to form a more unified or “grand narrative vision,” by considering how the various stories in *C:APH* have been constructed. In the sixth episode, for instance, we see the political machinations behind the referendum in Québec on sovereignty-association, which took place in May 1980. We also see the process unfolding from the perspective of two families living in Montréal – one for a more independent Québec, and one for the status quo. In Episode Fifteen, we are presented with the story of growing anxieties during the late 1950s in the United States and in Canada over the threat of nuclear war with the Soviet Union. As part of this story, we see the implementation of the North Atlantic Region for Aerospace Defence (NORAD) and the construction of early warning stations in the Canadian north.



We also see the consequent forcible relocation of Inuit families and communities. In each of these two examples, there are what can be called two levels of history, and they both result from what Maurice Halbwachs calls the social or historical memory (the referendum seen at the level of governmental figures and the impact that it has on the nation, or the nuclear threat that is posed between countries), and the personal or autobiographical memory (the two Montreal or the Inuit families).<sup>33</sup>

The diversification caused by different and competing voices within the political and cultural spheres of Canada, and the power of technologies to deliver message and manipulability, overlaps modern culture's formation of a kaleidoscopic sense and scene of self. The many faces and personal views from the past that appear within the frame of *C:APH* are accepted and deciphered by its audience because of this overlap. As Christopher Lasch explains, "The 'identities' sought these days are such as 'can be adopted and discarded like a change of costume'; if they are 'freely chosen', the choice 'no longer implies commitments and consequences' and so 'the freedom to choose' amounts in practice to an abstention from choice."<sup>34</sup> Daniel Bell extends the credence given to the idea that identity is something that can be chosen, altered, and discarded again by outlining modern culture's "expression and remaking of the 'self' in order to achieve self-realization and self-fulfillment...[In this] there is a denial of any limits or boundaries to experience...nothing is forbidden, all is to be explored."<sup>35</sup> The role-playing of actors who don historical garments and makeup in *C:APH* parallels the changeable nature of contemporary self-making. However, the forever shifting self-image generates a self that is rooted in loss – always leaving one identity for another; a self that desires what Huyssen described as "self-musealization." The freedom to choose

without consequence, and the denial of limits and boundaries form a part of the strength of populism, and the emergence of what has been called the “sovereign individual.” The latter term describes “information-empowered citizens [who] have broken the nation-states’ monopoly on information and, therefore, power.”<sup>36</sup> The “sovereign individual” identifies the technologically empowered (Canadian) citizens who, in the minds of Beatty and Starowicz, should rather see themselves in a unified image of Canadian-ness.

The presence and significance of this “new” free-floating and self-governing individual can be found in the 1996 report of the Mandate Review Committee for Canadian Broadcasting and Film, which stated that “the individual dignity of each Canadian is the very foundation of the country...they should be treated not just as consumers, but also as active and intelligent citizens.”<sup>37</sup> The significance of the sovereign individual can also be seen in the Canada 125 Corporation, which was given a mandate by the federal government to organize, distribute funding, and promote the 1992 celebrations of Canada’s 125<sup>th</sup> birthday’s. In an analysis of the build-up to the constitutional crisis and nationalist celebrations of 1992, Eva Mackey identifies the emergence of self-representation as “populist” and argues that “the people” became a “key contested metaphor at both national and local levels.”<sup>38</sup> The promotional material employed by the Canada 125 Corporation used a tabloid format and newsprint to express an everyday, ground-level message that portrayed what “‘ordinary Canadians’ were doing to celebrate the nation.”<sup>39</sup> The perspective that was adopted in the promotional material was in a “voice of the people...[telling] stories about ‘real Canadians’.”<sup>40</sup> The intention of the campaign was to engender “sentimental and naturalized feelings of patriotism.”<sup>41</sup> The aforementioned approach by the Canada 125 Corporation represents a

reflection of its intended audience in order to more effectively deliver its message. The same argument applies to *C:APH* – images showing active and self-determining individuals and groups appear because these social types exist within the series' audience.

The leitmotif running throughout the abovementioned issues is the splintering of the structure that provided a fixed reference for schemas of national identifications. Charles Taylor frames the issue succinctly by pointing to the development of “something we might call a diasporic consciousness. People now live in imagined spaces, spaces where they see themselves situated within a certain society, and more and more of these spaces straddle borders and other countries. You now have people who are in many ways fully integrated as citizens of their new countries, but at the same time retain active interest and contact with people in their country of origin.”<sup>42</sup> The matrix that holds the national system in place is the visual (technologically mediated) transmission of group identification. However, the image of “homeland” can originate from elsewhere. Whether by fax or Internet transmission of photographs and videos, home and family can be wherever the diasporic alight. Global migration and technological empowerment shift the centre of power from the state and toward the individual. As a function of these two factors (global movement and technological enhancement), identity becomes more unsettled, since migrating peoples now include migrating imagery. They can then shift places and reconstruct themselves with their own images of national identity. Since the link between personal and physical space is untenable, instead of a connection between people and land there is an urban agglomeration under which the land has become hidden. The world then becomes a network of electronically linked metropolitan centers

that expand exponentially with no apparent geographic anchorage. The question then arises: to what community do people align themselves? Where do their loyalties lie in terms of citizenship and national belonging? The kaleidoscopic and uncertain terrain of recent times drives people to that with which they are closest and most familiar physically and emotionally. In this process, all things personal become politicized – gender roles, sexuality, ethnic and racial origins, and social class. In what Jean Bethke Elshtain calls a politics of displacement, public issues become entangled with the establishment of personal identity.<sup>43</sup> It is the seam created by the intermixing of private and public that provides the points of attachment required to recreate a sense of wholeness in national identity. National identification is thus derived from successfully envisioning an interlocking social fabric made up of family, neighborhood, and community connection, local, regional, and national interests - the personal and the political being blended with the public and the private. Rather than disparate shards, these two poles (person/political and public/private) can in fact be made to resonate. As will be seen in the ensuing chapters, *C:APH* takes advantage of this resonance with an oscillation between tales of the personal/political and the public/private.

The context of the production of *Canada: A People's History* is embedded in an awareness of the use value of history and, in particular, the value of re-living these stories. Thomas S. Axworthy argues, "What we remember, what we stress as significant, what we omit from our past, and what we don't know or understand about the stories of our fellow inhabitants, is critical to our ability to endure as a collectivity."<sup>44</sup> The significance in shared stories (histories more precisely) was pointed out in the research conducted for the Policy and Research: Multiculturalism and Citizenship Sector, in

January 1989. The final document recommended that “[t]he history of Canada as a multicultural society even before Confederation needs to be emphasized.”<sup>45</sup> Additionally, the Report of the Standing Committee on Communications and Culture (April 1992), stressed that “Canada was a multicultural and multilingual country long before the Europeans ever arrived, noting that aboriginal peoples were as diverse with respect to language, tradition and history as were the immigrants who settled in this country beside them”;<sup>46</sup> and that the “essence of *belonging* to Canada is to be able to share in its diversity...The key to Canadian unity is to be able to *identify with our diversity*” (italics in original).<sup>47</sup> In essence, these recommendations and statements are a call for a return to a history of Canada as always having been the nation that it is now. Charles Taylor strengthens the emphasis on diversity as a crucial element in Canadian identifications. He states: “*We have to recognize that we cannot all share the same historical identity; our growing nation-state is going to need to accept and work with a plurality of historical identities. We can no longer make our political boundaries coincide with the boundaries of these identities. But we can develop viable multinational societies in which the citizens’ common identity includes a set of basic principles that recognize that we all want to work with each other to preserve these historical identities with their differences intact*” (italics in original).<sup>48</sup> The differing perspectives on history (social history, regional history, and so forth, as well as differing points of view taken by different peoples) and the different channels of representation (the so-called “thousand-channel universe”) all – as will be seen at greater length throughout this thesis – feed into the form and content of *C:APH*.

In this way, as in so many others, *Canada: A People's History* is a reflection of its times as much as it is a reproduction of the past. The same could be said of technology. As already noted, the conception and construction of the transcontinental railway was, in mythological terms, the conception and construction of the Canadian nation itself. The CPR is well suited to such mythologization because (1) its construction in the face of political, economic, and geographic obstacles can be presented as an epic struggle; (2) the CPR was a state project and thus can be represented as the manifestation of a *Canadian* will to survive politically; and (3) the steam engine itself offers Canadians the opportunity to identify with a "nationalized icon of power."<sup>49</sup> As is demonstrated in the pages that follow, both the making of *Canada: A People's History* and the Canadian history it presents are conceptualized as epic struggles. *C:APH* thereby seems to envision itself as progeny of the CPR and as being responsible for accomplishing the same thing as the historic railway – (re)generating a legitimating myth of Canadian nationhood. The series was made in the face of political, economic, and geographic obstacles, and, as a (weakly) state-sponsored project, it also demonstrated a manifestation of the Canadian will to survive, this time in the face of budget cuts.

## **Section 2 – Developing the form of *C:APH***

As the context within which *C:APH* was conceived and produced can be characterized by the terms multiple and mobile. The two concepts repeatedly emerge when reviewing the impact of multiculturalism's multiple points of view on Canada and (Canadian) identity, the multiplication of choice Canadians have in their cultural consumption, a technologically empowered and mobile citizenry, and the internal fragmentation of Canada along regional, linguistic, and cultural lines. Additionally, there

is a concern for the defense of Canadian airspace against the ongoing influx of American culture, and the perceived dissolution of geographically defined boundaries because of global migrants who remain digitally linked to their homelands. In the face of all this, there is the apparently defensive need to resurrect an interest in and knowledge of Canadian history. *Canada: A People's History* was developed as a response to these issues and concerns, and what follows below introduces the conception, planning, and production of *C:APH* into the discussion. The elements that are taken into consideration are: the perspective of the series' producers (how did they visualize Canadian history?), the chronology of *C:APH* from conception to shooting, the journalistic perspective adopted by the series, the pragmatism behind a 'mass appeal' programme, the influences cited by the series' producers, the financial support of the series, the avoidance of on-screen historians, the use of actors, the choice of people from the past, the selection and construction of historical narratives, and the research activity behind the array of imagery.

The period of the making of *C:APH* and the forces at work upon its foundations mark the beginning of its development. As noted earlier in this chapter, *Canada: A People's History* has two publicly identified primary reasons for its making: a dearth of Canadian historical narrative, and the potential death of Canada. In an interview, Gendron has reflected on how Starowicz and he shared this point of view. Coming hard on the heels of the 1995 referendum on Québec independence, Gendron sensed a feeling that "the country nearly ceased, and no one knew its history."<sup>50</sup> With the realization of a project like *Canada: A People's History*, Gendron mused, "At least if that was to happen again, and lead to the dissolution of Canada, then at least there would be a history out

there so that people would know what they were talking about (and, perhaps, fighting for).”<sup>51</sup> By the spring of 1996, after the extremely close 1995 referendum and its nearly 50-50 vote, Starowicz had introduced the CBC to the idea of a television series on Canadian history. The series was initially proposed as a CBC/SRC and National Film Board production. For pragmatic, logistical, and organizational reasons, the co-operation between the English and French broadcast divisions of the CBC was a default condition. The combined resources (hardware and creative) as well as financing made the triad of the CBC, SRC, and NFB an appealing formation. The scheme ultimately failed, however, because of internal divisions, and conflicting desires for creative control, selection of directors, and storylines.<sup>52</sup> When it became apparent to Starowicz and others at the CBC in Toronto that the creative and administrative teams at the National Film Board in Montréal were going ahead and independently choosing directors and roughing out story lines, the still proposed CBC/SRC and NFB association was cancelled.<sup>53</sup> The cooperation of the SRC was still an element that was considered by Starowicz to be key to giving the series life. In a rather lyrical recollection of his initial discussion with Claude Saint-Laurent, Radio-Canada’s director of news and current affairs, Starowicz draws together his and Saint-Laurent’s enthusiasm for Ken Burns’s *The Civil War* (PBS, 1990) through their mutual recollection of Burns’s portrayal of General Robert E. Lee’s surrender at Appomattox Station on April 8, 1865. In that episode, past and present, North and South, and French and English all merge together in poetic fashion.<sup>54</sup> Rooted in this apparently deep and mutually held admiration for *The Civil War*, the CBC/SRC cooperation was founded.



*Canada: A People's History* was broadcast over two seasons: October 22, 2000 - January 28, 2001, and September 30, 2001 - November 18, 2001. The first season's nine episodes begin with North American pre-history and end with Confederation in 1867; the eight episodes of the second season continue from Confederation and conclude with the early 1990s. The second season was preceded by a re-broadcast of the first nine episodes. In addition, the documentary on the series itself, called *Making History*, was broadcast in October of 2000. The series was produced at a cost of \$25 million. Although there was a parallel French language edition, this dissertation focuses on the English version since visual history is the subject, and the same film footage was used in both English and French versions. The variation that we encounter between the two is caused by the ability (or lack) of actors to speak both languages, and the use of subtitling. For instance, in Episode Seven and its coverage of the struggle during the early part of the nineteenth-century to unite Upper and Lower Canada, the figure of Robert Baldwin, an opposition member in the Upper Canada House of Assembly, is played in the English version by Ted Atherton, and in the French version by Jean Petitclerc. From a production standpoint, each actor was shot against a green background and digitally inserted into the same recreated setting. Also, in the same episode, we see Louis-Joseph Papineau, leader of the Canadian Party in the Lower Canada House of Assembly, addressing a crowd of patriotes. The audio track allows us to hear him speaking French, but the English version of *C:APH* includes subtitles.

The series was conceived and produced by Mark Starowicz, head of CBC Television's documentary programming unit. He was also the series' executive producer. Gene Allen was the senior historian and director of research, and Hubert Gendron and

Gordon Henderson were senior producers for SRC and the CBC, respectively. Murray Green was senior editor for the CBC, Louis Martin was editorial director for the SRC production, and Mario Cardinal worked as editorial adviser. All were charged with assuring the journalistic accuracy of the series. Although the directors, writers, and producers varied from episode to episode, they were all journalists. Corporate support for the entire series was provided by Sun Life Financial. Bell Canada Enterprises joined as sponsor for the second season.

*Canada: A People's History* constructs a particular history of Canada by concentrating solely on personal recollections. Episodes are either one or two hours in length. Each opens with a prologue of the events to be presented, and the ensuing stories are divided into titled segments. They are composed of material drawn from diaries, journals, and letters. Actors and voiceovers convey the experiences recorded in these materials. Maggie Huculak supplies the voiceover for the English series, and Marie Tifo narrates the SRC production. Michael Sweeney, csc, director of photography, coordinated a team of six cinematographers. Filming was done entirely in Canada. Records were drawn from museums, archives, art galleries, and museums in Canada and worldwide. Events are illustrated either by reenactments or by still imagery such as maps, paintings, sketches, and photographs. Actors either directly address the camera in a head and shoulder framing, or speak off camera as the lens pans over related documentation. The major source of documentation was the National Archives of Canada. Monica MacDonald, CBC project researcher and archives coordinator, began work there in 1998. Ron Krant (Toronto) and H  l  ne Bourgault (Montr  al) were the

visual research co-ordinators for the series. Historians worked as consultants.<sup>55</sup> Claude Desjardins and Eric Robertson scored the original music for the series' soundtrack.

*Canada: A People's History* also exists as an ongoing website, in VHS and DVD formats, as a two-volume, illustrated companion book, and as an educational package. The website totals more than three hundred and fifty pages, and provides episode summaries, full production credits, biographical information on historical figures in the series, as well as photographs and video clips from the episodes.<sup>56</sup> The French and English educational videocassettes and detailed teacher resource guides are directed towards elementary and high school levels, and there is also an eight-volume book conceived for children between the ages of 12 and 14 years of age.<sup>57</sup> The aforementioned two-volume text, in hardcover and softcover editions, contains an illustrated narrative adapted from the televised series. VHS and DVD boxed sets include supplementary material such as the series' theme music, website links, a documentary on the making of the series itself, Canadian history quizzes, and short documentaries that present material not included in the television broadcast.<sup>58</sup>

Mark Starowicz, Gene Allen, and Hubert Gendron sat at the top of the organizational chart and gave *C:APH* its earliest outlines. Metaphors of nature color Starowicz's impression of Canada's historical and social definition. As is explored at greater length in Chapter Two, for Starowicz, the "river that runs through Canadian history is a current of refuge and hope."<sup>59</sup> Canadians, as far as he is concerned, "are all refugees" who came to Canada "as the debris of war and famine...because of the tolerance of diversity."<sup>60</sup> The newly arrived, in his view, become cold-forged Canadians because the "common denominator you can't escape from is the profound effect of

climate. It is striking how we are shaped by the winter...it is ingrained in the Canadian experience to collaborate as communities...The climate naturally shaped us into tightly knit communities which are operated by the town-hall meeting culture.”<sup>61</sup> The rhythm of nature seems to permeate the perspectives of Starowicz, Allen, and Gendron, with Hubert Gendron, who – in the latter’s words see Canada as growing with “successive waves of people...[who then] contend with a second wave...[that] changes the people who are there.”<sup>62</sup> For Gendron, “Each wave is absorbed and yet transforms the shore.”<sup>63</sup> Allen looks back across Canada’s historical landscape and sees Canada as “a country which has a variety of kind of more or less permanent fault lines and that...you can look at the country’s history as a process of those fault lines becoming more or less acute and intersecting in different ways.”<sup>64</sup> The series is replete with evidence for the interpretive metaphors of Canadian community as something formed in tune with nature’s seasonal rhythms, Canadian history as an image of geologic stresses, and human diasporas as something driven by the measure of time and tide (see especially Chapter Two).

Throughout the series, the chapter titles present a visual motif that is produced by combining a landscape (signified by a horizontal landscape format) with the subject that marks it (indicated by the vertical portrait format). For example, all of the chapter titles in the first hour of Episode One present a horizontal image of a barely legible flat landscape that is paired with a high-contrast image of petroglyphs (Figure 1). During the second hour, all chapter titles include a horizontal landscape image that is paired with a high-contrast image of a western-style map in the portrait format (Figure 2). The significance of this shift lies in the fact that the first hour presents the pre-contact world of North America, and the second hour portrays the European exploration of, and claim

to, North America. Thus, what originally inscribed the land (and gave it a visual meaning for its inhabitants or 'readers') was the living presence of First Nations. With the influx of Europeans, the visual logic of the land becomes a map of possession. Other examples abound. Figure 3 shows the title of the chapter in Episode Seventeen covering the events that surrounded the Free Trade Agreement (1988). The landscape is a photograph of an Inglis Manufacturing plant (the 'working' landscape to be marked by the trade agreement), and the subject portrait is an image of Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and U.S. President Ronald Reagan standing side by side (as those who marked the landscape by signing the Free Trade document). The chapter that deals with the settlement of the West in Episode Ten has a steam engine paired with a photograph of a settler couple and child in front of a mud-brick prairie house (Figure 4). In this case, the train is a scribe of the landscape – that has left its mark on the land by carrying settlers whose images continue to mark off an historical panorama.

Going hand-in-hand with the ideas of debris knitted into tight communion, wave-worn shores, and fractured human geography, is the belief in negotiation that is shared by the producers. Moving through Canada's history along "[t]he right path," according to Allen, means "understanding what the differences are."<sup>65</sup> Or, as Starowicz states: "What unites us...is that we have consented to a process of negotiating with each other, and the other constituent elements of the Canadian body politic, a system of common values for today."<sup>66</sup> Gendron completes the three-part harmony by adding that we have "create[d] a country that has very sophisticated mechanisms of adaptation...that is used to compromise accommodation [and] not one grouping having its way."<sup>67</sup> Starowicz, Allen, and Gendron all refer to the necessity of negotiation, the struggle for survival, and

a process of transformation that can be read as signs of the social, political, and cultural events that both background and surround the series (to remind the reader of a few: the Meech Lake Accord, the Free Trade Agreement, conflicts with First Nations, and Québec separatism). The processes of the series' own production also reveal the values of cooperation and the transformative effect of bringing the past back to life. The reassertion of a national geographic site emerges in the persistent references to the land and its effect upon a people. In this sense, the lives of people become entangled with the rhythms of the natural world. On one level, it can be seen in Starowicz's awe of winter and Gendron's belief that it is "so bloody hard to survive here," as well as Gendron's elegiac vision of immigrants as waves transforming the national landscape. The very struggle of Canadians to establish a better life has as much of an impact on them, as it would appear to have on the landscape they settle in. On another level, the insistence on a national geography appears in a presentation that is replete with images of the land and repeatedly aligns the natural world with human actions (for example, migrants and flocks of wintering birds). Once arrived, in other words, we seem to move about like a species that is indigenous to the territory. At the same time, the alignment of human and animal migrations across the land underscores the immensity of the space that frames Canadian life. The integration of a people with the land, and into a sense of commonality involves three additional aspects. First, the multiple social and cultural points of view and a technologically savvy audience are both taken into consideration by the incorporation of a wide range of stories (First Nations, French, English, women, blacks, Asian, European, and so forth). Second, these stories are visualized with a recognizable photojournalistic style (as such, it resembles that within which the audience is immersed

on a daily basis). And finally, third, the main entrance into *C:APH* is the populist ground-level perspective of a people – everyone's point of view is accepted into the frame of the national narrative.

The logistics of the increasingly complicated production venture made it imperative to have a production head solely responsible for all activities at the SRC. Both Starowicz and Saint-Laurent felt that Hubert Gendron was the best choice. Gendron initially refused the opportunity, arguing, "It's hard to work on the family album when the house is burning."<sup>68</sup> After persistent requests he came on board and the French production unit was put together by the winter of 1997. The final organizational chart had Starowicz overseeing the entire production, Allen handling the historical content, Gordon Henderson, senior producer in Toronto, directly supervising the directors of episodes, and Michael Sweeney acting as director of photography for the series.<sup>69</sup> The initial title, *A People's History of Canada*, was felt to have an undesirable Marxist connotation.<sup>70</sup> The series was originally conceived as being divided into themes and periods, which were assigned to different production teams.<sup>71</sup> The style of the series would be documentary in nature and would change with the period being presented. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, for example, "would use conservative reenactments," the nineteenth century, "being a century of photography, [would be done in] mostly in *Civil War* style," and twentieth-century episodes would be done like the CBC documentary series *Tenth Decade* and *The Champions*.<sup>72</sup> *The Tenth Decade*, an eight-part CBC mini-series, was broadcast from October 27 to December 22, 1971. The executive producer of *The Tenth Decade* was Cameron Graham, and the director was Munroe Scott. The series covered the political decade in Canada leading up to the end of

1967. The narrative was constructed around the confrontations during that period between the leader of the Liberal Party, Lester Pearson, and the leader of the Conservative Party, John Diefenbaker.<sup>73</sup> *The Champions*, a National Film Board/Canadian Broadcasting Corporation co-production, was a three-part documentary produced, written, directed, and narrated by Canadian filmmaker Donald Brittain. Part One, “Unlikely Warriors,” and Part Two “Trappings of Power,” were completed in 1978; the last installment, “The Final Battle,” was finished in 1986. The subject of series was the political lives and interactions of Pierre Elliot Trudeau and René Lévesque.<sup>74</sup> Typically, large-scale documentary series have a production time in the range of four to five years, and normally have a year of pre-production and planning, but the CBC wanted a millennium project, and so *Canada: A People’s History* “had to be on air in 2000.”<sup>75</sup> With three borrowed Sony 700 digital wide-screen cameras valued at \$100,000 each, *C:APH* began to take shape off the coast of Newfoundland in the late spring of 1997 with the filming of a replica of John Cabot’s fifteenth-century ship the *Mathew* during the “Cabot 500” anniversary celebrations.

The content of the series is underwritten by its producers’ credo of journalistic integrity. The words that are spoken onscreen were to be those that bygone figures wrote. The events depicted were to be the events that actually happened. While the producers intended to remove any judgment on history by adopting a journalistic stance, the “journalistic approach assumes implicitly that there is meaning in the world, and that it can be discovered.”<sup>76</sup> The journalistic perspective would make Canadian history look like it might appear on the evening news – as actually happening – or, as Starowicz opines, “What seems realistic is determined by what we see on television. Our images of



history are shaped by the images we have of history in the making. The codes are embedded in our minds by real wars, real refugee camps, real battle footage.”<sup>77</sup> So, as Michael Sweeney, director of photography for *C:APH*, explains, “We wanted a documentary feel to the whole thing...When you make a documentary...you’re pointed at the confusion, and events unfold in front of you and you have to try to capture what you can, to make sense of it. But in this series, of course, nothing happened unless we made it happen.”<sup>78</sup> And, for example, in order to make it happen as if it was occurring in real time, the producers viewed hours of news footage taken in the former Yugoslavia. From this footage they extracted the kinds of camera angles and restricted vantage points that occurred during the escape of the ethnic minorities displaced by the conflict in that region. The practice laid down the style for the presentation in *C:APH* of the expulsion of the Acadians<sup>79</sup> in Episode Three.

The adherence to journalistic integrity is, on one level, a means of generating and sustaining historical accuracy. At the same time, however, the journalistic approach integrates, as Starowicz was aware, visual “codes” that determine what “seems realistic.” In any case the resources available to *Canada: A People’s History* were not limited to “what we see on television,” but ranged into the world within which the audience of the series exists. One example of this is Gendron’s use of the June 1985 issue of *National Geographic* that showed a close portrait of an Afghan girl (Figure 5). He turned to the magazine issue as an illustration of the kind of framing and impact desired for portrait-style close-ups to be used in *C:APH*. Starowicz quotes him as saying: “Can anyone ignore this face? Try to achieve this.”<sup>80</sup> Not only Gendron, but also Starowicz and Allen were aware of contemporary viewers’ visual literacy. According to Allen, “viewers

know a lot more about the implicit grammar of different styles than they might be able to express...[they] recognize what looks like a feature film or documentary.<sup>81</sup> Starowicz concurred. As far as he was concerned, “The grammar of this age is at least fifty percent visual. Movies are the principal distribution of fiction...[i]t is the way people take in information now.”<sup>82</sup> Starowicz was well aware that “*Canada: A People’s History* would be broadcast to people who had experienced *Star Wars* and *Titanic*, and had therefore developed a visual grammar [that] is very sophisticated.”<sup>83</sup> *C:APH* had to take Canadian history and “recast it into the grammar of the television and Internet age.”<sup>84</sup>

In sense, this meant generating a production that looks like contemporary audiovisual extravaganzas to which we are accustomed and not what Starowicz identifies as a more typical Canadian result of “three etchings and a piano track...[instead of an American story, which is] wide-screen with orchestral sound.”<sup>85</sup> At the same time, the filmmakers of *C:APH* not only looked to contemporary television coverage of both national and global events, they wanted to transcribe that ‘look’ into *C:APH*, as in the depiction (noted above) of the expulsion of the Acadians in 1755. *C:APH* presents many images – often portraits and head shots – that are brought together to form a coherent presentation. What we are also presented with is the mixture of still imagery and video scenes. An Internet vernacular comprises a great many separate images, a large number of which are headshots of celebrities and people in the news, and videoclips. This image environment is dynamic and subject to fairly rapid change from image to image, as well as comprising various sources. Thus, if the visual style of *C:APH* was to be recognizable to its contemporary audience, it would need to take into consideration the multiple image and video segment composition of that audience’s

world. And so it did. The final product incorporated formal portraiture of individuals, families, and associations (both as paintings and as photographs), home movies, family photographs, snapshot imagery, corporate images and film (for instance, the material produced for the Canadian Pacific Railway during its initial construction), news coverage of sports, the arts, war, and current events, as well as advertising from newspapers, magazines, flyers, and television, and clips from old television programming (for example, “Don Messer’s Jubilee” from 1960, and “La Famille Plouffe” from the 1950s).

The recognizable “TV/Internet” grammar had a very pragmatic objective – to insure the series’ success and to justify its financial costs. As Allen states, “The series was conceived first of all to reach a large, non-specialized audience of Canadian television viewers.”<sup>86</sup> With \$25 million of public money spent, if a large number of Canadian viewers were not interested in watching, Allen felt, “What was the point?”<sup>87</sup> Also, audience divisions of interest had to be taken into consideration. How long would French viewers sit for a presentation of the history of the Loyalists and how long would an English audience sit for a history of the New France, asked Gendron.<sup>88</sup> Over and above the justification of spending such an amount of public money, and attracting a dual-language audience, the series was, as Starowicz remembers, “critical for the [CBC] board as a model of the English and French networks working together. In the middle of crippling cuts and clear hostility from the government, this high-profile experiment in cross-cultural production was essential.”<sup>89</sup>

The series was not, however, entirely experimental, since the makers of *Canada: A People’s History* credit four primary influences. These were: Peter Watkins’s 1964

documentary film *Culloden* on the 1746 Scottish Highlanders defeat by the Duke of Cumberland at Culloden moor, produced for the British Broadcasting Corporation; the six-hour series on the American Revolution entitled *Liberty! The American Revolution*, produced for the Public Broadcasting Service in 1997; Ken Burns's 1990 eleven-hour documentary entitled *The Civil War*; and Steven Spielberg's 1998 feature film depicting events from the Second World War in Europe, *Saving Private Ryan*. Each of these influences on *Canada: A People's History* provides very specific approaches and techniques for the series' telling of Canadian history. Interestingly, the producers of *C:APH* have not mentioned the three-part miniseries involving the Canadian military in WWII called *The Valour and the Horror* (1992), despite that programme's use of reenactments and archival materials as well as onscreen commentary (albeit not historians, but actual participants in the events depicted). Important differences between the two programmes are the investigative approach that is adopted in *The Valour and the Horror* and its tendency towards confrontation. As noted in the Introduction to my dissertation, the producers of the miniseries, Terence and Brian McKenna, set about to correct crucial historical misrepresentations regarding incompetence on the part of Canadian commanding officers, and acts of war crimes by Canadians against German soldiers. In addition to a rather revisionist approach, the McKenna's writing for *The Valour and the Horror* has been criticized for its historical inaccuracies.<sup>90</sup> Both the re-writing of history (or, its correction) and factual inaccuracies are in direct counterpoint to the intent of *Canada: A People's History*, which is based on the fidelity of journalistic reportage and a history as recorded by those who lived it.

Starowicz saw Watkin's *Culloden* in 1964 and he has remarked on the impact of the chaotic soundtrack and shoulder-mounted camera perspective of the (documentary) vérité used in *Culloden*. The treatment is closely followed, for example, in Episode Four of *C:APH*, in the presentation of the battle between the French and English on the Plains of Abraham, which took place in 1759. Also remarkable, in Starowicz's mind, was Watkin's filming of the 1746 battle as if the documentary cameras had actually been at the scene. The voiceover, done by Watkins himself, is, in Starowicz's recollection, "cold, detached narration...which leans on precise detail."<sup>91</sup> It is important to note in particular how the combatants in *Culloden* are filmed just prior to the fighting. As the face of each warrior is shot in tight close-up, Watkins's voice speaks the man's name and recent social history. The same handling is afforded to individuals on both sides. For Starowicz, the technique "humanizes the battle."<sup>92</sup> The humanization of conflict is also an integral element of *Canada: A People's History*. An approach similar to that employed by Watkins is used in *C:APH* (the framing of a face or faces, accompanied by voiceover-supplied biographic information). Indeed, it is used in near carbon-copy form in the Starowicz-directed presentation of the 1759 battle on the Plains of Abraham. *Culloden* uses the shoulder-mounted documentary camera perspective that the makers of *C:APH* would also employ to give their series a dramatic, live-action feel. The CBC filmmakers also expressed their enthusiasm for the visual style seen in Spielberg's *Saving Private Ryan*. Both Michael Sweeny, director of photography for *Canada: A People's History*, and Starowicz, were marked by their viewing of Spielberg's movie; in particular the sequence of servicemen landing on the beaches of Normandy. A camera operator struggling to make sense of total chaos recreates the experience of the landing

sequence. For Starowicz, these are “fragmentary moments”<sup>93</sup> that led Sweeny to conclude that they must recreate a documentary style wherein only “parts work...but only a few seconds here and there.”<sup>94</sup> In *Canada: A People’s History*, high-action events are composed of snippets showing feet, hands, lines of marching legs, and the like. For instance, in Episode Four and the depiction of the Battle of the Plains of Abraham (1759), we are treated to quick glances at wounds, hands fumbling with weapons, anguished or determined facial expressions, and blurred snatches of hands, feet, and torsos. The effect is nearly the same in Episode Five and the Battle of Lundy’s Lane (1812), except the same sense of chaos is witnessed during an evening battle. As a result, we also see quick flashes of musketry and cannon, as well as glimmers of bayonets.

The PBS series *Liberty! The American Revolution* (1997) provided *C:APH* with a work that showed the interweaving of reenacted events, actors directly addressing the audience, archival visual material, and the sporadic presence of contemporary historians commenting on the events being represented. In many respects, *Liberty! The American Revolution* can be considered a template for *C:APH*, minus the historians. The other basic components are the same (reenacted events, along with period imagery and material culture).

Ken Burn’s *The Civil War* is, however, the influence on *Canada: A People’s History* that is most frequently cited by Starowicz, Allen, Gendron, and others. Senior producers met with Ric, the brother of Ken Burns, who co-produced and co-wrote *The Civil War*. While he was less than enthusiastic about the plan to use actors speaking to the camera, he encouraged the idea of “slap and tickle,” the narrative alternation of tragedy and humor. The objective of such a rhythm was to sustain viewer interest. It is

difficult, if at all possible, to locate instances where we see tragedy alternating with humor in *C:APH*. A more accurate observation would be that we move from tragedy to hope. For example, when we are introduced to the *filles du roi* in the second episode, we see destitute girls with no family moved to New France and into a growing community. Another instance can be found at the beginning of the fourth episode, we are introduced to a girl who is struggling to survive in New France during the turmoil of the Seven Years War. Before leaving her story, we will know that she escaped to Louisiana with a man who would become her husband. Ric Burns also encouraged the producers of *C:APH* to “give each episode a predominant focus, a theme.”<sup>95</sup> But the aspect of *The Civil War* with which the CBC senior producers were most enamored was the heavy use of archival photographs. In interviews conducted with both Allen and Gendron in preparation for this thesis, their fascination was almost palpable and verged on envy.

Ideas draw from existing mini-series on the presentation of history and the input of the makers of these programmes was one important source for *Canada: A People's History*. Another critical supply line carried money. In order to secure financing for the series' production, the Canadian business community was canvassed. Among the candidates were Canada Post, Via Rail, Canadian Pacific, the Bank of Nova Scotia, the Historica Foundation, and the Bronfman Foundation. The proposal was that in exchange for two million dollars, sponsors would get three spots during each one-hour episode so that their total commercial presence would amount to six and one-half minutes.<sup>96</sup> With five sponsorship openings available, when the series went to air only one had been sold. This was to Sun Life Financial. A second spot would later be sold – to Bell Canada Enterprises, for the second season.<sup>97</sup> Starowicz reports that within three weeks of the

sponsorship agreement, Sun Life Financial had generated advertisements for inclusion in the series, as well as related promotional material, and was distributing “flyers and schedules for the series at all their locations.”<sup>98</sup> It is worth noting that Sun Life also entrusted \$100,000 to Carleton University in Ottawa to sponsor a public lecture series on Canadian history for five years starting with Starowicz’s inaugural lecture in November 2001.<sup>99</sup> While Starowicz has stated that the business community shied away from the series because it was not an attractive vehicle for the promotion of their products,<sup>100</sup> the risks inherent in a history program that was potentially divisive along linguistic and political lines also had an impact. Two areas in particular warrant scrutiny: the defeat of the French by the British in 1759 that led to the loss of New France, and the demolition of First Nations’ culture that began the arrival of Europeans during the early part of the eighteenth century and continued with Canadian territorial expansion. In presenting Canadian history, *C:APH* would revisit these events and in the process risk re-opening old wounds. More airtime devoted to promotion meant less time for history on the screen. Thus, directors of episodes had to prepare for a minimum of ninety-six minutes of history or a maximum of one-hundred-and-twenty minutes.<sup>101</sup>

Regardless of the amount of time available for the history to be presented, the question of using historians and/or actors portraying figures onscreen - as was the case with *The Civil War*, for example - had to be resolved. From a straightforward point of view, the issue of onscreen advisors or historians involves pragmatic concerns and issues over content. With a bilingual series, which historians were available who could participate in both languages? And what perspective on the past would different historians bring to the series? Given that not all historians have the same view on the



past, multiple historians would compound the series' perspective on the past, which would foreground the act of composing the past into a history and undercut the illusion of reality sought for by *Canada: A People's History*. Adding historians to *C:APH* would also have consumed running time that could otherwise be devoted to showing Canadian history.<sup>102</sup> The presence of historians would also have disrupted the illusion the series' producers worked to create. As Starowicz has stated, "[W]e wanted to stay 'in the period'. We wanted to write it as if all the incertitude of the moment were still alive, with the audience having no idea how things would turn out."<sup>103</sup> Besides "breaking out the past," the producers did not want to have anything or anyone inserted between the depiction of "history as it actually happened" and the viewers' experience of that presentation. There was no interest on the part of the CBC filmmakers in having "a floating Supreme Court of historians passing judgments on events."<sup>104</sup>

The same risk of disrupting the sense of continuity in the CBC series' historical recreations is presented by the incorporation of newsreels into its depiction of the battle that took place in 1917 at Vimy Ridge. Newsreels allow for the unwitting inclusion of their tendency to feature staged events. In *C:APH*, just prior to the use of newsreel footage showing battlefield action from the Great War, viewers hear that they are not going to see actual footage of the war, but rather a training film: in short, a staged reenactment – just like the entire series. Gendron explains the caveat by stating, "Those...images...[are in] our historical consciousness...so what we did was...say that the images used to present the battle are not truly of the battle but this is how its been transmitted historically."<sup>105</sup> While the newsreels may contain reenactments, they are still period creations. Juxtaposing them with contemporary recreations would, as Gendron

states, result in “confusion.”<sup>106</sup> In effect, it would lose the viewer’s belief in the series’ own historical recreation.

A frequent criticism directed at the series is that it does not stop and invite people to interrogate the version of history that they are seeing. In reaction to this, Gene Allen flatly states: “It’s a TV show. We’re directing this at people who watch television!”<sup>107</sup> What the series would appear to be directed at is stimulating reception – to being accepted and watched rather than being something that does not elicit any interest and, possibly, being turned off. Thus, although it is obvious that the individual speaking directly to the camera is, for example, not Samuel de Champlain but an actor playing a role, viewers are allowed to engage the notion that it is Champlain. In other words, the series presents the performance of the past: a performance that comes to life through a personal interpretation.

Nonetheless, and in spite of journalistic integrity, actors portraying historical figures who addressed the camera directly, were all filmed according to a series-wide template. They all received the same framing and lighting (soft light from either the left or right) against a blue or green background screen. The screen allowed the later addition of a background selected to match the point of the characters’ eventual insertion. If the background lighting differed from how the person was lit, then the actor’s image could be adjusted to match the background. Beyond technical considerations, the age of the person onscreen versus their age when they made the journal or diary entry must be taken into consideration. Hannah Ingraham, for example, was in her 70s when she wrote the memoirs that detailed her experiences as an eleven-year-old child fleeing the American Revolution with the Loyalists in 1784<sup>108</sup> (Episode Five). However, instead of

an elderly woman, viewers see the silent visage of a girl during the Loyalist expulsion. The same approach was taken during later episodes that covered events much closer to the present day. As Starowicz relates, “An eighty-year-old man on camera, recalling the time he was nineteen in Normandy, would break the sense of being in the period, and it would also bias the content to the memories of the living.”<sup>109</sup> So, later and more contemporary episodes meant that although “living witnesses could be interviewed on camera... we would [then] have been into current affairs documentary.”<sup>110</sup> The last reenactment of someone occurs in the opening of the ninth episode, *From Sea to Sea (1867 to 1873)*, as actress Torri Higgenson plays Agnes Macdonald. Instead key people were interviewed and actors spoke selected statements in voiceover. The close encounters of the past and present, the living and the dead, raise the question of whether the series is journalism that looks like history, or history that looks like journalism.

The story that we see being told in the faces both young and old in *Canada: A People's History* is, according to Gendron, based on “every moment for...[the newly arrived in Canada] it is a new opportunity.”<sup>111</sup> Gendron is also convinced that Canadians have been shaped by “[a] country that is extremely harsh and yet that represents an opportunity, a fresh start”<sup>112</sup> Starowicz sees the same struggle taking place. In his words, “At the core of the Canadian character is the collective experience or ancestral memory of refuge and redemption.”<sup>113</sup> He describes the narrative arc of migrants being redeemed as one that “begins with the adversity that is the root of their upheaval...continues with the passage...[and] closes with the redemption and ‘planting of the new root.’”<sup>114</sup> In this way, Starowicz understands Canada as “sanctuary.”<sup>115</sup>

The characters chosen by the producers of *C:APH* to struggle, survive, and find sanctuary in Canada travel four narrative threads: the story of the aboriginals and their encounters with Europeans; the history of the French and English dynamic; the story of women in Canada; and an account shaped by immigrants and class. Emerging from these four main storylines, carried through the entirety of the series, are the appearance and growth of regional, ethnic, and gender divisions, and the changing relationship between Canada and the United States. During much of the first broadcast season, the four streams of history identified by Starowicz, Allen, and Gendron, which are listed above, are skewed towards men, the military, religion, priests, nuns and Jesuits because these figures are the sources of the primary and often the only remaining textual documentation. Within that restriction, two criteria determined who and what history would make its way into *C:APH*. The first determinant was whether or not the individuals were, to use Allen's words, "in touch with events...[and] are there visual materials that can be used to illustrate them and their involvement?"<sup>116</sup> Not only must the selected individuals meet these standards, they must also be capable of triggering empathy (the importance of which in the series is explored at greater length in Chapter Two. For Starowicz, empathy "was the key...[to] elicit[ing] empathy for the reasoning and emotions of ordinary men and women on opposite sides."<sup>117</sup> Being ordinary was an important feature of the empathetic and believable historical character because, as far as Gendron is concerned, "That's the essence of the series... the big events of history perceived as you and I see it everyday."<sup>118</sup> The need to provide visual evidence in support of these empathetic characters' textual records fell primarily to researchers working at the National Archives of Canada.



would see. Once a final version had been accepted, the visual product “fits its time slot perfectly [and it is]...then “picture-locked.”<sup>119</sup> The time slot refers to the amount of time allotted to present a particular story during an episode. The picture-lock version is the blueprint that guides the final selection of still and moving visual material from archival sources. All episodes open with an image or scene that can be viewed as a metaphor for what is about to be shown in that episode (as an illustration, the first episode presents waves crashing on a shoreline – two entirely different worlds of land and sea – and the episode deals with the European discovery of North America and the initial encounter between the two starkly opposed Native and non-Native cultural points of view).<sup>120</sup>

Once the series went into production, its planned form and content would not be altered as a result of external critiques or feedback.<sup>121</sup> Since its original broadcast in 2000-2001, the series has been rebroadcast in Chinese, Italian, Greek, Russian, Hindi, Portuguese, and Polish on the Canadian specialty channels OMNI 1 and OMNI 2. The linguistic adaptability evinced by these rebroadcasts reinforces the fact that the primary power of *C:APH* is its broadly affective visual language. The producers argue an allegiance to their journalistic approach, and yet at the same time, they are determined to avoid onscreen historians, or, in Starowicz’s words, the Canadian audiovisual spectacular that hinges on “three etchings and a piano track.”<sup>122</sup> In addition, the makers of *C:APH* underline the need to strike an empathetic response in the audience. The presentation of Canadian history must be dramatic not only in order to appeal to a large audience, but also to generate that kind of interest (and, as noted above, to justify the financial expenditure of its creation). An already cited instance of this is the reference by Gendron to the Afghani girl on the *National Geographic* cover. What seemed to matter

the most here was not the nationality of the girl, nor her circumstances, but rather the fact that her face and eyes were so hypnotizing. While the textual framework of *Canada: A People's History* guides us through Canadian history, what keeps us glued to the screen and what makes its presentation stick in our memories are the images that decorate and so enhance the structure of historical text.

### **Section 3 – Content**

The first step is to lay out the broad outlines and content of the subject of examination. Consequently, what follows presents a brief overview of the content of *Canada: A People's History*, and deductions about *C:APH*'s intentions based on an analysis of its introduction.

The first season opens by introducing viewers to the scope of *C:APH* and a behind-the-scenes look at the series, and the first episode then introduces the Beothuk and the story of Shawnadithit, which took place during the 1820s. The narrative of the first episode then backtracks to 15,000 B.C and presents theories on the migration of people into North America, after which the episode presents Native origin myths, social practices, and religious beliefs. The first episode then tells the stories of explorations and Native encounters made in what is to become Canada by Jacques Cartier (1491-1557), Henry Hudson (ca. 1565-1611), and John R. Jewitt (1783-1821). Exploration and discovery continue as themes in the second episode (1540 to 1670), which includes the stories of John Cabot (ca. 1450 - ca. 1498), Samuel de Champlain (ca. 1580 – 1635), the Jesuits in New France, and the efforts made by Louis XIV (1638-1715) to establish a successful colony in the New World. The main storyline of the third episode (1670 - 1755) relates the expansion of the French colony, its conflict with the British colony to

the south, and the expulsion of the French Catholic Acadians (1755 to 1763). The fourth episode (1670 - 1755) is concerned entirely with the struggle between the French and the British for dominance in the New World. The centerpiece of the fourth episode is the Battle of the Plains of Abraham in 1759. The fifth episode (1775 - 1815) is focused primarily on the American Revolution (1775 to 1783) and its impact on an emerging Canada, the migration of Loyalists from the American colony, and the few military encounters that took place between the Americans and the Canadians. The heart of the sixth episode (1670 - 1850) is exploration into the northern and western regions made by Pierre Esprit de Radisson (1636-1710), Samuel Hearne (1745-1792), Alexander Mackenzie (1764-1820), and mapmaker David Thompson (1770-1857). The seventh episode (1815 - 1850) is concerned with Joseph Howe (1804-1873) in the Atlantic region, Louis-Joseph Papineau (1786-1871) in Lower Canada, and William Lyon Mackenzie (1795-1861) in Upper Canada. The eighth (1850 - 1867) and the ninth (1867 - 1873) episodes brought the first broadcast season to a close with an account structured around the stories of Confederation and the building of the Canadian transcontinental railroad.

The second broadcast season, like the first, opens with a synopsis of *C:APH* itself. The first two presentations, Episode Ten (1873 - 1896) and Episode Eleven (1896 - 1915), then build on the first broadcast season by continuing to tell the story of Canada's westward expansion. The tenth installment is built around the story of Louis Riel (1844-1885), and the narrative armature of the eleventh presentation is made up of stories of European immigration into western Canada. The focal point of the twelfth segment (1915 - 1929) is World War I and its immediate aftermath. The thirteenth (1929



- 1940), describes the situation in Canada during the Great Depression, and also includes a story about the efforts of Cairine Wilson (1885-1962), appointed in 1930 as the first woman senator in Canada, on behalf of Jewish immigrants to Canada from an increasingly dangerous Nazi influence in Europe, which prefaces Canada's involvement in World War II. Episode Fourteen (1940 - 1946) presents conditions in Canada during World War II, and the country's role in that conflict. The storyline of the fifteenth installment (1946 - 1964) revolves around the social, cultural, and political upheaval that the post-war baby boom created in Canada. The sixteenth (1964 - 1976) extends the theme of social turmoil with its coverage of Québec's "Quiet Revolution" and struggle for independence, including the FLQ crisis. The seventeenth (1976 - 1990) brings the second season, and the series, to a close by developing the theme of social, cultural, and political tumult with stories on the first Québec referendum (1980), the Meech Lake Accord (1987), multiculturalism, the Free Trade Agreement (1988), and what the series calls "the explosion of computer technology," and the dramatic changes that take place on the global stage (for instance, the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and protests in Tiananmen Square in that same year). The final sequence of *C:APH* presents a behind-the-scenes look at the series' own production processes. The last image of *Canada: A People's History* is an archival photograph that has been given a red tint and that shows an unidentified girl staring directly back at viewers (Figure 6).

As mentioned earlier, the presentation of historical documentation in *C:APH* is made up of materials in three broad categories: archival material (including works of art), reenactments, and actors speaking directly to the camera. The second chapter of this thesis presents a detailed examination of their powers to communicate the past both as

individual media and in interaction with each other. The first of the three categories, archival material, is used throughout the series and appears to be used at face value, with the apparent assumption that it is capable of self-evident representation. Rarely is either image or original context identified – whatever identification or context it may have appears to be derived from its employment in *C:APH*. What this often results in is the generalization of the specific. In other words, the many portraits European immigrants had made for themselves are gathered into a story line up that seems to render them as a class or type – “Immigrant, Canada West” (Figure 7).

What *C:APH* seems to be most interested in are the visual images of people, places, and things that give its textual construction an appealing appearance. *C:APH* also relies upon photographic production for much more pragmatic reasons. As Allen declares, up to around the year 1870 the photographic record “was not thick enough on the ground to support...many three-second shots.”<sup>133</sup> The difference between having or not having a large number of photographs to choose from, lies in the recuperation of the past “as it actually happened.” The CBC producers’ apprehension over filmic charades (with little to no concern evinced for painting, sketching, or engraving – images “of the hand”) betrays a dependence on and a belief in photographic [documentary] verisimilitude.

While archival visual material appears to function as an inert carrier of a past reality, the two other categories (reenactments and the direct address of actors) must be seen as conscious reconstructions of events or people. Here, fidelity to the past seems to rely entirely on the accuracy of wardrobe, makeup, and set design, as well as on the emphasis made clear by the series’ voiceover that “these words were actually spoken or

written in the past.” In many cases, the camera slowly pans the document in question at the same time as its textual content is heard in voiceover, a combination that makes it seem as though we are describing what we see.

Looking at the opening sequence of *C:APH* in some detail allows the detection of an underlying message or set of assumptions held by the production, and thereby permits an assessment of what preconceptions might be put in the minds of the audience. As the steam train that gradually approaches the camera position at the beginning of every episode is a symbol of *C:APH* as a form of nation-binding technology, and it is a sign that opens and closes every episode opening (Figure 8). (This is a trope that I explore in greater length in Chapter Four). But the train is also a metaphor for the series as a whole because, rather than steel rails, what carries us into an historical landscape is the series’ assemblage of images and scenes. Instead of a group of passengers traveling together by train, we have an audience who are collectively experiencing a vision of Canadian history. As the approaching train finally rushes past the camera position, a cloud of onrushing steam obscures the view. In a sense, we seem to have passed through a space that separates our world from the recreated historical world of *Canada: A People’s History*. We are situated in the world of *C:APH* by the prologue to the episode that is about to be explored. After the prologue we are shown the main title sequence with which we see the moving image of another approaching train (Figure 9). By repeating the experience of seeing an approaching steam train, the CBC series parallels recreation with archival image (since a steam engine appears in both contemporary video and archival film footage), and reiterates communication technology as the carrier of different people into the present as a collective.

The two behind-the-scenes presentations that are the prologues to the first and tenth episodes stress the active production of history, which is underscored by a rhythmic visual progression of present production and past recollection. We see this in an alternation between clips of the series' on-set production and archival research. The process of production is shown in such a way that the subject being filmed and those doing the filming (camera operators, directors, and various members of the film crews) appear together in the same frame (Figure 10). Here, there is a strong visual statement that "we record ourselves and each other." The imagery in the two prologues also presents the archival background to the series: the image of a handwritten archival document is followed by a the shot of a loupe moving in-between the camera and a frail document, then to vault doors opening and a panoramic sweep over rows and rows of cans containing archival film. Afterwards, archive technicians are seen mounting an old map onto a translucent support. The prologue's series of clips then returns to the film production activity of the CBC's historical documentary. Thus, the visual symbolism of the prologue's rhythmic movement points to an active involvement in the present (of making and creating) that produces an archive that then founds a history to be told into the future.

The opening presentation that functions as the series' introduction at the start of the first season uses both actors portraying historical figures and people who are performing their roles as archive technicians or members of the production crew. In this case, the rhythm of putative past and present Canadians hints at the constructed and pedagogical nature of the visualization in *C:APH* of a people telling their story, and it also points to the present as the beginning of its history. In the first season's

introduction, a reenacted seventeenth-century *fille du roi* (girls sent to New France by the king to correct a gender imbalance in the colony) stares into the camera as she is putatively heard to speak in voiceover of her travails – her appearance follows the last image of archival material discussed above (Figure 11). The prologue then runs through selected scenes from the series (the only imagery taken from the second season comes near the end and shows, in order, a beach landing during the Second World War, the sight of a Lancaster bomber taking-off, and nineteenth-century immigrants aboard ship and crowding the image-frame). The prologue then draws to a close by presenting an aerial view of skyscrapers that then fades into the image of a young, contemporary Asian-Canadian girl calmly looking into the lens while standing in a school hallway (Figure 12). From this point, we continue onto the main title. With this sequence, the prologue symbolically expresses a move from a history that lives in the present (the reenactment of the *filles du roi*) to the living presence of Canadian history in the making (the Asian face of an assumed Canadian youth). The visual *sotto voce* underlying that symbolism seems to murmur that as Canada once sprang from foreign fertility, it appears to continue that same process into the present. Yet *C:APH* renders both girls mute. The French girl is not seen to speak on camera nor are the words we hear her own speech – both because an actor says them in voiceover and because the words are drawn from a seventeenth-century legal document read into the record by a lawyer representing her in a claim against her mother in France.<sup>134</sup> The words she seems to speak were spoken for her in the past and are put into her mouth once again in the present. Her reenacted presence then becomes an image that stands in her place – it can look like her as long as there is no other point of reference (as the words we hear can be accepted as hers so long

as we remain unaware of the actual origin of the words). The Asian girl, with whom the prologue ends, is placed in a school hallway that reflects the pedagogical undercurrent of the series (as the school lockers run along the wall in the background). She represents the newly arrived people who are about to ingest Canadian history. Her complete silence indicates that she exists in *C:APH* as a sign of the Canadian future perfect. As the future face of Canada she is yet to add her history to that of Canada – she has not yet been archived so to speak. It is from this point – an image of ‘Canada future perfect’ that is done in the present – that *C:APH* begins to unspool its image of Canadian history. The prologue to the second season is constructed in the same manner as the prologue to the first season. Notable variations are the reduction of images that present the archival activities that supplied the series with its visual material, and a different concluding image. Rather than arriving at an apparent present (the Asian-Canadian girl in the school hallway), the prologue to the second season ends with a clip of reenacted footage from the Métis conflict in 1885 at Batoche, Saskatchewan.

The dominant technique in the title sequence is blending one image into the next to form a sequential dissolve. The approach is found throughout the series and it is significant on two levels. First, unlike media are combined (painting, photography, line drawing, reenacted scenes may all dissolve one into the other), and the media are from different times and places; the combined images were rarely, if ever, created with each other in mind, but the fading of the one into the next knits them over a temporal and spatial gap so that they appear to possess movement. Second, the dissolve technique figuratively obscures the borders between different peoples and their differing perspectives and thereby reflects a desire on the part of the series to unify dissimilar

peoples and points of view. In other words, the series' opening title sequence of clips that merge and fade into each other is symptomatic of the series' desire to inculcate its diverse audience with an expression of multicultural intermingling that it sees at the heart of Canadian history and Canadian identity. The last image of the title sequence leaves the audience looking at an overlay made of the title *Canada: A People's History* and a map made by Pierre Desceliers ca. 1534-41 that shows the Saint Lawrence River valley. The orientation of the map is vertical yet the two images are aligned so that the modern typeface of the series can be read above the antique font of "Canada" in Desceliers' map (Figure 13 shows the overlaid images, and Figure 14 shows the map in its correct orientation). *C:APH* thereby signifies its transformation of Canadian history into a contemporary form since the antique map rises up from the background to become a contemporary map of the nation, and a nation that appears unchanged in its essential shape from past appearances ("Canada" was always already here).

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Anthony D. Smith, "The Problem of National Identity: Ancient, medieval, and modern?" in *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, Vol. 17 No. 3 (Jully 1994), 381.

<sup>2</sup>Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. *The Strategy of the CBC*. (Ottawa: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1983), 1.

<sup>3</sup>Karim H. Karim, *Perceptions about Multiculturalism: A Content Analysis of Newspapers, Academic Papers, Ethnocultural Organization Briefs, Attitude Surveys, and Ministerial Correspondence*. Prepared by: Karim H. Karim. Policy & Research Multiculturalism Sector Multiculturalism & Citizenship. (January, 1989), 86.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid*, 87.

<sup>5</sup>The sociopolitical relationship between First Nations and Canada was also being re-shaped by a 1996 treaty between the Nisga'a and Canada that stands as the first modern land claim agreement, and the 1997 Supreme Court ruling in the Delgamuukw land claim case that further defined and entrenched Native land rights.

<sup>6</sup>Cameron Duncan, "One America," in *The Canadian Forum*. 71.816 (January/February 1993), 9.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid*, 2.

<sup>8</sup>Susan Crean, "Looking Back to the Future – Creators and Cultural Policy in the Era of Free Trade: A Commentary," in *Journal of Canadian Studies*. 35.3 (September 2000): 199-212.

<sup>9</sup>Address by Perrin Beatty to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, Ottawa, April 2, 1998. <http://cbc.radio-canada.ca/speeches/19980402.shtml>

<sup>10</sup>Perrin Beatty, "Coping with Convergence: Social and Cultural Change in the Age of Digital Technology," Lecture to the University of Western Ontario (London), March 20, 1998. <http://cbc.radio-canada.ca/speeches/19980320.shtml>

<sup>11</sup>Perrin Beatty, "Address by Perrin Beatty to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage," Ottawa, April 2, 1998. <http://cbc.radio-canada.ca/speeches/19980402.shtml>

<sup>12</sup>Mark Starowicz, "The Great Media Shift: Television, Radio and Print in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century; Speculations on the Impact of New Technologies," First Annual Kesterton Lecture, School of Journalism and Communication, Carleton University, Ottawa. Held in Room 200, West Block, Parliament Hill, February 10, 2000. <http://www.carleton.ca/jmc/newsevents/kesterton/starowicz.html>



<sup>13</sup>*Ibid*

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid*

<sup>15</sup>Penney Clarke, "Engaging the Field: A Conversation with Mark Starowicz," in *Canadian Social Studies*. Vol. 36 No. 2 (Winter 2002)  
[http://www.quasar.ualberta.ca/css/Css\\_36\\_2/ARengaging\\_the\\_field.htm](http://www.quasar.ualberta.ca/css/Css_36_2/ARengaging_the_field.htm)

<sup>16</sup>Maurice Charland, "Technological Nationalism," in *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory*. Vol. 10 Nos. 1-2 (1986): 196.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid*, 197.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid*, 208.

<sup>19</sup>Ottawa: Government of Canada, Department of Communications. *Building for the Future: towards a distinctive CBC*. Francis Fox. (Ottawa: Government of Canada, Department of Communications, 1983), 8.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid*, 7.

<sup>21</sup>Address by Perrin Beatty to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, April 2, 1998. <http://cbc.radio-canada.ca/speeches/19980402.shtml>

<sup>22</sup>Perrin Beatty, "At Home in the World," lecture to The International Forum on Culture and Cooperation. Ottawa, June 29, 1998. <http://cbc.radio-canada.ca/speeches/19980629.shtml>

<sup>23</sup>Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. *The CBC – A Perspective*. (Ottawa: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1978), 190.

<sup>24</sup>Andreas Huyssen, "Present Pasts" Media, Politics, Amnesia," in *Popular Culture*. 12:1 (2000), 24-5.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid*, 24-5.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid*, 24-5.

<sup>27</sup>Ottawa, The Forum, Supply and Services Canada, *Citizen's Forum on Canada's Future: report to the people and Government of Canada*. Keith Spicer, chair. (Ottawa: The Forum [Supply and Services Canada], 1991), 38-39.

<sup>28</sup>J. L. Granatstein, *Who Killed Canadian History?* (Toronto: HarperCollins Publishers, 1998), 11.

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid*, 12.

<sup>30</sup>Michael Bliss, "Privatizing the Mind: The Sundering of Canadian History," in *The Journal of Canadian Studies*. 26:4 (Winter, 1991-2), 17.

<sup>31</sup>J.M.S. Careless, "Limited Identities' in Canada," *Canadian Historical Review*. L no. 1 (March, 1969), 3.

<sup>32</sup>Margaret Conrad, Alvin Finkel, and Cornelius Jaenen, *History of the Canadian Peoples*. Mississauga: Copp Clark Pitman, 1993. (now in a 4<sup>th</sup> ed., by Toronto: Pearson Longman, 2006); also, J. M. Bumsted, *A history of the Canadian peoples*. Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 1998 (now in a 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 2003)

<sup>33</sup>Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*. F.J. Ditter and V. Yazdi, trans. New York: Harper Colophon, 1980. (Both page 52)

<sup>34</sup>Christopher Lasch, *The Minimal Self: Psychic Survival in Troubled Times*. (London: Pan Books, 1984), 38.

<sup>35</sup>Daniel Bell, *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*. (New York: Basic Books, 1976), 13-14.

<sup>36</sup>Thomas J. Courchene, *A State of Minds: Towards a Human Capital Future for Canadians*. (Montréal: The Institute for Public Policy, 2001), 22.

<sup>37</sup>Mandate Review Committee, *Making Our Voices Heard: Canadian Broadcasting and Film for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. (Hull: Canadian Heritage, 1996), 24.

<sup>38</sup>Eva Mackey, *The House of Difference: Cultural Politics and National Identity in Canada*. (London; New York: Routledge, 1999), 107.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid*, 119.

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid*, 120.

<sup>41</sup>*Ibid*, 120.

<sup>42</sup>Charles Taylor, "Globalization and the Future of Canada," in *Queen's Quarterly*. Vol. 105 Issue 3 (Fall 1998), 332.

<sup>43</sup>Cited in James Littleton, ed. *Clash of Identities: Media, Manipulation, and Politics of the Self*. (Toronto: Prentice-Hall, 1996), 2.

<sup>44</sup>Thomas S. Axworthy, "Curing the historical amnesia that is killing Canada," in *Canadian Speeches* 11.6 (October 1997), 19.

<sup>45</sup>Karim, 84.

<sup>46</sup>Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. Standing Committee on Communications and Culture, *Culture and Communications: the ties that bind: report of the Standing Committee on Communications and Culture*. (Ottawa: the Standing Committee, 1992), xii.

<sup>47</sup>*Ibid*, xii.

<sup>48</sup>Taylor, 341.

<sup>49</sup>Charland, 200.

<sup>50</sup>Hubert Gendron, interview with author.

<sup>51</sup>*Ibid*

<sup>52</sup>Starowicz, *Making History*, 37-45.

<sup>53</sup>*Ibid*, 37-45.

<sup>54</sup>*Ibid*, 40-41.

<sup>55</sup>For example, Desmond Morton was consulted for Episode Twelve's presentation of the First World War, and Ramsay Cook and Jay Castle were conferred with on Episode Four's narrative of the Seven Years War.

<sup>56</sup>The website (<http://history.cbc.ca/histicons/>) also offers background information on the making of the series, and supplementary historical data pertaining to events in the series. Interactive elements such as quizzes on Canadian history and viewer discussion groups on the episodes, and discussion forums for the teaching community are also included.

<sup>57</sup>The teaching guides are divided by episode, are minimally illustrated, and highlight aspects of the stories, present questions for discussion, classroom activities, and study projects.

<sup>58</sup>As an indication, Volume 8 contains "The Way It Was 1867," a three and a half minute short of Canada's first election in the summer of 1867. The same volume also has a twenty-two minute presentation under the heading *History of Science in Canada* that is called "The Birth of Modern Medicine." Here, the central figure is Dr. William Osler, a leader in medical education in Canada.

<sup>59</sup>Mark Starowicz, *Making History*. (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2003), 320.

<sup>60</sup>Penny Clark, "Engaging the Field: A Conversation with Mark Starowicz," in *Canadian Social Studies*. Vol. 36 No. 2 (Winter 2002), np.

<sup>61</sup>Mark Starowicz, "The Canadian Experience: Lessons from the Canadian History Project," in *The Empire Club of Canada Speeches 2001-2002*. E. P. Badovinac, ed. (Toronto: The Empire Club Foundation, 2002), np.

<sup>62</sup>Hubert Gendron, interview with author, Société Radio Canada, September 27, 2005.

<sup>63</sup>*Ibid*

<sup>64</sup>Gene Allen, interview with author, Ryerson University, Toronto, September 29, 2005.

<sup>65</sup>*Ibid*

<sup>66</sup>Mark Starowicz, "Citizens of Video-America: What Happened to Canadian Television in the Satellite Age," in *Small Nations, Big Neighbour: Denmark and Québec/Canada Compare Notes on American Popular Culture*. Roger de la Garde, et. al., eds. (London: John Libbey & Company, Ltd., 1993), 93.

<sup>67</sup>Hubert Gendron, interview with author.

<sup>68</sup>Starowicz, *Making History*, 84.

<sup>69</sup>Gene Allen, interview with author.

<sup>70</sup>Starowicz, *Making History*, 108.

<sup>71</sup>Hubert Gendron, interview with author.

<sup>72</sup>Starowicz, *Making History*, 28.

<sup>73</sup>The filmmakers of *The Tenth Decade* brought together archival film footage (documentary, newsfilm, and kinescope) and more recent interviews with Lester Pearson and John Diefenbaker, as well as other members of both the Liberal and Conservative parties, and Canadian historians. The interviews, shot in informal settings, showed the subjects reflecting back on events that we see in the archival materials; throughout their musings, the focus rests on Diefenbaker and Pearson. Actor Jon Granik supplied the voiceover. The first one-hour segment of the mini-series presented the rise to prominence of the two men. Each of the subsequent one-hour segments dealt with specific periods in the terms of both political parties. So, for example, the fourth hour, entitled "Treason and Transition," recounted the events from 1962 to 1963 that revolved around the anti-war stance of the Diefenbaker government, and the question of allowing nuclear-tipped

missiles on Canadian soil. *The Tenth Decade* concludes with the resignation from power of Pearson, and the rise to prominence of Pierre E. Trudeau in 1968.

<sup>74</sup>*The Champions* incorporates period news footage, film shot contemporary to the time of the series' production, still photos, historical newsreel footage, and interviews with friends and coworkers of the two main subjects, Pierre Elliott Trudeau and René Lévesque. The programme opens with a panoramic sweep of the Olympic stadium during the 1976 Olympics in Montréal, with trumpet fanfare on the audio track and the segment title, "Unlikely Warriors," seen at the bottom of the screen. The camera will come to focus on both Trudeau and Lévesque, thereby positioning the two men as gladiators in the public realm and the two "Unlikely Warriors" in question. The narrative is carried forward by the on-camera recollections of people who directly participated in the history being presented and who had close ties with Trudeau and or Lévesque, with the voiceover (Brittain himself) insuring continuity between these narrative elements. The people who appear on camera are filmed in a simple head-and-shoulders framing; the location appears to be their home or business. They do not speak to the lens, but to the person who asks them the questions; occasionally the interviewer's voice is heard off-camera. During one sequence, Thérèse Casgrain shows her family photo album to an unidentified woman. The photo-album is first seen from the camera's point of view, and then seen directly while Casgrain turns the pages and explains who is who. The effect of both hearing the interviewer's voice and having the interviewed subject look away from the camera at the questioner, makes *The Champions* a reflexive documentary – it does not presume an illusion, but presents itself as a representation. Along with the interviews he conducted for the documentary, Brittain also incorporated archival news footage of historical events that occurred in the lives of the two men whose story he is presenting. The intermingling of those two visual narrative elements, together with the fact that *The Champions* itself is over twenty-years old, all combine to produce a kind of visual historical narrative palimpsest. The archival news piece can be seen for its relevance to the story Brittain is telling, and for its historical content – the way things were – regardless of Trudeau, Levesque, or anyone else whose story the imagery may be supporting. For example, the first meeting between the two occurred in the cafeteria of the CBC building on Dorchester Boulevard in Montréal. The street [name] no longer exists, and that can be of interest to the viewer who then remembers "the time when..." as connected to a since defunct name for the boulevard. The appearance of clothing, hairstyles, cars, and other material goods also function as part of the story Brittain is telling and as part of the memory of viewers watching his work twenty years later. *The Champions* is a record of its time as much as it is a document of the personal lives and political relationships of Trudeau and Lévesque.

<sup>75</sup>Hubert Gendron, interview with author.

<sup>76</sup>James Littleton, ed. *Clash of Identities: Media, Manipulation, and Politics of the Self*. (Toronto: Prentice-Hall, 1996), 7.

<sup>77</sup>Starowicz, *Making History*, 150.

<sup>78</sup>Carole Jerome, "Canada: A People's History – A Cinematographic Tapestry of Life and Land," *Canadian Society of Cinematographers* <http://www.csc.ca/news/default.asp?alD=861>

<sup>79</sup>Starowicz, *Making History*, 149-51; and Jerome, "Canada: A People's History – A Cinematographic Tapestry of Life and Land," <http://www.csc.ca/news/default.asp?alD=861>

<sup>80</sup>Starowicz, *Making History*, 152. The name of the girl is Sharbat Gula, and the picture was titled "Afghani Girl." The photographer's name was Steve McCurry, and the photo was taken in a Pakistani refugee camp. *National Geographic* vol. 167 no. 6 (June, 1985)

<sup>81</sup>Gene Allen, interview with author.

<sup>82</sup>Clark, "Engaging the Field: A Conversation with Mark Starowicz," np.

<sup>83</sup>Starowicz, *Making History*, 121.

<sup>84</sup>Starowicz, "The Canadian Experience: Lessons from the Canadian History Project," np.

<sup>85</sup>Mark Starowicz, *Making History*, 121.

<sup>86</sup>Gene Allen, "The Professionals and the Public: Responses to *Canada: A People's History*," in *Social History*. 34:68 (November 2001), 382.

<sup>87</sup>Gene Allen, interview with author.

<sup>88</sup>Hubert Gendron, interview with author.

<sup>89</sup>Starowicz, *Making History*, 111.

<sup>90</sup>For an examination of the historical accuracy of the McKenna's production, see: David J. Bercuson and S. F. Wise, *The Valour and the Horror Revisited*. Montréal; Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994.

<sup>91</sup>*Ibid*, 145.

<sup>92</sup>*Ibid*, 145.

<sup>93</sup>*Ibid*, 149.

<sup>94</sup>*Ibid*, 149.

<sup>95</sup>*Ibid*, 148.

<sup>96</sup>Stephanie Nolen, "Pitching Like PBS," *The Globe and Mail* (Wednesday, June 7, 2000): R1.

<sup>97</sup>Starowicz, *Making History*, 304.

<sup>98</sup>*Ibid*, 262.

<sup>99</sup>Carleton University Magazine, "Standing Ovation for Starowicz," [http://magazine.carleton.ca/2002\\_Winter/667.htm](http://magazine.carleton.ca/2002_Winter/667.htm)

<sup>100</sup>Mark Starowicz, "Notes for Remarks by Mark Starowicz Before the Senate Transport and Communications Committee, Ottawa, April 28, 2003." <http://cbc.radio-canada.ca/speeches/20030428.shtml>

<sup>101</sup>Mark Starowicz, *Making History*. (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2003), 205.

<sup>102</sup>Hubert Gendron, interview with author.

<sup>103</sup>Starowicz, *Making History*, 90.

<sup>104</sup>*Ibid*, 121.

<sup>105</sup>Hubert Gendron, interview with author.

<sup>106</sup>*Ibid*

<sup>107</sup>Gene Allen, interview with author.

<sup>108</sup>Hubert Gendron, interview with author.

<sup>109</sup>Starowicz, *Making History*, 293.

<sup>110</sup>Hubert Gendron, interview with author.

<sup>111</sup>*Ibid*

<sup>112</sup>*Ibid*

<sup>113</sup>Mark Starowicz, "The Canadian Experience: Lessons from the Canadian History Project," np.

<sup>114</sup>*Ibid*

<sup>115</sup>*Ibid*

<sup>116</sup>Gene Allen, interview with author.

<sup>117</sup>Starowicz, *Making History*, 154-55.

<sup>118</sup>Hubert Gendron, interview with author.

<sup>119</sup>*Ibid*, 242.

<sup>120</sup>All episodes of *Canada: A People's History* begin with the same opening sequence that is comprised of a series' introduction, an episode prologue, a main title sequence for the series, and then an opening for the episode itself. What introduces the CBC series with every broadcast is a steam train that continues to approach the screen until escaping steam completely obscures the view. During the approach of the train, titling progresses from "A Special Presentation," to "CBC Television," to "CBC Television and Radio-Canada," and then finally to "A Series conceived and produced by Mark Starowicz." The corporate logos of the series' sponsors appear within small inset windows that are placed in the center of the screen. The logo for Sun Life Financial is the only one to appear during the first season; it is followed the logo of Bell Canada Enterprises during the second broadcast season. A male voiceover repeats the titling seen onscreen and emphasizes that the series is "proudly presented with the corporate sponsorship of...." What follows the series' opening is a prologue to the episode that is about to be broadcast. All of the prologues that follow the series' opening presentation, with the exception of the first and tenth episodes, introduce the narrative and thematic content of the episode with visual material drawn from the episode in question. The main title sequence for the series comes after the prologue. <sup>127</sup>The title sequence has a yellow-orange tint throughout and is composed of visual material taken from throughout the series (it is primarily extracted from the first broadcast season, since the only material in the title sequence that can be seen in the second season are images showing the military landing at Dieppe and a Lancaster bomber during take-off). The first hour of the programme itself begins after the series' main title sequence. The episode's title and credits roll over the opening visual sequence. All of the episodes are divided into chapters. The episode title highlights its theme and chapter titles are frequently derived from a statement or event contained in the chapter itself.

<sup>121</sup>*Ibid*, 242.

<sup>122</sup>Mark Starowicz, *Making History*, 121.

<sup>123</sup>Gene Allen, interview with author.

<sup>124</sup>Hubert Gendron, interview, "Is Canadian History Boring?" CBME Radio Noon with Nancy Wood, March 12, 2001.



Figure 1

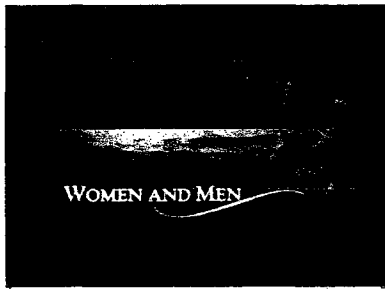


Figure 2

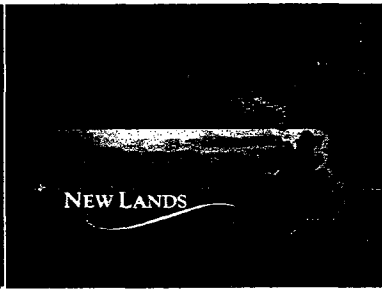


Figure 3

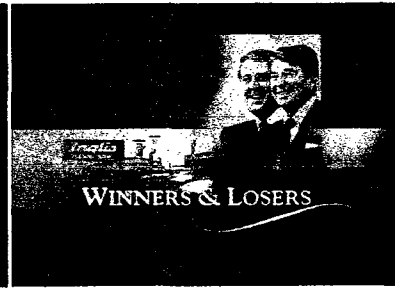


Figure 4



Figure 5

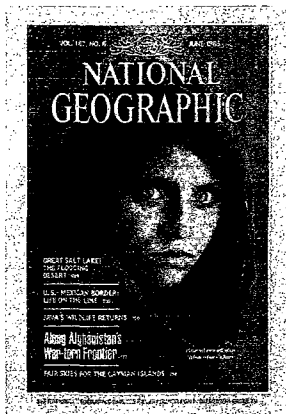


Figure 6

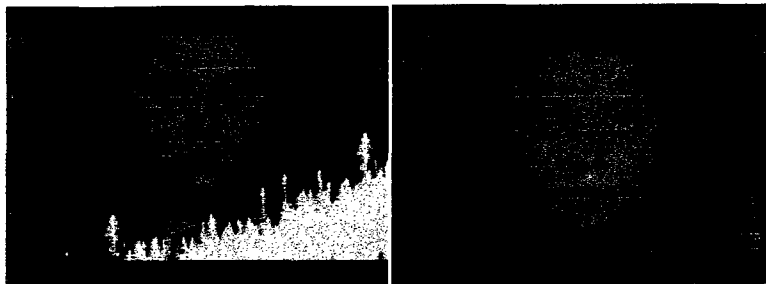


Figure 7



Figure 8

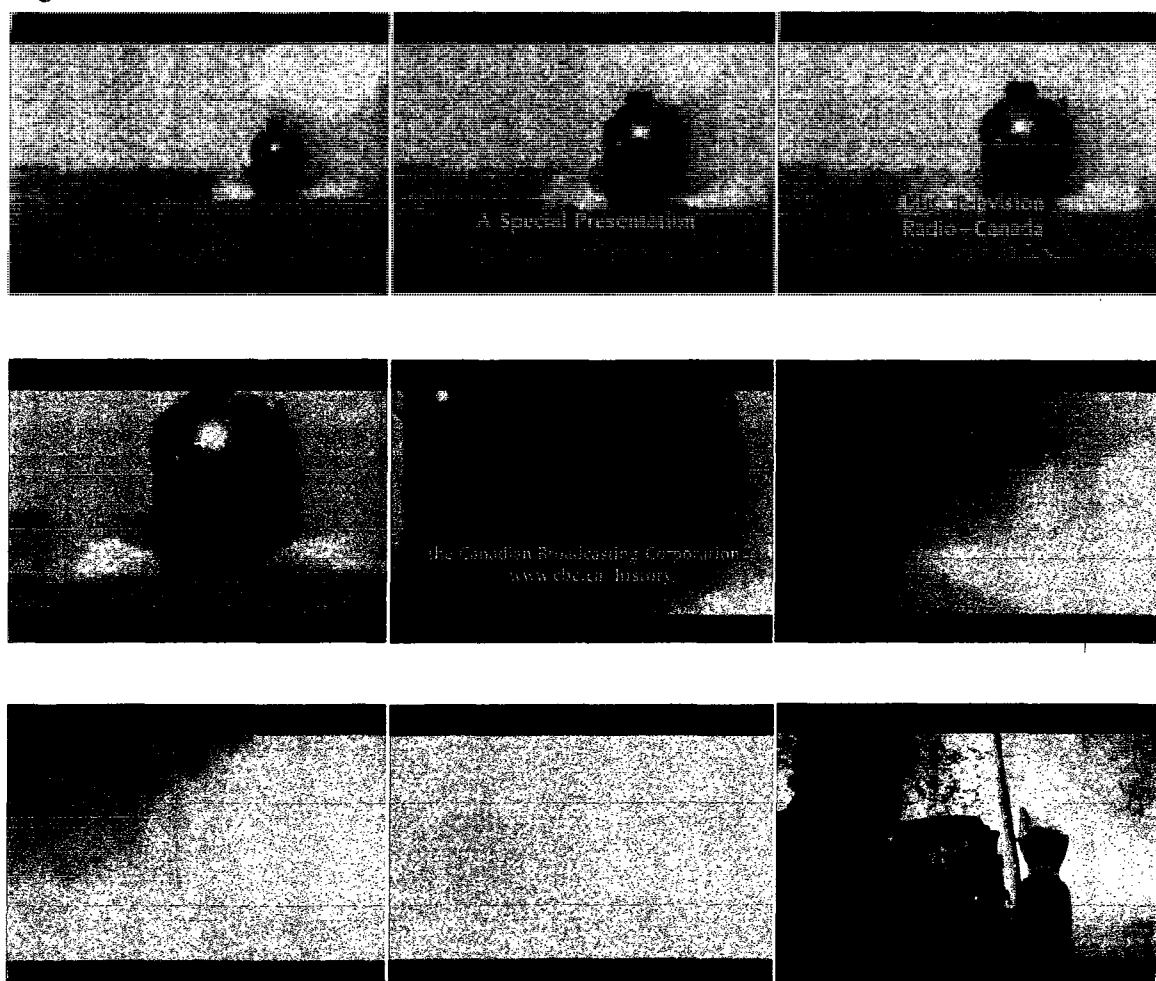


Figure 9



Figure 10

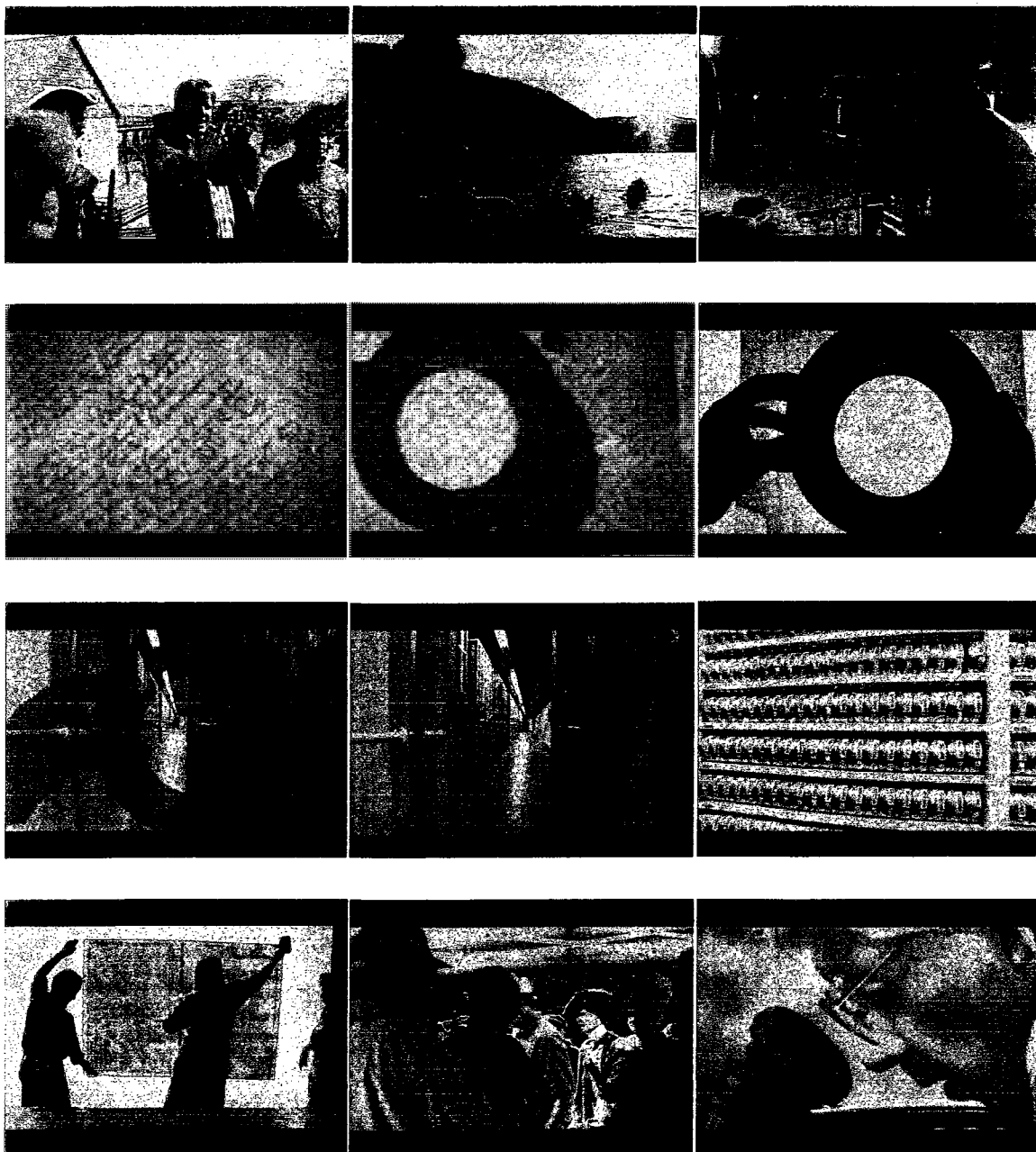


Figure 11



Figure 12



Figure 13

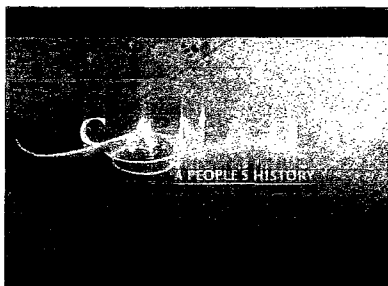


Figure 14



## CHAPTER TWO

Chapter Two is concerned with how *Canada: A People's History* shows the past, arouses an interest in it, and does this in a recognizably Canadian way. The work involves determining how each medium (painting, archival photography and film, and video) is used in the series to show history, establishing how they interact in sequence and combination, and identifying the Canadian idiom of *C:APH*. The chapter includes analytical models based on the series' reconstruction of the conflict on the Plains of Abraham, Confederation, the 1980 referendum in Quebec, explorer and mapmaker David Thompson, the Gold Rush in western Canada, and the depiction of the experiences of a First World War Canadian soldier. The chapter's methodology is based on the theories of Jacques Lacan, Susan Stewart, Roland Barthes, Stephen Bann, Northrop Frye, and Hayden White.

### Section 1 – The reassurance of children

The chapter opens with a look at how images of children and women contribute to the expression in *C:APH* of its underlying anxieties. The analysis is guided by Lacanian theory wherein desire occurs as part of the Subject's institution: split from the Mother, the child experiences a lack (in symbolic terms, the series' anxiety) and so desires to complete itself again with a return to unitary bliss in the Mother (the underpinning of the series' resolution is a desire to return to a point of origin). The expressions of anxiety and separation can also comprise scenes depicting either the separation from or ruination of the natural landscape, and the loss of personal and collective visual documentation. In the first instance, what is denoted is a loss of site that may ground self-representation. In the

second case, it is the loss of hindsight – a history that may carry individual and group identities forward to future generations.

The imagery of children that appears in *C:APH* provides a point of access into the way in which the series envisions the link between national history and the well-being of a people's sense of Canadian identity. In this sense, what the image of the child represents is "a symbol of redemption and hope for the future."<sup>1</sup> In the past, the figure of a healthy and happy child has been used to signal the same condition in the nation: that is, that the nation is doing well. In America, during the unsettled early period of the new Republic, representations of children gave people a feeling that there was a 'natural' order that provided a foundation as well as a sense of future for American society. Healthy American children meant that the United States was in fine fettle, and any social problems could thereby be dismissed as "growing pains."<sup>2</sup>

More than a simple sign of better days ahead or an assurance that all is well now, the child has been used more directly in political appeals, and can "justify widely divergent political agendas."<sup>3</sup> The advantage of using the figure of the child is that it "has the potential to consolidate an audience by drawing attention away from class and other divisions towards a group with whom everyone is presumably concerned."<sup>4</sup> Emphasis is placed on the need and importance of caring and providing for the nation's children and by extension the future of that country.

Underpinning the discussion of the image of the child is the tradition in Western discourse of seeing childhood as a stage on the way to adulthood and not a state of being in and of itself. The child is full of possibilities, but at the same time is vulnerable, and without proper care that future will not be realized.<sup>5</sup> In a study of Canadian parliamentary

debates during the post-WWII era, it was found that parliamentarians made frequent reference to Canada as “young” and “growing up.”<sup>6</sup> The link between the growing child and the future of the nation has a more direct link in the sense that adults (both within the family and as part of state institutions) bore a responsibility of shaping that future through the education of the child.<sup>7</sup>

The domestic environment and the child facilitate an expression in *C:APH* of an anxiety over a loss of knowledge about Canadian history and the consequent threat to a national future. The importance of these two elements is that when we see the imagery of the home and neighborhood we are presented with a place of security and familiarity, and in the figure of the child we are not only shown a past state of innocence but at the same time we can also recognize the potential for a future (adulthood). As Henry Jenkins underlines, “Childhood...becomes an emblem for our anxieties about the passing of time, the destruction of historical formations, or conversely, a vehicle for our hopes for the future.”<sup>8</sup> For instance, the prologue to the fourth episode presents us with the story of a young girl who flees the Quebec region in the eighteenth century due to the attacks by Natives on the European settlements in that area (Figure 1). The end of the prologue sees her eventually happily married in Louisiana. *C:APH* shows this story by closely framing scenes of a settlement’s fiery destruction, and by choosing to illustrate the brutality the girl experienced at the hands of Native warriors. The full-frame shot of flames roaring along the edges of walls and filling window frames suggests not only the destruction of domestic shelter (or, on a basic level, the structure of social organization) but also the obliteration of a frame of reference. The only thing that appears (either inside or outside of the burning window) is a roaring fire. The girl, along with the innumerable other

children that come to fill the frame of *C:APH*, represents the figure of a people's future that is in danger.

In this case, the future (as the girl) is in peril from a world in turmoil. Tumult is a steady narrative drumbeat in *C:APH* as people and children are repeatedly shown to be uprooted or under threat of eviction from home and hearth. For example, in Episode Three, the presentation in *C:APH* of the expulsion of approximately 12,000 Acadians in 1755 from what is to become the provinces of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, shows children witnessing the act of soldiers violent eviction homeowners (Figure 2). In Episode Five, the story of the more than 40,000 Loyalists who are displaced from the American colonies in 1775 is told through the eyes of an eleven-year-old girl by the name of Hannah Ingraham (Figure 3a/b). In the 1840s, it is the Irish who escape famine by voyaging to Canada. In Episode Eight, their story is brought to a full stop (after tales of the dead and views of cemeteries) with an archival photograph of a small girl who survived the trip while her parents died (Figure 4). Also in Episode Eight, the story of Montreal in the 1860s is punctuated with a narrative on the city's infant mortality rate. Here, we are shown not only a scene of empty cribs, but also archival photographs of gaunt children who are near death (Figure 5). In Episode Fifteen, late 1940s post-war Europe is shown to us by way of archival footage of devastated cities and children in ragged clothing who are in soup kitchens for their meal (Figure 6). In Episode Sixteen, when *C:APH* shows us the abandonment of Newfoundland outports during the 1960s and 1970s, we are treated to children watching as homes are towed on their own foundations across open water (Figure 7). Also in Episode Sixteen, the effect of changing social and economic conditions in Québec is marked by archival news footage of a mother



expressing her concerns for the future. While she speaks, the camera lingers on the faces of several children in ragged clothing (Figure 8).

The narrative focus on migrant, impoverished, or parentless children reveals the concern in *C:APH* that the future of Canada may be lost because the social, political, and technological changes in contemporary Canada cause us to become disconnected with our national past. The concern can also be found in recent writing on childhood and the effects of globalization, media technology, and migration. The question that is raised here, is whether modern media are creating a homogenized global childhood, or are we seeing new “hybrid or transnational identities?”<sup>9</sup> The problem here is that while adults who migrate to a new home can still retain their grasp on their existing traditions, children who grow up in a home with technologies that offer them global choices form their traditions on new connections that have much less, if anything, to do with their new homesite. For example, a Somali child may grow up in a Somali neighborhood in London, England but understand herself as a Somali and a Londoner, but not English.<sup>10</sup> The result of losing touch with our past and a sure sense of place and belonging, is the collapse of the national structure, something symbolically expressed by the burning structures that preface the girls’ flight to Louisiana that is noted above. The emphasis that is placed on the flames represents past events and at the same time gives us nothing to see but ruination. In a way, we are blinded by the chaos, which is important because an image of the past is wrecked, and that losing sight of the country’s history is something that can contribute to the demise of the Canadian future.

These two aspects – the loss of community and being out of touch with history, albeit without the imagery of childhood, also form a part of how *C:APH* illustrates the

impact of the American Civil War on Canada. At the opening of Episode Eight we are introduced to the anxiety that was felt by some Canadians living near the border with an America at war with itself (Figure 9). *C:APH* illustrates this by first showing us a recreated setting of an unoccupied Canadian militiamen's barracks. Once the camera has panned across the barracks interior, we are shown a video shot of a tree-lined road that is shrouded in fog. We then see an actress who portrays a woman who recounts her fear of the times. The opening sequence continues with several video images of burning buildings, and then the camera pans over two archival photographs. The first presents a huge encampment, and the second shows us the ruins of Atlanta, in the foreground of which are the figures of two women who appear to be dressed in mourning.

The construction of this point in history is achieved by *C:APH* with an alternation of clarity and obscurity, and also a focus on the destruction of established community. When we move from the barracks to the lane, and then to the woman and then to the flames, we are going from a clearly organized image to one that is chaotic. The foggy lane is an image of disorientation and of the partial blindness that impedes the acquisition of bearings and location. We are left motionless, robbed of an ability to see into the distance. In this, *C:APH* seems to suggest that we lose our way without a clear image of our past. The lost point of origin then momentarily appears in the maternal form of the woman, only to be lost from view in the following fires. The flickering nature of a clear view then leads into scenes of destruction when we see the mass encampment and the broken city buildings. These suggest the diasporic condition and deteriorating contact with history that leads to the collapse of longstanding social structure and so the corrosion of tradition.

We occupy the point of view that intermittently loses sight of the maternal form, and in this way we are positioned as the figure of the child who stands for an as yet unrealized potential of nationhood. The idea of the child as an embodiment of a national future is not restricted to an actual image of a child, nor is it limited to the eye-level view that a child would have on the events of history. The figure of the child is also invoked by objects of childhood (such as the toy we see in the story of the massacred refugees), and in scenes of childhood. The latter instance is shown in the Episode Eight chapter that depicts the Confederation negotiations that took place in Charlottetown in 1864. Before we are even introduced to the delegates, we are shown live footage of a merry-go-round, and then several archival images of circus freaks. This first set of images ends with a close-up of the merry-go-round that shows us the snarling face of a lion. Immediately after the lion, we are transported onto the deck of a steamer and find ourselves looking out over a broad expanse of calm water and at a brilliant blue sky (Figure 10). Once we have seen the successful conclusion of the Confederation meetings, *C:APH* closes the chapter by returning us to the circus and the slowly rotating carrousel. Here, we are again positioned close to the passing animals, and in between zebras and horses we can see a bright green, distant maple tree appear and then disappear. As the animal figures pass, *C:APH* gradually increases the image magnification so that while the maple tree appears to come closer, the animals become increasingly abstracted until the last image of a blurred black and white of a zebra rump (Figure 11).

Although ordinarily the merry-go-round is a source of pleasure for children, here it is empty and so made strange and rather dreamlike. The roaring lion that rushes forward to attack the frame reinforces this impression. In counterpoint, the cool and

serene perspective of water, clouds, and sky that follows the lion signals a dream-like bliss of a natural space that embraces the viewer as it fills their visual field. The effect of alternating an abstracted life form with a natural sign of Canada is to make the more distant object (the maple tree) more desirable and the foreground element (the false horse) interference. In order to get back to the natural state of Canada, the series seems to say, we must work through the false depictions that make up the growing world of technologically meditated images.

While technology must be dealt with in order to reacquire a proper conceptualization of the nation, the influence of technology can also be considered in terms of its effect on childhood. Recent authorship deals with the media-driven acceleration of childhood, a situation wherein children are rushed into the world of adulthood before they have a chance to emotional develop. It is a condition that Kathleen MacDonnell refers to as “turbo-childhood.”<sup>11</sup> One reaction, as McDonnell points out, “is to try and turn back the clock,” an urge driven by the “powerful lure of nostalgia for childhood the way it used to be.”<sup>12</sup> The desire for a return to an idealized childhood is unworkable, since childhood is a conceptualization that is formed and reformed in accordance with its time – there never was one, ideal childhood.<sup>13</sup> An other option to resolve the issue of a lost or ill-defined childhood, is to generate a comprehensive set of practices that are geared towards fully integrating the child into contemporary society. As an example, this alternative is reflected in the essays collected in *The Children’s Culture Reader* (1998). Contributor’s to this volume, notes the editor, Henry Jenkins, “[M]ove beyond mythic innocence and towards a recognition and advocacy of children’s cultural, social, and political agency.”<sup>14</sup> The objective of the essayists seems to be directed

towards forming a miniature adult that may “develop a political consciousness...access...the information they need to frame their own judgments...[and use] technologies that enable them to exchange their ideas with others of their generation.”<sup>15</sup> McDonnell also argues that it is the contemporary meaning of childhood that needs to be reworked in accordance with current conditions. The perceived crisis over a lost childhood, with the young being fast-tracked, unprepared to an adult world, is false. What McDonnell believes we have lost, “is the old *idea* of childhood, which is largely a set of assumptions that don’t match up with contemporary realities – new technologies and mass media, fallen taboos, [and] changing family structures”<sup>16</sup> (italics in original). What this calls for is the negotiation between different interest groups (for instance, educators, family groups, government, and religious groups) over a shared notion of what childhood means. The scene of the slowing rotating merry-go-round conflates the notion of childhood, natural space, and the negotiation of what Canada is about to become. In a sense, while we are watching the discussion over Canada, we are also seeing the notion of a national childhood in the balance. What kind of shared idea of Canada are we to conceive and to nurture in our thoughts?

By including the traveling circus, *C:APH* not only presents an actual event from history, the series also inserts a comment on the Confederation negotiations as a form of political carnival. Still, we are left looking at freaks and a rather melancholic merry-go-round that interferes with our view of a maple tree, which evokes the symbol on our present national flag. It would appear that the nation is within reach, but its future is uncertain since the tree flickers in the distance. The freakish figures that preface the struggle to negotiate a national union are representative of the “un-people” – less than

diasporic since the aberration never had a homeland to lose. The point is not so much that these deviants are some cultural or racial other, but rather that they represent simply a condition of not being a Canadian people. *C:APH* takes great pains to include the multicultural field of Canada. However, what haunts its frame is the unhyphenated presence of someone who has not yet become Canadian. The scene of the slowing rotating merry-go-round, which closes the story on the Confederation meetings in Charlottetown, suggests an isolated childhood that yearns for belonging. Ordinarily the merry-go-round is a source of pleasure for children, and yet here it is empty and so made strange and rather dreamlike without even the sound of children. If anything, judging by the point of view and the direction of the gaze, the child on this carrousel is transfixed by the surrounding landscape.

The child's eye on events also appears in the story of a French-Canadian couple determined to remain together and avoid the conscription drive in Quebec during the First World War (Figure 12). We are introduced to the story in Episode Twelve through an opening series of video scenes that alternates between an approaching car and a church, and a woman pushing a pram. The scenes that take place inside the couple's home have a dream-like quality and show the lower torso of the mother as she descends the stairs, with her silhouette created by a delicate white light. The silver kettle in the lower right corner provides the surface upon which the false mother (she has borrowed the child of a neighbor in order to provide her husband with a family and thus an exemption from conscription) is seen, sitting inside and waiting for the government official to arrive. A dark silhouette on the frosted glass of the door marks his arrival, followed by the placing of his black hat placed upon a table. The encounter between the man and the woman

plays out on the kettle's round surface and on the glass of a large clock-face. The two principals have neither normal figural appearance (they are seen as either ghostly or distorted forms) nor identifiable faces. The perspective is uniformly low, as if from a child's vantage point: the mother's legs are seen from the knees down, the kettle on the stove, and the bottommost part of the clock-face are also viewed from very close up.

The overt expression of the scene is the stress experienced by the woman who strived to keep her husband from the war by posing as a mother. As the official approaches the couple's house, the imagery alternates between the motorcar (a modern device for that period) and signs of the past and tradition (the church and the wheels of the baby carriage). Change, in the form of the motorcar, is in effect coming hard on the heels of the antiquated buggy. When the story moves indoors, the rhythm between the march of time and the pressure of technological change is reinforced by the fascination with the steaming kettle and the ticking clock. The clock insists on the passage of time, and since it shows its age with a rust-marked face, it is also an object that is a sign of the past. Also, the steam rising from the kettle marks the change in the state of a material, taking place over time, which eventually results in the dissipation and disappearance of the original form (water to steam). Steam as a marker of wide social and cultural transformation is reinforced by its role as the primary motive force in the Industrial Revolution. Thus, while *C:APH* does present the story of French-Canadian couple's experiences, the manner in which that story is represented also expresses anxieties contemporary to *C:APH* itself. The loss of traditional orientations that are emblemized by the form of the church as sign of spiritual guidance, and a threatened separation from an original defining state, defined by the mother figure that faces the dark stranger, is

coupled to the advance of the modern technologies – telecommunication satellites, for example, that threaten the sovereignty of Canadian cultural expression and thus a unifying sense of Canadian-ness. The camera framing that produce the sequence creates an obsessive focus (staring into the side of the kettle or peering fixedly at the clock) in a perspective is uniformly low. Since we occupy the camera position, we are given the child's outlook on the stability of a family that is under threat. Like the girl who fled eighteenth-century Canada for the safety of Louisiana, the story of the French-Canadian couple incorporates a child who embodies a threatened future.

Underpinning the operation of *C:APH* is the process of visually transmitting a people's history, and in the following example we can see how this is a crucial bond between generations, and one which carries a people into their future. The child is the heir to tradition and a successful transmission of tradition depends upon their ability to witness history. When we look at the prologue to Episode Fourteen, which shows the aftermath of the massacre of a group of refugees fleeing the German armies advancing on France during the late 1930s, we can also see the value that *C:APH* places upon the act of witnessing. As much as *C:APH* is based on textual evidence, it is the depiction of these texts and our act of witnessing them, that drives the presentation. In this sense, we become the children who inherit the national history. The events are drawn from the experiences of Gladys Arnold, who was the only Canadian journalist in France on May 13, 1940, after the war had already broken out. She was returning to Paris by train when it was stopped on a railway siding. On the adjacent track was a train that had been machine gunned by the German airplanes. The train had carried refugees from Holland and Belgium. Arnold saw the Red Cross, and local medical and military personnel



removing the dead and wounded from the train. She then disembarked and walked through the bullet-riddled train and realized that it had been carrying whole classes of school children, as well as old people, and women. She remembered, “The eyes of the remaining, untouched passengers and children were blank.”<sup>17</sup>

*Canada: A People's History* begins to tell her story with a perspective that looks through a rain-streaked train window of the refugee's train and out onto a passing landscape (Figure 13). The next images of the refugee's train show a stationary driving wheel of the locomotive and then a series of views that present the recreated passenger car interior. Here we can see some scattered personal belongings and a ray of sunlight that illuminates the center of the frame. After this, we see a pair of broken spectacles that are sitting on a window ledge, and then a close-up of a woman's framed photographic portrait. These aforementioned scenes are intended to represent what Gladys Arnold saw as she moved in and around the train that carried the refugees. To underline this, *C:APH* shows us a framed black and white photo of Gladys Arnold when she was in Paris, in 1938. After we see her photograph, we are returned to the interior of the refugee's train. Here, we see an open book that sits upon a suitcase next to a bullet pierced window, a child's shoe, and then a toy lying next to some shards of glass on the floor. The prologue closes by first moving from the victim's train to video footage taken in France, which shows close-ups of gargoyles, and then ending at a recreated beach setting of other refugees' evacuation. The camera slowly pans over the scattered personal effects that lay on the sand, and this lets us see the many personal photographs, and books, as well as a clock, that were all putatively left behind.

The sequence does present known events of history, but how are these events reconstructed? The opening rain-flecked window of the refugee's train is illogical in terms of the sequence's continuity, since the interior of the train is well lit by shafts of sunlight. The maker's of *C:APH* hereby allow for an interesting counterpoint that works with light and which underscores sight. By introducing us to the forthcoming events with a rainy window, we are forewarned of the tragic nature of the tale, since the windowpane covered by raindrops can be construed an eye that is filled with tears. At the same time, the suggestion of an eye that is made by the window also foregrounds sight as a crucial element. When we enter the scene of the tragedy, we find that it is filled with a sunlight that allows us to completely witness the aftermath of the calamity. We see this in the sunbeams that announce themselves as they render the space of the interior visible (we can see the light because of the dust motes, etc.). Without either the corpses or the survivors in view, we are left to memorialize the act of seeing – of witnessing itself as a crucial act and of recognizing the fate of those who have witnessed history. We now find ourselves in the place of the children, now massacred, who would have carried the memory of their parents. And it is to our eyes and memory that the future of a people may be framed. Thus, the television frame shows the rainy window, the shaft of light, and the broken spectacles that are all frameworks gathered within the image screen.

What edges into the foreground here, besides incidents from history, is the act of showing and seeing. *C:APH* then displays the trauma that is being witnessed with the next group of images: a framed photograph of a woman, an open book resting on a piece of luggage, a bullet-pierced window, a child's shoe, and a small toy. The sequence reiterates the shock of losing sight of the mother figure (as an embodiment of personal

origin) and of losing a documentary record (here, it is both the photo-portrait and the book as story, with the luggage as an accumulation of things we bring with us “from before”). Once the lens of vision has been broken, *C:APH* seems to be saying, the people can no longer move forward as a people. That the people are no more is emblemized by the fact that their train, and so the forward movement of their narrative, has been stopped. In another sense, with the loss of their memories and thus the continuity of their life stories, there is an expression of revulsion for the disfigurement of the people; something denoted by the gargoyles. The dispersal of the refugees is aligned with the objects of their daily life and with personal images that no longer cohere. Once the personal record has been shattered, the people themselves are no longer seen as a people but verge on a grotesquerie.

The same suggestions of an endangered connection to the past are evident in Episode Sixteen and the series’ construction of the oil boom in the Canadian West during the 1970s. The story opens by showing a herd of horses running through a landscape within which an oil derrick operates. The horizon line is tilted sharply to the left, and the shot of the horses is combined with a close-up of the oil platform that repeatedly penetrates the land (Figure 14a). The series is presenting the discovery and development of a natural resource that would seem to be of benefit to Canada, but it does so in a way that expresses a destabilization of the land and the ushering out of frame of an erstwhile natural relationship (the unfettered horses). Later in the story, the discovery of oil is shown with an oil rig reflected in a rear-view mirror, with the oil splattering over the mirror, pooling on the ground, and dripping from fir trees (Figure 14b). The sequence is a sign of the downside to modern development. We are blinded to our own past – the

“where we have come from” of the rear-view mirror – and it is something that is attached to the ruination of the natural world (both the initial tilting perspective of the horizon, and the toxic pool and oil-drenched trees). A group or collective (the herd that is symbolic of a people) that is unmolested in a natural state (the Canadian landscape) is destabilized by modern developments that threaten to cut off a connection to the past. Besides oil dripping from fir trees and tilted landscapes, *C:APH* shows coffins washed out of the ground and floating on a river in the fifteen episode, and houses that are towed, partly underwater, across bays and inlets in the sixteenth episode (Figure 7). Each of those sets of images is linked to stories of modern development. It appears that what gets lost during that process, from the perspective of *C:APH*, is the ability to conceive of an “our land.” Rather than a place of affective belonging, and one in which a people’s future is grounded, the land appears to be more of a space of transience and something that is prone to commodification. The landscape is less Canadian and more in line with a global environment of freely moving migrants and traded resources.

## **Section 2 – Objects, desire, and the past**

The previous section examined the expression of disassociations in *C:APH* with the past, with children, and with the mother as origin/bliss. What now follows are cases of how *C:APH* demonstrates both a desire to reconnect with these elements and the process by which this can be done. The methodological basis still draws its support from the theories of Jacques Lacan. With the child’s introduction into the Symbolic Order (principally language), the only means by which the Subject’s desired return to an imagined pure state of bliss can be attempted is through the signifying fragments of text, images, and sounds. Desire, as such, can become attached to the objects (words, pictures,

voices) that stand in the place of its realization. Having been split from the comforting union, the way back is only possible through the objects onto which desire has been transferred (photographs, paintings, archival documents, etc). Under such circumstances, Lacan explains, “The object of desire, in the usual sense, is...a phantasy (*sic*) that is in reality the *support* of desire, or a lure.”<sup>18</sup> He goes on to say that this object is “simply the presence of a hollow, a void, which can be occupied...by any object, and whose agency we know only in the form of the lost object, the *petit a*.”<sup>19</sup> *C:APH* is a weave of images and voices as lost objects (*l’objet a*). They are *l’objets a* in that they support the desire in *C:APH* for a fullness of historical authenticity, and in the sense that they are lures for viewers’ desires.

The analysis opens with two case studies that look at the use of images and objects in *C:APH*. The initial case is presented in two parts, the first of which is based on the sixth episode’s presentation of the Gold Rush in western Canada during the 1850s. In this situation, and inspired by Lacanian theory, it is as though we see a performance of the lost object and of desire as a permanent condition (and not something that can be extinguished by acquisition). An outcome of this process in *C:APH* is that we become aware of the presence of Canadian history; that is to say, history is not an elsewhere that is past and absent, but remains a part of the here and now. The second part of this initial case develops the discussion by establishing how *C:APH* encourages a sense of belonging to, and desire for, our historical origins through the use of a maternal image. What we are seeing here is the association of desire’s object with images of the mother, as an embodiment of a point of origin. The point is demonstrated by using a narrative extension of the Gold Rush story, which occurs in the prologue to Episode Eleven, and

again as a story in the sixth episode. As a preamble to Episode Eleven, the Gold Rush forms part of an introduction that establishes the allure of the Canadian West to European immigrants at the turn of the twentieth century.

The enactment of the lost object and of its desire is clearly demonstrated in *C:APH* in the Gold Rush in Episode Six (Figure 15). Unlike the presentation in *C:APH* of the oil boom, the portrayal of gold's extraction is not by default linked to spoilage. The discovery of gold is linked to the birth of community in a dream-like sequence that opens and closes with the same twilight vision of a moist cleft in the land. A more logically temporal sequence would have the Gold Rush begin in a virgin landscape and conclude with the town. Instead, the story begins in an unspoiled wilderness, and then shows us the creation of boomtowns, only to return us to a virgin landscape at the end of the story. We are thereby left looking at Canadian nature for its potential of community. At the same time we are forewarned of the loss of this pristine beauty, having already seen it become a golden boomtown. Thus, in the Gold Rush story in *C:APH*, we are returned to the land as a point of origin for Canadian community in a visual sequence that conflates an unsullied nature with an historical event. In the center of this finding and then remembering of community are the clusters of photographic fragments that appear to tell the whole story. The community, in this sense, is the photographic images that "build" the story. Yet at the close, the last archival photograph fades from view and leaves a pristine landscape – creating a memory of the past (or a ghost image) based on a collection of photographs that we have witnessed, rather than an attachment to the future community that remains or continues to expand. And it is here, the series suggests, in the

land and in the gathering together of our pictures, that a sense of community may be rediscovered.

The presentation of the discovery of gold itself, like that of the gold boomtown appearing and disappearing, enacts the dynamics of desiring the lost object (Figure 16a). The story relates how a First Nations trapper came across a gold deposit on the bed of the Fraser River in British Columbia when he was taking a drink of water. In the movement from the desired object (the nugget seen from above) to desire's possession (the nugget now in hand), the point of view (looking down on the nugget prior to acquiring it, and then looking at the acquisition from underwater) keeps desire in play by keeping the object at a distance. In the latter shot, the nugget disappears once more when the hand that grasps it is withdrawn from the water.

Immediately after we have seen the golden nugget being taken from the creek bed, we are shown the arrival of hundreds of prospectors in Fort Victoria on Vancouver Island, in 1858 (Figure 16b). In place of the nugget (of desire), viewers are given several views of steeples, a watercolor of a western town, and then the main narrative of the gold rush in British Columbia. The steeples are signs of exaltation that can also be seen in the watercolor of the town. The videotaped footage of actual steeples and the sound of ringing bells combine to create an impression of realism that underscores the "pastness" of the archival watercolor. The act of reproducing reality is more apparent with the watercolor than it is with the videotape, which seems to transmit only that which stood before the lens. In this latter case, any act of composition or selective framing (for instance, eliminating hydro wires or other signs of modernity), is not perceptible. The seemingly living presence of the video image emphasizes the bygone character of the

watercolor, so that the watercolor becomes a past image of community and, as such, something that may be longed for. The manner in which the chapter opens and closes reiterates this vision of longing for a desirable object (and not as destruction or loss, so much as the state or process of desiring itself).

The landscape of the gold rush, rather than being shown in a skewed perspective or spoiled, is a symbolic place of birth. A return to the land is effectively a return to a blissful state of unity (the pristine landscape before the gold rush held such a promise and, since the presentation of that story returns to the same image, the land continues to offer that same promise). My reading of the gold nugget and the original landscape interprets them both as representing the Lacanian *l'objet a*, the desire for which is unrelenting. The seeing of the nugget concludes with its immediate disappearance, like the cycle of gold town boom and virgin land.

The abovementioned meanings are still in evidence during the presentation of the Klondike Gold Rush in 1987, which we see in a story at the beginning of the eleventh installment of *Canada: A People's History* (Figure 17). The story starts with video footage of mountains and a lake at twilight, after which we see the golden, glittering surface of the lake. The gold highlights are faded into a shot of a period newspaper headline that reads: "Gold! Gold! Gold! Gold!" The headlines then fade away and are replaced by a photograph of a woman named Martha Purdy, who is seen holding the hands of her two children. The golden significations are twofold: a reunion with mother (a re-finding of maternal bliss that is based in an image of the land) and a reconnection with the past that is made possible by the archival photographic fragment – the part object with which the viewer can reanimate what once was. As viewers behold the land,



they come to behold a noteworthy image of maternal affection. Thus, as the mother figure and the land are seen together as desirable objects; they conflate a desire to return to a sense of maternal bliss and origin with a return to the country (getting back to national roots and origins). In a sense, the rendering of maternal return is one that veils a call home to Canada.

The recovery from the trauma of separation is then a process of returning to the past, finding the lost object of desire, and reconstructing a coherent sense of self. Thus, the initial split from the mother (which creates a lack in the self) is swathed by suturing together objects from the past (the archival images that are assembled into a presentation of Canadian history). Two primary signifiers for the source of original bliss are the land and the maternal image (both linked to the desire's golden haze).

The Lacanian concept of 'desire' informs Susan Stewart's discourse on the melancholy of longing that characterizes the nostalgic. In Stewart's words, "The nostalgic is enamored of distance, not of the referent itself...[for the nostalgic] to reach [their] goal of closing the gap between resemblance and identity [a] *lived* experience would have to take place...[that] would cancel out the desire that is a nostalgia's reason for existence"<sup>20</sup> (italics in original). Desire, as noted by Lacan, is created by the loss of an original state of bliss (the state of mother/child unity). Once we are separated from this condition, we are forever seeking it out. In large measure, it is not the realization of that original and pleasurable state, but the experience of desire that stimulates us. What we in effect desire is desire itself – the wanting of something more than the having of the object. Once we have the thing, we can no longer desire it and so in order to desire, we must begin searching for another object (of desire). The same is true, as pointed out by

Stewart, of the nostalgic who cannot actually have the experience of the past (since that would extinguish their desire), but lusts instead over the souvenir as the object through which they can touch and yet still desire the past (since the snowglobe is from my childhood visit to the fairground, I can touch the thing that I held as a child and yet still desire to be at the fairground once more as a child – I imagine myself there). In terms of *C:APH*, it is through the objects of the past (paintings, photographs, sketches, etc.) that we can elicit the past and yet still desire it. In effect, the virtuality of historical experience is required in order to free the desiring gaze to spark a participatory interest in the Subject.

The nostalgic longing that is shown in *C:APH*, and how it draws in an emotional experience on the part of viewers is exemplified in the twelfth episode's depiction of Canadian soldiers fighting in the First World War (Figure 18a/b). Here, the depiction of a father's remembrance of his dead son is constructed on the same paradigm as the discovery of the golden nugget. Rather than a lump of gold, however, the object to which desire is attached is a gold ring. The sequence illustrates the thoughts that the father conveyed to the mother upon their son's death. The father had located his son's corpse because of the ring worn by the young man. The process of relocating the absent loved one is redoubled in the photographic trace that the loved one leaves behind.

We are introduced to the soldier's story by seeing his ring sitting upon letter that his father has written to the soldier's mother. We get the impression that she has received the letter and opened it while sitting at home by the fireside (Figure 18a). The fireplace is in the background of the scene, and as the story progresses, the camera pulls back from a full-frame view of the flames to reveal the letter and the soldier's ring. The connotations are

much the same as those conveyed in the fourth episode by the imagery of burning structures that meant the feared collapse of Canadian national coherence. In this case, it is the person who has been lost. And the only way back to the person is through objects. The ring carries the trace of the soldier since it is something that he wore upon his body and it is symbolic of the objects upon which our desires alight in order to reclaim the absent other. In *C:APH*, the ring is seen to flare into a brilliance that coalesces as a photograph of the dead soldier. Now, instead of the ring being a trace of the absent other, it is the light that touched the man and reflected his then living presence onto the photographic emulsion. The process creates another object (the photograph in the place of the gold ring) through which the past may once again be experienced.

It is through these objects and images, and the emotional charge they trigger, that the series attempts to convey its impression of Canadian history onto the mind's eye of its audience. The dynamics of the evocation of memory in *C:APH* is demonstrated by the latter part of the sequence seen in Figure 18b. The object of the other, the ring, has conjured the absent man as an image object, which then dissolves into another photograph showing the happier times gone by and the soldier joyfully carrying his mother in his arms. One object seems to recall another object, as the image of the soldier seems to remember an image of himself with his mother. The photographic scene, holding onto one's mother, is itself symptomatic of holding onto an object through which we come to see and recognize ourselves as Subjects. In other words, the image reflected back at us governs our self-impressions, as the maternal face was, at our origin, the source of ourselves. Finally, it is the father in France who sees the ring that reminds him of his joy (expressed by the photograph of the now dead son), which leads him back to

the joy of the mother/wife/family in Canada. Thus, the full progression expresses a longing to go back to a place before loss, where the family was complete and happy. This repeats the suggestion of an expressed desire of *C:APH* for a return to a Canada that is unified and content.

The intent of *C:APH* is to arouse our interest in Canada through the objects that show its history. In effect, the series wants Canada and a sense of Canadian-ness to be what we desire. In this sense, we have what Lacan calls the “dialectic of desire...[that] creates the link between the desire of the subject and the desire of the Other.”<sup>21</sup> In the mother/child relation, the child will insist on being the object of the mother’s affections. We can see this dialectic play out in *Canada: A People’s History* in the fifth episode’s presentation of the remembrance of the veterans of the Battle of Lundy’s Lane (Figure 19). The conflict occurred on July 25, 1814, near the end of the War of 1812, and it is regarded as the bloodiest ever fought on Canadian territory and the one that finally stopped the American invasion of Canada.<sup>22</sup> After a reenactment of the fighting, we see the battlefield strewn with the dead. A young woman is then seen walking among the corpses and occasionally bending down for a close look as if hoping to find a survivor. Afterwards, a photograph of the old soldiers precedes a reenacted sequence of a woman lingering at the door of a barn and then turning and entering the barn. The woman appears to be the same person who wandered the battlefield and emblemizes the figure of Canada recalling the sacrifices made in her name. The juxtaposition of archival photographs with live imagery emphasizes the “pastness” of the photographs (and the elderly nature of the soldiers in the photograph contributes all the more to a sense of past time). In a sense, the woman enacts a yearning by lingering at the entrance as if waiting

or reflecting (in anticipation) before turning back inside. By the end, it is easy to imagine that what we have seen is a reflection upon men who defended the honor of Canada by preventing a foreign invasion of her soil.

Viewed using the ideas of Lacan and Stewart, the archival image of the veterans of the battle at Lundy's Lane becomes the desired object because it seems that the woman's yearning grows out of its disappearance (the image fades as the woman appears, so that it seems as if she emerges to look for that image). The woman then turns away and disappears from view without acknowledging the viewers. The lack of recognition is coupled with the closing image of the now empty doorway so that her image of longing for what once was (the act of military bravery) remains in the minds of viewers who are left longing (or waiting) for her reappearance in the doorway. Thus, as the archival image seems to fade into her memory, she becomes an object (like the photo-fragment) of our recollection.

Stewart's ideas on narrative acts and relations between subject (reader) and object (text) also inflect the reading on this point of the construction of Canadian history in *C:APH*. Her work supports the argument that the many images, scenes, and stories of the series are given narrative coherence by an underlying desire. According to Stewart, narrative is "a structure of desire...that both invents and distances its object."<sup>23</sup> It is an operation that she maintains has the ability "to generate significant objects and hence to both generate and engender a significant other."<sup>24</sup> The argument here is that the process of making significant others produces a signified rather than actual presence (desired and not real). The hollow or void of the Lacanian *object a* can then be considered as a larger, figural space formed out of pictures, sounds, and moving tableaux that can receive the

desired acting-out of history. Otherwise stated: sequences (a structure of desire) invent and distance their object (the past) so that an important other is created in the viewing subjects' imagination.

We can see this in the eighth episode's concluding segment on the realization of Canadian Confederation (Figure 20a/b). From a video shot of a bright sky, we are moved to an interior so that we find ourselves looking out at the same sky, but now through an ornate neo-gothic window. We are ushered by the subsequent imagery through a room by first being shown a desk that is covered in paperwork, then a glimpse of a bathroom, and then a close-up of a framed photo-portrait of Sir John A. Macdonald's first wife, Isabella Clark, that is placed next to a calendar showing the date of July 1, 1867. We then get a close-up view of an open book, and then an actress who addresses the camera as Macdonald's second wife, Susan Agnes Bernard. The last images present us with a bureau that has a doll and cosmetics in front of its mirror, and finally a shot of a burning candle (Figure 20a). The sequence eventually concludes by showing a young actress looking up at a night sky that is filled with exploding fireworks, all of which suggests that the national future is well in hand now that the Confederation document has been signed (Figure 20b).

A counterpoint of mayhem versus merger is established between the fireworks' fiery conflagrations and the meditative shot of a single burning candle. In the singular and steady form of the candle we have an image of bliss and purity in a light that allows us to see. In the random and unpredictable violence of the fireworks, replete with noise, we have an image of disunity that only offers glimpses of our surroundings. With the form of the empty chair that is reflected in the dresser-top mirror, we have a reflective

space that can be imaginatively occupied so as to provide a false and segmented sense of wholeness. In the place of the chair in front of the dresser that is covered with toiletries, cosmetics, a comb, and a brush, we see a place where we can be someone. Yet this is a space that is composed of parts – the images and objects that belong to someone else – and we take these things in our imagination in order to fashion an historical self (to vicariously live the experiences of the people that we see in *C:APH*). This act of forming ourselves as subjects by taking on the image of the other results in what Lacan calls an orthopedic self, something that occurs when the infant glances to and fro the figure of the parent and the child's own reflection in a mirror. In these back and forth glances, the child who is still unable to conceive of itself as a separate being, moves to a state of anticipation – where the child can imagine themselves as whole and separate by virtue of the mirror image that they see and have correlated with the forms of the parent. Lacan calls this manner of self-understanding an “‘orthopedic’ form of its totality,”<sup>25</sup> because the mirror is a form of corrective aide – it helps the child achieve something that it would otherwise be unable to. The dressing table is a site, to use the vernacular, at which we compose ourselves by putting on our face; such a place and an action seems an apt metaphor for the dramatization in *C:APH* of Canadian history.

Additional indicators of present absence, or Stewart's “significant other,” that is the sensory and imagined presence of someone who is no longer physically there, augment all of the objects that surround the doll. In effect, the objects of daily ritual that are seen with the doll underscore the orthopedic nature of the Subject's formation. The comb, talcum pot, and bottles of cologne all signal surface sensations or illusory presence. They are signs of the body removed – in other words, we think of the body in

its absence – we smell the fragrance of a loved one and we are reminded of them. And it is through the external world of objects, draped with our desires, that our Subject-hood comes to be formed. The expression of unity has emotive hooks that catch viewers and attach them to the history being presented.

The selection of props suggests an effect of presence and not an actual physical one. In the same vein, the arrangement of archival materials suggests an historical presence and not an actual one. In addition, it is the assemblage of these materials that bears a resemblance to the Lacanian orthopedic self: an illusory sense of completeness created from multiple fragments. When *C:APH* brings together disparate images, it creates an illusion (imagined in the mind's eye of viewers) of unity. As a collective, the different archival images generate a whole image. The process of creating a whole (self) through the assembling of archival visual materials contains a corollary expression of a people's unification not only with a history, but also with each other. In simple terms, the viewing audience is repeatedly shown individual images or individuals being gathered into a group portrait or social collective. On another level, the suggestion of a collective image is also expressed in *C:APH* by means of many-windowed structures, and overlapping window frames. In either case, many points of views are gathered into the unified likeness of a single people.

A clear expression of collectivity, and of the emotional hooks within the gathering of archival and recreated imagery can be seen in the chapter of the eighth episode called "Three Weeks in Quebec." The chapter depicts the successful negotiation of Confederation at Quebec in 1864 after the initial meeting of delegates in Charlottetown that same year. The assemblage that brings together archival fragments into a seemingly



coherent whole presentation mirrors the coming together of representatives with different interests into a singular national vision.

The chapter on the Quebec Conference opens with a sequence that heralds the dynamics of the forthcoming presentation (Figure 21). The first set shows the Quebec parliament building and then a flight of Canada geese landing on a marshy lakeside. This is followed by a reenacted sequence showing the approach of a steam train, a passenger compartment, and then the principal figure of the story – Mercy Coles. She was the daughter of George Coles, leader of the opposition in the Legislative Council of Prince Edward Island. Mercy Coles's arrival, and the introduction of the delegates themselves, is shown with an archival photograph of lower Quebec City, a view up a rocky escarpment, and a series of shots that present a collection of cartes-de-visite.<sup>26</sup>

While *C:APH* does present the events that unfolded at Quebec, it also expresses a present-tense set of circumstances. The migratory return of geese emblemizes the expressed wish of *C:APH* to align the return home of a collective (the re-familiarization of Canadian people with their historical origins) with a natural and seemingly eternal rhythm (the always already of the nation-state). An associated leitmotif is the formation of a whole through the gathering together of parts – be it a seemingly coherent whole from disparate archival materials or a common sense of national identity shared among different cultures. The geese are more than a visual metaphor for the gathering of delegates at Quebec. They are also metaphors for what we are seeing in the form of archival fragments that are brought together in a story of different peoples forming a nation, and the effect of that seeing, which *C:APH* presents as the common ground – or pond – upon which different households gather to form a national audience.

The conference at Quebec was an important step on the way to Canadian Confederation and, ultimately, nationhood. A critical part of the negotiations was the recognition of the needs and concerns of different regions, and of political and social interests. And that view of the past that is seen in *C:APH* is framed by its concerns in the present: a need to generate a common structure of reference with which to present a shared sense of Canada and Canadian identity: i.e., what unifies the audience is what they are looking at. What each individual pane in the window has in common is the landscape it looks upon.

*C:APH* threads the presentation of the negotiations together with a visit by Coles to a science museum (Figure 22). The negotiations are seen briefly from outside, looking through a rain-streaked window. The point of view evokes an exterior stormy environment and an inside space of negotiation. The power of imaging technology to reveal the previously unseen is an important consideration because it is reflected in the process by which *C:APH* captures archival materials and scenes reenacted from history, edits them together, and then broadcasts them nationwide as a coherent history. Canadians are thereby exposed to a world they were previously unaware of. The suggestion of the power in imaging technology is expressed by the models of scientific wonder witnessed by Coles during her visit to the museum. The refracting prism, microscope, and Foucault's pendulum that she sees are all new developments that permit hitherto entirely unknown worlds to come to light. In the case of the prism and microscope, it is a world of individual elements that compose the whole, and, with the pair of shadows cast by a window frame that are seen behind the microscope, the inference is of an inward examination that is prompted by an awareness of the

surrounding world. The third scientific device on display, Foucault's pendulum, emblemizes the connection between an outer world and an inward examination. The pendulum gives visible proof of the Earth's daily rotation because the pendulum swing rotates in time as a direct result of that rotation. We see the historic demonstration of the earth's daily movement within a presentation that valorizes the everyday movements of people as historic.

*C:APH* is itself a modern system of technology that encourages us to come into contact with the past through the visual experiences of people who have preceded us. On the one hand this occurs by giving us a point of view that mimics that held by people in the past. For example, in the story of the massacred WWII refugees, we seem to move through the train much like Gladys Arnold did when she saw the aftermath. On the other hand, we are given the archival material that once allowed people in the past to seemingly be with their lost loves once more. In this instance, we have the story of the WWI soldier, and his ring returned to his mother in a letter notifying her of his death. In this case, we are left with the photographs through which the absent other can be experienced again. However, neither reenactment nor photograph actually returns us to the past nor brings the dead back to life. What both recreations do accomplish, however, is to stimulate a desire in us for the past. I argue that the historical scenes, video or otherwise, reflect the Lacanian *l'objet a*, which "is in reality the *support* of desire, or a lure."<sup>27</sup> The arrangement made by *C:APH* of objects and images is the delicate netting upon which we imaginatively construct our experience of the past.

### Section 3 – History as theatre

The first section of this chapter examined how images of women and children are used in *C:APH* as part of an expression of anxiety over the loss of Canadian historical knowledge and a corollary loss of Canadian identity. The threatened child suggested the endangered nation, while the form of the mother stood for a desired point of origin. And it is through the child's visual reception of their parent's traditions, that the story of the people is sustained. These aforementioned ideas were brought forward in the second section of this chapter, and which looked at how images and objects are the things through which we can access the past and transmit it to others. The idea is that the image of the absent person is a form of Lacanian *l'objet a*, the lure that snares our desires. The purpose of this third section is to present how objects and archival images (all Lacanian *l'objets a*) operate together to produce a presentation that can be experienced on a personal and emotional level. The examination incorporates two aspects: looking at the dynamic relationship between objects, images, and the gaze, and also considering the theatricalization in *C:APH* of Canadian history. The theoretical structure is derived from the work of Roland Barthes, specifically his ideas of the *studium* and the *punctum*, and the thoughts of Stephen Bann on the question of anecdotal representations that allow the experience of history to be internalized by its audience.

The illustrative material from *C:APH* comes from three points in the series. The first objective is to establish how we are enthralled by *C:APH*. To do so, Barthes' concepts of *studium* and *punctum* are used in an examination of the chapter called "Three Weeks in Quebec" that is in Episode Eight and that depicts the evening socializing among delegates, family, and friends at the conference in 1864 at Quebec on

Confederation (Figure 23). The analysis is then expanded to include how history is dramatized in *C:APH*. Two case studies ground the study on this point. The first is from Episode Four, and deals with the treatment in *C:APH* of the battle on the Plains of Abraham in 1763 (Figure 24a/b), and the second is from Episode Seventeen's presentation of the 1980 Quebec referendum on independence (Figure 28).

To better appreciate how the main narrative of *C:APH* imprints the past on contemporary viewers, its two components – the visual field (or, our field of vision) and the objects (which are seen within the field of view) – are considered to be, respectively, like Barthes' concepts of *studium* and *punctum*. The *studium*, he explains, is a “very wide field of unconcerned desire...[on] the order of *liking*, not of *loving*; it mobilizes a half desire...a vague slippery, irresponsible interest”<sup>28</sup> with which “I participate in the figures, the faces, the gestures, the settings, the actions.”<sup>29</sup> As for the *punctum*, Barthes writes that “it is not I who seek it out...it is this element which arises from the scene, shoots out of it like an arrow, and pierces me.”<sup>30</sup> Frequently it is a “detail, *i.e.*, a partial object”<sup>31</sup> that occurs “by chance and for nothing,”<sup>32</sup> “like a supplement that is at once inevitable and delightful.”<sup>33</sup> In Figure 23 for instance, which shows the evening socializing during the negotiations at Quebec, the lens produces the *studium*: the wide field of the ballroom that is filled with dancers and in which viewers participate with the figures, settings, and actions. Much like the Lacanian *l'objets a*, what elicits the viewers' personal experience of history is the *punctum*, which may be a glass, the glimpse of a hand or bosom, a child's doll such as that seen earlier, or even the glitter of candles on jewelry. (A response may also be touched-off by *punctum* as various as glittering surfaces, sounds, or flapping

curtains.) The *punctum* should be understood as the inducement of a dormant desire rather than a simple recollection of facts.

The central narrative of the episode on the negotiations at Quebec for Confederation is the evening festivity (Figure 23). *C:APH* aligns the social spectacle of ballroom dancing with the scripting of national declaration. The implications evident in the visit to the science museum, with its prism, microscope, and pendulum, are repeated in the presentation of the conference negotiations and evening merriment. The audience gains access to the interior (the inward look or perspective on Canadian history) through a trio of large windows. The prism has become a glittering chandelier, with the investigative lens showing not only its delicate beauty (rather than a butterfly or moth's wing), but that of the elegantly dressed dancers as well. The swirling movement of dancers, seen from the improbable overhead view, is linked through a visual dissolve to the legal texts scattered upon a desk. The point of view suggests the way one looks through the eyepiece of a microscope (down from on high). The implication of Foucault's pendulum will also return in the overhead overlap of textual documentation that backgrounds Confederation with the circular swirl of the waltzing dancers.

The "event" of Confederation is aligned with the ballroom, with the ballroom dancing as a metaphor for a negotiated union made possible through cooperative movements. The sequence of dancing (the visual field as *studium*) is punctuated throughout by the many eye-catching *punctums*. The glimpses of bosoms, smiling faces, hands grasping drinks are the points of attachment given as much if not more importance than the dance itself. The overhead view of texts blends into the swirl of dancers so that the meaning is of unifying – cobbling together something new out of the individual

fragments. The closing image, which shows a beautiful girl asleep on a couch (signaling both the desiring gaze and an embryonic nation that will shortly awake), leads into a close-up of an ice container and then a view of a tower.

The process of the negotiations at Quebec was directed at taking several distinct regions and forming a coherent nation. In this way, the initial image of the ice bucket suggests the abstract form of national being upon which the conference in Quebec is focused. The choice of a window-filled tower speaks to the desire *C:APH* to create a clearly delineated portrayal that unites different ways of seeing (all of the different windows – symbolic of images through which we come to know the world around us) into one dominant overview of the landscape (what one can do looking out from the tower is what can be done looking at Canadian history through the imagery that *C:APH* has gathered together). The vague, unformed shapes that move across the distorting surface of the ice bucket are resolved into windows and frames, and the unformed people are organized into a nation as *C:APH* narrativizes the past into a history.

The Québec Conference chapter closes by first showing a shot of the paperwork produced by the negotiations, then a complete view of a photograph of the delegates that leads into a reenacted scene showing a photograph of John A. Macdonald's wife with their child, and then finally a shot of the letter he is supposedly in the process of writing to her. With this sequence, *C:APH* restates its prime motif: the collectivization of individual expressions of devotion to the national form as something greater than themselves that defines them all. The meanings can be read from the sequence in two interwoven layers. First, the series has moved from the individuated portraits of the cartes-de-visite, which illustrated Mercy Coles's arrival in Quebec and noted in the

previous section, through the paperwork of Confederation to a complete view of the group portrait; this implies the move from a fragmentary state to a collectivity. Second, the imagery progresses from the scripting of the documentation of Confederation through an image of mother and child to the handwritten letter; this suggests the self-inscription of national devotion.

The reconstruction of the negotiations at Québec brings together two activities: the negotiations and scripting of the Confederation documents, and the gaiety and dance of the evening socializing. In a way, the dryness of legal discussion and editorial revision is livened up for the television audience by the entertaining performance of the dancers. In simple terms, the glittering chandelier and swirling dancers make the history more entertaining and visually appealing. The performative aspect is important since the whole of *C:APH* is a theatricalization of Canadian history.

Two points in *C:APH* that exemplify this theatricalization are the reenactment of the battle between the French and English on the Plains of Abraham in 1763 (Figure 24a/b), and the narration of the 1980 Québec referendum (Figure 28). The dramatic theatricalization of both the battle's reenactment and the referendum is reconstructed using the same techniques seen in the presentation of the negotiations at Québec, discussed above. Despite being conflicts, the 1763 battle and the 1980 referendum are, like the negotiations at Québec in 1864, constructed to convey a sense of unification. In all three cases, the viewing audience is encouraged to imagine a larger whole from the individual experiences and images. Four elements drive this expression: partial objects and partial views, the human face, framing devices, and the heroization of personal sacrifice.



The battle itself is prefaced by the climb up the escarpment to the meadow where the sun rises like a curtain on the plains as the grand stage of history (Figure 24a). The sharp division between the grey tones of the foreboding cliff face, with the abstraction of grappling fingers, and the golden pastoral meadow highlights individual struggle to arrive in a beautiful place by overcoming a challenge set by land. As a golden scene it is the object of desire over which the battle is fought – the desire is to “be there.”

We are then introduced to the main protagonists, the two generals, as well as artillery commanders, and the infantrymen of both sides. The introductions take place as the two sides arrange themselves for battle. Wolfe and Montcalm are shown in painted portraits, while re-enactors embody the lower-ranking officers and infantrymen. In the case of the latter, we are not given names, but instead nationalities (Irish, Scottish, etc.). The officers can be seen evaluating the field upon which the fight is to take place, and directing the positioning of guns and men. The infantry, by contrast, crowds the frame and we are treated to close-ups of their faces that seem to turn them into monumental forms. Once the fighting commences, we see cannon and rifle muzzles, and glimpses of body parts – expressions of action and visceral consequence (Figure 24b). In each case, the partial view tends to abstract the action and consequence from individuality. The effect is to focus more on the instant of the gesture or discharge and the bloody result, but not specific persons. With the conclusion of hostilities, the camera slowly pans over the forms of several fallen men until the screen goes to black. Afterwards, we are shown Benjamin West’s *The Death of General Wolfe*, 1771 (National Gallery of Canada) (Figure 25), and then the work done by Marc-Aurèle de Foy Suzor-Coté, which is the study that he did in 1902 for a work to be entitled *La mort de Montcalm*, which shows

Montcalm upon his deathbed<sup>34</sup> (Figure 26). The screen goes to black again and then we are returned to the plains to be shown several more close ups of dead soldiers. The screen goes black once more before the chapter closes with the narrative of a French survivor who mourns the loss of the confrontation.

*C:APH* crowds its frame with the human details of the conflict, and these are the facets of history that then catch our eye and trigger our affective response. By way of comparison we can consider a painting that Stephen Bann examined as part of his work on the French painter Paul Delaroche: *The Execution of Lady Jane Grey*, 1834 (National Gallery, London) (Figure 27). Lady Jane Grey was the niece of Henry VIII, and she ascended the throne of England in 1553, receiving priority over Henry VIII's two daughters, Mary Tudor, and Elizabeth. Mary claimed the throne nine days later and based on charges of high treason had Jane beheaded on July 10, 1553; Jane was seventeen years old at the time of her death. The painting received a "rapturous reception at the [Paris] Salon of 1834"<sup>35</sup> as it "fascinated French spectators...with...an illusionistic representation of emotionally laden moments from the past."<sup>36</sup> The scene presents us with the moment just prior to her execution. We see a blindfolded Lady Jane partly supported by the Lieutenant of the Tower, and reaching for the chopping block with her right hand. Bann successfully argues that a point of preoccupation for Delaroche in this painting was the depiction of her "hesitant movement...[towards] the block."<sup>37</sup> The consequence of this, according to Bann, is that we see "her bodily awareness...translated entirely into terms of what she feels (or feels for) in her state of disequilibrium."<sup>38</sup> Of course, what she is reaching for is the surface upon which her neck is to be severed, and seeing this, the emotional involvement of the painting's audience is immediately triggered. The

experience of that event is effectively conveyed through the very human nature of Lady Jane's uncertain gesture into empty space.

In an analogous manner, the staging of *C:APH* is internalized by evoking in viewers an empathetic response with the dramatic tableaux of the history. Their personal response certifies the presentation of history because they have actually *felt* it either on a visceral level (witnessing physical suffering) or on an emotional level (seeing a parent who grieves over a lost child). The construction of the past in *C:APH* induces a role-playing that is made even more evocative by the high realism and dramatic gestures of its staging. The presentation of the Battle of the Plains of Abraham is one situation, and the Charlottetown meetings, Quebec negotiations, and the confrontation of a childless French-Canadian couple by a conscription officer are other instances. The Canadian past is acted out in scores of these dramatic tableaux, each containing an extravagance of emotion and gesture. The use in *C:APH* of these tableaux repeats the shift Stephen Bann notes in academic history painting of 1838-1856 "to the premium placed on piquant immediacy by the 'anecdote'."<sup>39</sup> He goes on to argue that "in this way, 'history' became internalized, and its textual authority replaced by a measure of personal response."<sup>40</sup> Thus, when we see the story of the French-Canadian couple resisting Federal conscription efforts in Episode Twelve, the small kitchen in which these events unfold becomes a stage in Canadian history. Bann's stance goes hand in hand with Barthes' *studium* and *punctum*, lending the heretofore loosely defined field of emotionally charged objects a narrative configuration.

The focus on the ordinary has an echo in one of the only two paintings that are included in the presentation of the Battle of the Plains of Abraham: Benjamin West's *The*

*Death of General Wolfe*, (Figure 25). The painting represents an interesting point of comparison with which to analyze the series' theatricalized and highly realistic rendering of history. Ann Uhry Abrams explains that the painting is "both a historical document and a theatrical tableau";<sup>41</sup> "instead of creating a documentation of the event, [West] staged an operatic performance."<sup>42</sup> However, West depicts the hero in a down-to-earth and seemingly realistic manner, opting for period military dress rather than the Classical togas or nudity preferred by academic painting. *Canada: A People's History* practically mimics the techniques of depicting history that are seen in West's painting. For example, the negotiations at Québec are both historical document and theatrical tableau in that they combine fact and entertainment (an attempt at accuracy that is shaped by spectacle).

When we look at West's painting, we are expected to see the attention to authentic detail, and in the process of looking we also notice the inclusion of living people's "actual portraits...[that] enhance the picture's illusion of actuality and authenticity."<sup>43</sup> In *C:APH*, the camera repeatedly frames archival portraits in addition to *live* facial expressions apparently inspired by past events. Also, the inclusion of the human face is made all the more potent because *C:APH* introduces the person with an archival portrait, and then follow this with the countenance of the actor who portrays them.<sup>44</sup> With this technique, we are seemingly brought into contact with a living presence from history.

The practice of moving from archival portrait to its living resemblance also works to bring the grand events of history down to a more human and personal point of view. We can see this in the presentation of the battle on the Plains of Abraham, where the deaths of ordinary soldiers (French or English) are not treated in the same manner as

those of the two generals, Wolfe and Montcalm. The fate of the former is reenacted, while that of the latter is shown in painted form. The immediacy of the video close-ups of the dead and dying soldiers makes it seem as though we are witnessing events as they happened and nearly as though we are actually walking among the dead and dying on the battlefield. In the cases where we are shown the deaths of the two generals, the painted representations convey a sense of memorialization of the events. Here, we seem to be remembering the events after the fact. The archival painted image is a form of relic that is open to veneration and recognized as an illustration. Video, on the other hand, is live immediacy and, as such, elicits emotional reaction and recognition as actual (not historic fact).

The same kind of dramatization structures the chapter called “The Choice,” which presents a narrative on the 1980 referendum on Quebec independence (Episode Seventeen, Figure 28a/b/c). Over and above the fact that both *The Death of Wolfe* and “The Choice” convey major points in Canadian history, two key elements that they also share are the construction of an event through the amalgamation of separate scenes, and the inclusion of highly expressive faces that signal an emotional state and elicit a response in kind by the audience. In the words of executive producer Mark Starowicz, “The human face, speaking to the camera, convey[s] all the drama and emotion of human expression.”<sup>45</sup> that allowed *C:APH* to “elicit empathy for the reasoning and emotions of ordinary men and women.”<sup>46</sup>

The opening imagery of “The Choice,” shown in Figure 28a, presents us with the domestic spaces of the two families whose experiences shape the presentation (one is for independence, and the other is against it). The first image is a very tight close-up of the

arm and needle cartridge of a record player. We then see another closely framed object: a baby bottle placed on its side on a table. We can see a tiny drop of milk on the tabletop and another drop that is suspended from the nipple. We then see inside the dwelling of the pro-independence family in a series of views that identifies their political stance while emphasizing family and a family's self-documentation. Among the things that we see in the room, besides the record player and baby bottle, are a toy phone, a framed picture of an infant, a small poster exhorting the "Qui" vote, and a color picture of a man who is standing next to a woman and holding a baby. We are then taken into the home of the family who are against independence. Once again, the camera slowly pans over a room that is filled with framed images. Again, the family record is emphasized and pictures orient the personal worlds of both families (be it the family's own home or the world outside the home). In the large living room see a television that is broadcasting a press conference, and then a framed portrait of the same baby that we saw in the first home. After this we see a portrait of an old couple, and then a portrait of the same couple that we saw in the pro-independence home (Figure 28b). In this way, we realize that the families are related, and that the older man and woman are the grandparents of the baby. It is as if we are being shown the lineage of a family in their family album (the function of the family album in the representation of history is a subject that I explore at greater length in Chapter Three of my thesis). *C:APH* then shows us a black and white photograph of René Lévesque, then some archival footage that shows a crowd sitting in a brasserie and watching a parliamentary debate unfold on projection screen. We are then returned to the domestic space of the pro-independence couple, before being returned to the public arena in which supporters watch the results of the vote and await Lévesque.

The closing sequence of images presents us with the visage of the pro-independence father, holding his infant, and weeping in disappointment over the outcome (Figure 28c).

The opening sequence of “The Choice” is made up of objects that incite an emotional response as they take us through the two domestic spaces: the arm of the record player by the music it can play, and the bottle by the infant to which the parent is emotionally connected to, and the toy as an object that not only evokes the infant but also a childhood. In this way they are signs of something immaterial that provokes an emotional response (an emotional image produced by music or the emotional attachment to the child that, with its absence, produces a mental image). The same can be said about the photographs that are also seen present in the two homes. As images of absent loved ones, they provoke an affective response, and it is these affective reactions that link us with the scenes in *C:APH* that we see.

The initial set of images in “The Choice” also introduces a concern for the future through signifiers of the absent infant. After the camera pulls back from the bottle close-up, the milk drop is the link to an imaged presence of the infant (the framed photographs on the coffee table are seen from side on so that their images are invisible). We can think of the milk drop, the record player, and the toy phone as depictions of a moment in suspension that is quite similar to that which is described in Delaroche’s *The Execution of Lady Jane Grey* (Figure 27). Her hand, extended into space, is one sign of that moment of experience. With this choice of setting and of objects, *C:APH* sustains the concern for the child which runs throughout its presentation. The wide view of the living room that includes the television and two photographs exists as an image in the living rooms of *C:APH*’s audience. We look at ourselves watching ourselves in a miniaturized version of

the space in which we live. It is by virtue of the individual objects and images that create the theatre of the Québec referendum in *C:APH*, that we are able to affectively experience that particular moment in history. The mingling of images like the television screen(s) and the coffee table photographs of baby, parents, and grandparents are symbolic parts of *C:APH* as a complete series; that is, they are structural elements of a single, complex visual document.

We can also look at the spaces, or theatrical scenes, that comprise *C:APH*. As we watch the events that surround the referendum results, we go from the living room of one home to that of another, and then to the public space of the brasserie, until we are returned to the home before going to the arena and the expectant crowds. By way of explaining the idea of theatrical spaces in the representation of history, when we look at West's *The Death of Wolfe* (Figure 25), we are looking at several distinct scenes that taken together represent the battle upon the Plains of Abraham. In the lower right of the painting we can see the early morning climb by the British forces up the escarpment, and in the far left of the painting, we can see the figure proclaiming victory. In behind the death scene that occupies center stage, we can still see the battle raging. In the presentation of the Québec referendum, the camera moves from scene to scene (for instance, from the kitchen to the living room) but the domestic theatre is now the proverbial battlefield on which the drama unfolds. The difference between the painting and *C:APH*, of course, is that we do not see all of the scenes simultaneously. Still, they occupy a position in the larger space of *C:APH* within which Canadian history is played out in its many component scenes and images, and these tableaux, set within the space of *C:APH*'s frame, do remain as a tapestry in our recollection.



The tapestry, as such, is pinned to the Lacanian structure *l'objet a*, which is the object that functions as a support for desire. In the case of *C:APH*, *l'objets a* are images and things from the past, which both catch our interest (we recognize aspects in the image or we may have once possessed an object like one that we see in the series), and pique an affective reaction in us. The personal and emotional response is something that draws us more deeply into *Canada: A People's History*. Thus, the idea of theatrical spaces in *C:APH* points to the many scenes that are either recreated, made up of a sequence of archival materials, or composed of both archival and recreated materials. The space of these theatres is the place in which we recreate the events and personal experiences of Canadian history in our imaginations.

#### **Section 4 – Landscape and being Canadian**

The dramatic and theatricalized performances of Canadian history in *C:APH* are shaped by the other dominant presence: the Canadian landscape. In fact, faced with a paucity of characters and written records, the land was chosen as the main subject of Episode One, which presented the prehistory and indigenous cultures of North America, as well as the first encounters between Native and non-Native peoples in North America. In the words of Starowicz, “Our biggest writing challenge was Episode 1....[which] had little recorded history...it had the fewest quotes and few characters...Finally we decided the character would be Canada itself.”<sup>47</sup> In effect, landscapes engulf the *tableaux* mounted by the theater of *C:APH* in montages of discovering, exploring, claiming, fighting, developing, and always becoming Canada. Susan Stewart adds support to this point by differentiating between the miniature, which is the tiny portrait often found inside a locket, as a “metaphor for the interior space and time of the bourgeois

subject...[and] the gigantic...considered as a metaphor for the abstract authority of the state and the collective, public life.”<sup>48</sup> Critically, however, she believes landscapes are “portraits of Nature.”<sup>49</sup> And she points out that “we move through the landscape; it does not move through us”;<sup>50</sup> it “envelopes us, but it is inaccessible to lived experience.”<sup>51</sup> In this sense, as we experience the presentation of *C:APH* we are moving through an historical landscape that paints a picture of Canadians. The sense of envelopment is the experience of the past in our imagination; although it seems to fill our senses, it is imaginary and intangible. Finally, the miniature and gigantic are “discourses of the self and the world.”<sup>52</sup> and these ideas are applied to the two kinds of landscapes found within *C:APH*: a human landscape of painted, photographic, and live portraits (as Stewart’s miniature), and geographic portraits (as the gigantic face of the land).

As we do move through the landscape, our understanding and use of that space turns the landscape into “a construction, a composition of that world.”<sup>53</sup> Landscape can then become “an ideological concept”<sup>54</sup> that serves to represent how a people defined who they were and the world that they inhabited, the basis for which is an “imagined relationship with nature.”<sup>55</sup> Interestingly, in terms of *C:APH* and its emphasis on the everyday, lived experience of the common person, the composition of the landscape by a people is something that is closely tied to “the diurnal course of life’s events – with birth, death, festival, tragedy – all the occurrences that lock together human time and place.”<sup>56</sup> While the ideological potential for the landscape, and its close association with lived, daily experience may be true the world over, “in Canada, the land has been especially important because it sometimes has seemed to be the only common element in Canadian life.”<sup>57</sup> The land has been written into the national history as a founding element of

Canada, with prominent Canadian historians like Harold Innis and Donald Creighton linking the growth of Canada to the land and to natural resources. And in some respects, they have identified the fur traders and explorers as heroic individuals who won or captured the north for Canada.<sup>58</sup> In these cases, the focus lay upon the vast drainage basin of Hudson's Bay, which provided a natural communications network in the river system that linked the populated eastern regions with the north as a source of fortune. Some Canadian historians have gone so far as to claim that "if the Canadian people are to find their soul, they must seek for it, not in the English language or the French...[but from the] unconquerable vastness of the north. From the land, Canada, must come to soul of Canada."<sup>59</sup>

Historians are not the only ones to look to the north as a source of Canadian identification; nationalists have also regarded it as a source of distinction. Canada First associate Robert Grant Haliburton (1831-1901), a Nova Scotia lawyer and provincial historian, proclaimed in an address to the Montréal Literary Club on March 31<sup>st</sup>, 1869 that Canada's tough environment and cold weather would produce "healthy, hardy, virtuous, dominant race." He went on to say that "[i]n Canada, 'the cold north wind that rocked the cradle of our race, still blows through our forests, and breathes the spirit of liberty into our hearts.'"<sup>60</sup> Another Canada First member, William Foster (1840-1888), added a gender spin by arguing that "we are a Northern people – as the true out-crop of human nature, more manly, more real, than the weak marrow-bones superstition of an effeminate South."<sup>61</sup> In a similar vein, George Parkin (1846-1922) was a writer, imperialist, and an educator who argued in 1892 that the climate is "one of our greatest blessings...the most valuable asset that the country has...[because of] a persistent process

of natural selection.” Parkin makes reference to natural selection based on his stance that the weaker (and more feminine) races would head farther south for comfort.<sup>62</sup>

Interestingly, with an emphasis on the north and a rugged hinterland as the wellsprings of Canadian identity, the variety of regions and climates in Canada are glossed over. But that did not stop Vincent Massey, Governor-General of Canada from 1952 to 1959, from believing that “[c]limate plays a great part in giving us our special character, different from that of our southern neighbors.”<sup>63</sup> By this time, Massey was giving voice to the myth of the north, and by extension the northern wilderness, as the root of the Canada national character. The mythos of the landscape and climate as formative features of the Canadian consciousness remains in effect. In the words of William Morton, not only does the experience of moving into the wilderness and then returning to civilization mark “the basic rhythm of Canadian life...it [also] forms the basic elements of Canadian character.”<sup>64</sup> We can also hear the echo of Canadian historians Harold Innis, and Donald Creighton in Robert Fulford’s 1991 assertion that “it is geography which sets the tone of Canadian culture just as it sets the rules of our working lives and governs our economic relations with other countries.”<sup>65</sup> It seems then, that not only have we been shaped by the land, but – as John Ralston Saul put it in 1997 – “[o]ur destiny is tied to the territory of which we are custodians – that is, the northern half of the continent.”<sup>66</sup>

The story of explorer David Thompson (1770-1857) is the central paradigm for the presentation in *C:APH* of an archetypal Canadian-ness and image of the Canadian landscape (as well as the relationship between Canadian identity and Canadian landscape). Thompson began life as an orphan in England, travels to Canada, and

becomes a surveyor and explorer of the Canadian wilderness. He lives to produce a set of atlases of previously uncharted lands and it is through these acts and these texts that he acquires his place in Canadian history. As such, the life of Thompson as seen in *C:APH* resembles those of diasporic individuals who eventually find themselves again by relocating in Canada.

As I have shown in the first section of this chapter, a figure of the child such as the orphan Thompson, is central to *C:APH*'s construction of history. In the second section, I made the point that witnessing events and conveying these to people who come after us represents the gold standard of *C:APH*. In effect, this means generating a visual document that can sustain a people's sense of coherence, identity, and place. With Thompson, we have a child who came to Canada and ended up devoting their life to the creation of a visual document of the Canadian landscape. Thompson's finished set of atlases could allow everyone who came after him to find their way in an erstwhile-unmarked space. Although this is not the narrativization of history, like that effected by *C:APH*, the common ground between Thompson's atlases and the series is the act of transforming an unfamiliar space (geographic in the case of Thompson, and historical in the case of the series) into a readable place.

The typical Canadian, seen through the lens of *C:APH*, most often emerges from chaos, clinging to fragments of identity. From the presentation in Episode One that shows North America being populated because of the ice bridge across the Bering Strait, to the influx of Cambodian refugees in the mid-1980s that is shown in the seventeenth and final episode, *C:APH* is, to use its own phrasing, the story of the dispossessed. In part, this is the result of how Mark Starowicz understands Canadian history: "The paradigm for

Canadian history is that we are all refugees... We are really the debris of war and famine, but I mean it in the best sense of the word... This is a unifying paradigm.”<sup>67</sup> Not only is it a question of what overall shape is given to Canadian history, it is also how that story arcs. Starowicz believes that “[t]here are three parts to almost every Canadian family biography”: first “the ‘adversity,’ or the reason for the migration,” second, “the ‘passage,’” and finally “the ‘redemption’...[and t]he first story of acceptance.”<sup>68</sup> In *C:APH*, people are seen must negotiating their way in unfamiliar landscapes as they reestablish a coherent sense of self and community. And it is the stories and visual records of these acts that inscribe them into the nation.

The construction of David Thompson’s story repeats abovementioned motifs: technologies of seeing and locating, windows as thresholds that establish inside and outside worlds, and documentary records as an image of the self. The presentation of his story also introduces four central parables of Canadian identity as expounded by *C:APH*: that the landscape of Canada is a vast, cold and often fatal void; that communication creates a referential web that creates a readable space from the Canadian abyss; that the influence of the land is such that it shapes Canadian identity (or, the weave of the web is determined by the loom of the landscape), and that to become Canadian is to experience a great romantic tragedy.

The human form as an object of desire in a larger visual field is heralded from the onset of Thompson’s narrative, when he is introduced as an orphan in England (Figure 29a). The imagery in Thompson’s story begins with a view down through a window on a young Thompson pacing in circles in the courtyard below. We see Thompson as solitary figure in an empty space; in other words, we come to understand him because of where

he is. In this sense, Thompson's manner of introduction heralds the person he will become – a Canadian defined by the great expanse that he moves through. At the same time, since we are told that he is an orphan, he comes to us already infused with the quintessential Canadian experience of the romantic tragedy. And again, we are being forewarned, since not only is he a tragic figure at the onset, he will prove to be one at the close of his story.

From the opening image of Thompson pacing in the courtyard, the lens draws closer to Thompson and then shifts to look up at a many-windowed tower. The shift in point of view from outside and looking up at the window, to inside and looking outwards crosses an intermediary image of the many-windowed tower and thereby creates a point of contact at the window panes. The final shot in the opening sequence is from behind and over the shoulder of Thompson, who is now inside and looking through a window flaring with light. What becomes linked by this sequence is the viewing subject (the unseen presence that looks down at Thompson) and the historical subject (the figure of Thompson who looks up at the tower as if in recognition of the gaze that looks down upon him). In a sense, it is the audience who gazes out from the tower. Once he is seen inside, Thompson stares into the brilliant light of revelation of his purpose in life – going to Canada and the new world and eventually mapping the Canadian wilderness. He has seen the light, in other words, and the halo of window light enveloping the child Thompson outlines the high regard with which he is held within *C:APH*. And it is as if he is sheathed in the sign of projected imagery; he lives to produce what can be called an unassailable document of the land that allows for its successful interpretation and settlement. The same result is what *C:APH* desires in contemporary times: to make

Canadian “history as it actually happened”<sup>69</sup> that permits an understanding that then leads to a successful re-settlement of the Canadian present, or, a rebirth of a shared vision of Canadian-ness.

The landscape is as much a subject as is Thompson himself, often appearing romantically monumental and overwhelming. Thompson’s arrival at Hudson’s Bay in 1784 is marked by his solitary figure faced with an expanse of sky and sea, and by the departing ship in the far distance (Figure 29b). It is imagined much as Frye argued that for new arrivals, “the loneliest and most frightening part of [Canada] is the...sense of being completely surrounded by an indifference.”<sup>70</sup> Thompson’s story marks his arrival in Canada by tucking him into the corner of a vast blanket of nothingness, and then proceeds to fill his narrative with images of emptiness; his life in Canada is devoted entirely to mapping them out. Thompson’s story of a singular determination to explore a vast, unknown space and to create a record for others to follow typifies what Northrop Frye called the “theme of the epic act of communication in Canadian history.”<sup>71</sup> Frye argued persuasively that the landscape has shaped the creative imagination in Canada: “There would be nothing distinctive in Canadian culture at all if there were not some feeling for the immense searching distance, with the lines of communication extended to the absolute limit.”<sup>72</sup> The geo-social void has prompted Canadians to articulate themselves in terms space and location. We speak the way we do because of what we have seen, and what we have seen is an enormous (empty) wilderness. As Frye observed, “Canadian identity is less perplexed by the question ‘Who am I?’ than by some riddle such as ‘Where is here?’”<sup>73</sup>



The effect of such relations of scale is that landscape, as a compositional space, miniaturizes the human form to the point of vanishing. However, the consequence of such miniaturization is that the human form becomes an object of fascination. We can see this when Thompson's group appears as microscopic dots on the floor of a valley in the Rocky Mountains (Figure 30). The same relation of scale between the human figure and the landscape can also be seen in Episode One when we are introduced to pre-historic Canada. At this point, three people are seen from high above as they walk along a mountain ridge (Figure 31). Their position is quite precarious as the ground drops sharply away on either side of the narrow footpath. First Nations hunters are seen as minute figures in a huge natural space (Figure 32), and the Inuit are the size of dots in a monochromatic visual field that has virtually no perspective (Figure 33). In cases such as these, what intrigues the eye and draws it into the landscape, are the small and moving human figures. The polarity of miniaturized people and gigantic landscapes is illuminated by Roland Barthes' observation of a desire triggered by landscapes that are "*habitable*, not visitable."<sup>74</sup> He concludes that the "essence of the landscape (chosen by desire) [is] *heimlich*, awakening in me the Mother."<sup>75</sup> And it is the articulation of these internal spaces (articulation in the sense of linkage and in the sense of expressing an idea) that presents the habitable landscape that awakens a maternal and domestic desire – to be at home and to be at home together.

The abovementioned symbolic expression is reinforced when we see the latter stages of Thompson's work on his atlases (Figure 34). His home is entered through the window, and his work in progress is seen together with the window. The imagery then shifts to a series of dissolves that show different maps, books, and lastly a watch. The

flow of images produces the expression of seeing the past by way of a collection of image fragments that are brought together to form a coherent and readable image of the past.

The introspection that characterizes *C:APH* is an extension of the inside/outside dynamic in the individual self against the natural space, it is an inside and outside division of the Canadian outlook as well as an internal examination that is largely determined by external pressures. The space, in the latter case, is an anticipated or feared hollowing out of traditional Canadian identity resulting from globalization and human migrations, as well as the impact of communication technologies that import foreign visual culture.

The scattering of domestic interiors and communal locations across an enormous, empty landscape simultaneously represents a compression of isolated personal experience in a communal life of little dots scattered across a vast space. They are much like little fortresses, with a form of what Frye has recognized as a “garrison mentality” that is an identifying feature of Canadian identity. In *C:APH* the domestic spaces are sites of enunciation that function as dramatic platforms or tableaux. It is from within these cocoons (outside of which is an infinite consuming space) that Canadian identity plays itself out.

The garrison-cocoon appears in the story of Champlain (Figure 35a), and again (the same video footage is also used) in the story of a fur trader named Daniel Harmon (1778-1845) (Figure 35b). The series isolates the domestic place, setting it against the immensity of geographic space, in its presentation of the West’s settlement. The dichotomy of cold exterior and warm interior has been established in *C:APH* since the opening chapter on the experiences of Shawnadithit (in the third chapter of this thesis, I

explore her presentation in the CBC series in greater detail) (Figure 36). The narrative thrust of that story was her rescue from the wilderness and her salvation in the civilized world of the newly arrived Europeans. In all cases, the interior space is both warm and secure – a welcoming place, and one that *C:APH* imagines Canada to be by virtue of the cold world around it. The resurrection of the individual comes about with the death or loss of a previous set of identifications. They no longer belong to another country, but have shed that attachment and emerged as a Canadian.

The polarity of an interior national warmth that shelters the landless against a seemingly barren external world supports the desire in *C:APH* to create an image of Canada as a place of resurrection promising the hope of a better future. The construction of Canadian history works to accomplish this, in part, by portraying the founding of home and community as the realization of diasporic desires. What *C:APH* is also concerned about is presenting Canada as a desirable place in the present. In this case, the void is the global space that threatens the Canadian identity with annihilation. Salvation is to be found in a return to the national house of Canada.

The hearth space is the site of return and reminiscence that underpins the function of *C:APH* (to bring people back to an awareness of themselves as Canadians through an experience of the national history). In the story of Thompson, the hearth is his final symbolic resting place (Figure 37). Near the end of this tale, as the lens slowly travels over the stack of Thompson's completed seventy-seven-volume set of atlases, embodying an elderly Thompson, viewers hear that the atlases "go unpublished in his lifetime" due to publishers' reticence to reveal fur traders' secrets. The narrative finale has Thompson seen through a doorway, sitting in a rocking chair by a fireplace, as his daughter

Charlotte recalls his last days. The image of Thompson fades into a magenta-red sunset, and for an instant the viewer sees him framed by a doorway, against the sunset sky.

Thompson failed to gain credit during his lifetime for mapping the enormity of Canada. And the immensity and failure are two attributes underpinning my assertion, supported by the work of Hayden White, that the history in *C:APH* is emplotted in the form of Romantic Tragedy. Thompson is embedded within a vast landscape, from his arrival to his westward trek, alone against a starry sky, or solitary in the face of towering mountains. The romance of these visions is underwritten, White argues, by “a drama of self-identification symbolized by the hero’s transcendence of the world of experience, his victory over it, and his final liberation from it.”<sup>76</sup> And this is exactly the narrative trajectory of Thompson’s presentation in *C:APH*. Separated from his beloved home, alone against a natural void, we see Thompson’s tragic ending of misery and neglect as an aged form set against the sunset sky of his final victory. *C:APH* treats the abandoned Thompson with a form of worship – he is elevated, still reminiscing, to the heavens. Thus, per White, “In Tragedy...the fall of the protagonist...[is] not regarded as totally threatening to those who survive the agonic test. There has been a gain in consciousness for the spectators of...the epiphany of the law governing human existence.”<sup>77</sup> Thompson’s struggles teach the value in the personal sacrifices that are comprised by the vision of Canadian history in *C:APH*. White states that the organicist historian composes his narratives so “as to depict the consolidation...out of a set of apparently dispersed events, of some integrated entity whose importance is greater than that of any of the individual entities.”<sup>78</sup> What *C:APH* presents with Thompson’s story is a narrative map to be followed by *C:APH* and (metaphorically) by its viewers. Individuals’ struggles to

define themselves against the chaos of their times are taken into the series' projected vision of Canadian-ness, so that personal struggle is equated with national self-definition.

Thompson's tragic and romantic end is one that is repeated throughout *C:APH*. In addition to the cases of Wolfe, Montcalm, and the separatist anguish in 1980 Québec, other notable depictions are the treatment of Tecumseh (1768-1813) in the fifth episode (Figure 38a), Champlain (1570-1635) in the second installment (Figure 38b), and a gold miner in Episode Six (Figure 38c). The presentation of the death of Tecumseh never shows the man himself, only an absence implied by riderless horse in an empty, wooded glade. It is as if he has simply returned to the natural world from whence he originated. The culmination of Champlain's story has him sitting, just as forlornly as Thompson, in front of a fireplace. Champlain appears after a close-up of a candlelit lantern, and then a shot of a bulky text that nearly fills the frame. The final image shows the audience an exterior view of Champlain's cottage. The heavily blue-tinted shot forcefully states a cold and darkening world. Like Thompson, Champlain faded without the recognition he apparently deserved (in hindsight). His tragic end is, like Thompson's, built with the elements of candle, text, and hearth. The three elements are central symbols for *C:APH* as they represent the national spirit captured in a coherent form and firing the domestic heart of the land. What is of value is as much the recording as the performance (as much the historical record as the life lived, since without the record the life is lost-to recollection). The presentation of the experiences of a gold prospector in Episode Six expresses this idea. His story is built up with images that show two realms: the land and nature, and the act of personal inscription. The diary kept by the prospector and that is later recovered is a metaphor for the individual, just as the image of history produced by

*C:APH* may come to be an image of Canada. In the case of the gold miner, we are left not with his corpse or grave, but with the tattered pages of his journal. These things are what we treasure, because they are the foundations of our identity.

The final story of immigrant deliverance is seen in the last episode of *C:APH* and the arrival of a Cambodian refugee (Figure 39). His story begins with pine trees and falling snow and then a photograph of him in a snowscape. His salvation is imagined with the candles and church interior that fade into alignment with a photograph of his benefactors. Again, the candle evokes a warm and welcoming Canadian spirit that exists in contrast to a cold and apparently barren landscape. Once the refugee is at home and a part of the land, his fortunes symbolically multiply. The Cambodian is welcomed into the cold landscape by the interior space of the nation – its people who are huddled together by virtue of the cold and unforgiving exterior. The audience of *C:APH*, too, is gathered together inside Canada by the history that plays on the television as domestic hearth set against an external (global) void.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>J.D. Stahl, "Moral Despair and the Child as Symbol of Hope in Pre-World War II Berlin," in *Children's Literature*, Vol. 14 (1986), 83.

<sup>2</sup>Claire Perry *Young America: Childhood in the 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Art and Culture*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 4. We can see this is England as well, where children are "reconstructed as material investments in national progress." Harry Hendrick "Constructions and reconstructions of British childhood: An interpretative survey, 1800 to the present," in *Constructing and Reconstructing Childhood*. Allison James and Alan Prout, eds., (London: Falmer Press, 1997): 34-62. The same process took place in Berlin immediately before the outbreak of war. The sign of the child provided something which people could have faith in amidst the upheaval and uncertainty of the times. J.D. Stahl "Moral Despair and the Child as Symbol of Hope in Pre-World War II Berlin," in *Children's Literature*, Vol. 14 (1986), 83-104.

<sup>3</sup>Sharon Stephens, "Editorial introduction: Children and nationalism," in *Childhood*, Vol. 4.1 (1997), 8.

<sup>4</sup>Karen Stanbridge, "Framing Children in the Newfoundland Confederation Debate, 1948," in *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 32.2 (2007), 180.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid*, 196.

<sup>6</sup>Jane Helleiner, "'The right kind of children': Childhood, gender and 'race' in Canadian postwar political discourse," in *Anthropologica*, Vol. 43.2 (2001), 143-152.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid*, 145-46,

<sup>8</sup>Henry Jenkins, "Introduction: Childhood Innocence and Other Modern Myths," in *The Children's Culture Reader*. Henry Jenkins, ed. New York; London: New York University Press, 1998), 5.

<sup>9</sup>Liesbeth de Block and David Buckingham, *Global Children, Global Media: Migration, Media, and Childhood*. (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 2.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid*, 27-8.

<sup>11</sup>Kathleen McDonnell, *Honey, We Lost the Kids: Re-Thinking Childhood in the Multimedia Age*. (Toronto: Second Story Press, 2001), 15. The same concerns over the impact of contemporary media such as the Internet and satellite television, are expressed in *Children in the Digital Age: Influences of Electronic Media on Development*. Sandra L. Calvert, et. al., eds. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 2002; and David Buckingham, *After the Death of Childhood: Growing Up in the Age of Electronic Media*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000.

<sup>12</sup>McDonnell, *Honey, We Lost the Kids*, 5.

<sup>13</sup>For example, see: *Symbolic Childhood*. Daniel Thomas Cook, ed. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2002; and *Dimensions of Childhood: Essays on the History of Children and Youth in Canada*. Russell Smandych, et. al., eds. Winnipeg: Legal Research Institute of the University of Manitoba, 1991.

<sup>14</sup>Jenkins, "Introduction: Childhood Innocence and Other Modern Myths," 32.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid*, 32-3.

<sup>16</sup>McDonnell, *Honey, We Lost the Kids*, 19.

<sup>17</sup>Arnold, Gladys Arnold, *One Woman's War: A Canadian Reporter with the Free French*. Toronto: J. Lorimer, 1987, 32.

<sup>18</sup>Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. Edited by Jacques-Alain Miller; translated from the French by Alain Sheridan. (London: Hogarth Press, 1977), 186.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid*, 180.

<sup>20</sup>Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*. (Baltimore; London: the Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), 145.

<sup>21</sup>Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, 215.

<sup>22</sup>Richard V. Barbuto, *Niagara, 1814: America invades Canada*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2000. And, Lundy's Lane Historical Society, *The documentary history of the campaign on the Niagara Frontier*. E. Cruikshank, ed. New York: Arno Press, 1971.

<sup>23</sup>Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*, ix.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid*, xi.

<sup>25</sup>Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits: a selection*. Trans. Bruce Fink. (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 2004), 6.

<sup>26</sup>The site of the initial meetings at Charlottetown was odd, considering that Prince Edward Islanders opposed union – in the Maritimes as well as with Canadians. The maritime delegation would reject confederation at Quebec and only enter into serious negotiations nine years later in 1873 when the island government faced severe financial



concerns. Christopher Moore, *1867: how the fathers made a deal*. Toronto: M & S, 1997; E. R. Forbes, and D. A. Muise, eds., *The Atlantic Provinces in Confederation*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993.

<sup>27</sup>Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, 186.

<sup>28</sup>Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*. Translated by Richard Howard. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 27.

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid*, 26.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid*, 26.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid*, 43.

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid*, 42.

<sup>33</sup>*Ibid*, 47.

<sup>34</sup>Musée Laurier, *Marc-Aurèle de Foy Suzor-Coté: Back to Arthabaska*. Arthabaska, Qué.: Musée Laurier, 1987. In the autumn of 1902, Suzor-Cote worked on a study for *La Mort de Montcalm* as a submission to the Québec Legislature competition (52).

<sup>35</sup>Tim Barringer, "Rethinking Delaroche / Recovering Leighton," in *Victorian Studies* vol. 44 no. 1 (Autumn, 2001), 11.

<sup>36</sup>Maurice Samuels, "Illustrated Historiography and the Image of the Past in Nineteenth-Century France," in *French Historical Studies* vol. 26 (2003), 278.

<sup>37</sup>Stephen Bann, *Paul Delaroche: History Painted*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 119.

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid*, 126.

<sup>39</sup>Stephan Bann, "Editorial," *Word & Image* vol. 16, no. 1 (January – March 2000), 2.

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid*, 3.

<sup>41</sup>Ann Uhry Abrams, *The Valiant Hero: Benjamin West and Grand-Style History Painting*. (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institute Press, 1985), 161.

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid*, 173-74.

<sup>43</sup>Helmut Von Erffa and Allen Staley, *The Paintings of Benjamin West*. (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1986), 60. authenticity.”<sup>15</sup>

<sup>44</sup>For example, we can see this happen with General (Marquis de) Montcalm, who first appears in a painted portrait before we see the actor Guy Nadon in the role of Montcalm. The portrait in an oil on canvas, 92.3 x 72 cm, undated, that is in the collection of the Royal Ontario Museum (951.91, ROM2006\_7325\_1). In another instance, this time in the fifth episode, a painted portrait of Joseph Brandt, a leader of the Mohawk people as well as a British military officer during the American Revolution, precedes the appearance of actor Eric Schweig in the role of Brandt. The painting that we see is: George Romney, *Joseph Brandt (Thayendanegea)*, 1776, oil on canvas, 127 x 101.6 cm; The National gallery of Canada (no. 8005).

<sup>45</sup>Mark Starowicz, *Making History: the remarkable story behind 'Canada: A People's History'*. (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Ltd., 2003), 152.

<sup>46</sup>*Ibid*, 155.

<sup>47</sup>*Ibid*, 255.

<sup>48</sup>Stewart, *On Longing*, xii.

<sup>49</sup>*Ibid*, 53.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid*, 71.

<sup>51</sup>*Ibid*, 102.

<sup>52</sup>*Ibid*, 102.

<sup>53</sup>Denis E. Cosgrove, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape*. (London; Sydney: Croom Helm, Ltd., 1984), 13.

<sup>54</sup>*Ibid*, 15.

<sup>55</sup>*Ibid*, 15.

<sup>56</sup>*Ibid*, 19.

<sup>57</sup>Ramsay Cook, “Landscape Painting and National Sentiment in Canada,” in *Historical Reflections*, Vol. 1.2 (Winter, 1974), 263-283. The myth runs rampant through many texts, some of the more prominent are: Carl Berger, “The True North Strong and Free,” in *Nationalism in Canada*. Peter Russell, ed. (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Company of Canada, 1966): 3-26; Cole Harris, “The Myth of the Land in Canadian Nationalism,” in *Nationalism in Canada*. Peter Russell, ed. (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Company of Canada,

1966): 27-43; and William Morton, "The Northern Frontier: Key to Canadian History," in *A Guide to the Peaceable Kingdom*. (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1970): 280-284.

<sup>58</sup>Harold Adams Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930; Donald Grant Creighton, *The Commercial Empire of the St. Lawrence, 1760-1850*. Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada, Ltd., 1937.

<sup>59</sup>Arthur Lower, *Settlement and the Forest Frontier in Eastern Canada*. Toronto: Macmillan Company of Canada, 1936.

<sup>60</sup>Robert G. Haliburton, *The Men of the North and their Place in History*. (Ottawa?: s.n., 1869), 16.

<sup>61</sup>William Alexander Foster, *Canada First: an address*. (Toronto: s.n., 1888), np.

<sup>62</sup>Quoted in Carl Berger *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism, 1867-1914*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), 130-131.

<sup>63</sup>Vincent Massey, *On Being Canadian*. (Toronto: J. M. Dent & Sons (Canada), Ltd., 1948), 29-30.

<sup>64</sup>William L. Morton, *The Canadian Identity*. (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1961), 4-5.

<sup>65</sup>Robert Fulford, "The Forest and Canadian Culture," Paper Delivered for the Canadian Institute of Forestry, The Inn on the Park, Toronto, September 23, 1991.

<sup>66</sup>John Rolston Saul, *Reflections of a Siamese Twin: Canada at the End of the Twentieth Century*. (Toronto: Penguin, 1997), 158.

<sup>67</sup>Penny Clark, "Engaging the Field: A Conversation with Mark Starowicz," in *Canadian Social Studies*. Vol. 36.2 (Winter 2002): [http://www.quasar.ualberta.ca/css/Css\\_36\\_2/ARengaging\\_the\\_field.htm](http://www.quasar.ualberta.ca/css/Css_36_2/ARengaging_the_field.htm)

<sup>68</sup>M. Starowicz, *Making History*, 320-21.

<sup>69</sup>The words are oft used by the series voiceover.

<sup>70</sup>Northrop Frye, "The Canadian Scene: Explorers and Observers," in *Canadian Landscape Painting, 1670-1930: The Artist and the Land*. Text and catalogue R. H. Hubbard. (Elvehjem Art Center: University of Wisconsin Press, 1973), 2.

<sup>71</sup>Northrop Frye, *The Bush Garden*. (Concord, Ontario: House of Anansi Press, 1995, 1971), 11.

<sup>72</sup>*Ibid*, 10.

<sup>73</sup>*Ibid*, 222.

<sup>74</sup>Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 39.

<sup>75</sup>*Ibid*, 40.

<sup>76</sup>Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe*. (Baltimore & London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), 8-9.

<sup>77</sup>*Ibid*, 9.

<sup>78</sup>*Ibid*, 15.

Figure 1

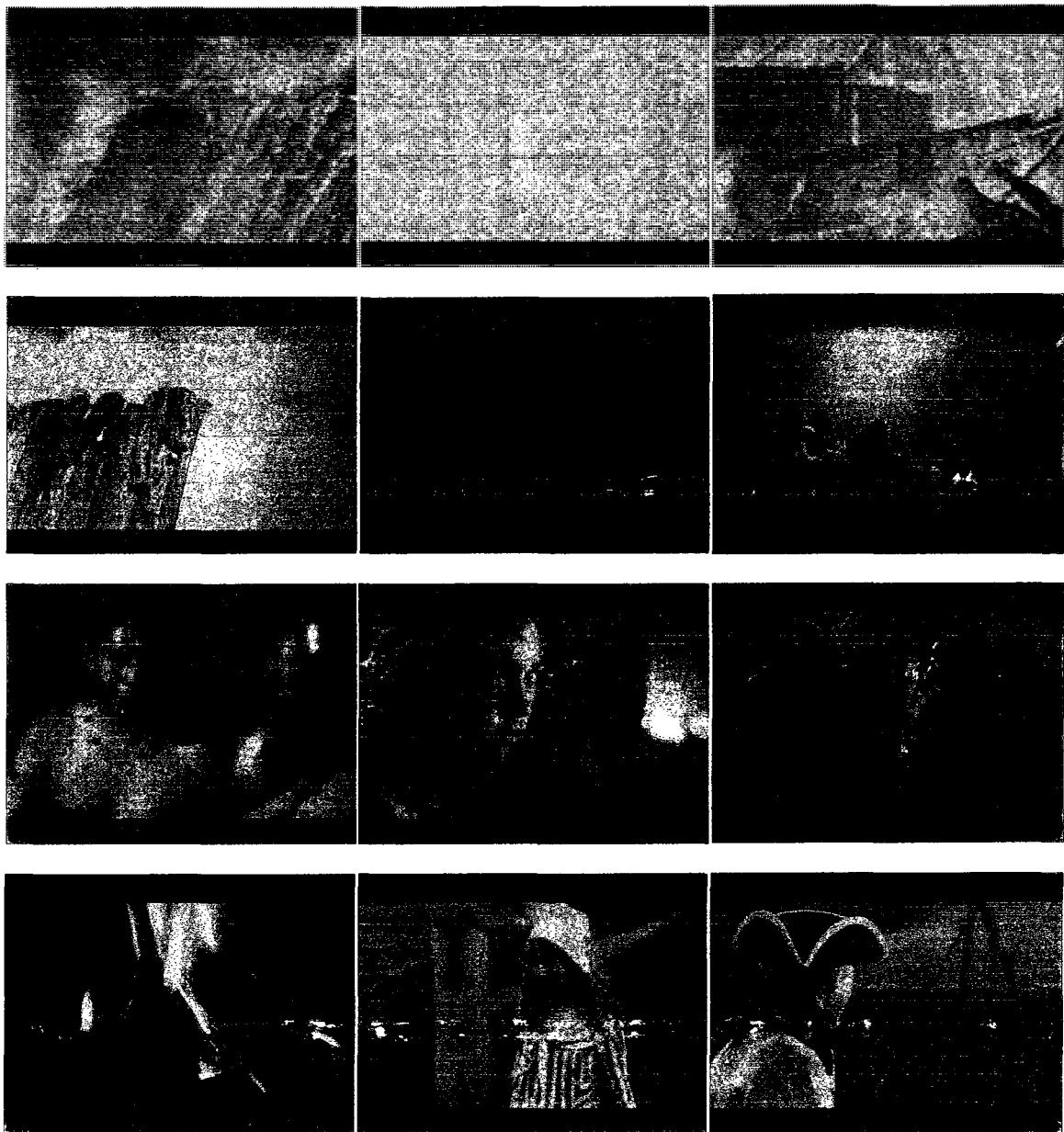


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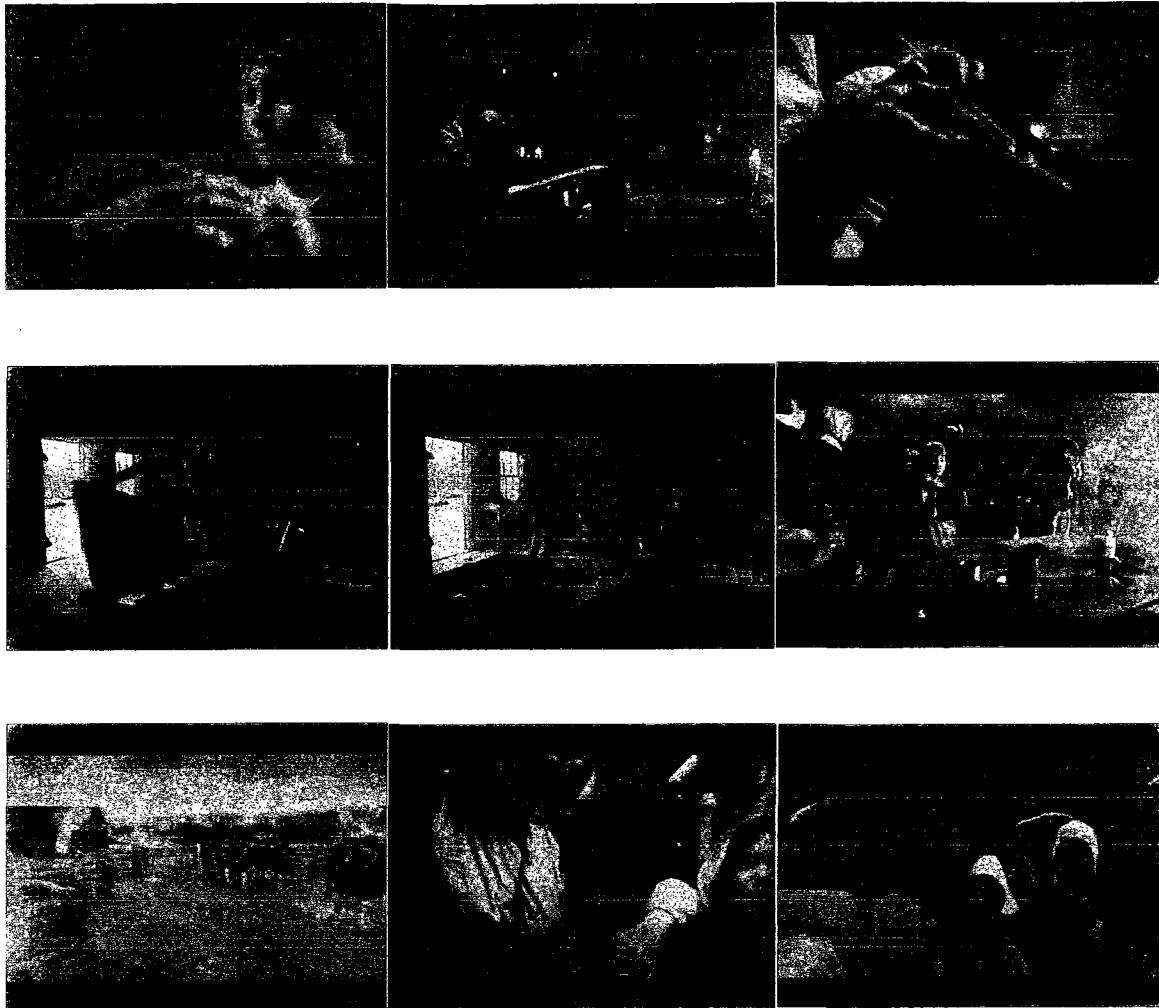


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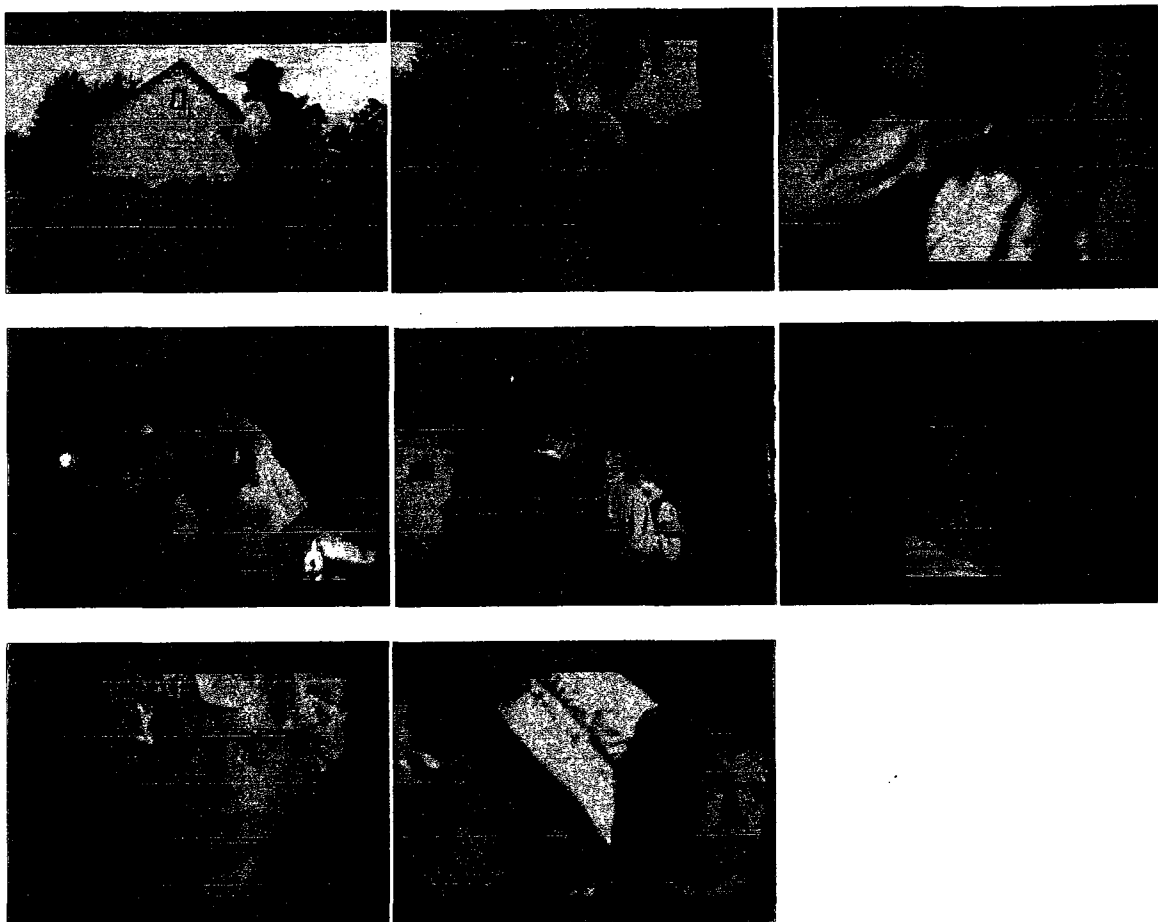


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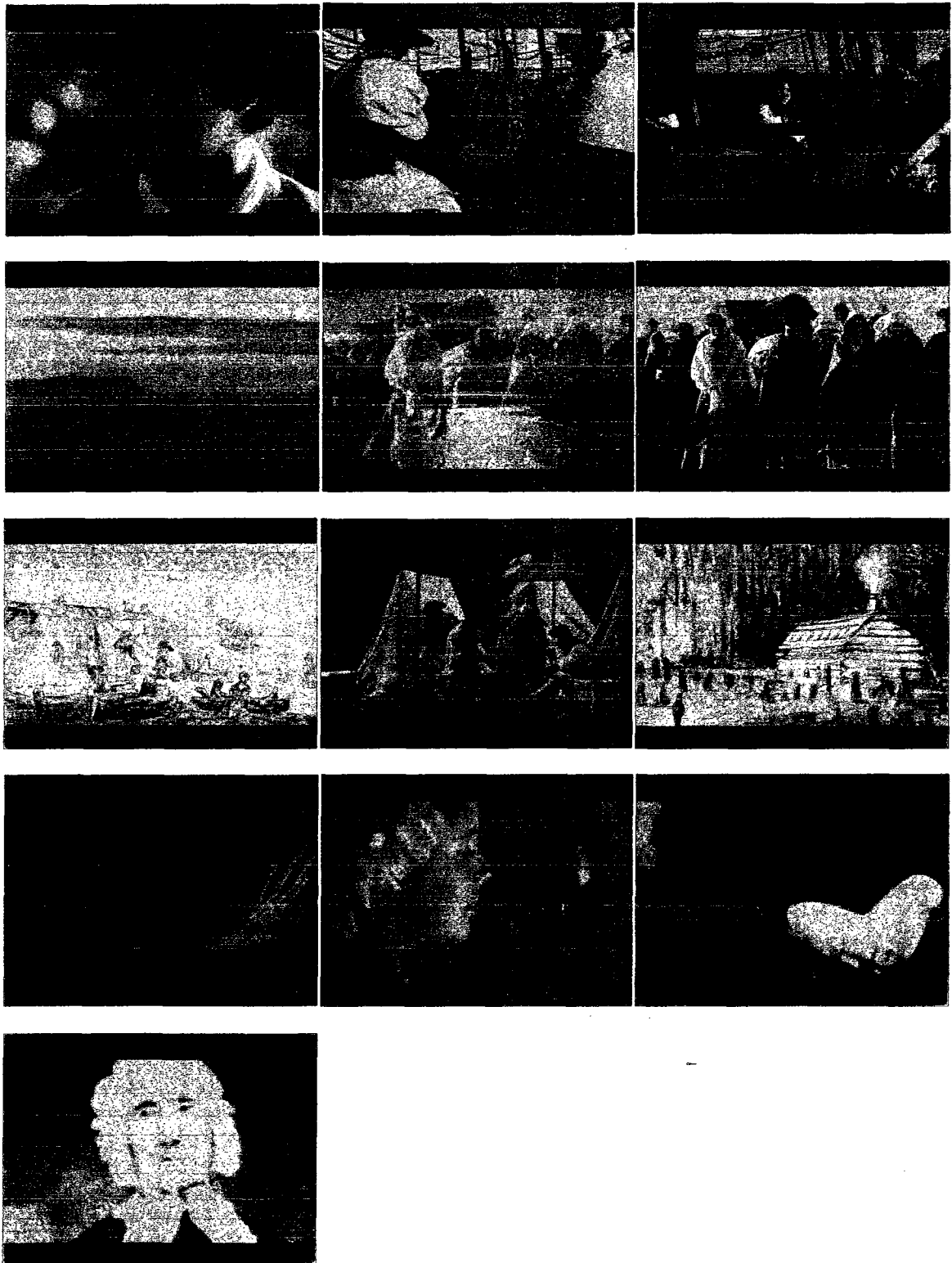




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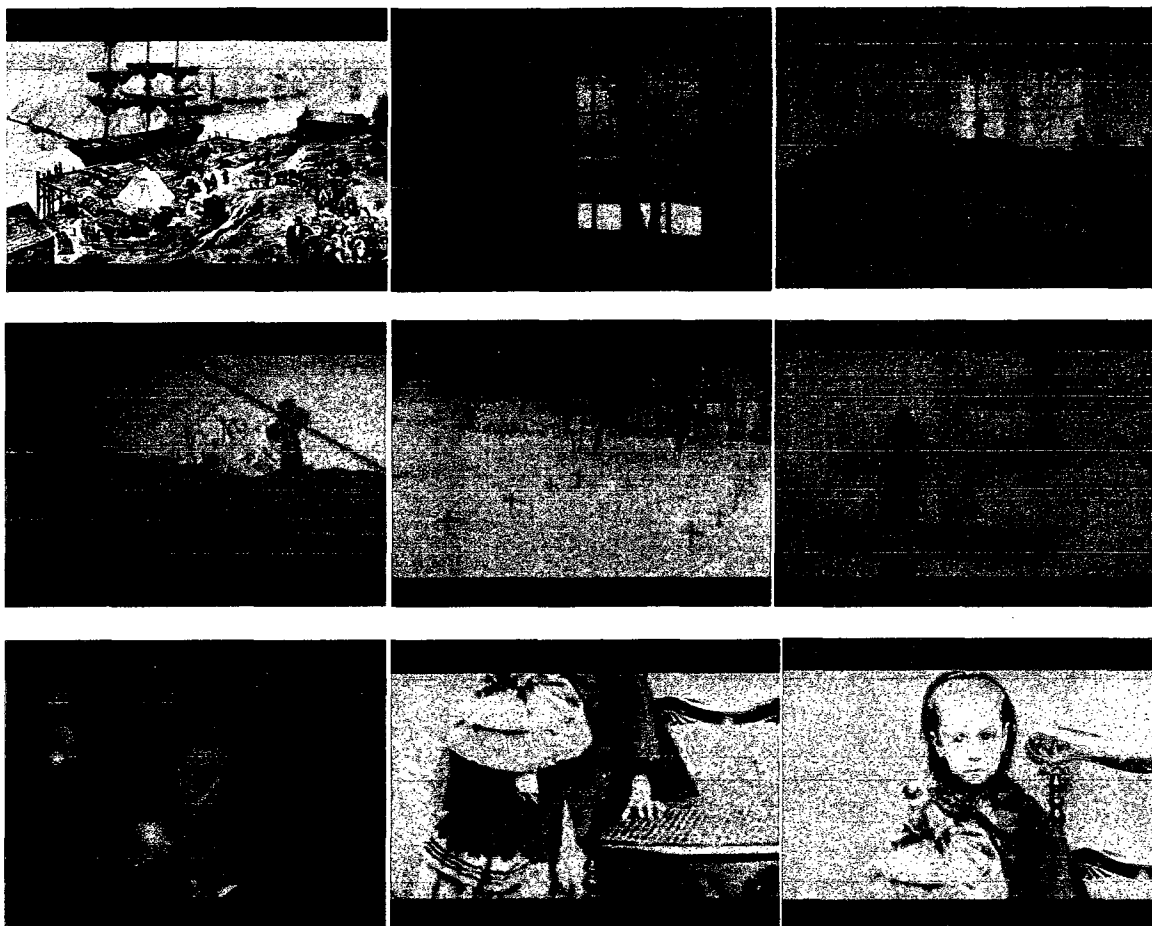


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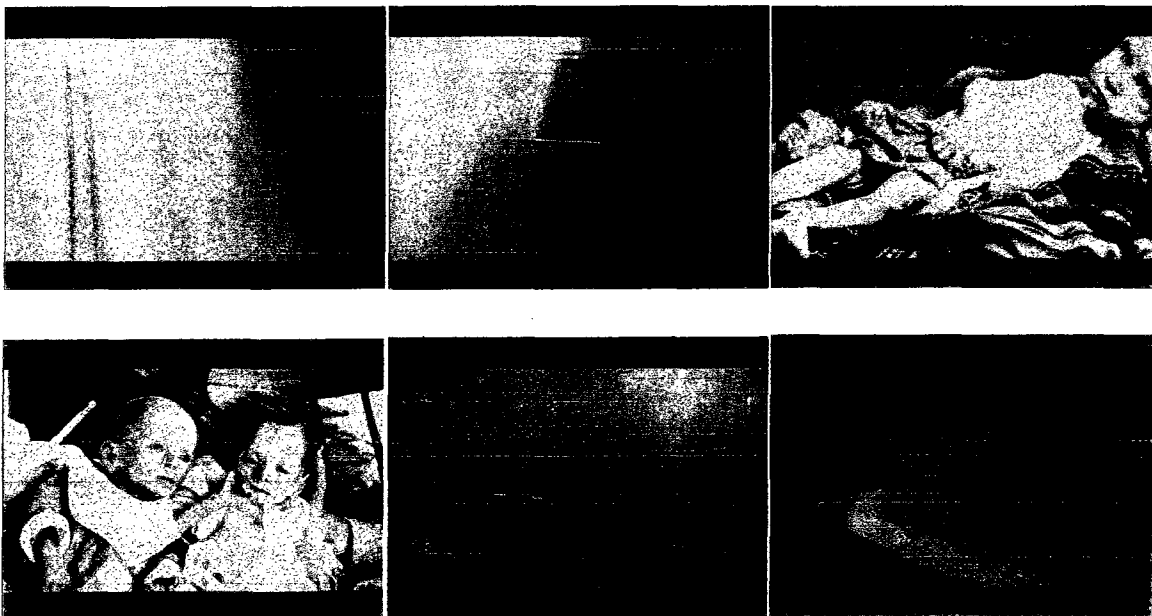


Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9



Figure 10



Figure 11

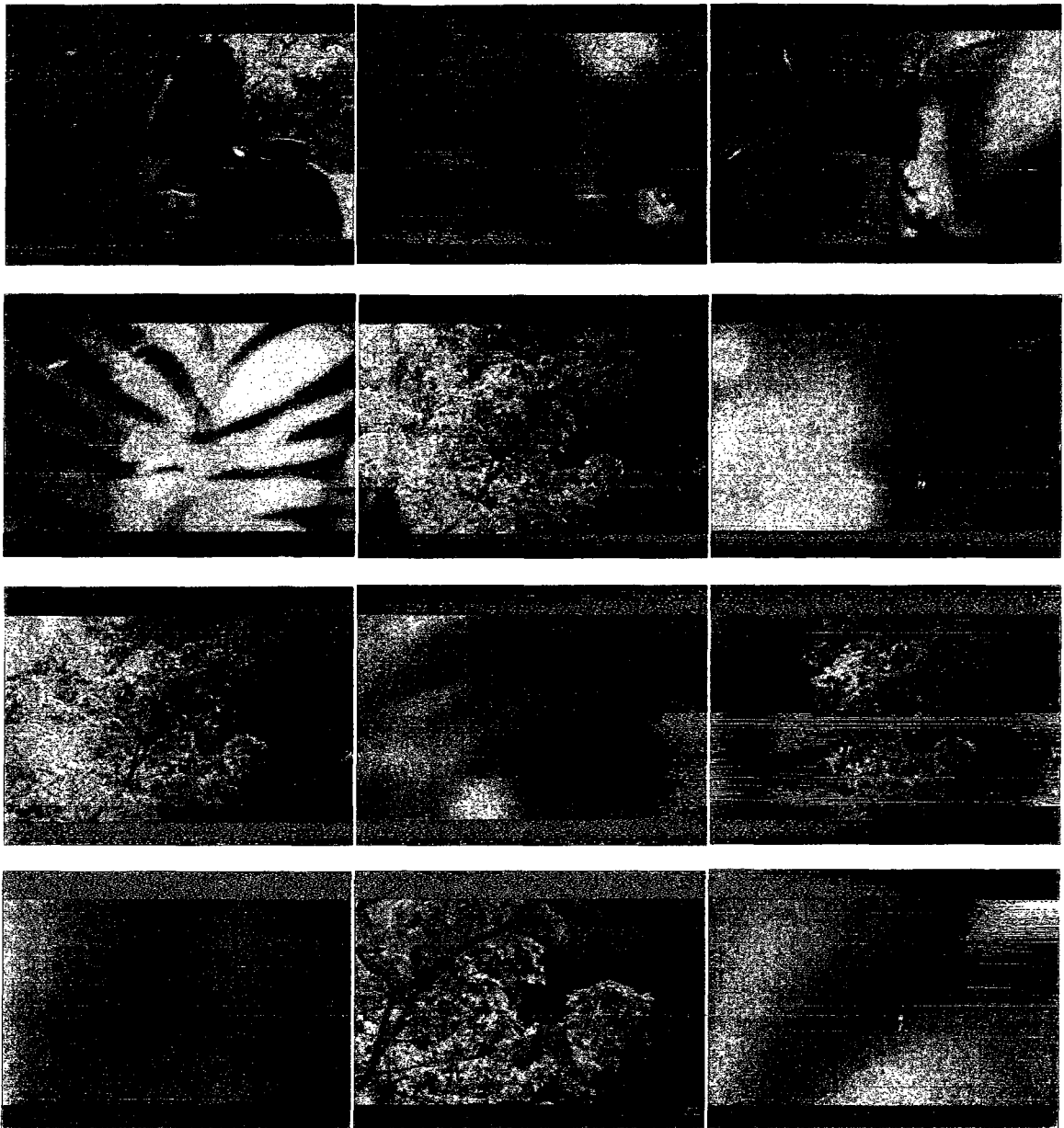


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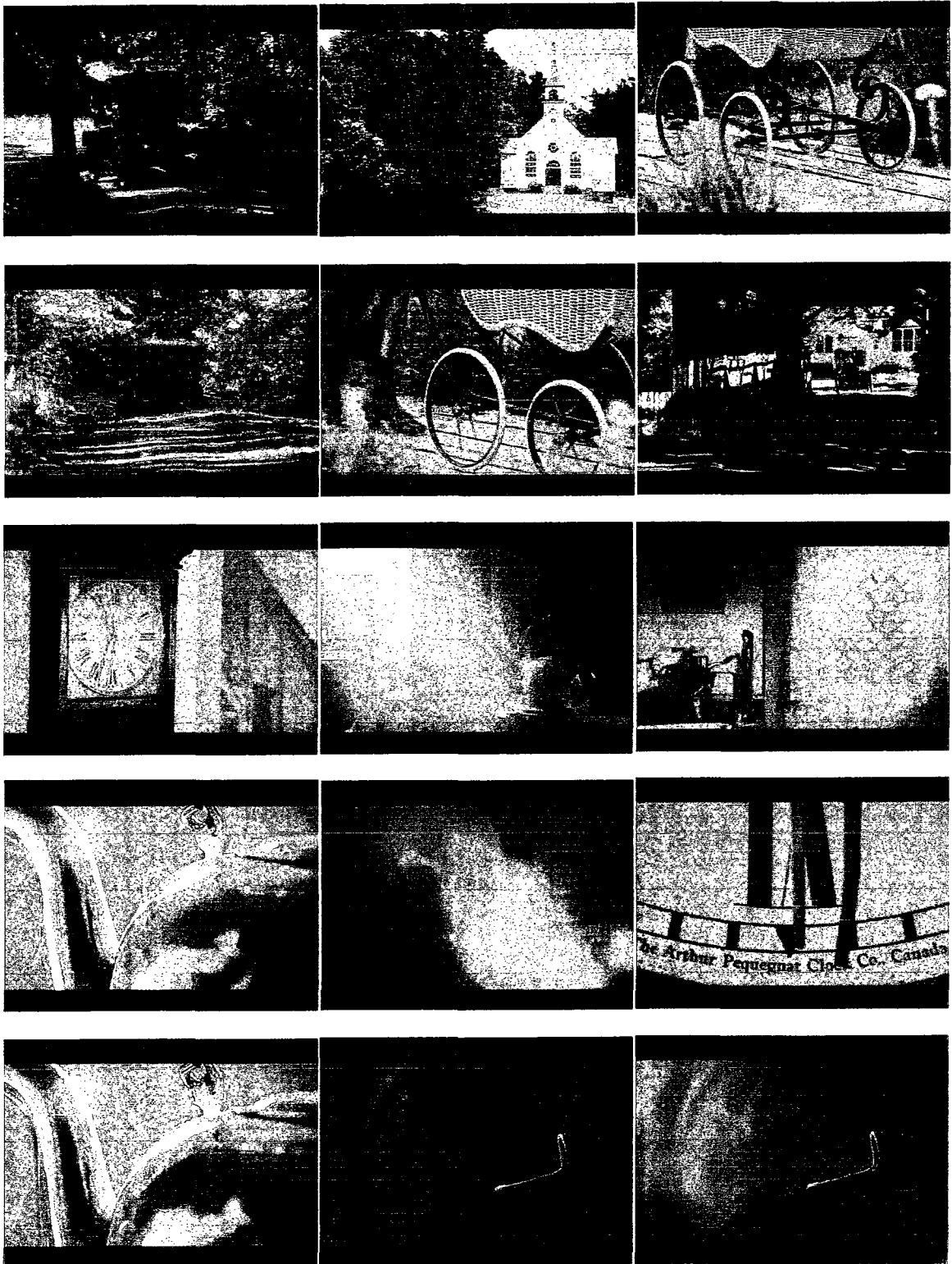


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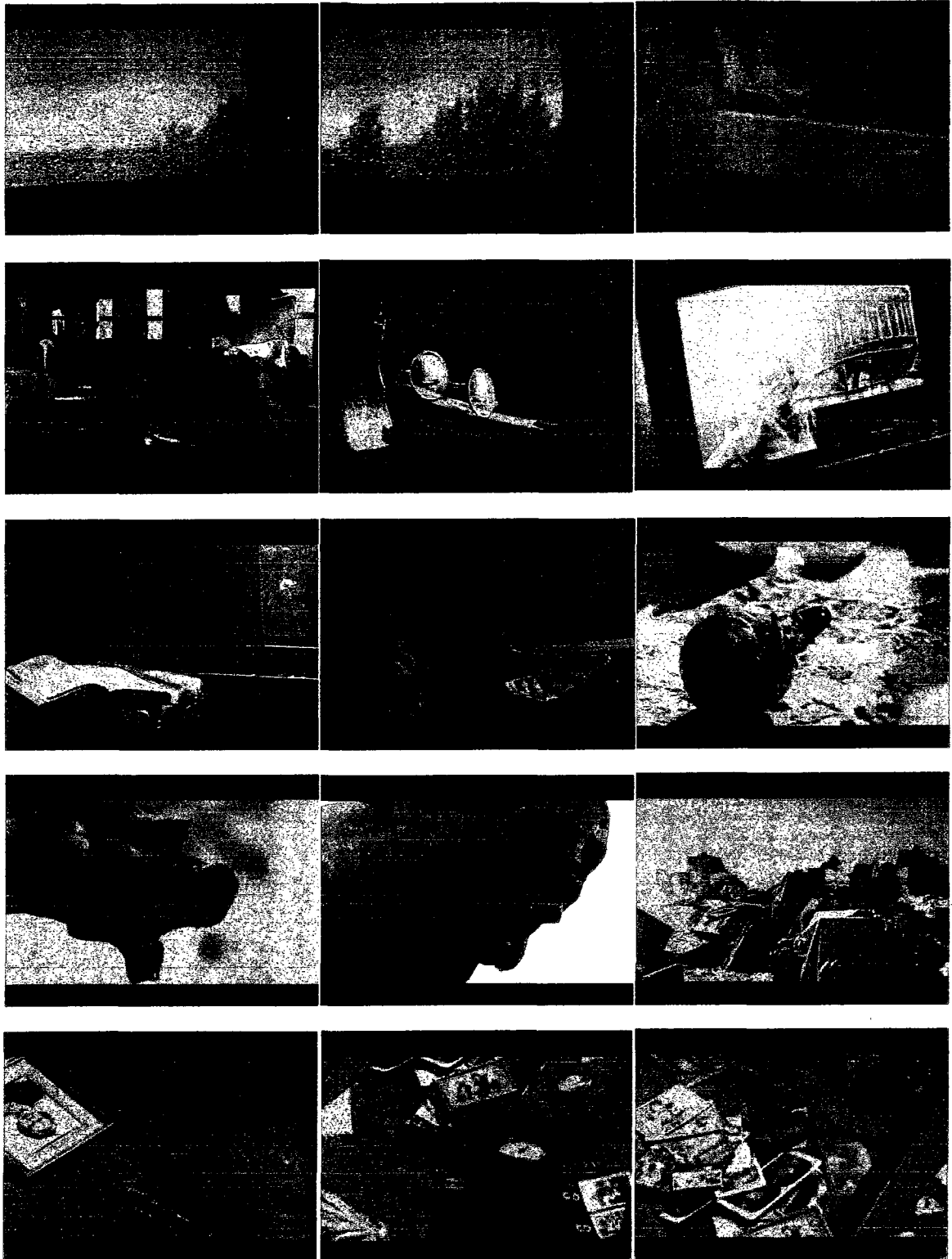




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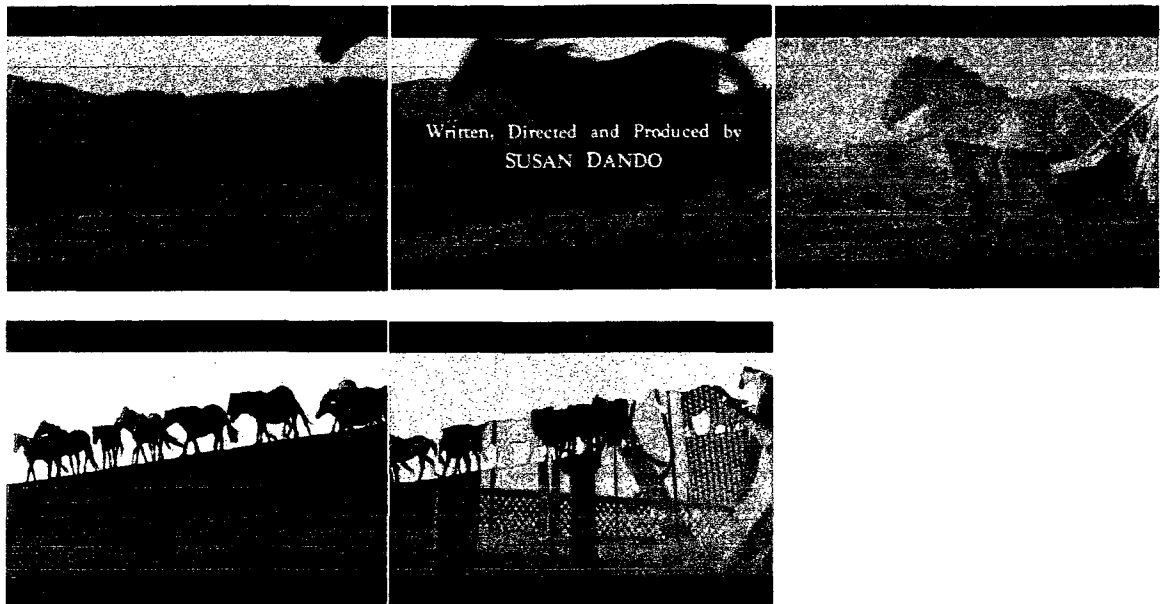


Figure 14b

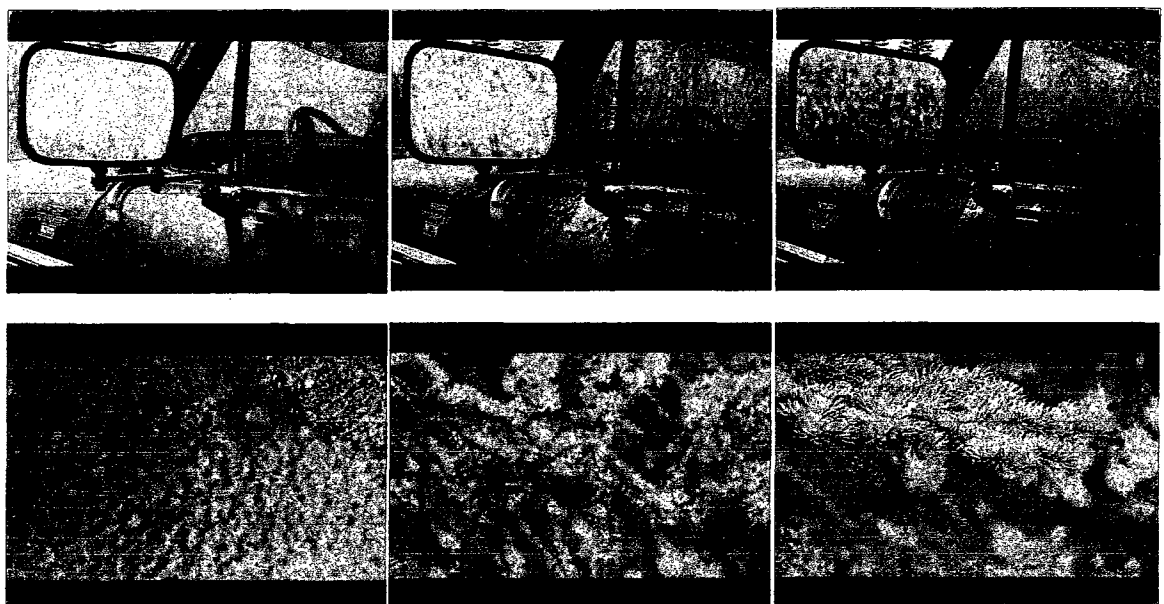


Figure 15



Figure 16a

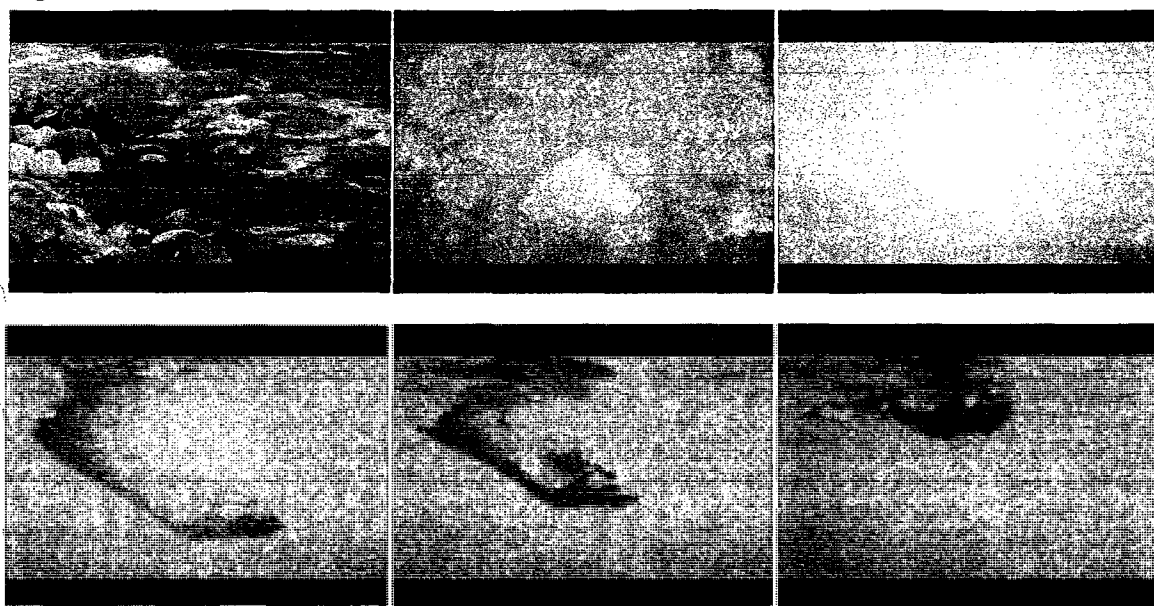


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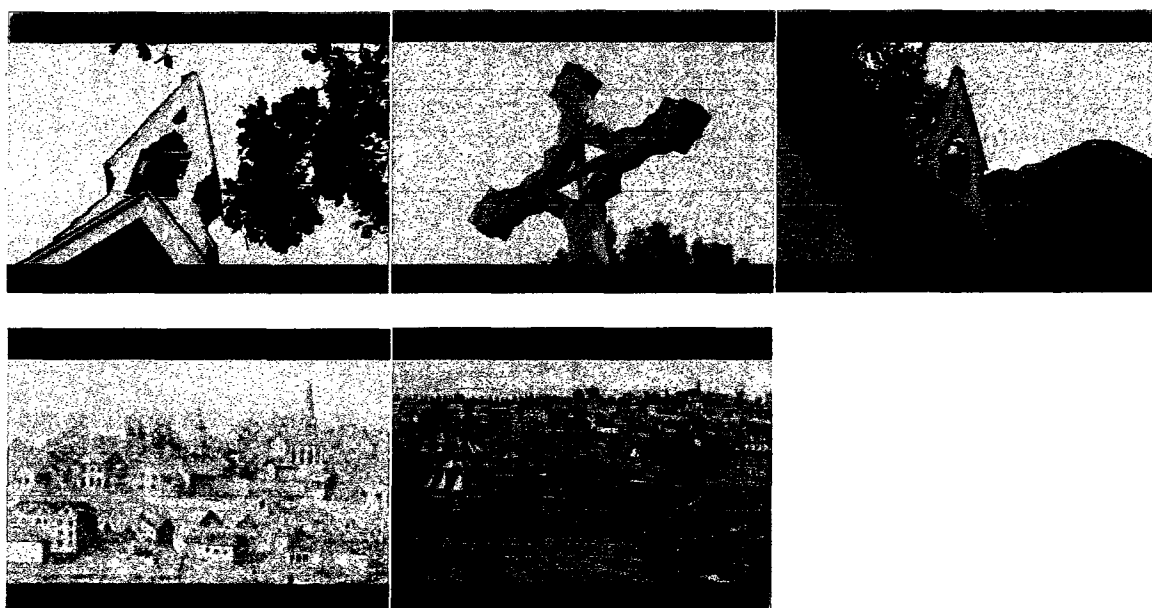


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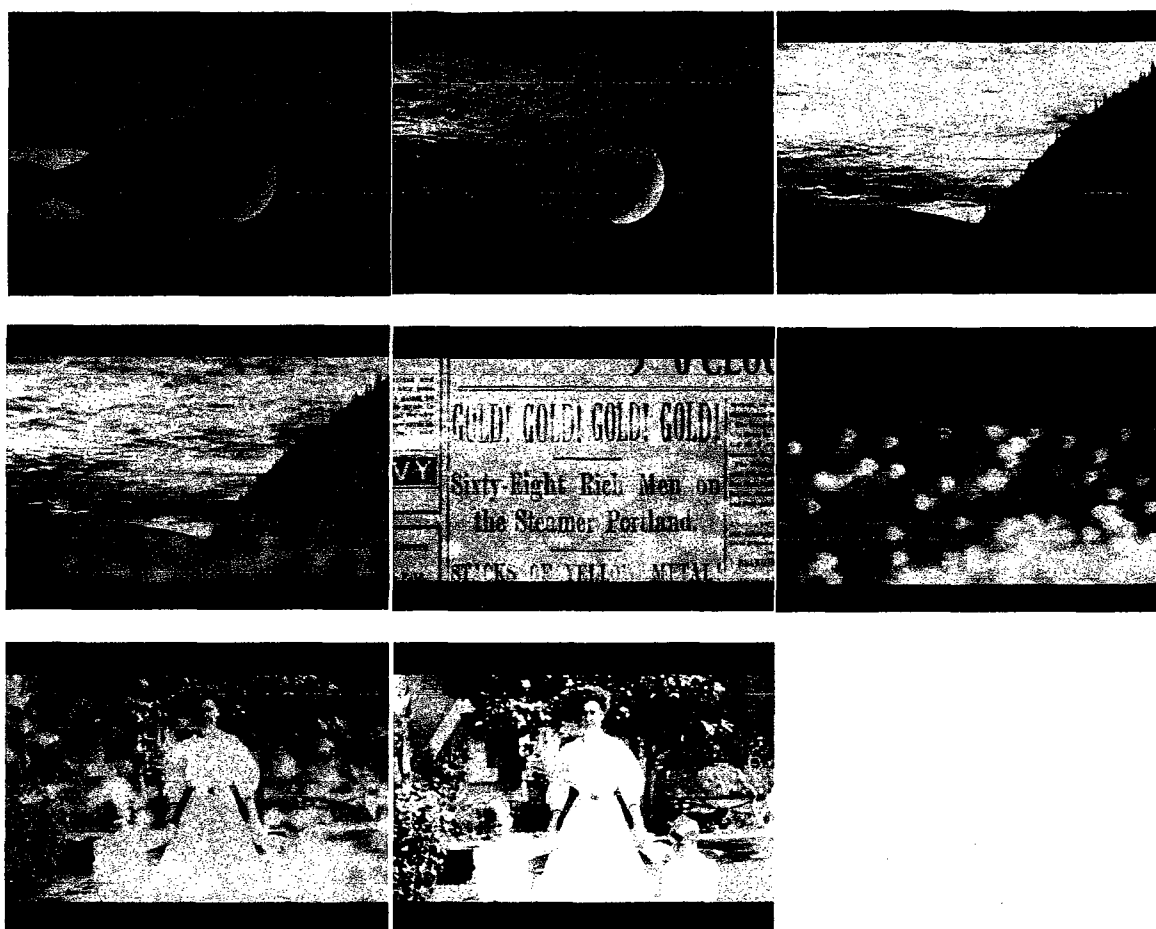


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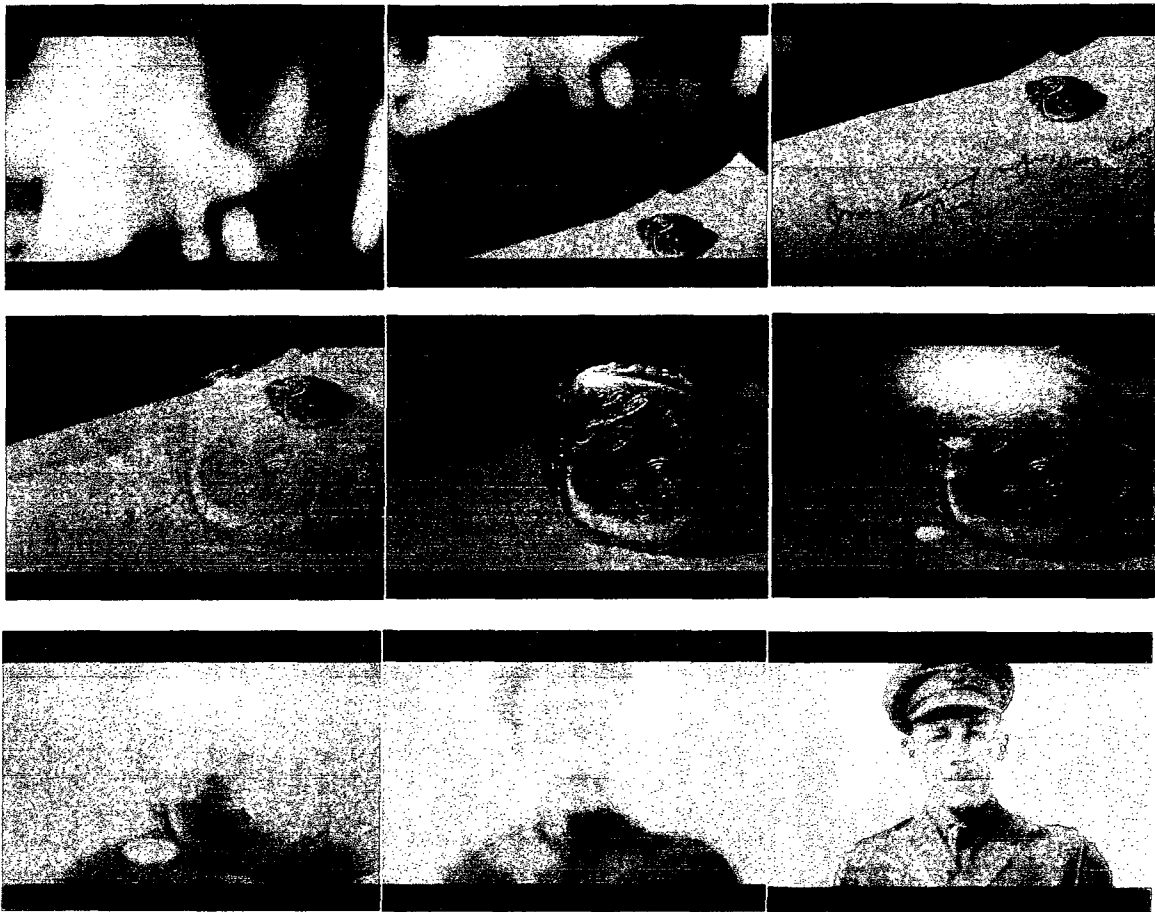


Figure 18b



Figure 19



Figure 20a

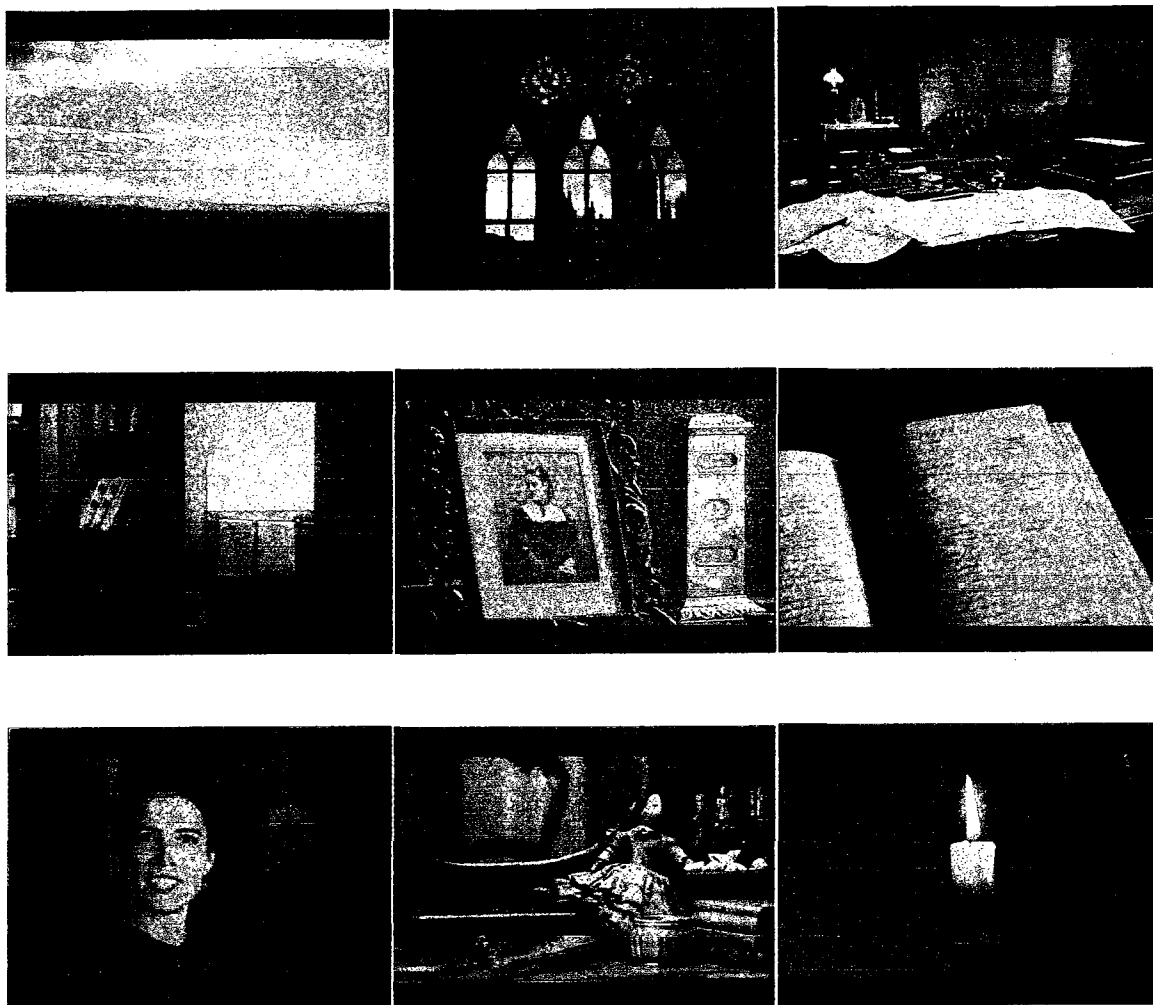


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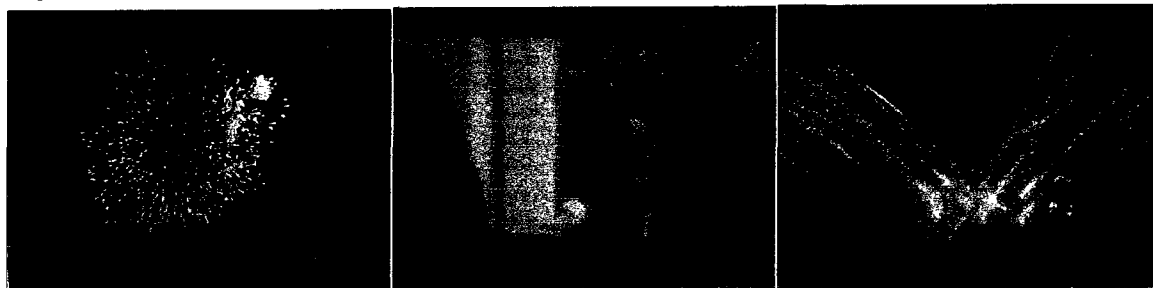


Figure 21





Figure 22

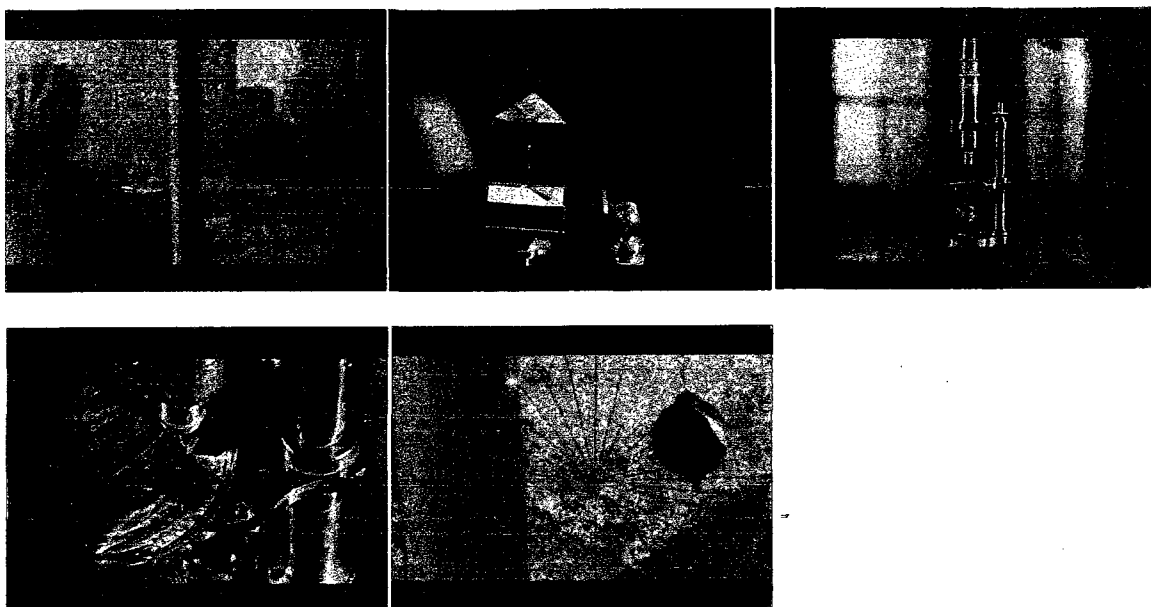


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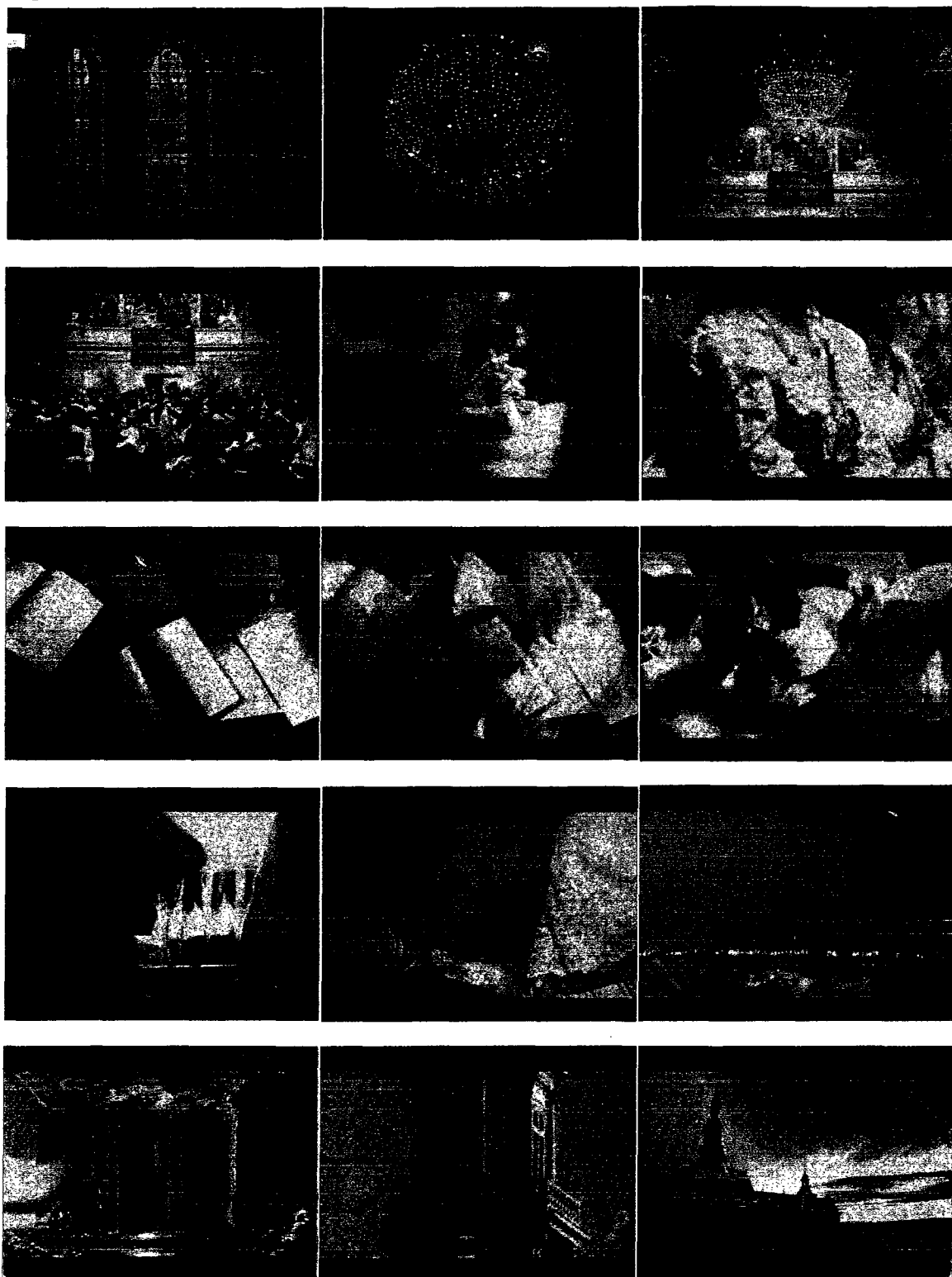


Figure 24a



Figure 24b

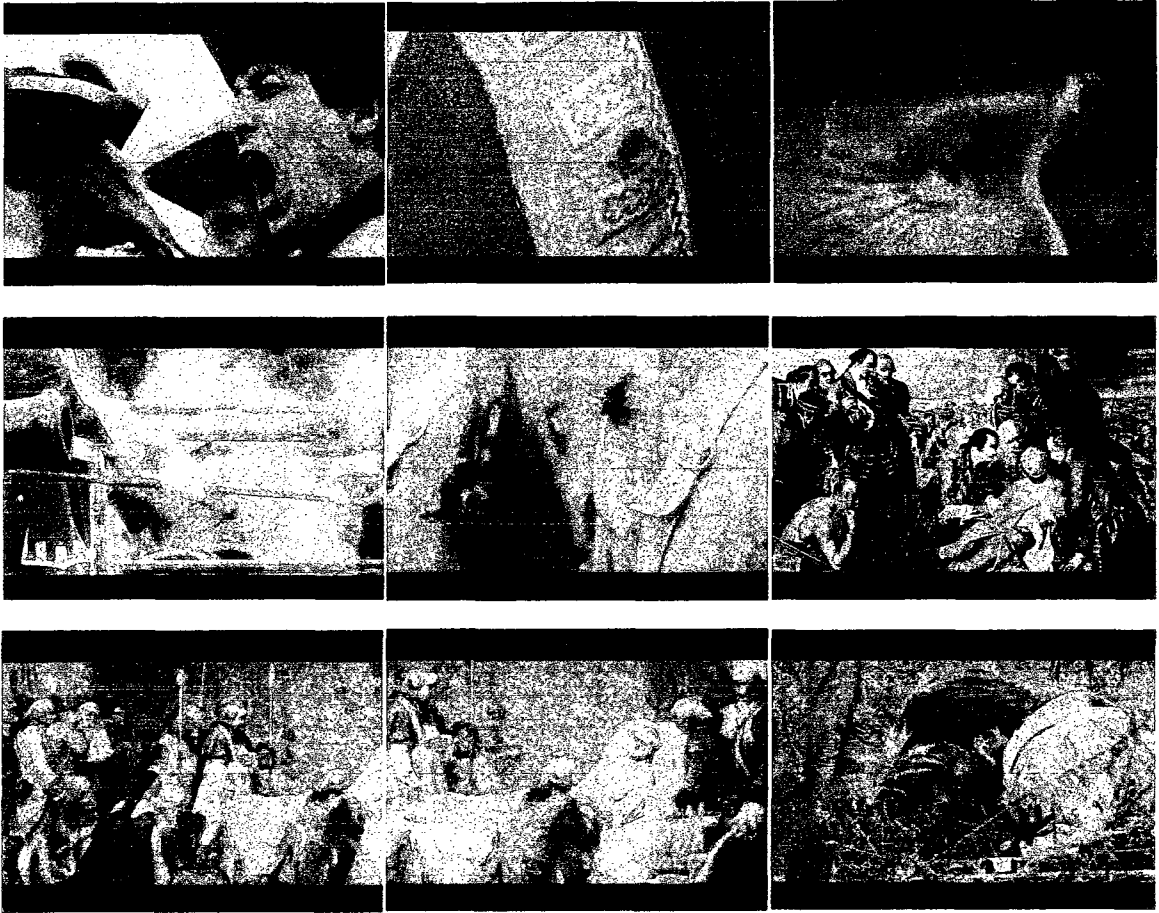


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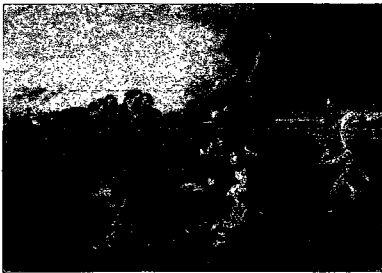


Figure 26



Figure 27



Figure 28a



Figure 28b



Figure 28c



Figure 29a

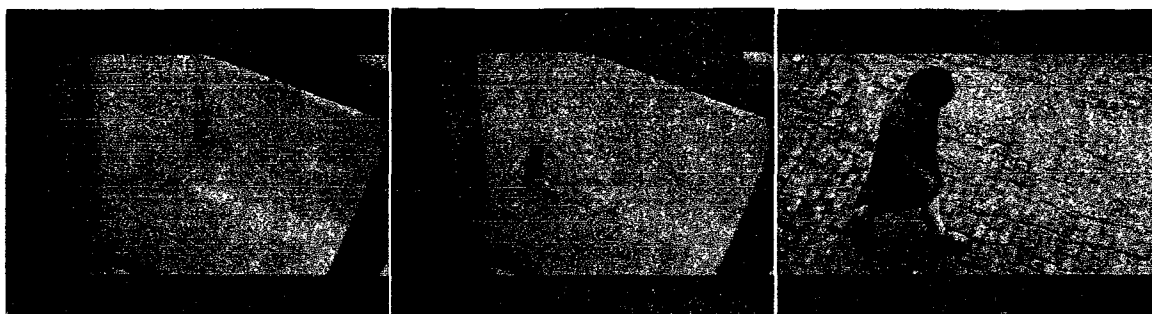


Figure 29b



Figure 30

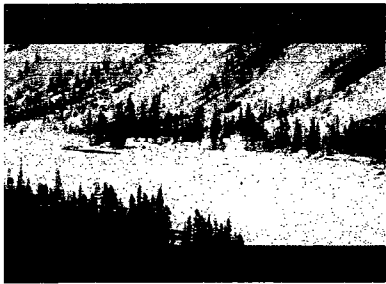


Figure 31



Figure 32

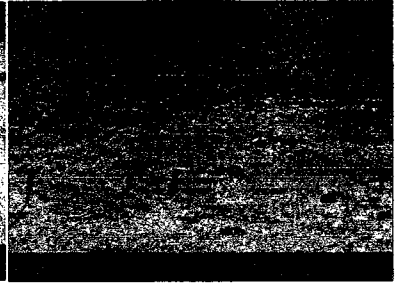


Figure 33



Figure 34

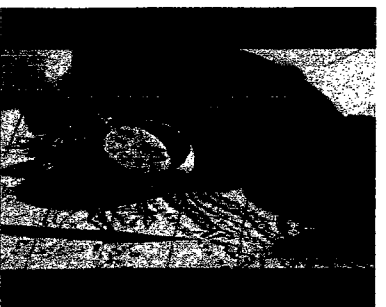
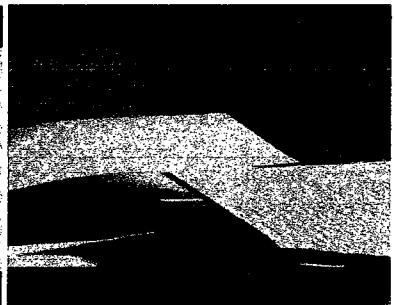
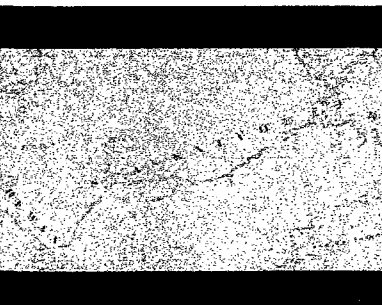
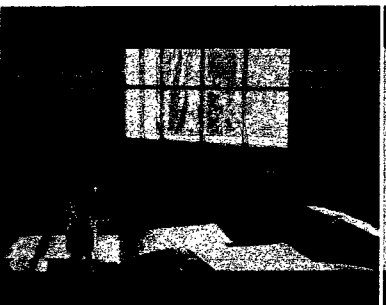
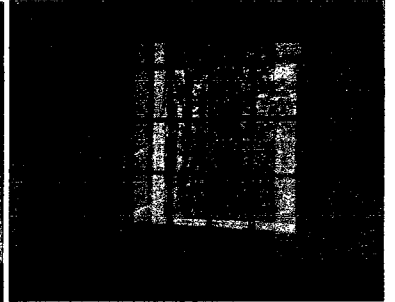
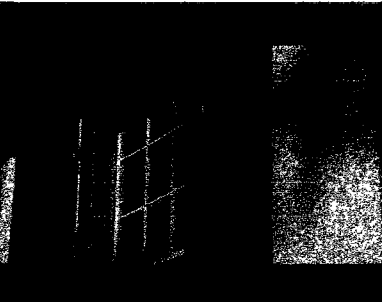




Figure 35a

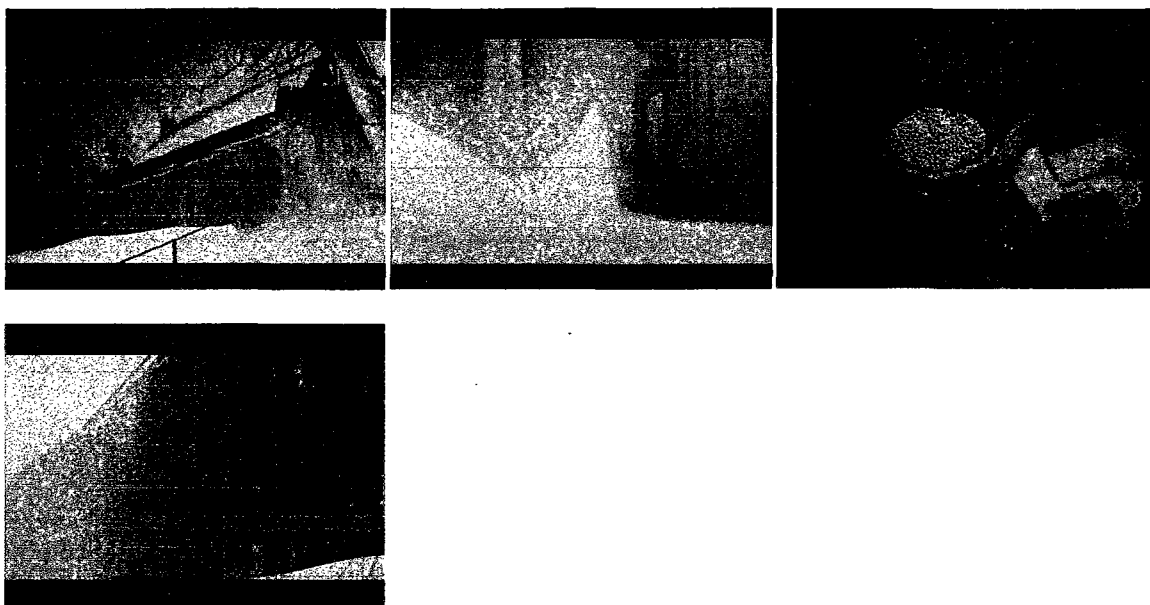


Figure 35b

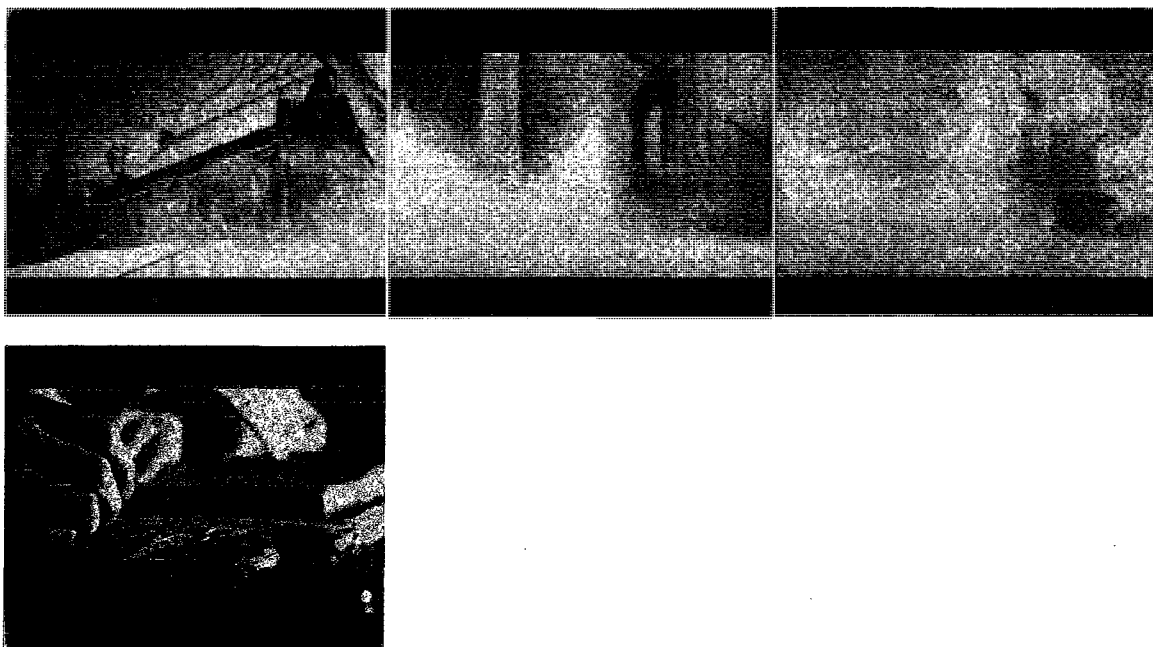


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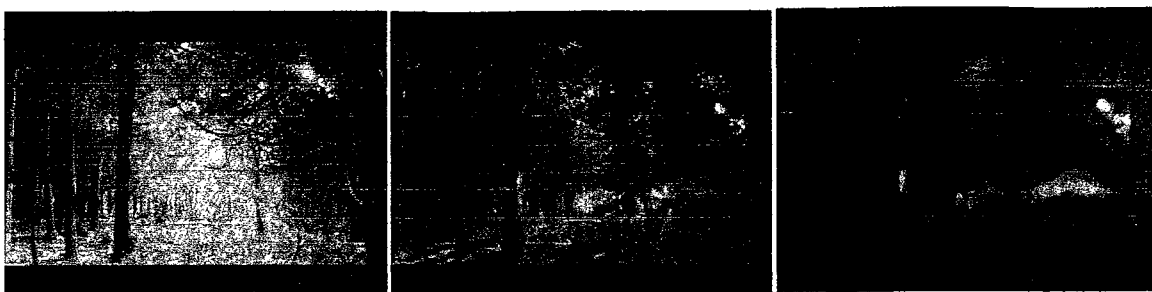


Figure 37

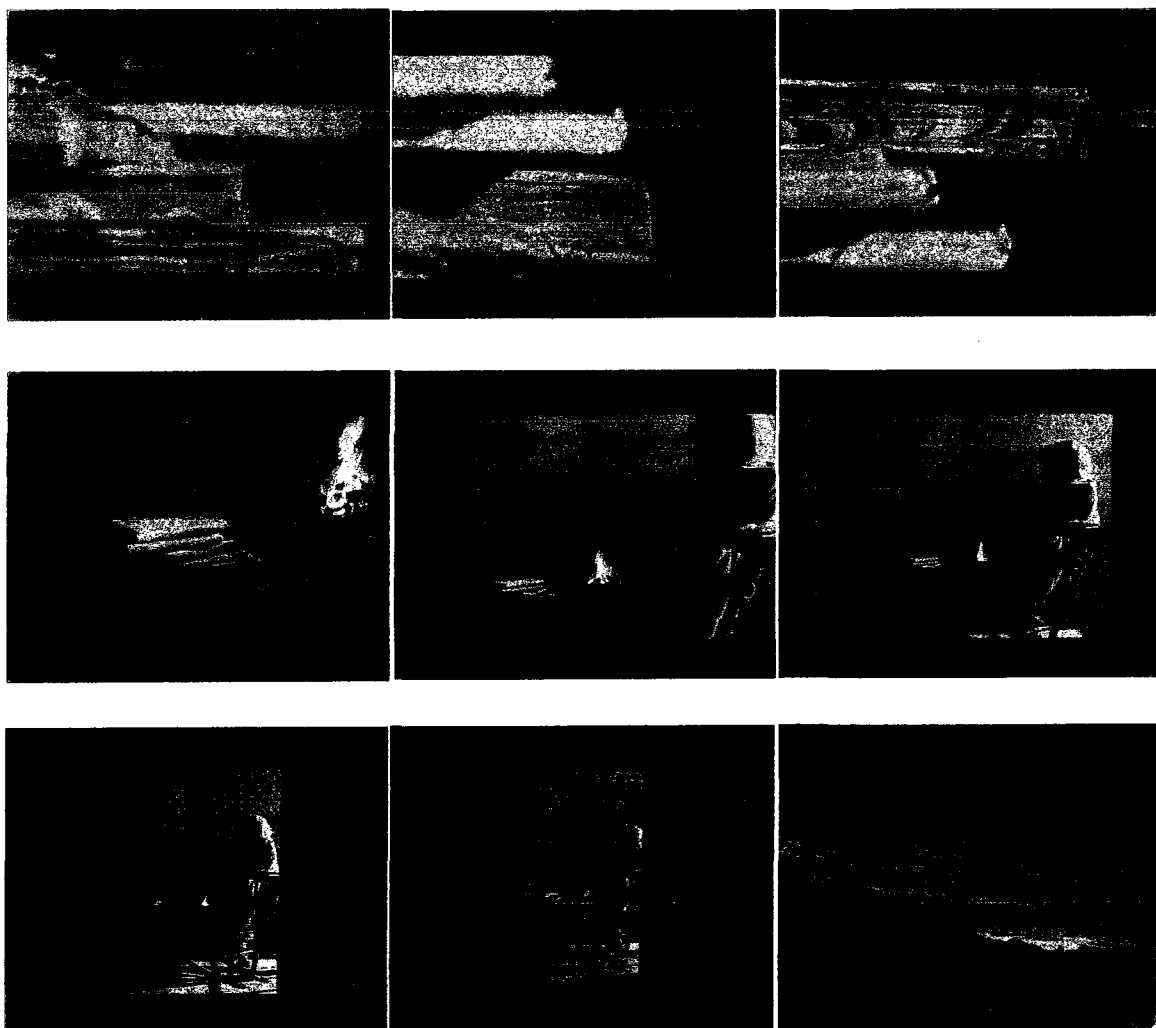


Figure 38a

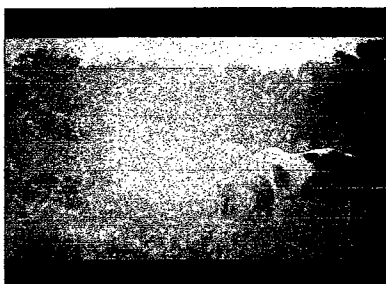


Figure 38b

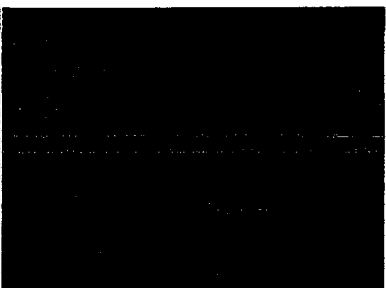
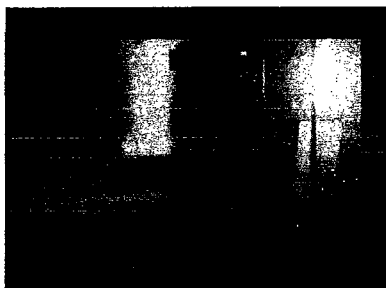


Figure 38c



Figure 39



### CHAPTER THREE

Chapter Three explores the creation and articulation of personal, group, and national identity in *Canada: A People's History*. The investigation is based on the argument that *C:APH* is akin in operation to a family album that recounts a diasporic experience. The visual restoration of this history, at once familial and national, gathers together disparate pictorial elements as it tells the story of dispossessed peoples. The performance of the family album reinforces identity, personal and collective, with private and public acts of remembering. The discussion covers a considerable number of selections that are taken from throughout *C:APH*.

The methodology is drawn from several sources. The work of Nigel Rapport and Andrew Dawson, and of John Berger is used to identify and establish the relationship between movement (i.e., diasporas, and globalization) and fixity (i.e., the Subject, and the nation) in the production of identity and belonging. Homi Bhabha's concept of the pedagogical (unchanging history) and the performative (living present) clarifies how *C:APH* attempts a putatively homogeneous articulation of the diversity inherent in Canadian history. The metaphor of the family album as an interpretive strategy is supported by Marianne Hirsch's idea of "postmemory," which makes the album a work of mourning and commemoration, and her conception of "the familial gaze," which emphasizes the ideological influence 'family' has on identity in *C:APH*. Additionally, Maurice Halbwachs' thinking reveals the socially determined and narratively interdependent nature of the individual and collective memories that bind the stories in the series together as one. Paul Ricoeur's theories on narrative and identity explain how

the performative aspect of narrative shapes self-understanding through the temporary adoption of roles that are witnessed being played in stories of one's own culture.

The chapter opens by setting in place the idea of diaspora as it relates to the analysis, while the remainder of the study is subdivided into three sections. The second section is focused on questions of history, memory, landscape, and belonging. The section starts by explaining the theories on memory of Maurice Halbwachs and Marianne Hirsch, and then works with the theory of Halbwachs to look at how *Canada: A People's History* shows an historical event by intermingling archival documents and video reenactments of the event. After this, the theory of Hirsch is used to explore how, in *C:APH*, the records that people have created of themselves and of the events that they have witnessed are forms of personal memorialization that can shape our understanding of the past. The second section then closes by applying the theoretical work of both Halbwachs and Hirsch to identify how *C:APH* gives us a sense of attachment to Canada through the memories of past Canadians. The third section of the chapter examines how *C:APH* creates an historical landscape of homes and communities, which then attaches a people to a landscape so that the site of Canada shapes how people identify themselves. The fourth and last section of Chapter Three shows how *C:APH* uses a landscape of homes and communities to encourage the audience to see their sense of home and belonging as an extension of an historical Canadian process of nation-building.

### **Section 1 – The naturalization of diaspora and regrouping**

The principal human experience that is presented by *C:APH* is of people who are in search of a new beginning, whether they are explorers or the dispossessed. The overwhelming majority are people who have been forced to flee their homelands for

reasons such as penury, war, famine, or simply to build a better future for themselves and their children. As a result, *C:APH* harbors what James Clifford calls a “[d]iaspora consciousness [that] lives loss and hope as a defining tension.”<sup>1</sup> Clifford goes on to explain the diasporic experience as having “a history of dispersal, myths/memories of the homeland, alienation in the host...country, [and] desire for eventual return.”<sup>2</sup> In this chapter, we will see that the desire for a return to a home that is elsewhere, is co-opted by *C:APH* by adopting the immigrant and refugee perspective as its own point of view on Canadian history.

Diaspora is an overriding characteristic of *C:APH* both for its choice of narrative perspective – the dispossessed – as well as for its content of decontextualized and fragmentary archival remains. The subject and content both echo John Berger’s observation that “[t]o emigrate is always to dismantle the centre of the world, and so to move into a lost, disoriented one of fragments.”<sup>3</sup> Within the frame of the subject under examination, proto-Canadians are seen as being uprooted as people, in pieces as visual documents, and in motion as historical fact and as portrayal. Where these scattered and homeless people are seen to arrive, as noted above, is a new home in the landscape of Canada. An important consequence of the shift from dispersal to settlement is the renewed ability to stake a claim of identity. A similar thing happens with the pasting of old clippings, drawings, and photographic materials into a scrapbook (or capturing them all on a videotape for broadcast). The new context within which the various archival fragments are now seen, provides them with a new semiological point of origin and so a new voice.

The major operation of the series is therefore recollection, and above all else, this is defined both as bringing back to life and the return of life. On the one hand, to cite the series' claim, this is a case of transcribing a portion of the record into a "history as it actually happened." On the other hand, it is a question of showing people being released from the limbo of diaspora so that they can return to a productive life. At the same time, recollection reflects a desire to bring Canadians back to the hearth of Canada through an appreciation of the nation's history – and so be able to establish a claim to Canadian belonging. A key step in this process is to reconnect citizens with the historical nature of their Canadian identity.

Nation and nature are brought into alignment in *C:APH* when the depictions of journeys that are undertaken by the protagonists, and the work of settlement that these people carry out, are associated with natural phenomena. Natural rhythms become signs of a people's behavior as they cross the boundaries of the Canadian landscape. Instances of this abound. The first episode of the series includes narratives on the earliest known North American peoples, and the audience is taken to those stories in a low-level flying perspective over a wild landscape (Figure 1a). The initial settlement of Upper Canada is introduced in Episode Five with video shot of a flight of birds that is then combined with an aerial view of Niagara Falls; the two images are then faded into a painted landscape in the distance of which we can see Niagara Falls (Figure 1b). In Episode Eight, before we are shown how the documents of confederation were drafted at Québec, we see a flight of geese gathering and then landing on water. The eleventh episode's narrative of European immigrants settling in western Canada shows a flock of birds swirling over the new home site (Figure 1c). The staging of oil exploration in western Canada that is presented in



Episode Seventeen includes a scene that shows a low-flying crow tailing the line of dust that is being raised by a prospector's car (Figure 1).

The migration to a new land, which is at once the return to a place of origin, is the idea that the migrant can enact their origin and so inscribe their myths of origin once more. In this sense, origin occurs as a result of rebirth. The theme of migratory behavior that is associated with the peopling and formation of Canada insists on a timeless return to a place of origin and so the permanence of generation after generation (and the aforementioned process of rebirth). The alignment of human settlement with natural rhythms and their inherent continuity offers us a mythic assurance that future generations will do as we do – follow in the footsteps of those who have gone before us. We can then become part of something greater than ourselves alone. The panoply of historical personal moments that we see in *C:APH* constructs nature as a foundational myth, along with a mythology of the everyday that is shared across cultural and social boundaries. Myth, according to Barthes, exists “not only [as] written discourse, but also [as] photography, cinema, [and] reporting.”<sup>4</sup> The latter are media that “serve as a support to mythical speech,”<sup>5</sup> which then represents “a *value*”<sup>6</sup> (italics in original). A key element of Barthes' argument is that “[a] *complete* image would exclude myth...[which] prefers to work with poor, incomplete images”<sup>7</sup> so that “the reader lives the myth as a story at once true and unreal”<sup>8</sup> as if the “picture *naturally* conjured up the concept” (italics in original).<sup>9</sup> The expression of myth can be seen in the cyclical narrative arc that runs through the entirety of *C:APH* – departure and loss, travel and suffering, arrival and redemption.

The drift of a people who spread naturally and settle across the land in some undying cycle of national history is reinforced in Episode Eight, in the chapter entitled “The People of British North America” (Figure 2). Instead of an alignment between human settlement and migratory birds, we first see an image of ruptured milkweed seedpods, then a video shot of a pond. The latter image then fades into the first of several archival family group portraits. The sequence very nearly stands for a people’s dispersal over a void and into a mature form in the soil of their new homeland. In this sense, the seeds are the proto-people, the pond represents the void through which they must pass, and the portraits represent the later, more evolved forms of the migrants. What the image-set clearly connects are two forms of reproduction: the natural and unfettered seeds, and the artificial and authored photographs. The sequence also contains the expression of an implied future, since the drifting seeds will freely take root and grow into new plants that will bear a resemblance to their precursors. *C:APH* trades in reproduced likeness to plant an understanding of the national past in its audience. While watching the series we can see a figurative burst and release of reproductions that broadcast an image of family and domesticity across the land. A corollary process is that the imagery also takes root and is carried into the future in our memories.

The images that sow an awareness of history do so because they instill a personal, emotional reverence for both Canada and past Canadians. Instances of a spiritually based remembrance emerge from some of the earliest stories of the series. These include a funeral procession along a prehistoric shoreline (Episode One), the burial of a deceased member of a failed eastern settlement during the early part of the seventeenth century, wooden crosses that marked the riverside graves of *coureur des bois* (circa 1650, Episode

Six), and the death of a settler crossing the western plains at the turn of the twentieth century, in Episode Ten.<sup>10</sup> What these ceremonies do is mark the passage from one world and state of being to the next. The statement holds true for the actual ceremony and for its representation, which is another kind of passage. In this second case, the absent thing returns to us in reproduction as we gaze upon an image in order to remember the absent thing.

Interestingly, the abovementioned rituals that mark a transition between realms are themselves filmed as taking place at or near boundaries. For that matter, as noted above, a body of water lay between the milkweeds and the family portraits. The ancient burial ceremony moves along a shoreline, the eastern settler's interment is marked by the change of seasons and ocean surf, and the western settler's crucifix sits at the line between earth and sky. We also see this during the narrative of the *courier de bois*; their graves are marked with wooden crosses at the edge of a river. The binary motif that underlies these depictions is that of fixity and movement: the same practice marks the passage of untold numbers of individuals, and a passage so often seen in the series as taking place at the boundary between the seemingly permanent earth and continually shifting sea or sky.

Sequences like those paralleling animal migration and human settlement, wild and cultured forms, and the earth/sky and body/spirit, reflect a blended motif that is at the core of *C:APH*. The theme expresses a mixture of permanence and ethereality, which can also be detected in the physical records of lived experience, as will be seen below.

## Section 2.0 – Collective, personal, and connective memory

In this chapter two kinds of memory are described, and how they act together to historically locate and emotionally integrate the audience is discussed. Section Two now begins with an explanation of the two modes of memory, the first of which is Halbwachs' combination of "autobiographical (personal) memory and historical (collective) memory,"<sup>11</sup> and the second of which is Hirsch's "postmemory."<sup>12</sup> Section Two then demonstrates separately how the two memory types function in *Canada: A People's History*, before showing how these two kinds of memory work together in *C:APH*.

The reason for delineating these two different layers of memory is that they work together to unify national- and familial-oriented depictions of the past, and *C:APH* revolves around the reiteration of history and what I shall term the co-memorialization of the past. The first function involves a more or less factual restatement of the historical record, so that we can locate people, places, and things of the past; an offshoot of this process is that we may then locate our own life story in relation to these past events. The memory that is talked about here is the Halbwachsian type, which involves both the autobiographical (personal) memory, and the historical (collective) memory.

What accompanies the Halbwachsian form is a type of co-memorialization that involves the preservation of another's memory. The manner in which this is done nearly invokes an obligation in the past; that is to say, we can feel charged with a responsibility to keep the past alive in our memory. The sort of memory that we see in this case, is the Hirschian form that is called postmemory. The primary difference between these two levels of memory is that Halbwachs' combination of autobiographical (personal) memory and historical (collective) memory speaks to an understanding of the record of history

and an ability to situate our experiences in its temporal flow. Postmemory, on the other hand, invokes a response to concerns that are raised by the past's ephemeral nature. For example: What are we to do with the remains of the past now that we have located and organized them? Why are these remains significant? What kind of future might they enable?

### **Section 2.1 – Establishing national and personal memories in *C:APH***

In order to understand Halbwachs' formulation, we can begin with his idea that personal memory is briefly situated within historical memory in order to confirm what the former holds, to correct disparities, or to fill in perceived voids.<sup>13</sup> The process involves connecting historical occasions with personal experiences of those same events. Thus "war, rebellion, national ceremony, popular festivity...can be considered from two distinct viewpoints. They...alter group life. But they also dissolve into a series of images traversing the individual consciousness."<sup>14</sup> The person is thus left with a fragmented perspective, and in order "to grasp the historical reality underlying that image, he would have to go outside himself and be placed within a group viewpoint...[to see] the concerns, interests, passions, of a nation."<sup>15</sup> The movement of memory between the national and the personal accurately describes the mingling in *Canada: A People's History* of past events and people's everyday experiences. Three aspects are involved in this process. They are the alternation of reenactments with archival imagery, the punctuation of the presentation with onscreen actors who speak directly to the audience, and finally, the showing of people experiencing the unfolding of events that have since become historically defining (for example, seeing archival footage in *C:APH* of people

watching a television broadcast of the Apollo lunar landing – as they watch history being made, so do we).

The first subject of the examination of memory is the technique that is found throughout *C:APH* of alternating between archival material and contemporary footage or reenactments of the past. In this approach, we see an archival image and then one that allows the audience to “grasp the historical reality”<sup>16</sup> behind that first image. A demonstration of this can be seen in the presentation of Samuel de Champlain’s exploration and mapping of the New World, shown in the second installment of *C:APH*.<sup>17</sup> Figure 3a shows the forms of a deer and a wolf that alternately appear in archival and video form. The archival source for both animals is an antique map.<sup>18</sup> The same technique is shown in Figure 3b, which is taken from the same episode and narrative. This time we are shown the cartographic detail and then an actual ship that was videotaped at sea. In these scenes, the archival images represent what Halbwachs calls the historical (collective) memory, and the video recreations are what he would describe as autobiographical (personal) memory. The fluctuation between archival document and actual imagery might at first seem redundant. However, this visual weave is a function of the desire in *C:APH* to bring the past back to life and to create an impression of historical accuracy. Interleaving the two forms of image allows the active, and living, presence to be validated by its archival equivalent. The relation between the two forms of representation is reciprocal, since we understand and experience the archival document through its video equivalent.

We see the process take place in the presentation of Champlain’s visit to Huronia in 1650, staged in Episode Two (Figure 4a), and when we see the farmlands and

communities of eighteenth-century Acadia that are described in Episode Three (Figure 4b). The period watercolors of Huronia<sup>19</sup> blend with video that has been taken the historical park near Midland, Ontario, called Sainte-Marie Among the Hurons. What this combination accomplishes is that we first have the visual experiences of the historical artist, and then in the video repetition we encounter the same scene for ourselves as if we are seeing in the past. When we come to see the Acadian landscape, we are first introduced to it through a painting. The term ‘through’ is used because the painted image then gradually fades away to reveal a nearly identical but reenacted scene, and so we seem to have arrived in the past.

The second factor that I now highlight is the use of onscreen actors who directly address the audience of *C:APH*. Here, rather than being presented with the national stage or diorama of the past such as scenes of Huronia or Acadia, we directly experience the recollections of people who acted in that space. The points of transfer are the figures of onscreen actors. *C:APH* has been constructed with a narrative that presents history from the perspective of those who experienced it, and this link between the greater historical field and a personal experience is the very definition of the Halbwachsian call and answer between autobiographical (personal) memory and historical (collective) memory. In *C:APH*, history is quite literally made by figures from the past that embody the personal perspective that is central to the series’ expression of history. While these onscreen appearances offer us an eye-to-eye perspective with people from history, we are also inserted into their point of view. By this it is meant that the manner of construction in *C:APH* lets us see through the eyes of other people.

The overlapping of these two points of view is, in effect, the brief positioning of personal memory inside historical memory. In *Canada: A People's History*, we can be informed by history through the perspective of another (the figure from history), and it is from this point of view that we can become witnesses of the past. This happens when we seem to move through the past as if we are in the process of remembering what other people experienced there. We can see this illustrated by the portrayal of the clash between the Métis and the Canadian militia at Batoche in 1885, which is shown in the tenth episode (Figure 5). The conflict at Duck Lake is constructed with an alternation of photographs and re-enactment. The video footage simply repeats the scenes that are shown in the archival photographs.<sup>20</sup> The photographs give every impression of what we might today think of as the work of a news photographer, since the camera is positioned so close to the fighting. Yet these images, produced by Captain James Peters, emerge not from the newsroom, but from a photography practiced “primarily as a sort of visual diary for recording the events of...personal lives.”<sup>21</sup> The live imagery is the autobiographical personal memory, and the archival photographic documents represent the collective record. The way in which they are combined in this sequence alternately places us behind the camera that captured the events, and in the events as they seem to unfold. Thus, the archival photograph simply confirms what we seem to be remembering – the reenactment, in this sense, is our memory of the historical event.

A very clear demonstration of the insertion into *C:APH* of a witness to history occurs when the series includes its own medium – television. We can see this occurring at several points during the latter part of the series’ second broadcast season. Two examples are taken from Episode Seventeen and introduced here to illustrate the point. They are the



reconstruction of someone who is watching the televised broadcast of a St. Jean Baptiste parade (Figure 6), and the recreation of the developments leading up to and including the referendum on Québec sovereignty in 1980 (Figure 7).

When we are presented with the St. Jean Baptiste parade, the fusion of individual and group historical experience is unmistakable (Figure 6). The video tracking brings the perspective of the audience into the living room of the individual watching the parade. The lens that introduces us into the room eventually shows a television screen that is filled with celebrants. As an audience, we thereby enter the domestic space and experience of a figure from the past. We also find ourselves connected to one more collective – that of the parade marchers. The sequence manages to align three levels of memory: the one belonging to the person who is watching the parade on television, the historical (collective) memory embodied by the original broadcast recording of the parade, and the memory of the audience that is being informed by the presentation of *Canada: A People's History*.

In the second case, we are given the re-presentation of the 1986 referendum in Québec (Figure 7). We find ourselves situated in a living room, watching a TV broadcast of the referendum's principal events. The screen of the television is placed among several family photographs and as a result, we are not only seated in the experiential world of another, we also seem to inherit the snapshots that they have produced to document themselves. Again, several levels of memory are brought together within the same visual frame. The televised coverage of the referendum, and the photojournalist's shot of René Lévesque represent the historical (collective) memory. The framed photographic portraits

of a married couple, their newborn child, and their parents represent the autobiographical and personal level of memory.

The memory thread that is established by the family images is the record that reveals a passage of time, which is marked-off by the images of the grandchild and the grandparents. The arrangement's depiction of human aging is a hint of the human fragility that winds its way through all of history. And it is through the images of parents and children, framed by the domestic environment, that *C:APH* incorporates an expression of responsibility and caring, which spans generations.

### **Section 2.2 – Inheriting memories in *Canada: A People's History***

The kind of memory that is involved with the transition from one generation to the next is defined by Hirsch's concept of postmemory. She develops this in her work entitled *Family Frames* (1997), which deals with the construction and remembrance of collective identity. Her subject revolves around the photography-based installation entitled "The Tower of Faces," that is situated at the centre of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C.<sup>22</sup> The function of the installation is to resist the complete erosion of memory that would then result in the ultimate disappearance of the peoples and the communities that were lost during the Holocaust.

The term "postmemory" is derived from the effect of seeing the family-based imagery of "The Tower of Faces." According to Hirsch, spectators are struck by the familiarity of the pictures and are thus able to "adopt these memories as their own postmemories."<sup>23</sup> This idea of a memory after the fact – that is, after its lifeline has been cut – strengthens the premise that *Canada: A People's History* represents what Clifford calls a "diaspora consciousness [that] lives loss and hope as a defining tension."<sup>24</sup> Hirsch

describes “the photographic aesthetics of postmemory” as “the photograph’s capacity to signal absence and loss and, at the same time, to make present, rebuild, reconnect, [and] bring back to life.”<sup>25</sup> Transcribed onto the human experiences that are represented in *C:APH*, this becomes a “diasporic aesthetics of temporal and spatial exile that needs simultaneously to (re)build and to mourn.”<sup>26</sup> The two elements in Hirsch’s notion that are most crucial to the analysis of *C:APH* in this chapter are the capacity to reconnect people with the past, and the broad point of contact between people that the widely recognizable family images make available.

Light provides the introductory point of reference in an examination of the picturing of postmemories in *Canada: A People’s History*. The first four examples, below, are unified by their inclusion of a curtain of light, which in each case refers to a point of transition between the corporeal and the remembered forms. They are: the stories in Episode One that show Columbus coming to the New World in 1492, and the first encounters between Europeans and the Beothuk in northeastern Canada during the early part of the sixteenth century; the eighth episode’s presentation of the Irish immigration to Canada in the nineteenth century; and the tale of the Canadian Merchant Navy during the early 1940s that is shown in Episode Fourteen.

The narrative theme that is shared among all of these incidents is the death of the old and the birth of the new, and the image of a curtain of light marks this point in each of the stories. The arrival of Columbus marks the beginning of the European transformation of North America and the gradual erosion of an existing set of Native traditions. In this case, we first see a portrait of Columbus,<sup>27</sup> then an image of an ocean that is illuminated by shafts of light, and then a drawing of Natives greeting a European

ship of sail (Figure 8a). The story of the Beothuk, meanwhile, ends with their extinction not long after their contact with the Europeans. In this story, the image of a luminous ocean expanse immediately precedes the disappearance of the Natives (Figure 8b). The narrative focus in the tale of Irish immigration to Canada in the nineteenth century is the large number of deaths by disease that they suffered, and another delicately lit body of water marks the journey to their new home (Figure 8c). And the theme of death and rebirth is again made apparent when we see the violent sinking of a ship in the Merchant Navy story. After the sinking we see an image of shimmering light over water, and then we see film footage of a few oil-covered sailors being pulled from the water (Figure 8d).

It is worth noting that three of the abovementioned constructions – of Columbus, the Beothuk, and the Merchant Navy – incorporate exactly the same image of sunbeams over an expanse of water. The fourth, the arrival of the Irish, uses an image that is very closely related; light streams down through breaks in the clouds to illuminate calm waters. The image is the same or nearly identical in all four cases because the presentation is trying to show the same thing each time. What *Canada: A People's History* is trying to express, is the moment of suspension between a loss of the old and a hope for the new. The use of a picture that shows a curtain of light in a space, is also an indication of the importance that is placed on seeing, and thus remembering. Light, in other words, represents a transformative space and a power that enables a documentary reconnection with what no longer exists.

Light continues to be the point of reference in the next three examples, which focus on detailing how *C:APH* concerns itself with the acts of making and receiving memorial images. At issue is the creation of a likeness that can then be used to bring the

departed back to mind. The illustrations that support this are the eleventh episode's narrative about the evils of alcohol in eastern Canada during the late nineteenth century, the eighth episode's presentation about the operation of William Notman's photographic portrait studio in mid- to late nineteenth-century Montréal, and the twelfth episode's story of a mother's reminiscences, at the turn of the twentieth century, on the childhood of her son.

The line of inquiry, which traces the use of light in *C:APH*, continues to support the overall theme of this chapter, which is that we are the point of origin for a visual record that others will later be able to use in order to recreate our experiences. The guiding metaphor of this chapter's analysis is the family album, which as a collection of memorabilia can contribute to the formation of the contemporary family's self-understanding. In the discussion that follows, we see demonstrations of what underpins this process – the production of a documentary image, and its later reuse to imaginatively come into contact with the departed.

The discussion begins with the example from Episode Twelve that includes a film that was originally produced to counter alcoholism (Figure 9). Instead of beginning with the temperance film itself, *Canada: A People's History* shows the film's projection so that we are treated to a bright fan of light that is streaming from an antique projector. A boundary space is thus created between the dramatized "history as it actually happened" of *C:APH*, and the artifice of the filmic morality play on drunkenness. In addition to separating the fabricated nature of *C:APH* from that of the temperance film, the projector's light indicates a fascination in *C:APH* with the power of a documentary to rebuild and remember. This shimmering margin is at the heart of the "aesthetics of

postmemory.”<sup>28</sup> that signals “simultaneously to (re)build and to mourn.”<sup>29</sup> Light, as something that we can see but not touch, works effectively to express presence and absence together. The re-presentation and remembrance that can then take place stems from the power of light in the creation and recreation of a documentary record.

When we look at the story of William Notman as presented in Episode Eight of *Canada: A People's History*, we can also see how the series builds a capacity for memory into its presentation. Notman's practice is introduced to us with an archival photograph that shows the building where his studio was located. The photograph then fades to reveal a video shot of an antique camera. A photo-portrait of Notman then rises to prominence on the screen, only to fade from view and leave in its place a videographic scene of a studio interior. At this point, *C:APH* presents the central event of the narrative, which is the depiction of a woman who is having her portrait taken (Figure 10).

The first thing that we see is a close-up of the neck brace that assisted the sitter in remaining motionless during the long exposure times. The scene then shifts back to a wider view of the studio, allowing us to see the actress who is playing the part of the portrait subject. However, the sequence introduces her with a very faint image and then slowly makes it stronger until she appears to be more fully present. She never does acquire a substantial presence because the full sequence is rendered in light, pastel shades. An outcome of the gradual materialization of the woman's form is that the pole and neck brace remain visible inside her figure until the last moment. This has the interesting effect of alluding to a structure, which supports a delicate and ultimately fleeting form in the sense of a mortal being, and in the sense of a memory. The structure in question is the visual record. The allusion to permanence and transience that we see in

the gradual appearance of the brace, is repeated by the documentary act of *Canada: A People's History*. The series frames the portrait sitting so that its documentary lens sits in the place of Notman's camera. The visual matrix of *C:APH* is therefore what provides the structure for the remains from the past that we see in our homes. Thus, the woman seems to nearly achieve, but not quite, a material presence. This is because she must remain an image of memory so that she satisfies the desire of *C:APH* to offer its audience the experience of history as it actually happened. And in reality, what transpired in Notman's studio was the making of photographic reproductions of people. Once these ghosts born of light had been made they could be seen and remembered but not touched.

*Canada: A People's History* then emphasizes the regenerative power of reproductions by taking us into Notman's darkroom and the faux-development of the film that supposedly carries the woman's image. A video close-up of an antique pocket watch interrupts the move from the studio to the darkroom. This is the second time in Notman's story that a reference has been made to the making of historical imagery. The first occasion was when we saw the neck brace. The two instances are reminders that recall the passage of time being recorded both in the portrait image that we see being made in *C:APH*, and also in the series that we are watching.

The image that follows the pocket watch repeats the likeness of the female portrait sitter. The next thing that we see is a large piece of photographic film that is floating in what appears to be a developing tray. The film is large enough to let us recognize the woman's seated form. However, the film does not prove to be the source for the portrait prints that are then shown to us. Instead, *C:APH* follows the darkroom scene by showing us two archival photo-portraits of two different women. The first of

these does bear a very slight resemblance to the woman in the reenacted settings; the second portrait image does not resemble her at all. Thus in the end, Notman's story does not present us with a specific event. Instead, it shows us what went into the production of images that then became historical reproductions. It is the documentary image that provides us with a structure upon which we can reconstruct an image of absent others.

Memorialization can also be seen taking place in the twelfth episode's presentation of the ruminations of a mother on the fate of her son (Figure 11). The event is significant to the overall argument that is being made in this chapter because what we see in the case of the mother and son, is what we see happening throughout *Canada: A People's History* – an affective connection between family members that spans both generations and geographic space. In this story, we encounter a child who has grown up and become a combatant in the First World War, and the mother who yearns for him. The sequence of this narrative begins with a close-up view of an outdoor photograph of the woman with the boy when he was very young. The story continues with the mother in an attic space, gazing over the child's toys. Since the exterior photograph of the mother and child is made to fill the screen of *C:APH*, we cannot be sure that it actually forms a part of the collection of objects that is later seen in the attic. The photograph can therefore be imagined as being in the hand of the mother (in other words, she gazes first at the image and then at the belongings that are scattered on the attic floor), or the photo can be understood as being held by the audience of *C:APH*. In this second sense, the photograph would be held within their own (television) picture frame. In either case, the photograph of the mother and child establish what has since been lost. Loss is present in the fact that



the mother no longer has a young child, and that from our point of view, both the mother and the child have almost certainly since passed away.

The last scene in the mother's story shows us a pair of baby shoes that are placed beside two studio photo-portraits, one of a woman and the other of a man. The two portraits are framed together in a double-window matt. The double portrait can be interpreted as a memento of the woman's marriage; she is on the left and her husband is on the right. It is in this manner that by the end of her story, we are returned to an image of family inheritance. The baby shoes that lie next to the parents' portraits point to this continuity in the family line. As a result, we are made witness to an inheritance of memory – not the recitation by rote of facts, but a personal involvement with history to the point where we are obligated in some way to the people who have gone before us.

The baby shoes also hint at the multiple points of view that are evident in the mother's story. Her story opened in a way that implied the narrative was being seen from either her point of view or that of the audience. By concluding the story with an image of baby shoes, it is possible to imagine that we are now looking back at the tale that has just unfolded. Since the baby shoes are placed next to the photo-portrait of the parents, they can be understood together with the photographic images as signs of the absent body (the photo refers to the absent sitter, and the shoes to an adult who once existed as a child). The sequence allows us to imagine the meditations on childhood that can occur upon returning to the family home to wander through the family's pictorial remainders of the past. When we reflect on what has been lost, and we also remember the familial foundation and so preserve it. *Canada: A People's History* thereby presents us with a

passage between generations that takes place through archival imagery – the function of the series itself.

### **Section 2.3 – Memory and tying personal memorial to national formation**

In the previous section I showed the transition from the past to the present that takes place between the image object and the witness, and which is driven by a sense of obligation to past Canadians. The sacrifices that they have made form the foundation of the Canada in which we live. The discussion now shifts to look more closely at how *C:APH* generates a presentation of Canadian history that also entrusts us with the memories of past Canadians. The point is that we do not just see the past through the documentary collections of others (a Halbwachsian operation), we are also encouraged to receive these records as though they were our own memories (the Hirschian response). The distinction between the two processes is that in the case of a Hirschian response, by receiving the documentary image of others as our own we are carrying forward the memories of those who have gone before us. In short, an emotional as well as a cognitive connection is established between people (past and present). The following Hirsch-based analysis builds on, and is distinct from, the above discussion by demonstrating the personal obligation inherent in the interlinkage of collective and individual memories in *C:APH*. The point is, that the events that contribute to the formation of a nation are thereby linked to the experiences and self-understanding of the modern-day citizenry of that nation.

The evidence from *Canada: A People's History* included here in support of this contention is comprised of four case studies. They are the eighth episode's presentation of John A. Macdonald when he mourns the loss of his first wife and child, the same

episode's tale of nineteenth-century Irish immigrants arriving on the eastern shores of Canada, the eleventh episode's story about the deaths of twentieth-century European settlers' children on their passage into western Canada, and the seventeenth episode's depiction of the events surrounding the shooting deaths of students at the École Polytechnique, in Montréal in 1989.

The analysis of the method by which *C:APH* bestows memories upon its audience begins with its story of how Macdonald mourned his lost loves (Figure 12). The narrative begins by showing us a view through a window and out onto a bench that is placed near a wooded area. We are then taken into that exterior space by seeing a dissolve that moves through the window's perspective until we see a close up of the bench. The next shot that we see shows us the two grave markers for his son and for his first wife. After this we are brought back inside where we see a video shot of an antique writing desk. For a moment during the transition from outside to inside, the image of the gravestones and the shot of the desk become superimposed. Another dissolve then shifts from the image of the desk to an archival portrait of Macdonald sitting at somewhat similar desk.

Each of the two transitions between spaces (from outside to inside, and from contemporary video to archival material) briefly overlaps, and thereby identifies, two sites of memorialization. What is being referred to is the image that shows both the grave and writing desk, and the image that contain both the writing desk and photographic portrait. The images that we see in this story are those that are derived from the recorded thoughts of Macdonald who is said to ruminate on his lost wife and child. The desk that we see can be interpreted as the site at which he committed these memories to the record; it is a committal that is echoed by the image of the names that are written on the grave

markers. The gravestones and the image of the writing desk have both become memorial sites.

Once the image of the writing desk is replaced by the photo-portrait of Macdonald, the portrait becomes situated, by extension, as another memorial site. These significations are reinforced by the fact the two images are momentarily blended together so that the ethereal form of Macdonald appears to be sitting at the desk. His portrait image is the last of the sequence and it ultimately fades into darkness. This last dissolve represents a repeat of the significations that were seen in the two previous overlapping memorial spaces, except that this time it is the photograph as a tomb of the absent body that is laid down in our memory. In the end, we are left to carry an image of Macdonald within our own memory.

The second case on the manner in which *Canada: A People's History* imparts memories to its audience is the series' staging of the Irish immigrants' passage to Canada in the mid-nineteenth century (Figure 13). The story is told from the point of view of a male survivor, and it begins with the onscreen actor who plays the role of the Irishman. We then begin our imaginary ocean voyage to Canada with a video shot that shows a calm ocean that is illuminated by several shafts of sunlight. The eventual landfall is shown with a black-and-white picture of many people who are in the process of disembarking from a ship. The black-and-white image then fades into a video shot that looks through the window of a darkened room and out onto a winter landscape.

The ensuing sequence contains two combinations that are of particular interest. The first combines the window view of a winter landscape with an image of a hilltop crucifix. The second image-set is made up of that same cross upon a hill, and a close-up

view of an archival document that shows a list of names and places of origin (Figure 14). It is clear to see that the names and towns are Irish. Together, these two doubled images convey a binary narrative. The primary narrative is that of the people who came ashore and were taken inside, where they eventually died from disease, their bodies then being transported to the hilltop graveyard. The second narrative speaks of an historical death and contemporary memorial rebirth, and we can see this in the image of the archival list of names. In this juxtaposition of a list of names and a view of a crucifix, we have the Halbwachsian form of memory. However, *C:APH* is not concerned solely with names, dates, and places. The series is also shaped by a concern to pass these memories into the hearts of its audience, and this necessitates the more Hirschian type of memory. We can see how the two mnemonic forms are integrated in the presentation, by following the tale of Irish immigration to its conclusion.

The significations of death and memorial rebirth that we see in the overlays of the window and hilltop crucifix, and then the archival documentary list of names, are reiterated by the closing sequence of the story. We are presented first with a different view of a graveyard, and then a close-up of a grave marker. Afterwards we again see the video-framed countenance of the actor who is playing the part of the Irishman, and then finally a slow upward pan of an archival photograph of a very young girl. She is seen standing next to an empty chair, and is holding a doll in one of her arms (Figure 15).

The empty chair seems to suggest that the little girl survived the voyage while her parents did not. Obviously, we cannot physically adopt the orphan girl, but what we can embrace is the memory of her as a child. The point is reinforced by the conclusions that were drawn at the end of the abovementioned story about a woman who yearned for her

child who had gone to war. When we saw the couple's portrait that was placed beside the baby shoes, we became aware of the compassion held by the offspring for their parents and, through the same visual arrangement, the caring that existed in the parents for their child. When we now gaze upon the forlorn figure of the little Irish girl, we are in this parental perspective. We can hold the girl in our thoughts much like the boy's mother supposedly did when she held his childhood image. We do not adopt the little girl, we adopt her memory, and by extension the memory of those like her – the Irish who came to this land and became Canadians.

The narration of the Irish immigrant experience also echoes the dynamics that were seen in the staging of Macdonald's remembrance of his wife and son. Each of those two arrangements of pictures established an emotional connection between a people and their land – both in history, and in the present. Both sequences first showed the deposition of the dead into the land, and then left us with a photographic reproduction of the departed as a form of metaphoric casket. *Canada: A People's History* thereby conflates the past event of commemoration with a contemporary form of its remembrance. In other words, as we see the past event of entombment we enact it ourselves by remembering the represented form of the absent historical figure.

The analysis now turns to look at how *C:APH* offers memorialization to us in a process that leads out from loss and into a sense of communal rebirth. The argument is rooted in the dramatization of European immigrants moving into the Canadian West during the nineteenth century (Figure 16). The narrative focus of this presentation is on all of the children who died from disease during that westward trek. The migration is introduced to us with a photograph of a family group. At the center of the image is a

mother who is holding on to her young daughter. The photograph then fades into a reenacted funeral procession, and the child then slowly vanishes into the image of an approaching crucifix. The tragedy is illustrated further by alternating between the reenacted funeral procession and several archival photographs of children. Eventually we are left with an image of a child that then slowly fades into video footage of a departing train. The photograph of a woman, which comes after the image of the train, gradually disappears into a video shot of a rain-streaked window through which we can see a passing landscape. The destination of her journey is then made evident with the appearance of a photograph that shows an early western settlement.

This progression conveys what the mother, and those like her, lost in the course of realizing their dream of building a new life in Canada. It should be noted that this statement is based on two assumptions: that the woman is the mother of the child, and that the woman is grieving. Neither assumption is self-evident. Nevertheless, we have been made to experience a sense of loss by seeing that particular order of images: the child's photo-portrait, a departing train, and then the photograph of the woman who is made to appear on the inside of a rain-streaked window. And this experience of loss lies at the foot of the new community that is presented in the archival photograph of the western town. Personal loss, which backgrounds the birth of the new, is the theme that is shared by the constructions of Macdonald's act of bereavement, the deaths of Irish immigrants, and the fatalities among the westward immigrants.

Up to this point, my argument has centered on how *Canada: A People's History* presents a depiction of Canadian history in which we can locate and understand our own experiences, and also on how *C:APH* empowers this documentary evidence with a

compassion for the human memory behind these events. With the presentation in *C:APH* of the tragedy at the École Polytechnique in Montréal in 1989, we can see how the series encourages us to honor the personal loss that allows for renewal (Figure 17). The moment of the shootings is first marked with a tight shot of a wall-mounted clock. We then see the desks that are covered with the notebooks and pens that refer to the students who were present at the time. The event itself is shown through the use of news footage. The end of the story includes more news video, this time showing mourners in the act of paying their respects to the victims during the public visitation. The last images of the story show a graduating student's jewelry case, wristwatch, mortarboard, and photo-identification as she embarks on a new job as a Hydro-Québec engineer.

When the scene shifts from the news coverage of the visitation to the re-staged setting of a dresser top, the casket and jewelry case become visually confused. We can only understand the jewelry case to be what it is once the diploma, wristwatch, and mortarboard come into view alongside it. Two key elements make this confusion possible. First, the floral arrangements surrounding the casket blends easily into the roses that are resting upon the jewelry case. Second, the oblong forms of the casket and the case are similar to each other. These two parallels make it difficult to tell that we have left the public space and entered the private realm. Yet the casket/jewelry case is not the only equivalence that is drawn between the public and private worlds. In addition, the measure of time is first signaled by the clock on the classroom wall and then by the watch that is seen among the student's personal property. The correspondence between a clock that is watched by many people and the watch that guides the individual implies that the



passage of time. History, in other words, is something that binds the one to the many. In a sense, we can grow as individuals and as a people by honoring the past.

### **Section 3 – Creating belonging in home and land**

In the previous section I demonstrated how people locate and confirm their personal recollections through exposure to the historical record and the memory of the group. The outcome of the mingling of memory types (the personal and the national, or group) is reciprocal. I can substantiate my recollection of something that affected the group; just as the group's experience assures me that I lived through the event. Now the examination considers how *Canada: A People's History* integrates people into the Canadian landscape while establishing a correspondence between who they are and where they are. The flow of argumentation originates in an explanation of the idea of home and house as sites of enunciation that can frame a renewed expression of self-identity. The discussion then moves on to establish a parallel between images of home and community in the landscape on the one hand and clusters of visual materials on the pages of a scrapbook or family album on the other. The core of this section is occupied with demonstrating how *C:APH* expresses the historically defining character of both Canada and Canadians as that of an attachment and commitment to the land.

The work is based on the premise that the full seventeen-episode form of *C:APH*, conceived as a complex visual document, represents a metaphorical family album ("family album" and "scrapbook" are used interchangeably in this chapter to denote the gathering together of fragments into a narrative whole). As we move through the landscapes of the past that we see in *Canada: A People's History*, it is as if we are turning the pages of this family album. The landscapes-as-pages function as per Louis

Marin's description of the background as a "[m]aterial support, inscriptive and figurative surface that permits each figure to be brought into view."<sup>30</sup> It is through the stories of people whose lives are shaped by the land, that we are able to form our own understanding of Canadian belonging. The manner by which the people and events of these stories are attached to the land (or, metaphorically, how pictorial reproductions are attached to the pages of the album) is through images of home and community that appear in *C:APH*. These same visual motifs of home and community are also how we, as audience, are attached to the contemporary Canadian landscape. We grow attached to *C:APH* because we recognize ourselves in the scenes of family and home that we see within its frame.

With the abovementioned operations in mind, the concept of "home" is utilized to identify the scenes in *Canada: A People's History* that provide the framework for the expression of a renewed sense of identity. The importance of home lies not just in seeing it as an architectural form, as noted above, but also as the signification of a belonging to place. The sense of place that is established then allows for the building of a rehabilitated expression of self, and this is important because it is a key element in how *C:APH* shows diasporic individuals acquiring a space of their own in Canada. The issue of fixity and mobility – the permanence of place and the evolution of who we are individually and together – is central to a presentation of national history such as *C:APH*. The reason for this is that the complete narrative must retain a consistent image of national identity through its various permutations over time. The use of home in this analysis originates in John Berger's definition of "home," which he sees as being "represented, not by a house, but by a practice or a set of practices...[so that h]ome is no longer a dwelling but the

story of a life being lived.”<sup>31</sup> Nigel Rapport and Andrew Dawson bolster this position by declaring “home refers to that environment...in which one best knows oneself, where one’s identity is best grounded.”<sup>32</sup>

My first step is to sketch in the manner by which a sense of personal belonging is joined to the national ground. The narrative of the Inuit experience in Canada, which is shown in Episode One, allows me to introduce an illustration of the relations between the geographic and human landscapes, and their mutual relations of scale (Figure 18). What we see happening in this sequence is the transformation of an empty space by the signs of intimacy, warmth, and togetherness. In the process, we are introduced to the human face of Canada.

The story of the Inuit in Episode One begins by showing them in the process of moving to a new encampment. The alternation in scale between the landscape, and the human presence that we see there, creates an impression of human intimacy. The first image that we see presents the Inuit in a moderately-sized image within the frame, walking in a group towards the camera. The presence of the land is barely noticeable as a small slip of earth and snow in the foreground of the shot; the sky is simply a blank, white space. The next scene that we are presented with is a panoramic shot of an Arctic landscape; the forms of the Inuit can now be seen far in the distance as tiny moving specks. The sudden shift in scale turns their miniature moving forms into objects of fascination that draw us into the land. From that shot, in which they are seen setting up their tent, we are taken inside the tent itself. Once inside, we find ourselves in close proximity to an Inuit woman and girl who are sitting on the ground near the opening of the tent. The scale of land and people is now reversed. The land has been reduced to a

minor form that is seen through the open tent flap in the lower left of the frame, and the human figure now dominates the frame. In this composition, the eye flicks back and forth between the bright landscape, and the movement and presence of the two women. The movement in and out underlines the experience of the inherent warmth of a personal, sheltering space. We are then brought even closer to the Inuit inside the tent when their faces nearly fill the frame in a tight close up. The lighting nearly abstracts their appearance by catching just the edges of their facial features. Soon, the tight close-up of their visages fades into the same panoramic landscape within which the Inuit were first seen setting up their camp. The dissolve aligns the two kinds of vistas that we see in *Canada: A People's History*: the human, and the geographic. The sense of intimacy that we experienced is applied to the land when we are drawn into that space by reading it through a human form.

While the presentation of the Inuit expresses an attachment between a people and a place through the pulse of scale and intimacy, we can also see how the human attachment to the Canadian landscape occurs through the direct action of Canadians in history. In this sense, we can see how their experience of the land marked them as persons. An early section of the narrative of David Thompson, which is shown in Episode Six, provides a clear demonstration of the figural inscription of the land into the character of Canadians (Figure 19).

What we see of Thompson's story recounts his early days in Canada, when he worked as a clerk for the Hudson's Bay Company in the far north. Thompson first appears in the story seen from above and seated at a desk writing in his journal; the scene is inserted between two exterior views. The first shows us a vast, windswept expanse of

snow, with the sun barely visible on the distant horizon. Following the image of Thompson, we see another snowscape, this one having a jagged crack that runs from the foreground right through the snow and to the far horizon line. A fortification can just barely be seen in the distance. The last image of the sequence takes us closer to the fort that sits at the juncture of snow and sky.

The insertion of Thompson's form between the two landscapes creates a rhythm that repeats the technique of moving back and forth between an outside and an inside space that we saw in the Inuit tale. Yet this time, the linking mechanism is not relations of scale, it is the act of inscription. We move from a blank field to a field that is similar to the first, except that the jagged break in the ice creates a line that leads into the landscape. We are led by this line, a symbolic form of text, right up to the human structure that marks the division between the corporeal (the earthly present) and the ephemeral (the ever-moving sky).

As was the case in the Inuit tale, our eye is attracted to a mark that is set against an otherwise featureless space. Instead of a moving human figure, here in Thompson's tale we have a symbolic expression of a trace upon the land. When we go from a blank expanse of snow, through Thompson in the act of writing, and then into a landscape that is marked, it seems to suggest that there is a parallel between the act of writing and the mark that we see upon land. It is as if Thompson, who will soon become a mapmaker, figuratively inscribes a path through a previously unmarked space. This act eventually leads to a structure of community (the distant fort). At the end of the line, an empty landscape has been symbolically marked off as a human place.

The third instance of the process by which *C:APH* envisions the attachment of a people to a land, is also selected from the story of Thompson in Episode Six. The scenes present us with Thompson at home after his travels throughout Canada, and they show him in the process of producing the maps that are to eventually comprise his atlases (Figure 20).

We are first brought to his home with an image of its exterior, and are then taken inside by first seeing a window from the outside and then from the inside. The camera then pulls back and reveals that a table, which is covered with maps, journals, and mapmaking tools, is situated below the window. The camera movement not only carries the narrative along, it also has an important subtext. In effect, when we are brought into the house, we are being shown the inside of Thompson's memory of the land that he traveled through. In effect, the first window looks out onto the land of Canada and it therefore represents what Thompson saw during his travels. The perspective from the second window looks down upon the maps that are in the process of being made. This is what Thompson's sight led to – a depiction of the land that he saw. The maps are then shown large enough to allow us to read the names of rivers and other geographic features. My line of reasoning on this point is that the home is a metaphor for the personal space of Thompson. His movement through the Canadian landscape marked him as a man, and we see the traces of that experience when we occupy his personal space. Thus, the home is not just an architectural presence, it is a site in which belonging is inscribed and from which identity is then produced. The sequence comes to a conclusion by first showing several open journals, and then a close-up of a watch. What the last scenes are presenting

us with is an expression of history in the making, both in the sense of Thompson's historic Canadian cartography, and in the sense that *C:APH* re-presents this event to us.

The last two examples continue to develop this analysis of how *Canada: A People's History* establishes Canadian identity through a relationship with the Canadian landscape. The element that is now brought forward is the leitmotif of devotion. While the construction of *C:APH* reveals cognitive elements in the attachment of a people to a place (i.e., Thompson's mapping), there is also an affective component. In this case, people's emotional attachment is made apparent with a mark upon the landscape. We can see this in the first example, which comes from the sixth episode's story of an American fur trader named Daniel Harmon (1778-1845), and his experiences in Canada from 1800 to 1819 in the employ of the North West Company (Figure 21).

Harmon's narrative includes the fact of intermarriage between white fur traders and Native women. Harmon at first refuses, and then relents. He decides to stay in Canada and marry a Native with whom he has twelve children. We are then told that the one son who had been sent east for his formal education has died there. Harmon learns of this through an exchange of letters with his brothers. This news is shown in *C:APH* through a close up of a small pile of envelopes that is placed upon an open letter. We then see a broken red-wax seal of an envelope. The image of the red seal is then seen to slowly fade into a close up of a staghorn sumac. Afterwards, the camera pulls back and shows the context of this tree, which is a wooded space during a heavy snowfall.

The expression of Harmon's devotion to his wife, and his sadness over the news of his son's death, are both seen in the dissolve from the red wax of the seal to the red fruit of the Staghorn. In this way, Harmon's experience of loss is laid over a sign that

promises new growth in the landscape. The broken seal of the envelope thus symbolizes the lipstick traces of a devotional kiss upon the land. The link between the white envelope and the white winter landscape suggests that winter is also an envelope of sorts. The winter envelope contains a text, and to open that envelope (to live the experience of the Canadian winter), is to enter into the land of Canada. The blank landscape becomes readable, *Canada: A People's History* seems to say, by virtue of the traces that we consign to it.

The sense of devotion that colors the story of Harmon's commitment to place can also be seen in the last example, which is taken from Episode Ten and which presents a depiction of western Canadian settlement during the late nineteenth century (Figure 22). In this case, what is intriguing is the manner in which two landscapes frame the events from long ago. The contention here is that *C:APH* uses the two landscapes to echo the long-distance embrace that is expressed between a husband and wife.

We are introduced to the husband when an archival photo-portrait of him materializes from within the videographic space of the first prairie landscape. His portrait image then fades back down into a video that was shot during the evening, and which shows a cabin that is situated among several trees. A candle is in the window on the side of house that we see, and that point of warmth attracts the eye in an otherwise cool scene. As we saw in the presentation of Thompson when he was producing his maps at home, the home interior is where we witness the thoughts of the protagonist. We are brought into the settler's cabin as the camera's perspective shifts from a close framing of the window to a writing desk, upon which is a candle and a framed portrait of the man's wife. He is then shown in the act of penning a letter to his wife; all that we see of this is a



close up of the candle, the letter paper, and a hand that is holding a pen. The camera then pans up and focuses closely on the woman's photo-portrait, which is then faded into another archival portrait of that woman. The only difference between the two portraits is that the horizontal orientation of one image is the reverse of the vertical orientation of the other. The narrative ends at this point by fading her portrait into a view of another prairie landscape that is similar to the one from which the man's image emerged.

The land that is made to frame the couple's devotion to each other is not the wooded place from which he writes, but rather a much broader and all-encompassing space. The sense of security and warmth that is expressed by the candlelight and the cabin that is "snuggled" amongst the trees is accentuated by the contrasting grandeur of the prairie landscapes. By opening and closing the tale of marital devotion, these two landscapes, which are suggestive of a heavenly space, identify the site of love while at the same time symbolically embracing that love. The expression of love and commitment that we see in this narrative is made as much by the couple as it is by the land to which they are seen attaching themselves.

The abovementioned examples illustrate the process that we see in *Canada: A People's History* of infusing the landscape with a sense of communal belonging. First, in the case of the Inuit narrative, we see an interior, personal place that is brought into alignment with the space of the land; this gives a human face to the Canadian landscape. Second, in Thompson's narrative, a domestic space is positioned as the location of the Canadian Subject. It is inside the domestic structures that are shown in *C:APH* that we can see what comprises Canadian character. Third, as was shown in the case of the nineteenth-century settler couple, the space of Canada and the life experiences of

Canadians are bonded together through a domestically centered commitment. These are all situations that establish the foundation upon which the concept of home can then rest. Home, as indicated above, provides the framework for a renewed expression of self-identity, and as such it signifies a sense of belonging to place. When we see the domestic scenes, which thematically unify *C:APH*, we are receiving an image of Canada as our collective home.

The term used here in association with “home” is “house,” and it is a term that signifies the structure of the nation that contains the homeland. Or, to put it another way, home is the visual signifier for a personal space that is found within the site of the national house. Here, as Ulf Hedetoft explains, “[b]elonging is collectively transformed into the modern, nation state-dependent form of identity, which...institutionalizes belonging in the form of passport, citizenship, socialization agencies and official, ethno-national versions of historical memory.”<sup>33</sup> The institutional framing in *C:APH* of Canadian identity can be shown with the next two selections. They are the presentation of the negotiations that took place in 1864 at Charlottetown, which is shown in Episode Eight, and the description of the arrival in Canada of post-Second World War European immigrants, that appears in Episode Fifteen.

In the story that takes place at Charlottetown, we are moved between an exterior and an interior space, and in the process the connotations of a wilderness space are positioned at the heart of Canadian national origins (Figure 23). The visual flow begins with an image of a large, stone building. We then figuratively enter the building by seeing a room with a large table that is surrounded by many chairs. The camera then pans down the length of the table, and as the camera nears the far end of the table the scene

begins to slowly fade into an exterior space. We now find ourselves standing on a dirt path in a wooded area. In the visual passage from the meeting room to the woods, the green tabletop and brown-toned walls of the room rhyme with the green forest and earthen path. Once again, we find that we have moved into a structure to be presented with a particular defining feature. In the case of the Inuit, it was the people themselves. With the story of Thompson, it was the maps that he made. In the case of the Charlottetown presentation, it is the negotiating table. The linkage that is made by the construction in *Canada: A People's History* then connects this object back out and into the natural world. The path of negotiation, it would seem, runs through our nature, since the end point of the journey is the achievement of confederation.

In the second example, the twentieth-century European immigrants' story represents a passage through official documentation and then into personal domestic space (Figure 24). In a sense, these travelers have passed through an institutional border to enter the Canadian house. Once inside, they begin to express themselves by virtue of the surrounding family images. The story is told from the perspectives of two families who leave western Europe for a new beginning. In each case, their arrival in Canada is shown to us with an array of archival immigration documents that originally belonged to them. We are first introduced to all of the family members (two married couples, with one couple having two children) by seeing their passport photographs. Once they have passed through the immigration process, we come to see them in photographs that were taken in and around their new homes.

By the end of the narrative, which includes the later experiences of both married couples, we have witnessed them by the sight of an official record, and in a domestically

produced photograph. The passport represents belonging in the national house, and the family photographs represent being home. These two representational forms illustrate the two kinds of belonging referred to above: to Berger's sense of home seen as "a practice or set of practices,"<sup>34</sup> and to belonging in the form that Hedetoft describes as that which is "collectively transformed into the modern, nation...form of identity."<sup>35</sup>

Like the passport image, the familial documentation that we see in *Canada: A People's History*, and that we are also quite likely to see in someone's family album, carries a record of the movement over the course of time. This second form of documentation, family-oriented visual memorabilia, is what *C:APH* relies primarily upon to interweave people and nation. The personal set of records, which are held by the audience of the series, validates the documentation of belonging that is made by the immigrants once they settle in Canada. We admit them due to the representational ground that we share with them – the practice of self-documentation that is offered by family imagery. Since we recognize ourselves in the domestic imagery that the series contains, our experiences validate what the series is presenting to us. We can also come to see ourselves in *C:APH*'s production of Canadian history.

#### **Section 4 – Being at home in this land**

In the preceding section I established how, in *Canada: A People's History*, the landscape of Canada can be understood as the pages of a photo album, which present scenes of domesticity and communal belonging. In this way, we are introduced to the history of Canada by witnessing how people became attached to the land by striving to build a new life in Canada. The purpose of this section is to show how *C:APH* transfers this sense of attachment with the land through family-oriented imagery and to the

audience of *C:APH*. The section opens by detailing the relevant features of the snapshot and the family album. The next step is to show how a construction of images (like those found within the family album) frames our reception of history and provides us with a familiar structure that allows us to remember and retell the past from our own point of view. The examination then culminates by bringing Paul Ricoeur's idea of narrative identity together with the Halbwachsian and Hirschian forms of memory, in order to demonstrate how the family album provides the means by which memory can be handed down from generation to generation. The idea here is that we can see an evolving representation of a group identity (like the national or the personal), which permits us to belong, and yet at the same time be an individual person.

In *Canada: A People's History*, home and community are the concepts that bind personal attachment to the national landscape. The source materials in this process are the archival remains and re-enactments of past events that are brought together by the production of *C:APH* and thereby give an illusion of completeness. The process parallels that which takes place in the production of a family album. Visual materials originating from sources that are separate in time and space come together within the album as a coherent record of a family. The result is, as Hirsch maintains, that family pictures "can reduce the strains of family life by sustaining an imaginary cohesion"<sup>36</sup> by what she calls "the familial gaze [that] situates human subjects in the... mythology, of the family as institution."<sup>37</sup> The familial gaze functions together with "the conventional nature of family photography [that] makes the space for this identification...we might leaf through any of our own family albums and find similar photos."<sup>38</sup> Not only does *Canada: A People's History* present 'family' as a common image in its national narrative (the other

one, discussed in this chapter, being the landscape), its practice carries recognizable rituals of domestic belonging. The pictures that we see in *C:APH* cohere to each other and to viewers because, as Hirsch concludes, “[w]e reanimate the pictures with our own knowledge of daily life.”<sup>39</sup> The national history is thus joined to the lived experience of its audience in a presentation that brings together national and personal levels of memory. The importance of this experience is that we come away from the depictions in *C:APH* with a sense of personal identification that shapes how we may then understand ourselves as Canadians.

The plethora of family-oriented and -created imagery that is available to the makers of *Canada: A People's History* came into existence with the advent of the Eastman Kodak Brownie camera in 1900, when a “snapshot mentality ...[was] born.”<sup>40</sup> This mentality was less concerned with technical and artistic prowess, and more interested in being able to “document and preserve a moment and a feeling, to embody a memory.”<sup>41</sup> The focus on capturing a fleeting emotion meant that instead of creating images based on established conventions of composition, for example, amateur photographers took pictures according to how they actually saw the world. Not only that, but the technical limitations that were imposed by the cameras restricted the ability of the user to control what the final image looked like. The arrival of amateur photography meant a differentiation between “sophisticated photographers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century” who operated with the “public time...of the nation’s or the people’s past, present, and future,”<sup>42</sup> and “[a]mateur photographers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century” who dealt “with personal or familial time – the continuum of...memories, anticipations, and endurance.”<sup>43</sup> And this is interesting in terms of *C:APH* because the domestic-oriented imagery that we see in the

series creates a personal continuum that accompanies the larger than life scenes that also contribute to *C:APH* (for example, Benjamin West's *The Death of Wolfe*, 1771). The self-documentation through snapshots by family members brings together a "time designate[d by] such changes...as marriage, child birth, maturation, and leaving home."<sup>44</sup> In addition, Gillian Rose cites the moment of the photograph's production as "cementing family success"<sup>45</sup> like having children, graduation, marriage with what is called the "social time...[of] institutional conditions in the larger society, namely: occupational structure, migration, settlement patterns and changing policies and legislation governing family behaviour."<sup>46</sup> With the production of snapshots and their arrangement in an album, we not only "become our own historians,"<sup>47</sup> but we create something that "pictorially weaves together...a visual history documenting a miniature society which shapes, and in turn is shaped by, each succeeding generation."<sup>48</sup> As part of this process, it should be noted that pictures that are included in the album might not have been originally created with that (album) purpose in mind. Instead, the image "illustrates something pertinent to the theme of the album."<sup>49</sup> In this sense, there is a parallel with *Canada: A People's History* since all but the reenacted sections were produced for purposes other than the series.

The value of the family album in its actual use and as a metaphor for the visual structure of *C:APH* is not simply that it presents an image of family roots. The album also has the capacity to elicit conversations, which then give rise to memories.<sup>50</sup> The point here is that the clusters of family images that we see in *C:APH* can provoke conversations in the audience, which lead the audience to connect their memories with those that are seen in *C:APH*. Thus, the album is read through dialogue, and the structure of memory and meaning in the album is rooted in oral and not written traditions.<sup>51</sup> The

result of leafing through an album, is that people tell stories, parables, and confessions that combine to form epics and myths.<sup>52</sup> In such cases the speaker is “at the center, heroes and heroines to whom it all flowed, [and] from which it all came.”<sup>53</sup> The lived experiences of the audience overlap with the presentation of Canadian history, as if the stories that audience members remember and retell are echoing those that they see upon the television screen. Two important features of the family album structure of history are repetition and formulaic patterns.<sup>54</sup> What these do is make the whole of the history easier to remember because its components are aligned, repeated, and seen in the same pose or location. We can see this happening in the “[s]urface characteristics of [a] snapshot [where] content may undergo dramatic changes – people look different as they grow older and styles of clothes, types of hair cuts and models of cars change with regularity. However, the pattern of people doing certain things with certain people, in certain places, at certain times, for certain reasons seems to remain astonishingly consistent through time.”<sup>55</sup> In the case of *C:APH*, the whole of Canadian history is made more familiar and more easily remembered, through the iteration of the domestic setting (inside the home and in the yard), meals (at home, work, war, or elsewhere), and the community (whether an encampment, suburb, or metropolis). Within these settings, we encounter the same characters – parents, children, lovers, and heroes. The stories in the series are thereby tied together by the motifs of the home, family, and belonging.

The motifs are in evidence in the presentation in Episode Thirteen, entitled “Hard Times,” of a family’s experiences in Canada during the Great Depression of the early 1930s (Figure 25). The episode opens with a slow pan of a recreated period bedroom. A photograph of a young woman named Anne Bailey can then be seen before it is faded



into an archival photograph of a large group of people who are gathered around a dining table. The initial shot of a bedroom then returns to the screen, and the camera shows us a close-up of the quilt that is on the bed. The surnames that are on several of the fabric squares that make up the quilt can be clearly read. The dinner table scene and the quilt are both images that convey a sense of togetherness, warmth, comfort, and security. We can look about at the people who are sitting at the table and recognize in that image our own experience of family. The scenes of the quilt and of the dining table are exemplars of the “family as institution,”<sup>56</sup> and it is at these sites, with the return look of the “family gaze,”<sup>57</sup> that we are made to feel at home in *C:APH*.

A central practice that unites all of the domestic spaces that are depicted in *Canada: A People's History*, and which undergirds the practice at the heart of *C:APH* as photo album of national history, consists of the daily acts of gathering and consumption. The themes of collectivization, ritual communion, shared harvest, consumption, and entertainment are threads that bind the construction of Canadian history together in *C:APH* (Figure 26). They are images of social gathering, the significance of which is triggered by our knowledge of daily life (with home conceived as a set of practices). We can see it ranging through *C:APH* from a scene in Episode One that shows a prehistoric fireside meal of marrow, to the third episode's depiction of a family at their dinner table in eighteenth-century New France, to the presentation in Episode Five that shows eighteenth-century soldiers enjoying an elegant meal together, and right up to the story of striking Inglis workers in Episode Seventeen, which includes a twentieth-century image of a full tray of glasses that are topped-up with beer. What we see transpiring

metaphorically, and in fact, is a sharing of the harvest and a negotiation between people of each other's interests.

*Canada: A People's History* stitches together these kinds of scenes – of home and family (family as blood relatives, and family in the sense of brothers in arms or co-workers) – so that it can present an image of Canada that recognizes a diversity of perspectives. We are, as Homi K. Bhabha explains, seeing a “confront[ation] with the nation split within itself, articulating the heterogeneity of its population.”<sup>58</sup> As Bhabha notes, the articulation of the “scraps, patches and rags of daily life” that we see literally in the form of the quilt, and figuratively elsewhere in *C:APH*, “must be repeatedly turned into the signs of a coherent national culture.”<sup>59</sup> The trouble with national speech as an “accumulative temporality of the pedagogical”<sup>60</sup> is its dependence upon “the repetitious, recursive strategy of the performative.”<sup>61</sup> The nation must remain constant over time despite the continuously changing nature of its ‘people’; so it re-applies the same template of identifications. The daily acts of gathering and consumption (what Bhabha might call the performative aspects of a people's lived experiences) are themselves gathered together in *C:APH* so that they form one national image (in Bhabha's terms, the pedagogical form that is intended to reflect the people). When we see the dining table around which the people are grouped, and the quilt that unites the surnames, we are seeing figurative forms of the nation.

The family orientation of so much of the imagery that is present in *Canada: A People's History* not only incorporates the performative acts of personal, lived experience, it also presents us with an opportunity to incorporate ourselves into the flow of history that we see. This is the Halbwachsian operation that transpires between an

autobiographical (personal) memory (that belongs to us individually) and an historical (collective) memory (which is represented by *C:APH*). The gaps in our knowledge of Canadian history and of past Canadians can be filled in by our experience of *C:APH*. However, the series is not a dry construction, but rather a dramatized and highly emotionalized history. As a result we are not simply adding facts about Canadian history to our knowledge base, we are being given an opportunity to imaginatively play the roles of past Canadians. The family album format plays an important part in this process, because the role-playing involves “reanimat[ing] the pictures with our own knowledge of daily life.”<sup>62</sup> While our knowledge of Canadian history can be informed by watching *C:APH*, it is our memories of daily life that give it energy.

The homemade theatre of the snapshots assembled in a family album lets us witness “a theatrical aspect”<sup>63</sup> in which the photographed people play certain parts that are expected of them within the framework of the family, and all of which are intended to project the image of a happy family; for example: the caring mother, the provider father, as well as the child and adolescent within “my” family. This kind of behavior has even been described as “front stage behavior,” which “define[s] the situation for those who observe the performance.”<sup>64</sup> The production and performance is linked in an interesting way because family members so often produce the family photographs. Thus, they are familiar with what they are looking for and what they should look like.<sup>65</sup> The idea that the snapshot-filled album represents a form of theatre meshes with the argument that the snapshot represents “evidence of how certain people have symbolically structured a carefully contrived view of everyday life.”<sup>66</sup> The family may not be together at all times, and may not even be a happy family, but the imagery that we are presented with in the

album is selected and arranged to generate such an impression nonetheless. Figure 27 shows some instances of this as found in *Canada: A People's History*. What this selectively constructed presentation amounts to is a form of mythology that gives us something to live up to as much as aspire to become. At the same time that the familial mythology creates "an image shaping the desire of the individual living in a social group,"<sup>67</sup> it also allows us to image and be "imagined as significant participants in the family's history."<sup>68</sup> The little dramatic scenes that we can see staged in the photograph, and collected into an album, "make possible the dramatization and classicization of the individual life history," because pictures of the family before the car or the Christmas tree...eternalize a moment...of the typical in the same way that a proverb or emblem captions a moment as an illustration of the moral working of the universe."<sup>69</sup>

However, over the course of the national history, much like over the lifespan of an individual or group, identity does not remain the same despite the need of the national fantasy to remain forever fixed and so avoid collapse. Still, on a personal level we can feel ourselves to be the same as we have always been, despite the many personal changes that have taken place over time. The ability to express a consistent identity over time requires that the speaker remain fixed while enunciating their ever-changing subjectivity. The theoretical framing for this operation can be found in Paul Ricoeur's formulation called narrative identity. He locates this at the point at which "we attempt to obtain an understanding of ourselves...by means of the imaginative variations of our own ego."<sup>70</sup> We do this in response to the dichotomous nature of subjectivity. Ricoeur works with the idea of a subjectivity that is "neither an incoherent series of events" ("sheer change") nor the "immutable substantiality, impervious to evolution" that he calls "absolute identity."<sup>71</sup>

Narrative identity, in other words, allows the expression of a motile “selfhood” that maintains a “sameness” or permanence over time.

The universal human concept of family lies at the root of the “narrative identity” that is expressed in *C:APH*. An illustration of this can be found near the end of a prairie settler’s narrative that is shown in Episode Eleven. The protagonist’s name is Petrov Svarich, and he has successfully established himself in Canada after an arduous trip from eastern Europe at the turn of the twentieth century. At this point in his story, we see him in a formal portrait with his wife and three children<sup>72</sup> (Figure 28). The portrait image grows fainter to reveal a video image of a domestic interior shot at twilight, which shows an oil lamp and a small dish of berries upon a table. The interior shot then fades into an exterior view of a small thatched-roof house at dusk. What the sequence does is nestle an image of family inside a domestic space, which is then shown to be a warm site of refuge in an otherwise cool and dark evening. The picture of domestic togetherness in the land is something that is repeated throughout the personal perspective on history that is offered by *Canada: A People’s History*. However, *C:APH* has already showed us Petrov’s arrival in western Canada, and it did so by superimposing a portrait of his parents<sup>73</sup> over the virgin landscape (Figure 29).

Between the two portraits of the Svarich’s, we can see a resemblance over the generations. As we come to recognize this, we are also witnessing a family’s evolution occurring in step with their domestication of the Canadian landscape, since the descendant, Petrov, has become a successful farmer in Canada. The land no longer looks the same and yet it is the same place. The human subjects in the portraits are not the same either, and yet we understand them to be the same family – there is continuity in that

place (here, the western region of Canada) that we can recognize by virtue of its familial content. We see this here, in the case of Svarich, and we see it throughout *C:APH*. By linking an image of the Canadian landscape with an image of an evolving family, *C:APH* contains an expression of Canadian identity that maintains a “sameness” over time despite an ever-changing appearance.

Ricoeur’s idea of narrative identity also helps to explain how the audience of *C:APH* can experience the series’ presentation of Canadian history more directly than if they were not made to feel as though they were active participants. The key feature is that we “reinterpret the narrative identity that constitutes us, in the light of the narratives proposed to us by our culture...we [thus] learn to become the narrator and the hero of our own story.”<sup>74</sup> For Ricoeur, we take on the “narrative voices which constitute the symphony of great works such as epics, tragedies, dramas and novels,”<sup>75</sup> by “trying on the different roles assumed by the favorite characters of the stories.”<sup>76</sup> The assertion is that while the narratives that are proposed to us originate from our culture, as stated by Ricoeur, they also come from within our family. Thus, we not only learn who we are as part of a people (or, what it means to be Canadian), we also come to know who we are by virtue of a personal heritage that forms part of the national past. We can see this in the depiction in Episode Two that presents the seventeenth-century experiences of Champlain and his men when they stayed in Canada through the winter (Figure 30), and we can also experience it during the story in Episode Five that tells us about the experiences of Hannah Ingraham, an eleven-year-old British Loyalist in the eighteenth century (Figure 31).

We enter into Champlain's narrative of over-wintering in 1608-09 with a video shot in the wintertime that first shows a small cabin and then the settlement, which is surrounded by a stockade. Several shots are included in this sequence to show the heavy snowdrifts that are against the outside walls of the cabin. We are then taken inside the cabin to see a table that has just a few scraps of food upon it, and the men who are gathered near the fireplace. The next scenes take us back outside to see the snow, and then we are presented with a painted group portrait of seventeenth-century court gentlemen.<sup>77</sup> Two other paintings that show activities of court nobles follow the first group portrait, before we are taken back to New France in the wintertime. Here, we are greeted by a video sequence that pans over a graveyard. Several grave markers fill the screen before we are presented with the countenance of one of Champlain's men who is suffering from malnutrition. We are to remain in the New World from this point of the story forward and witness the coming of spring, the ice breakup on the St. Lawrence River, spring buds upon the trees, and then video scenes of Champlain's abandoned settlement. The narrative eventually closes with a shot of his men paddling their canoes into the distance.

What the story has effectively done is present us with a cocoon-like interregnum (the wintering in Canada) that marks a transformational period between the previous identity of Champlain and his men (signified by the images of French court life) and their new subjectivity that is taking shape in Canada. With spring, the settlement is empty as if to say that the cocoon has burst, and the men have now entered into the landscape as Canadians. The transformation of the men involves the emergence of a new self that retains its original form – Champlain and his men are the same except that they are now

becoming Canadian. The whole process also weaves together the sight of the newly-minted identity with the site at which it takes place.

In Champlain's story, we are given an example of how the landscape (in particular, the winter) of Canada shaped the character of the newly arrived. In the end, we are left holding something in our mind's eye – the story of Champlain's exploration and over wintering – that gives us an imaginative access to that person, and through their experiences, the Canadian past. In addition, however, *Canada: A People's History* also draws a more direct link between the national past and present through the use of archival images, such as in the story of Hannah Ingraham.

We are introduced to the story of the Loyalists' expulsion from the American colonies through the tale of Hannah and her family being removed from their farm in Albany, New York, in 1783 (Figure 31). Together with her family, Hannah is shown traveling by horse and cart, and on a ship that carries them along with the other Loyalists. They eventually land in what is soon to become the colony of New Brunswick.<sup>78</sup> The initial landing of the Loyalists is shown by *C:APH* with a reenactment of their encampment. The closing scenes of Ingraham's experiences show a watercolor rendering of a log cabin that is supposed to represent Ingraham's new home. The girl who portrays Ingraham is then shown warming her hands next to the fireplace as her mother prepares a meal. From the close up of her hands, the camera moves up to show her face in close proximity. The video image of the girl's face then fades into an archival photographic portrait of a now elderly Ingraham.<sup>79</sup> The portrait is panned from the bottom up, so that we see a repetition of the framing that was given to the actor's face and hands. In the



portrait, Ingraham is posed looking to the left, and it seems as if she is looking back at the recent events, which we have just witnessed.

The incidents of Ingraham's early life are those that lie at the foundation of Canada. At the same time, woven into that foundation by *Canada: A People's History* are the occasions that formed who Ingraham has now become. And, with Hirsh's concept of postmemories in mind, these episodes are what we have come to hold onto in the form of Ingraham's photo-portrait. "Postmemory is a powerful form of memory precisely because its connection to its object or source is mediated not through recollection but through an imaginative investment and creation."<sup>80</sup> Thus, we have come to carry in our memory not only the archival image of Ingraham as an elderly person (which to us represents what has past), but also the memories that that image has been shown by *C:APH* to contain. The transformation of the self, which nevertheless remains constant, is also evident because despite appearances, the elderly woman is the same person, over time, as the young girl. Ingraham's story is one in a long line of the dispossessed being reborn in Canada, and these stories structure *C:APH* as a whole. In this sense, her story becomes one more in a national-family line of descent. The audience of *C:APH* represents the people who inherit these memories and can then carry them into the future.

The interconnection of past and present is facilitated by the archival image as an heirloom – an object that allows for the reconstruction of Subjectivity. The word heirloom has a syllabic construction that is worth noting, because these archival materials are inherited, and because they are also the apparatuses with which we weave our narrative identity. We do this on a personal level by producing and arranging documentary evidence of ourselves, and we experience this through the memorabilia that

are formed into a coherent picture by *Canada: A People's History*. The latter arrangement allows us to identify a Canadian historical identity.

In each case, part of the process involves the identification of people through the objects with which they have surrounded themselves, since the “meaning of a photograph emerges not only from the people in it, but in their linkage to the objects that surround them.”<sup>81</sup> The connection being drawn here is between the material belongings that we consume, and our visual consumption of images. As the same story unfolds time and again, we see the same classes of objects surrounding the protagonists. This sameness, founded by material consumables (for example, a vehicle, radio, or kitchen appliance), is a line of continuity that can be drawn into our own homes.

A genealogy of pan-cultural sights and sites can be traced in the family-oriented images that we see in *C:APH*. For example, there are West Coast Natives in a canoe, settlers and farmers standing next to their wagons and horse teams, and the families who group themselves proudly in front of their car. It is the association of people with these elements of material culture that unifies the individual groups, and makes them all “family.” The commonality extends to the shared interests, which bind or formed the group and continue to do so over time and across cultures. They are the celebrated moments in the lives of the ordinary folk of the land: moments such as birthdays and graduations, weddings, the birth of children, and even leisure activities. The people can thereby appear to be a timeless entity, since despite the separation in time they share the same understanding. In each case, the frame centers on an individual in order to put a face to the wider event.

The family-album nature of *Canada: A People's History* can also be seen in the manner by which the series emphasizes the act of domestically transmitting personal and group history across generations. This is something that is evident in the first episode's presentation of the Inuit, wherein we see a young girl watching an older woman work, as well as the spectacle of traditional throat singing that we see in the same narrative. Cultural tradition and domestic entertainment will continue to be associated with each other during the rest of *C:APH*.

For example, the story of the Acadian expulsion in 1755, which we see in Episode Three, is partly established by letting us see an Acadian family at home and engaged with each other by the fireside (Figure 32a). The mother and daughter work together at baking bread, while the son plays with a toy boat. Later in *Canada: A People's History*, we see archival photographs that depict the earliest use of the wireless and the television in the home (Episodes Twelve and Fifteen, respectively) (Figure 32b and Figure 32c). Once introduced, television remains a steady motif in *C:APH*. What all of these presentations highlight is the location and manner in which we look back to ancestral sources and to the body of stories that sustain an understanding of our social and cultural bonds. In *C:APH*, the hearth is repeatedly shown as the place at which we gather to share as a social collective, listening to voices from across the great distances of time and space. The two narrative points in *C:APH* that best illustrate the abovementioned points are the presentation of John Diefenbaker's childhood that is shown in Episode Fifteen (Figure 33), and the sixteenth episode's presentation of June Callwood (1924-2007) and her son watching the first landing of a man on the moon on July 20, 1969 (Figure 34). Callwood had a career as a Canadian journalist, CBC television host, and writer.

The sequence of images that introduces us to Diefenbaker begins with an archival photographic portrait, ca. 1904, which would show him at the age of nine, together with his eleven-year-old brother Elmer (Figure 33). The next archival image is a portrait of his mother and father; the flower-covered latticework in the background, and the couple's formal dress, suggests that this is a wedding portrait. After the image of Diefenbaker's parents, we are shown a video shot of a small cabin's exterior. In the video image that follows, we can see a room that contains a rocking chair, a potbellied stove, and a trunk. The final image of the sequence presents a close-up view of a small pile of old books. The chair brings to mind the human form, and the stove suggests the warmth that is offered by the body of knowledge that is signaled by the form of the trunk. In the forms of the home, hearth, family portraits, and old stories, we see the places and things that represent the sites of tradition's ritual, and the touchstones that are at the heart of *Canada: A People's History*.

Diefenbaker will be seen to grow into one of Canada's leading political figures, and to have done so from humble origins. In the same way, throughout *C:APH* the ordinary and the everyday are seen as the foundation from which great experiences are had. In Episode Sixteen, we are shown a story of Callwood and her son watching their television in the backyard at night to see the first lunar landing (Figure 34). The first image of the sequence shows us some archival footage of Neil Armstrong's historic arrival on the lunar surface. After this image we see the reenacted exterior scene of the mother and child watching the event on TV. The backyard site, however banal, leads us to a monumental experience.

At the same time, Callwood's rise to prominence is likened to another kind of escape. The closing shot of Callwood's story is a video image of the moon, and when her story segues into the next narrative, which relates to the rise to prominence of First Nations people in the political arena, the moon is momentarily superimposed upon a First Nation's painting. The work of art shows two figures that are facing each other from opposite sides of a small fire. They are placed underneath the form of a semicircle, and this suggests that they are inside a structure. Above the semicircle is a highly stylized form of either a sun or a moon, and a blue wavering line connects the fire to the celestial form. The link that is established between the two stories by a celestial body also suggests that two differing cultures share an overarching interest. We as a people, come together at the site of the hearth so that we may bridge great distances as one. While it is a lunar landing on the one hand, and a rise to political power on the other, individuals of both cultures still gather together to experience past events in the life of their nation.

*Canada: A People's History* also expresses a coming together of opposite in the manner by which it begins and ends. In Episode One, we begin our experience of Canadian history with the narrative of the Beothuk extinction during the early part of the nineteenth century (Figure 35). The story is told using the figure of Shawnadithit as its central protagonist. The last episode of *C:APH* begins with the story of Cambodian refugees who were accepted into Québec during the mid-1980s (Figure 36). The main character in this tale is a man named Rada Dith, who is married and has three children. These two stories embrace the national history that is seen in *C:APH* because they introduce and close with the central motifs of family and belonging in a new home, and because when we see the Cambodians being given a life and a future in Canada, we are

effectively receiving a sense of closure for the loss that is represented by Shawnadithit and her people.

An actress in European-style clothing, sweeping the floor in front of a fireplace, brings the first appearance of Shawnadithit in *Canada: A People's History* to life (Figure 35). The domestic setting then fades into a winter landscape. After a moment, the actress portraying Shawnadithit reappears in close up, looking directly at the camera. During her narrative, we see Shawnadithit sitting at a table while she draws a Beothuk figure.<sup>82</sup> The result is an onscreen reproduction of an archival drawing. Shawnadithit's account then leads into the First Nations' origin tales, which make up the first hour of Episode One. Shawnadithit ultimately returns to the screen as the first hour of Episode One comes to a close. At this point, the camera slowly pans over another archival drawing made by Shawnadithit. *C:APH* refers to the drawing as a map, when in fact it is a drawing made from the memory of certain events that Shawnadithit experienced.<sup>83</sup> The final image in her story presents us with a video shot of a leather-bound case that supposedly contains her skull ready for shipment to be studied in England.<sup>84</sup>

The form of Shawnadithit's tale contains the key elements that underpin the intention and operation of *Canada: A People's History*. An important aspect that lies at the heart of *C:APH* is an anxiety over a possible dissolution of Canadian identity. As argued in Chapter One of this dissertation, *C:APH* embodies a response to the aforementioned anxiety. The idea is that national coherence can be achieved, and therefore the national future assured, by reacquainting Canadians with their history. In short, a people can be saved by the records of their past. When we see Shawnadithit, the poster girl for the extinction of the Beothuk, we witness her producing a map-like

drawing that represents past events, and in the end, the packaging of her skull for shipment and study – the putative physical site of memory. These elements are demonstrations of what *C:APH* is trying to do and how it is trying to go about doing it: save a people by recording a collection of their personal documentation. *Canada: A People's History* thus begins with a quest to find a lost people, and that search symbolically ends with the winter setting of the Cambodian near the end of the series.

Dith's story begins by presenting us with video footage of snow falling in a forest (Figure 36). A color snapshot of Dith then emerges against this background. The sequence takes us through the interior of a church and into a face-to-face meeting with a snapshot of the French-Canadian couple who sponsored Dith to come to the town of Dolbeau-Mistassini, Québec, in the winter of 1980. The image of the couple dissolves into video footage that shows a river during a heavy snowfall. Another color photograph appears onscreen and shows Dith at home with his wife and children. Their image then fades back into the winter landscape, and we are left at the end of his story with the form of a solitary bulrush in the falling snow.

The tale of the Beothuk and of the Cambodian share a number of important features: the winter setting as the metaphoric page to which the images of history are attached, the domestic space as the site of a people's sense of belonging, and the acts of self-representation that record that belonging in that landscape. The two stories also include the other critical point of attachment, one that completes the family experience of Canadian history, and this is what Hirsch calls the family gaze.

When we see Shawnadithit, whom does she first look towards when she pauses during her sweeping? The same question can be asked about the Cambodian when he is

seen alone in the snowy forest and when he is seen together with his family. Who takes his picture? Strictly speaking, the series has filmed an actress portraying the long dead Shawnadithit, and a neighbor, family member, or benefactor may very well have photographed the Cambodian. What the gazes of both Shawnadithit and Dith share in these instances is the audience that they are directed towards. We record and thus save both Shawnadithit and the refugee (in effect, both are refugees, since she is bereft of her people). The manner by which they are recorded is the “familial gaze [that] situates human subjects in the...family as institution.”<sup>85</sup> We take their pictures in so far as we remember the mental imprint that their stories leave within us, and in this way both are recouped by the postmemory that *Canada: A People's History* offers to its audience. What matters is not just the salvation manifest in a documentary record, but the witnessing of that record, and the emotional attachment to the experiences that it preserves. The audience is the final resting place of Shawnadithit and of Dith, and of all the other people that comprise the metaphoric family that we see in the album of *C:APH*. We are the symbolic embodiment of the descendents of the historical Canadian (family) that we see.

Expressions of the home and of communal belonging, couched in the structure of a family album, and inflected with myth, facilitate our acquisition of Canadian history as we watch *C:APH*. As motifs, family and home function effectively for three other reasons. First, as aspects of collective human experience, they have the potential for creating a very wide appeal because of their mythic significations. Second, they are both reflections of the many domestic spaces into which the series was originally broadcast. The third and final reason is their easily recognizable family and domestic character. The



upshot is not just a large audience and potentially impressive ratings, but also the chance that a high percentage of that viewership see their reflection in the national history. They can then identify Canada as home and themselves as members of the Canadian family.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>James Clifford, "Diasporas," in *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*. (Cambridge, Mass., London, England: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 257.

<sup>2</sup>Clifford, "Diasporas," 247.

<sup>3</sup>John Berger, *And Our Faces, My Heart, Brief as Photos*. (London: Writers & Readers, 1984) Hall, Stuart "Cultural Identity and Diaspora" in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference* Ed. Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990), 57.

<sup>4</sup>Roland Barthes, Barthes, Roland *Mythologies*. Annette Lavers, trans. (Jonathan Cape: London, 1972), 110.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid*, 110.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid*, 123.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid*, 127.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid*, 128.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid*, 129-30.

<sup>10</sup>The location of the prehistoric funeral is given by *C:APH* as the coastal area of what is now called Labrador. The story of the failed colony is told in the second episode. The colony was initiated by an English merchant named John Guy in 1610 at Cuper's Cove in Newfoundland, with the idea of generating a profit from the cod-fishing trade – hard winters, poor crops, no mineral resources found, and the realization that the cod catch was insufficient to sustain the colony – led Guy in 1613 to abandon the idea of a permanent settlement in the New World. The tale of the *coureur des bois* is told in Episode Six. They were enterprising Frenchmen who, in 1652, began traveling into the interior and engaged directly in the fur trade with the Natives. The success of these men eventually led to a ban on the practice in 1654, since it drained profits from the French administration's coffers. The death of a settler in the Canadian west appears in Episode Ten. The narrative focus is on the travails of a married couple heading west by wagon. The biting insects are of such intensity and persistence that the woman is driven to commit suicide.

<sup>11</sup>Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*. F. J. Ditter and V. Yazdi, trans. (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1980), 52.

<sup>12</sup>Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: photography, narrative, and postmemory* (Cambridge; Massachusetts; London: Harvard University Press, 1997), 243.

<sup>13</sup>Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, 50-1.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid*, 58.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid*, 58.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid*, 58.

<sup>17</sup>In 1603, Samuel de Champlain left France for the New World and traveled up the St. Lawrence River until he reached Tadoussac before continuing on as far as the Lachine Rapids. Champlain made a second trip from France in 1604, arriving in Acadia (the area now referred to as the Maritimes). He was at the head of an expedition to revive French fortunes in the New World through trading posts. Champlain and his men wintered on Ile. Ste. Croix and while there, they suffered an outbreak of scurvy. Due to the disease and the harshness of the winter, the group headed farther south in search of milder weather. Violent resistance by Natives prevented the men from going ashore, and they eventually head back and to build a new settlement on the shores of the Bay of Fundy that they called Port Royal. Champlain makes a third trip to New France, this time in the spring of 1608, which eventually led to the founding of Quebec. Once the colony was built, Champlain sent the laborers back to France, and he and twenty-seven other men remained behind. Of the twenty-eight men, only eight survived the winter of 1608-09. Champlain later forged an alliance with the Huron Indians in the region and joined them in their war against the Iroquois. Champlain would lead the success of the colony at Quebec until 1629, when, with England and France at war with each other, English privateers captured a French ship headed to the colony and claimed the settlement. As it would turn out, the war between the two European powers had ended before the surrender of the colony, and by 1632 Champlain was back at the colony. *C:APH* ends his narrative by showing his last days in the thriving colony of Quebec and his death there in 1653. See: Raymond Litalien, et. al., eds. *Champlain: the birth of French America*. Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004; and Samuel Eliot Morison, *Samuel de Champlain: Father of New France*. Boston: Little Brown, 1972. See also Champlain's own accounts in *Les voyages du Sieur de Champlain*. Paris: Jean Berjon, 1613; *Voyages et découvertures faites en la Nouvelle France*. Paris: Claude Collet, 1620; and *Les voyages de la Nouvelle France occidentale, dicte Canada*. Paris: Louis Sevestre, 1632.

<sup>18</sup>The map details that we see during the account of Champlain (a deer, and a wolf,) are taken from: Samuel de Champlain, *Les voyages du Sieur de Champlain*. Volume 1. Paris: Jean Berjon, 1613.

<sup>19</sup>The illustrations that accompany the story of Champlain's time in Huronia depict another location entirely. The images are: "The Fortified Town of Pomeiooc," and "The Village of Secoton." They are both engravings by Theodore de Bry (1562-98), after watercolors by John White (fl. 1570-93), and are from *Admiranda Narratio... (Brief and true report of the new found land of Virginia)*, Thomas Hariot, 1588. Secoton is an Algonquin settlement that was located near the Atlantic coast in what is now North Carolina. Huronia refers to an area near present-day Georgian Bay, Ontario, which was

occupied by Hurons. During his first voyage to North America, Champlain did travel as far south as the area now called Cape Cod. His attempts to go ashore and set up an encampment were violently repelled by local inhabitants. There does not appear to be any evidence that Samuel de Champlain spent time peacefully among the Algonquin in either Secoton or Pomeiooc.

<sup>20</sup>The archival photographs that illustrate the account of the battle between the Canadian militia and the Métis are all attributable to Captain James Peters (1853-1927). Peters led the "A" Battery of the Regiment of Canadian Artillery during the fighting with the Métis. The photographs are "Opening the ball at Batoche," taken at Fish Creek, Saskatchewan, 1885; "Gun pit - 'A' Battery, Regiment of Canadian Artillery," taken at Fish Creek, Saskatchewan, April 24, 1885; "Grenadiers relieving the 90<sup>th</sup>, Fish Creek," taken at Fish Creek, Saskatchewan, April 24, 1885; "First sight of Batoche, arrival of the North-West Field Force," taken at Batoche, Saskatchewan, May 8, 1885; "Shelling Batoche, last shot before the attack on the guns," taken at Batoche, Saskatchewan, May 9, 1885; and "Shot dead," taken at Batoche, Saskatchewan, May 12, 1885.

<sup>21</sup>It is worth noting that the images of the fighting that come to us are the result of Peters's interest in amateur photography, an area of activity that was only just coming into its own during the late stages of the nineteenth century. He was the first President of the Québec Camera Club, which was founded in 1887. (Andrew Birrell, et. al., "On View: The Evolution of Amateur Photography," in *Private Realms of Light: Canadian Amateur Photography, 1839-1940*. Lilly Kolton, ed. (Markham, Ont.: Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 1984), 119.

<sup>22</sup>The object of "The Tower of Faces" installation, which occupies three floors of the museum and forms part of its permanent exhibitions, is the commemoration of the complete eradication of the Jewish community in the Lithuanian town of Eiskes. The massacre of between four- and four-and-a-half-thousand individuals was committed by units of the German army and took place on September 26 and 26, 1941. Only twenty-nine people survived. The exhibition is made up of reproductions of approximately one thousand prewar photographs that were taken by over one hundred Jewish families who resided in the community.

<sup>23</sup>Marianne Hirsch, "Past Lives: Postmemories in Exile," in *Poetics Today*. 17.4 (Winter, 1996), 659.

<sup>24</sup>Clifford, "Routes," 257.

<sup>25</sup>Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: photography, narrative, and postmemory* (Cambridge; Massachusetts; London: Harvard University Press, 1997), 243.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid*, 245.

<sup>27</sup>The portrait used in *C:APH* is attributed to the Spanish School, and is called *Portrait of Christopher Columbus*, 1451-1506 (oil on panel). Inscriptions are visible in

the upper left and right of the painting ("Columbus," above "orbis" in the upper left, and "Lygur Nou," above "Reptop" in the upper right), and these may have necessitated cropping out the top of Columbus's head when incorporated into *C:APH*.

<sup>28</sup>Hirsch, *Family Frames*, 243.

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid*, 245.

<sup>30</sup>Louis Marin, "The Frame of Representation and some of its Figures," in *The Rhetoric of the Frame*, Paul Duro, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 80.

<sup>31</sup>Berger, *And Our Faces*, 64.

<sup>32</sup>Nigel Rapport and Andrew Dawson, "Home and Movement: A Polemic," in *Migrants of Identity: Perceptions of Home in a World of Movement*. N. Rapport and A. Dawson, eds. (Oxford; New York: Berg, 1998), 21.

<sup>33</sup>Ulf Hedetoft, "Discourses and Images of Belonging: Migrants Between New Racism, Liberal Nationalism and Globalization," in *The Politics of Multiple Belonging*. F. Christiansen and U. Hedetoft, eds. (Aldershot, Hants, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), 25-6.

<sup>34</sup>Berger, *And Our Faces*, 64.

<sup>35</sup>Ulf Hedetoft, "Discourses and Images of Belonging: Migrants Between New Racism, Liberal Nationalism and Globalization," 25-6.

<sup>36</sup>Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: photography, narrative, and postmemory* (Cambridge; Massachusetts; London: Harvard University Press, 1997), 7.

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid*, 11.

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid*, 252.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid*, 256.

<sup>40</sup>Andrew L. Walker and Rosalind Kimball Moulton, "Photo Albums: Images of Time and Reflections of the Self," in *Qualitative Sociology* 12.2 (Summer, 1989), 157.

<sup>41</sup>*Ibid*, 157.

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid*, 157.

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid*, 157.

<sup>44</sup>Tamara K. Hareven, "The Family as Process: The Historical Study of the Family Cycle," in *Journal of Social History*. vol. 7 no. 3 (Spring 1974), 325.

<sup>45</sup>Gillian Rose, "Family photographs and domestic spacings: a case study," in *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*. 28.1 (March, 2003), 6.

<sup>46</sup>Hareven, "The Family as Process: The Historical Study of the Family Cycle," 325.

<sup>47</sup>Jacobs, D. L. "Domestic snapshots: towards a grammar of motives," in *Journal of American Culture*. Vol. 4 (1981), 104.

<sup>48</sup>Andrew L. Walker and Rosalind Kimball Moulton, "Photo Albums: Images of Time and Reflections of the Self," 172.

<sup>49</sup>*Ibid*, 166.

<sup>50</sup>Martha Langford, "Speaking the Album: An Application of the Oral-Photographic Framework," in *Locating Memory: Photographic Acts*. Annette Kuhn and Kirsten Emiko McAllister, eds. (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006): 223-246.

<sup>51</sup>Martha Langford, *Suspended Conversations: The Afterlife of Meaning in Photographic Albums*. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), 21).

<sup>52</sup>Michael Lesy, *Time Frames: The Meaning of Family Pictures*. (New York: Random House, 1980), xiv.

<sup>53</sup>*Ibid*, xiv.

<sup>54</sup>Langford, "Speaking the Album: An Application of the Oral-Photographic Framework," 224.

<sup>55</sup>Richard Chalfen, "Redundant Imagery: Some Observations on the Use of Snapshots in American Culture," in *The Journal of American Culture*. 4.1 (Spring, 1981), 110.

<sup>56</sup>Hirsch, *Family Frames: photography, narrative, and postmemory*, 11.

<sup>57</sup>*Ibid*, 11.

<sup>58</sup>Homi Bhabha, "DissemiNation: Time, Narrative and the Margins of the Modern Nation," in *The Location of Culture*. (London; New York: Routledge, 1992), 147-8.

<sup>59</sup>*Ibid*, 145.

<sup>60</sup>*Ibid*, 145.

<sup>61</sup>*Ibid*, 145.

<sup>62</sup>Hirsch, *Family Frames: photography, narrative, and postmemory*, 256.

<sup>63</sup>Ralph F. Bogardus, "Their *Carte de visite* to Posterity: A Family's Snapshots as Autobiography and Art," in *The Journal of American Culture*. 4.1 (Spring, 1981), 127.

<sup>64</sup>Sandra L. Titus, "Family Photographs and Transition to Parenthood," in *Journal of Marriage and the Family*. 38.3 (August, 1976), 525.

<sup>65</sup>Jacobs, D. L. "Domestic snapshots: towards a grammar of motives," 96.

<sup>66</sup>Richard Chalfen, "Redundant Imagery: Some Observations on the Use of Snapshots in American Culture," 108.

<sup>67</sup>Marianne Hirsch, *Family frames: photography, memory, and post-narrative*. Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1999), 8.

<sup>68</sup>Jacobs, D. L. "Domestic snapshots: towards a grammar of motives," 104.

<sup>69</sup>Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*, 26; and the argument that "[c]ollections of snapshots found in family albums serve a record keeping function which serves to guide and structure the memory of a specific collection of people for a specific collection of people," 109; as well as the occurrence of "[i]mages [that] fuel and feed a desire to see this family as Victoria presumably wished it to be seen: symbol of a national fantasy, large, healthy, robust." (Green-Lewis, Jennifer. *Framing the Victorians: Photography and the Culture of Realism*. (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 1996), 1.

<sup>70</sup>Paul Ricoeur, "Life in Quest of Narrative," in *On Paul Ricoeur: Narrative and Interpretation*. David Wood, ed. (London; New York: Routledge, 1991), 32-3.

<sup>71</sup>*Ibid*, 32.

<sup>72</sup>The portrait of Svarich with his wife and three children is dated 1908, and is located in the Provincial Archives of Alberta (PAA 75.74/1084 (A17750)).

<sup>73</sup>The portrait of Svarich's parents is located in the Provincial Archives of Alberta (PAA 75.74/171).

<sup>74</sup>Ricoeur, "Life in Quest of a Narrative," 32.

<sup>75</sup>*Ibid*, 32.

<sup>76</sup>*Ibid*, 33.

<sup>77</sup>The story moves between the colony of Quebec and the French and English courts in order to stress the obsession with fashion in court life, in particular with hats and especially those made of beaver skin – an important commodity driving the colony in New France. By doing this, *C:APH* manages to insert an everyday concern (albeit of the court) with the flow of Canadian history.

<sup>78</sup>Another presentation of the same events can be seen in *The World Turned Upside Down*, a twenty-five minute National Film Board production made in 1985, produced by William Brind, directed by Joan Henson, with cinematography by André Lu Dupont, and editing by Ginny Stikeman. The whole film was done with actors in period dress at King's Landing Historical Settlement near Fredericton, New Brunswick. The voice of Hannah Ingraham is supplied by Terri Hawkes. Vlasta Vrana narrates the prologue, which establishes the growing discontent among the American colonists with the British rule that they live under. The remainder of the production focuses on the experiences of the Ingraham family as noted by Hannah. The actors are always oblivious to the camera and only occasionally can snippets of their conversation be heard. Two interesting points of comparison emerge between this NFB production and the same tale as told by *Canada: A People's History*. First, in the NFB version, we are shown much more of the rough treatment endured not only by the Ingraham family, but especially by Hannah at the hands of former friends. What this does is elicit a fair degree of sympathy for the Ingraham family. The second point is that while both NFB and *C:APH* versions conclude the story with Hannah and family happily ensconced in their new home and land, in the NFB film we see them in a very rude log cabin, on the other hand, in *C:APH* Hannah is seen warming her hands in front of a large fire. A result of these two differences – harsh treatment at the hands of former friends, and a very rough looking home in the new land versus the omission of personal infidelity and an apparent warm and cozy new home – is that we can see the emphasis that *Canada: A People's History* places on communal togetherness and the family hearth.

<sup>79</sup>The portrait of an elderly Ingraham comes from a daguerreotype, made by an unknown photographer, and dated 1860. There is an inscription on the face of the image that reads: "aged 88 years 1860." The writing is not visible on the image that appears in *C:APH*. Since the daguerreotype is a positive original (meaning that each exposure produces a final image), and both the archival and the series versions are a perfect match, it is possible to conjecture that the writing has been removed during the production of *C:APH*.

<sup>80</sup>Marianne Hirsch, "Past Lives: Postmemories in Exile," in *Poetics Today*. 17.4 (Winter, 1996), 659.

<sup>81</sup>Jacobs, D. L. "Domestic snapshots: towards a grammar of motives", 96.

<sup>82</sup>The image that we see being drawn by the actress who portrays Shawnadithit has been singled out from several drawings on one sheet that is reproduced in James P. Howley, *The Boethucks or Red Indians: The Aboriginal Inhabitants of Newfoundland*.



(Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1915), 248. The drawing in question has an inscription directly above it that reads “Dancing Woman,” and another inscription directly beneath the drawing, which reads “Phub-wed-gie.” The other drawings on the sheet depict spears, baskets, and a Beothuk storehouse.

<sup>83</sup>The drawing that is referred to by *C:APH* as a map, is titled “Captain Buchan’s visit to the Beothuk in 1810,” and a reproduction can be found in James P. Howley, *The Beothucks or Red Indians: The Aboriginal Inhabitants of Newfoundland*. (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1915), 238.

<sup>84</sup>The story of Shawnadithit has also been discussed in detail in the first chapter of my Master’s Thesis, entitled *Canada: A People’s History: an analysis of the visual narrative for a colonial nation* (Montréal: Concordia University, 2002). The objective of the chapter was to demonstrate the narrative mode of the first episode of *C:APH* as colonialist, and that it was couched in a romanticist point of view.

<sup>85</sup>Hirsch, *Family Frames: photography, narrative, and postmemory*, 11.

Figure 1a

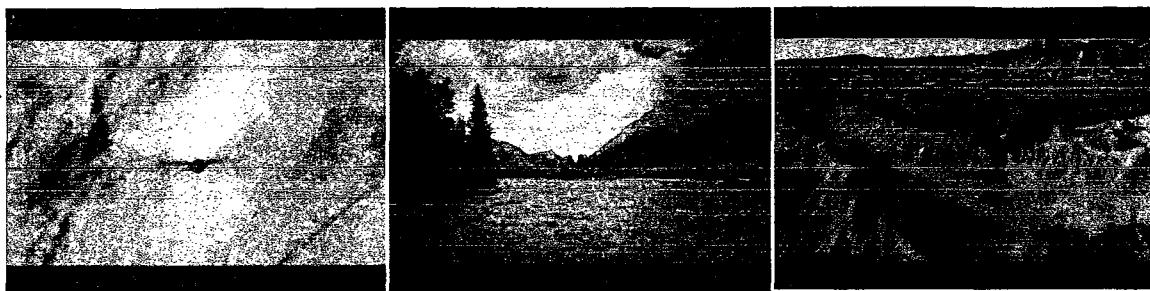


Figure 1b

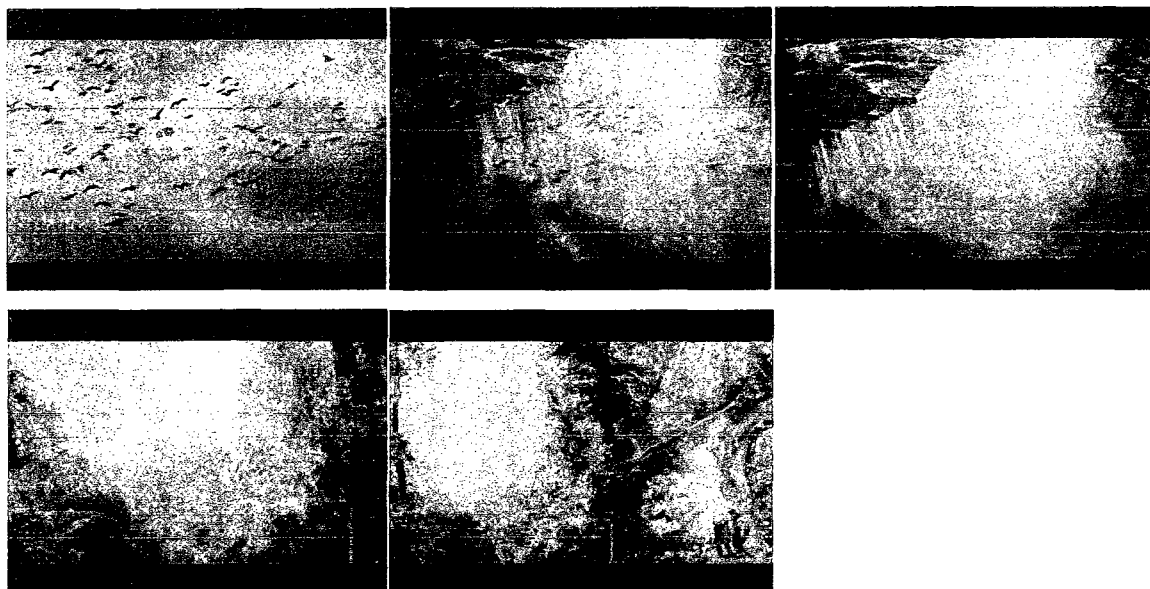


Figure 1c

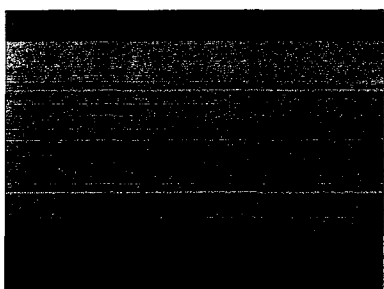


Figure 1d

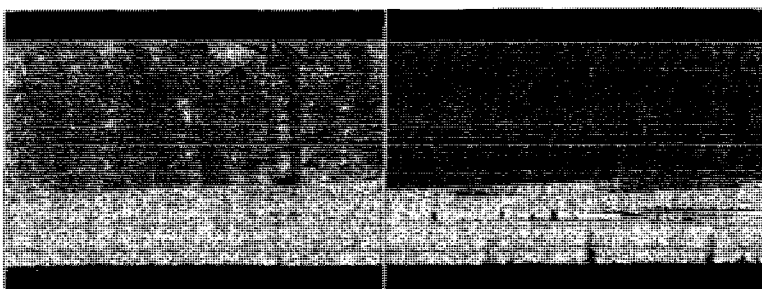


Figure 2



Figure 3a

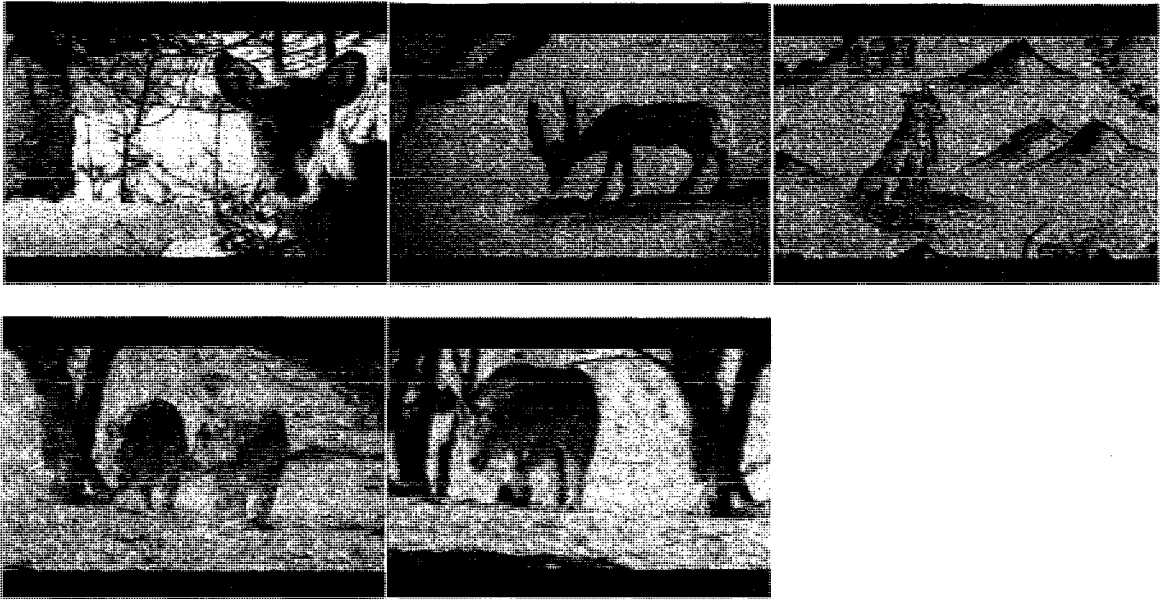


Figure 3b

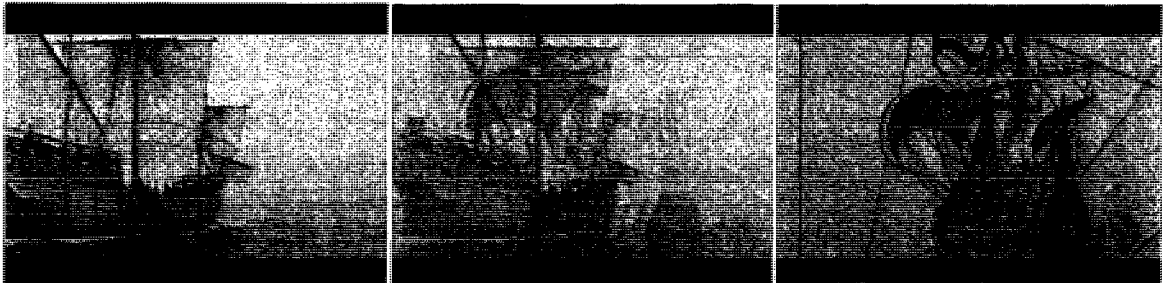


Figure 4a

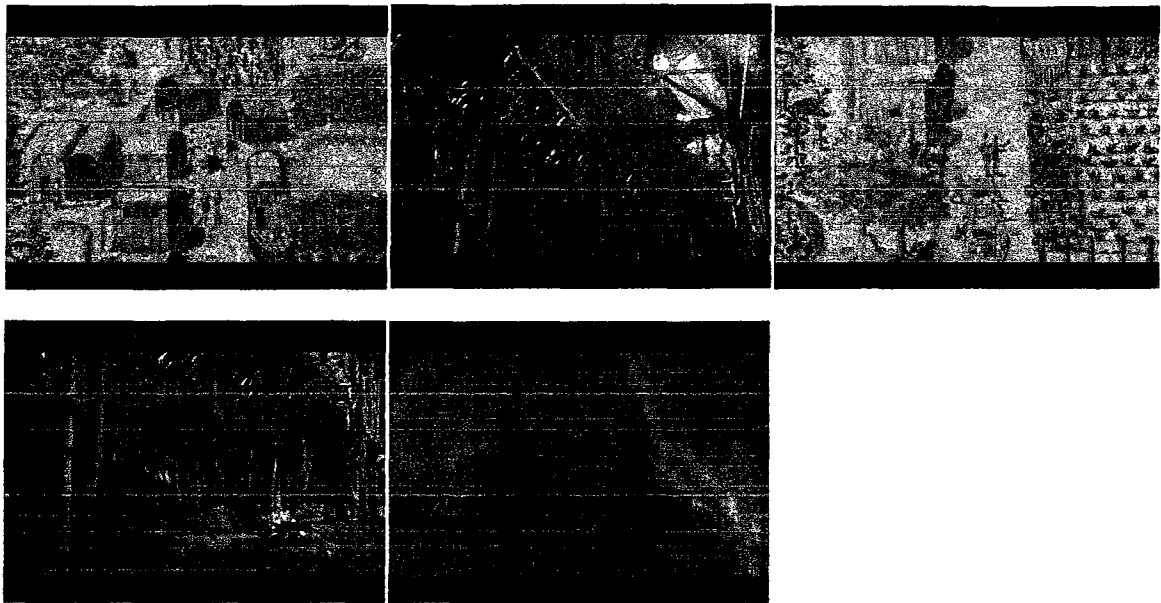


Figure 4b

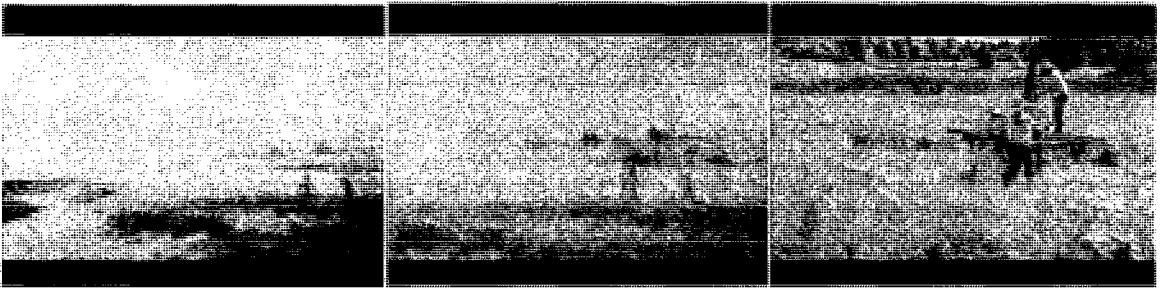


Figure 5



Figure 6

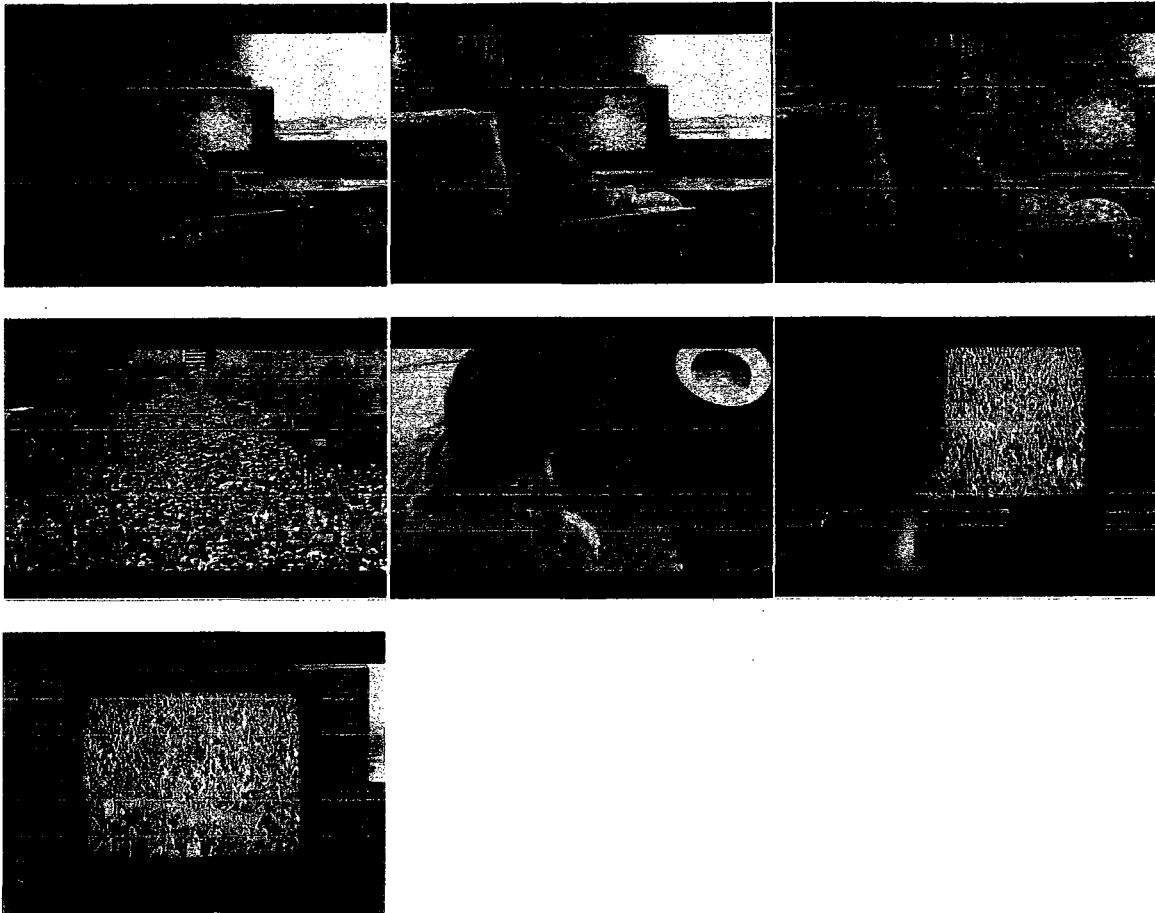


Figure 7



Figure 8a

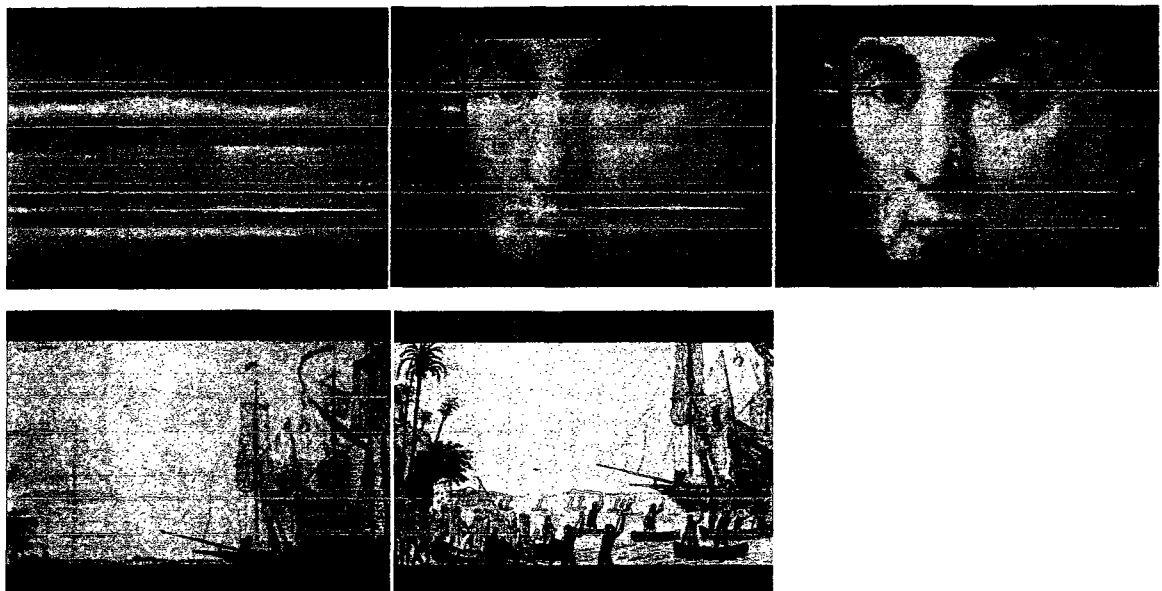


Figure 8b

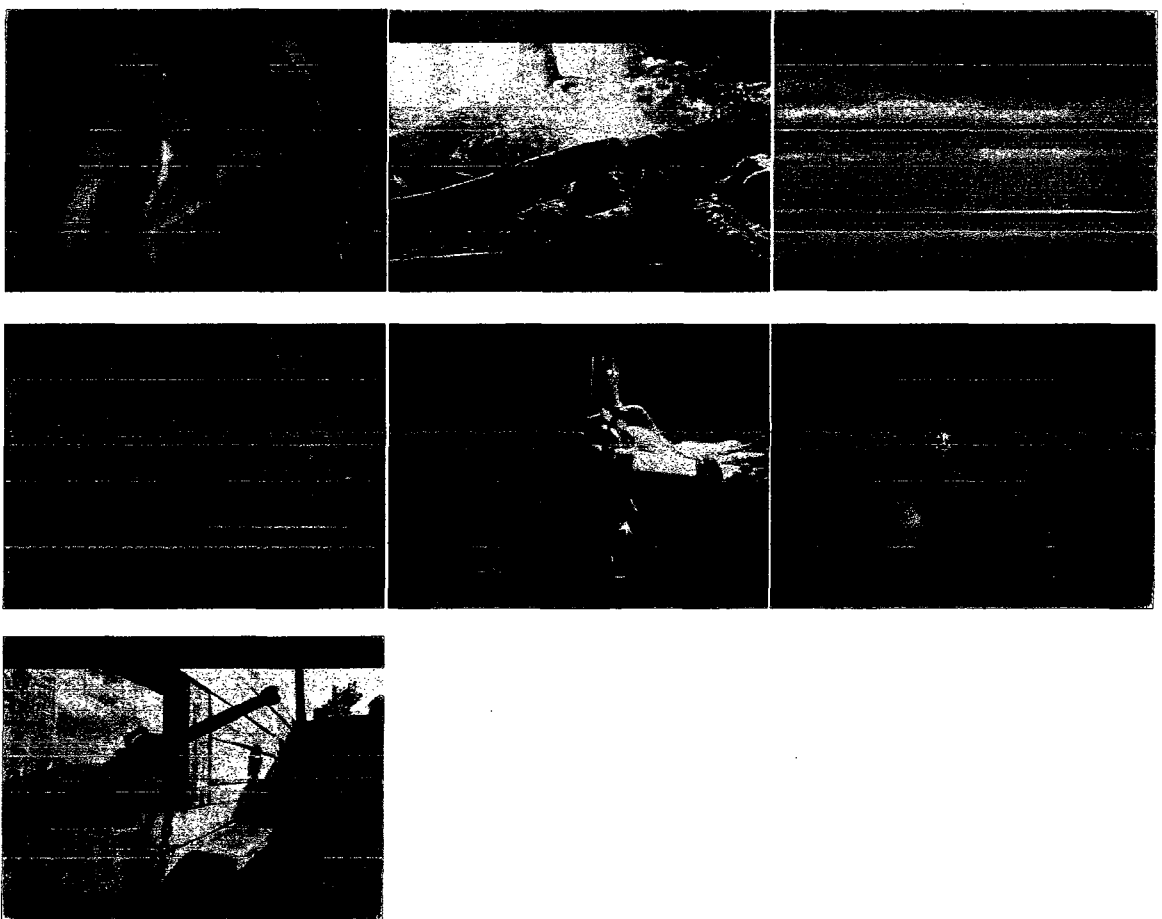




Figure 8c

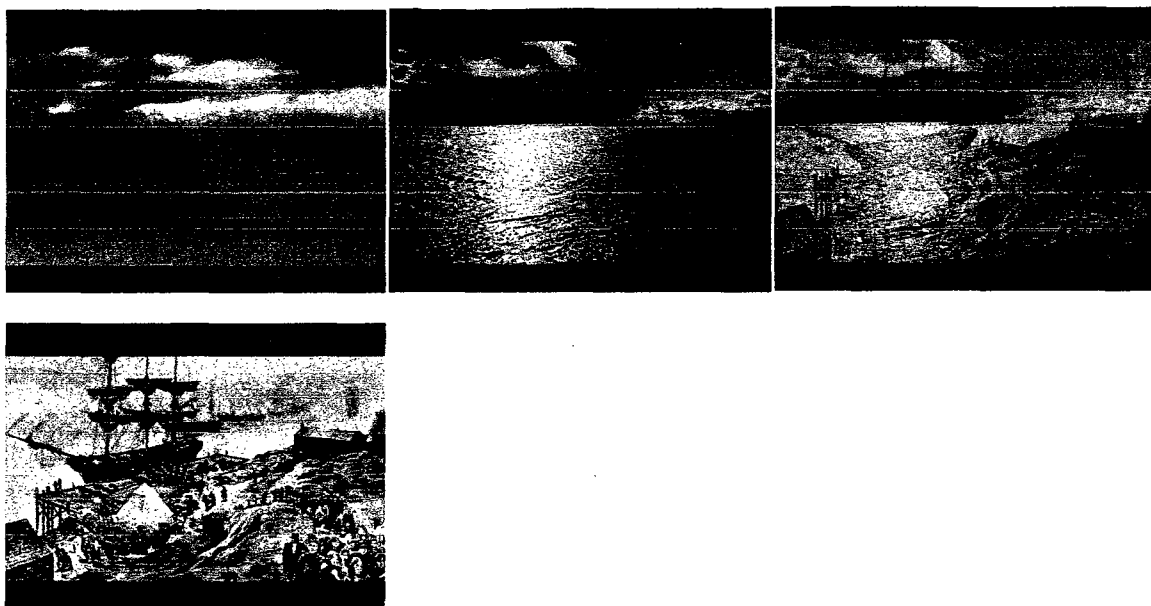


Figure 8d

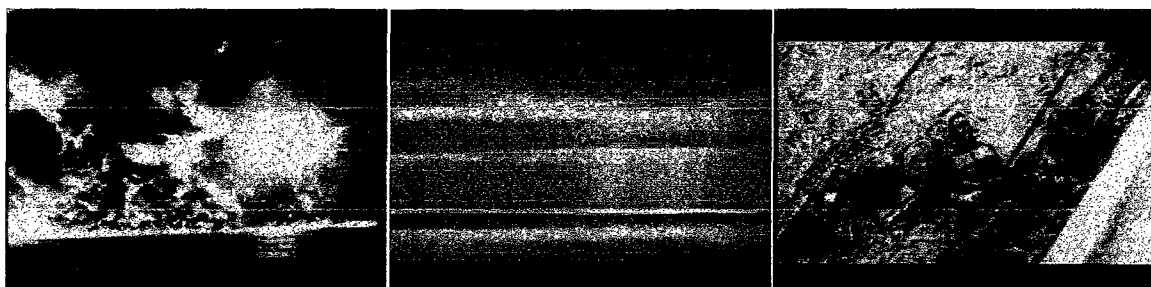


Figure 9

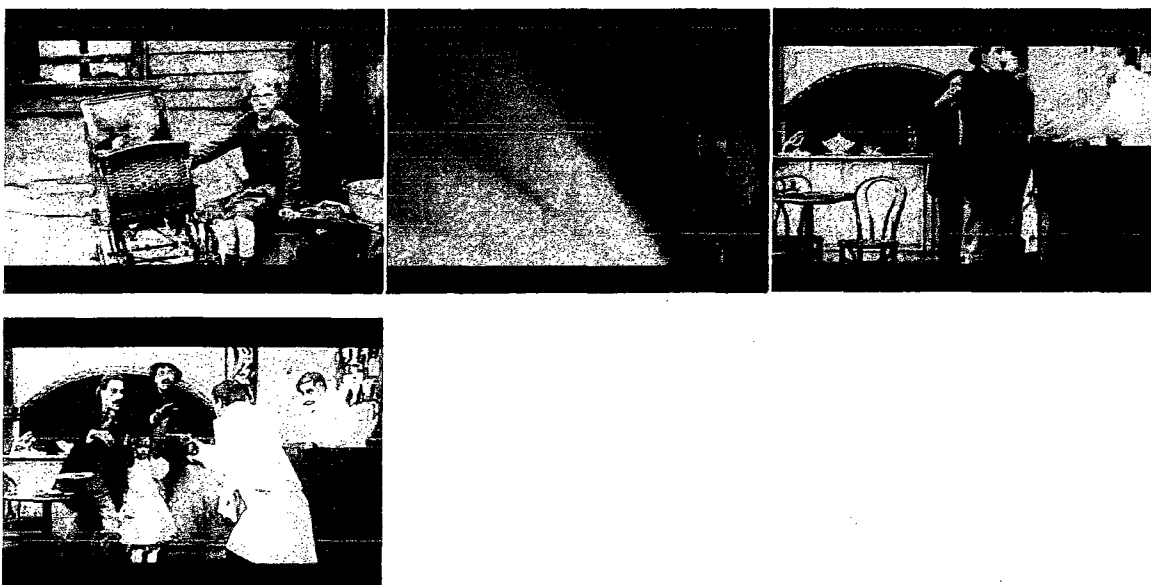


Figure 10

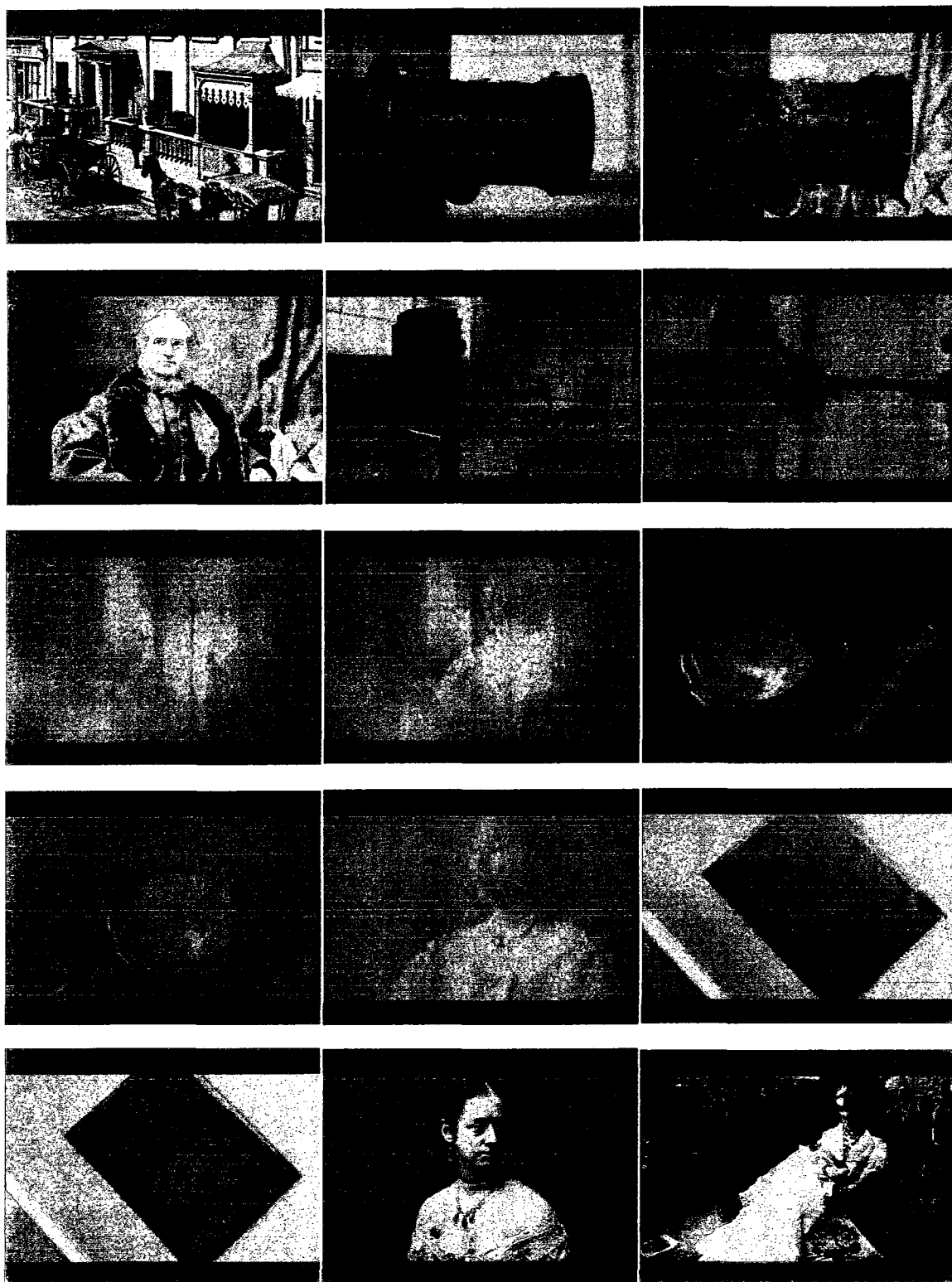


Figure 11

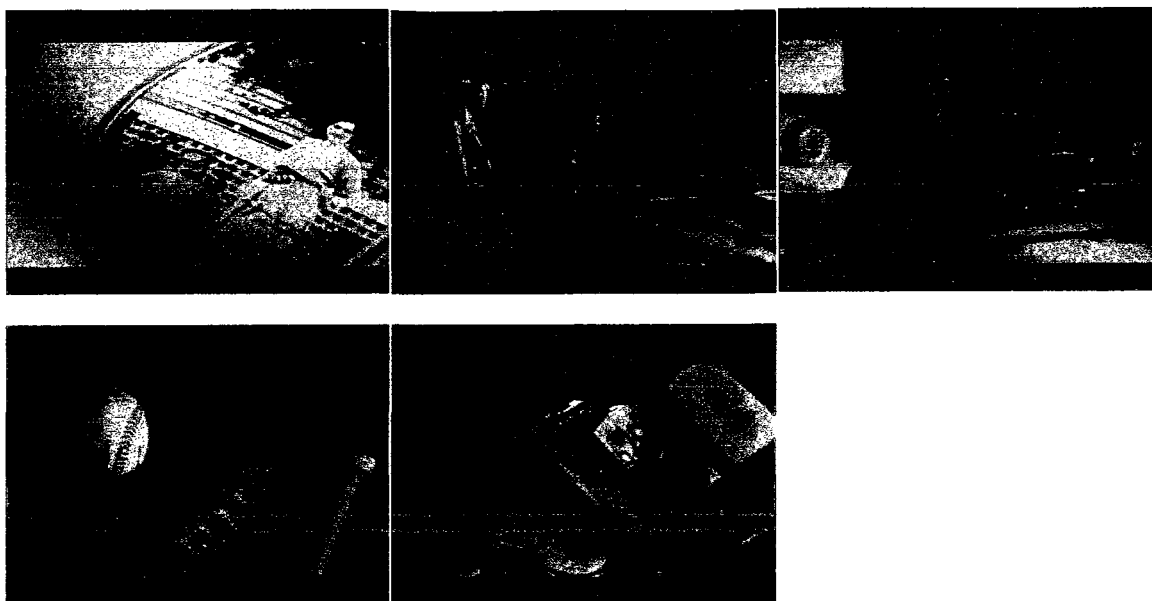


Figure 12

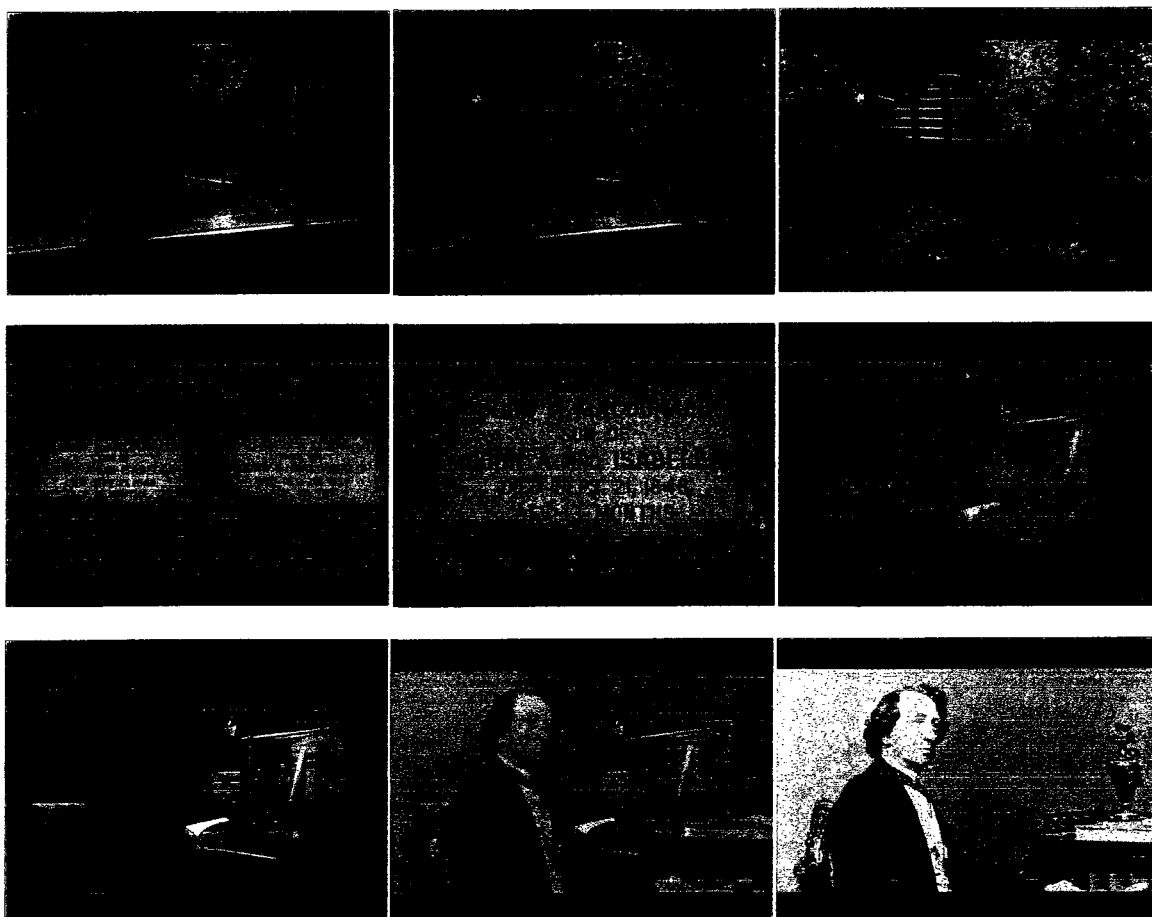


Figure 13

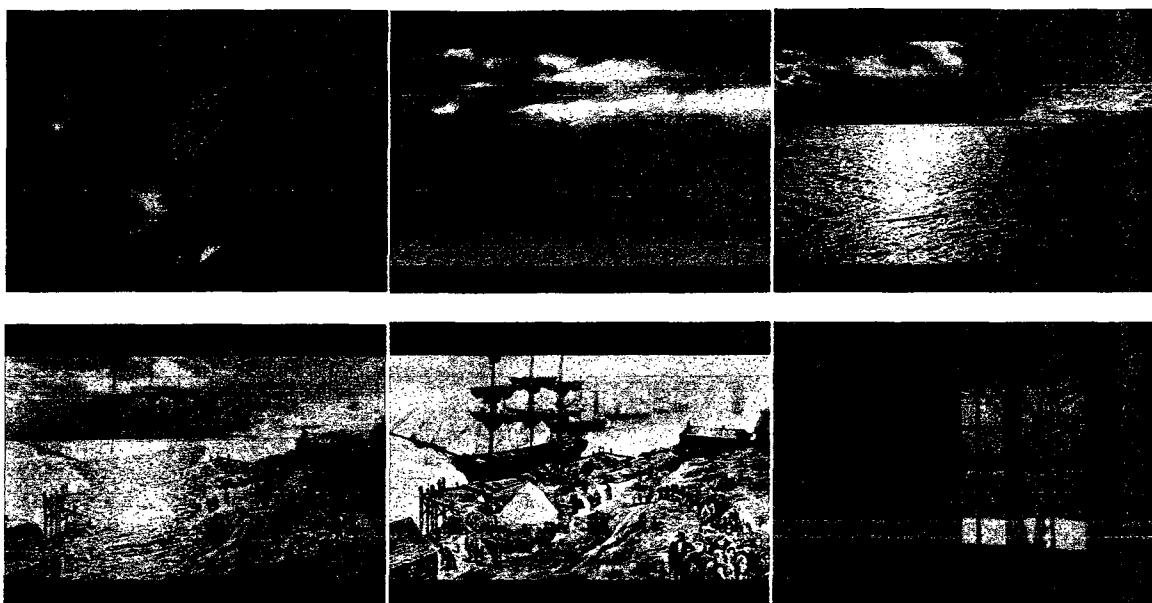


Figure 14

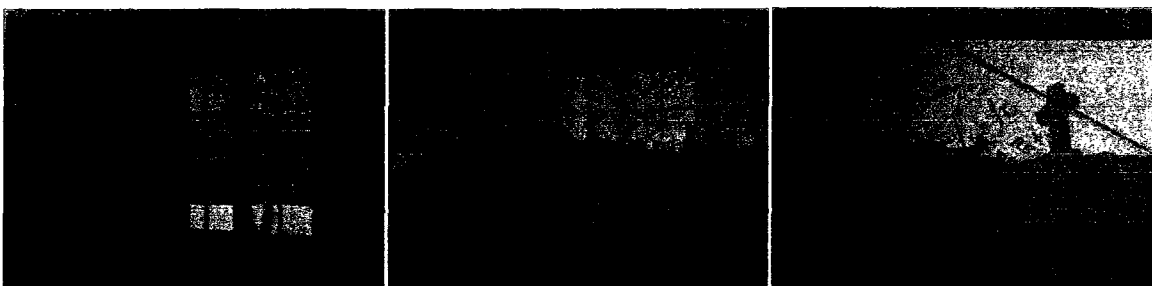


Figure 15

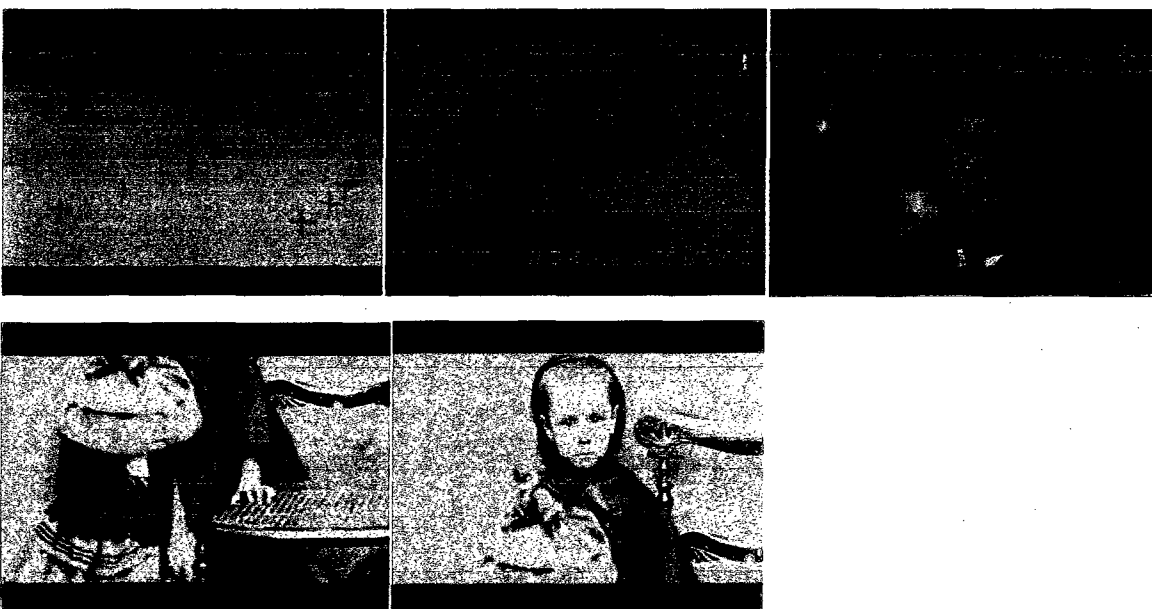


Figure 16

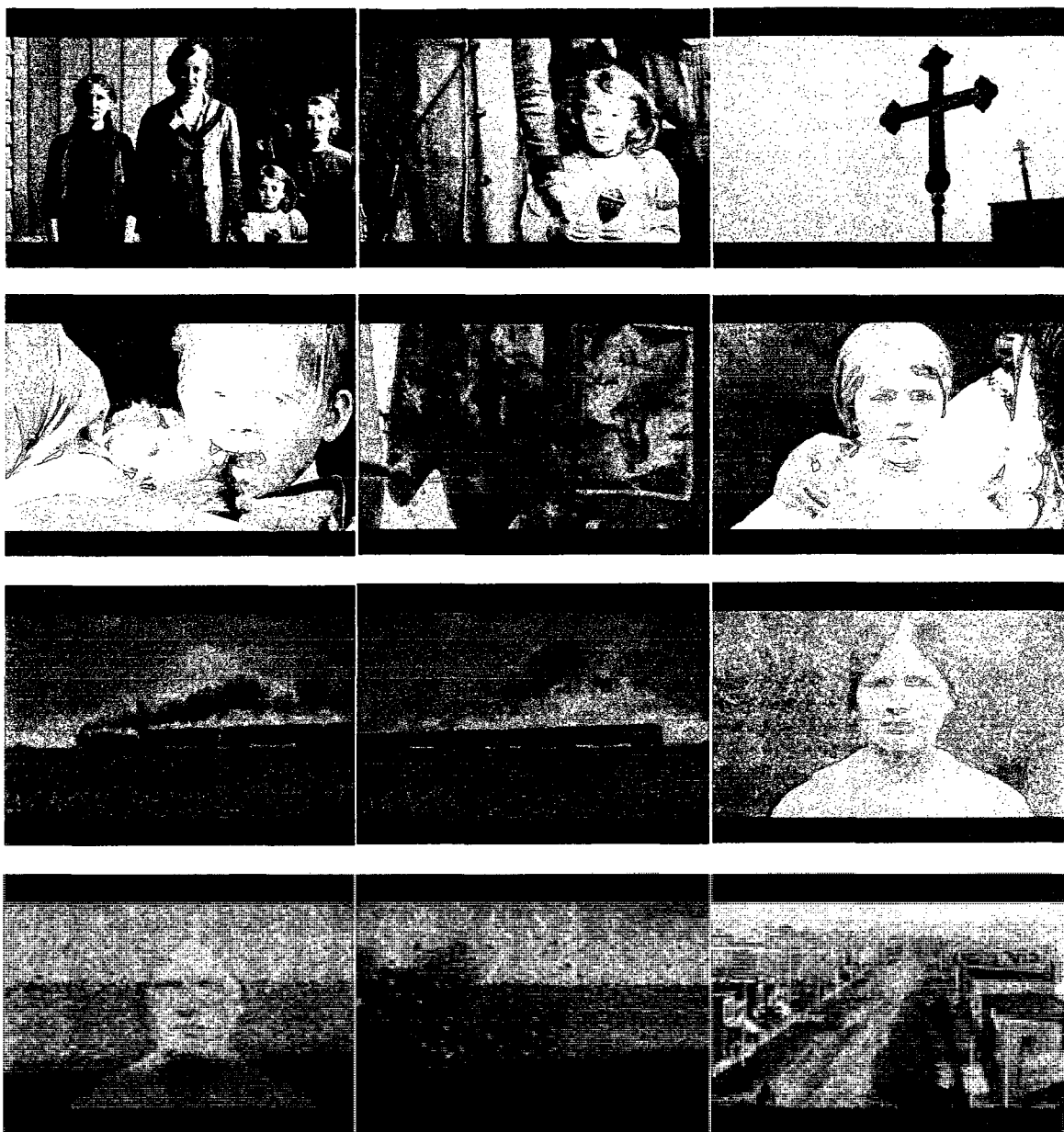


Figure 17

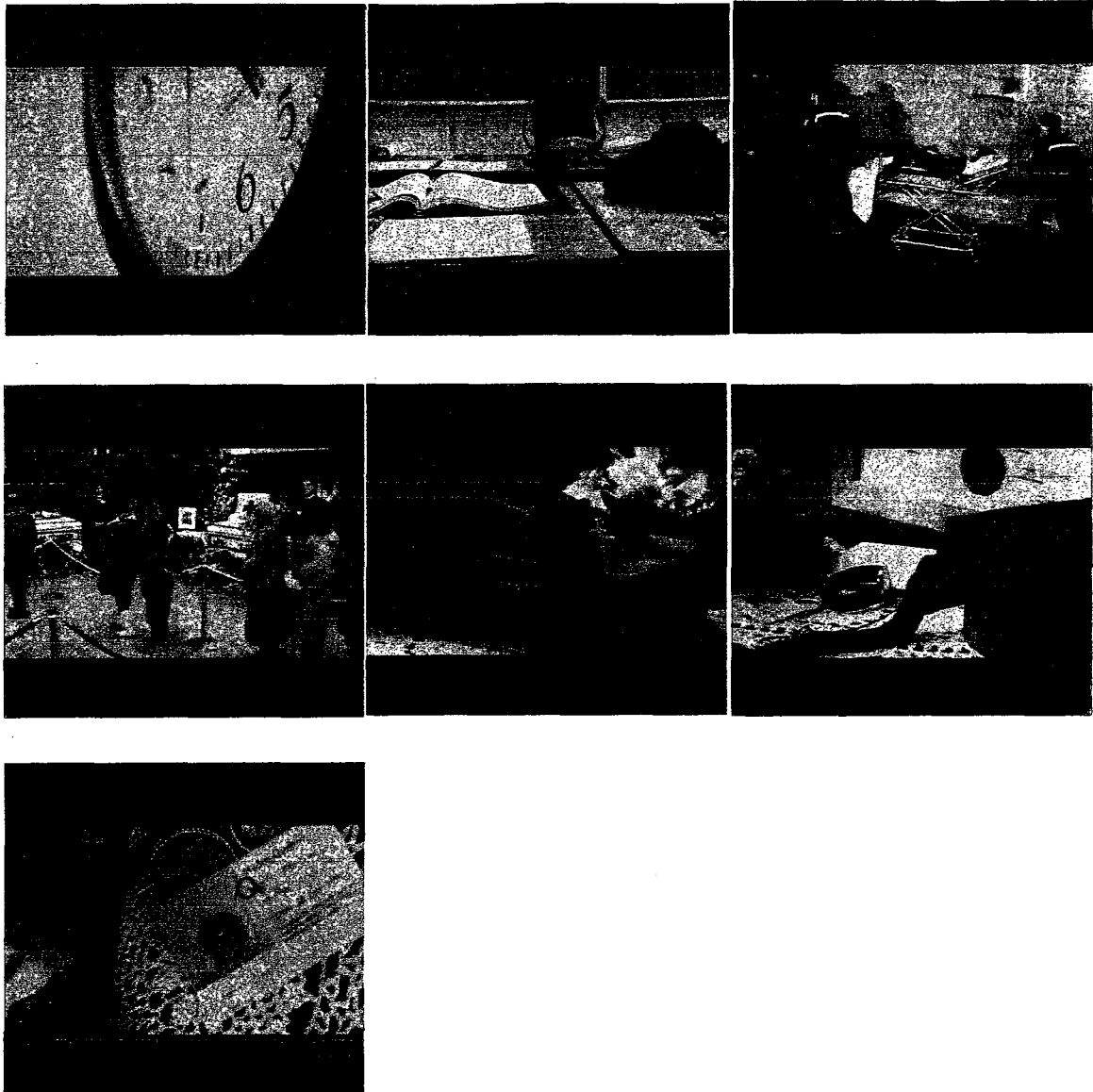


Figure 18

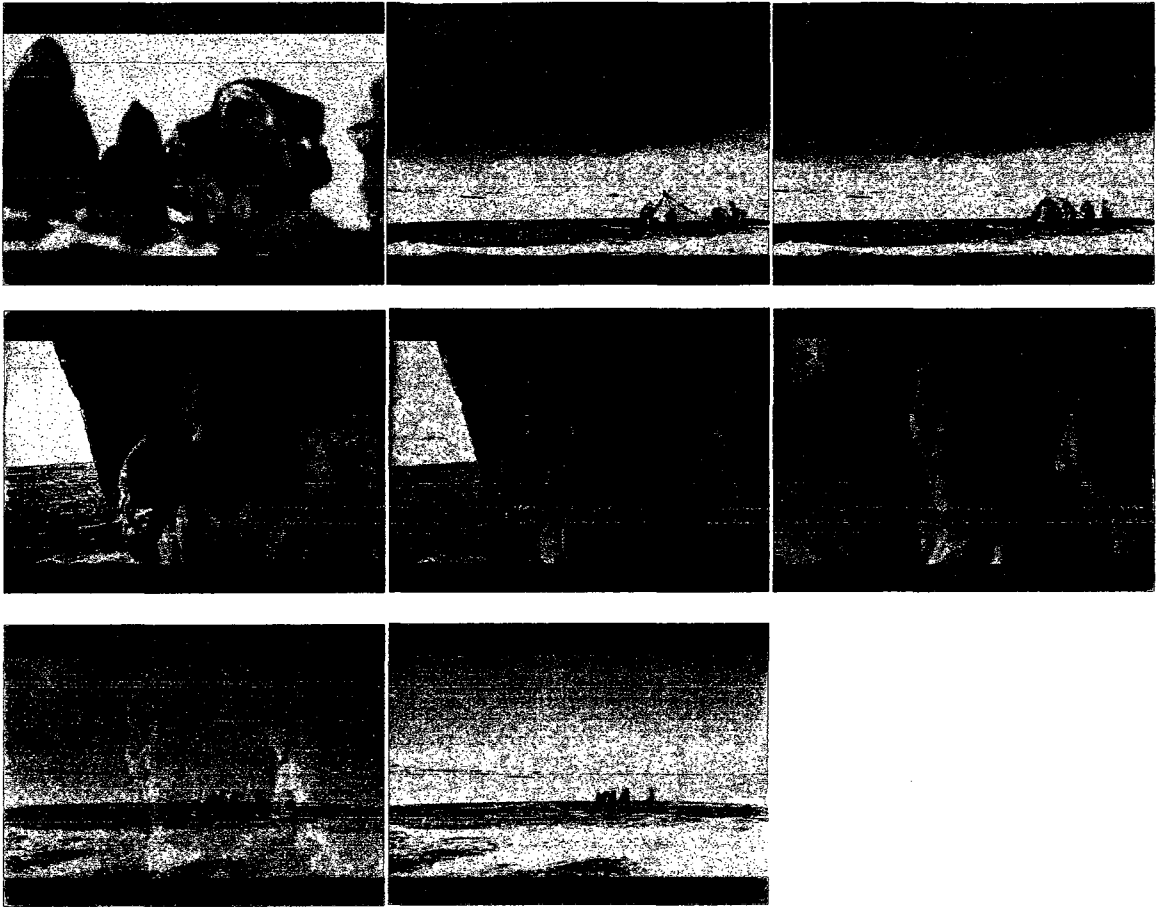


Figure 19

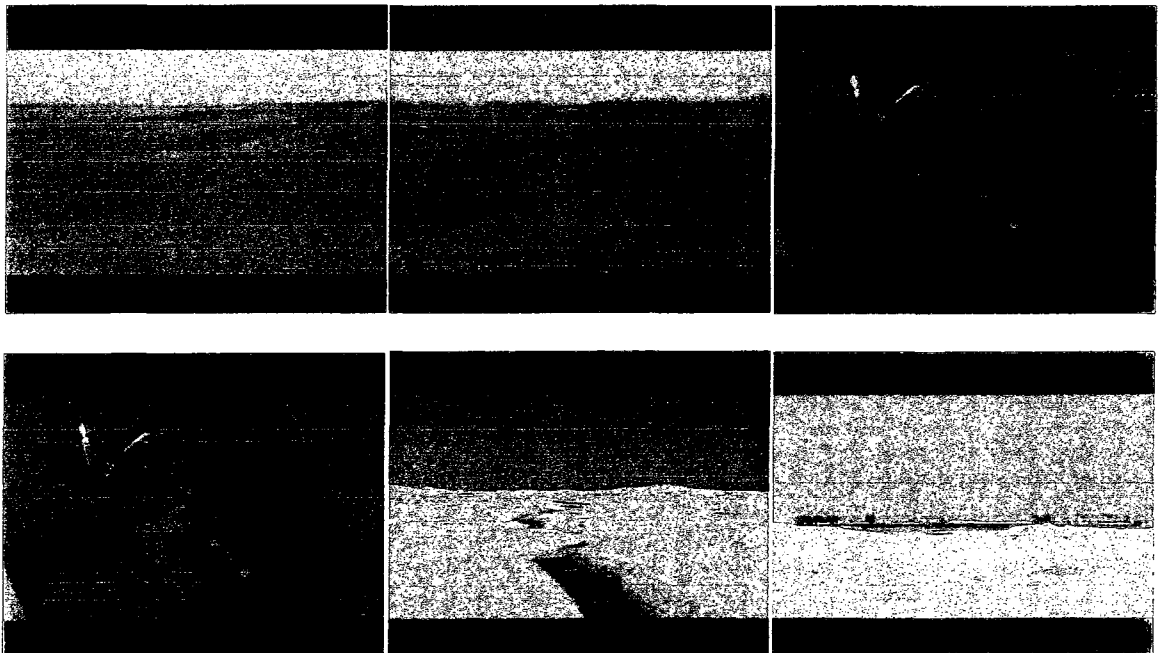


Figure 20

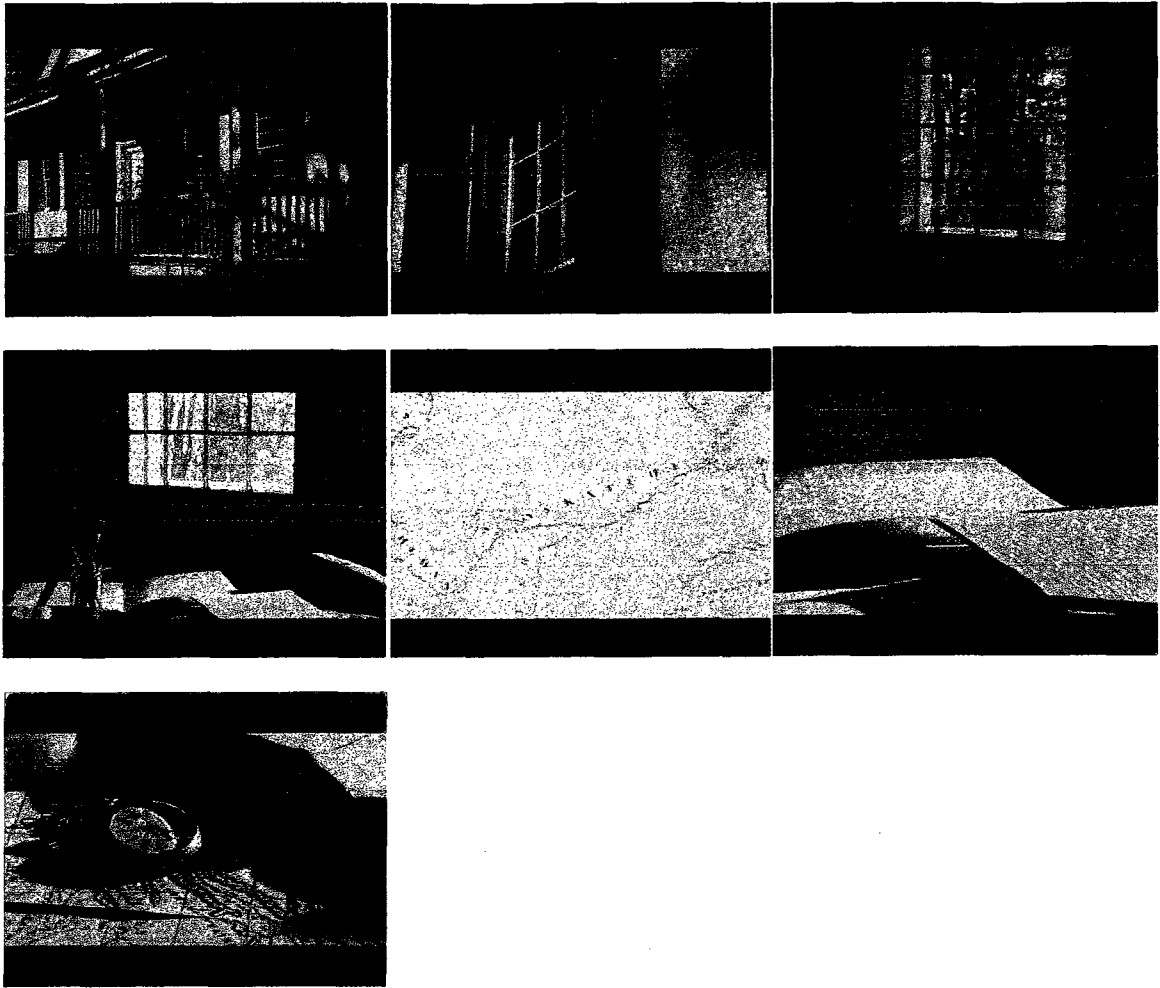




Figure 21

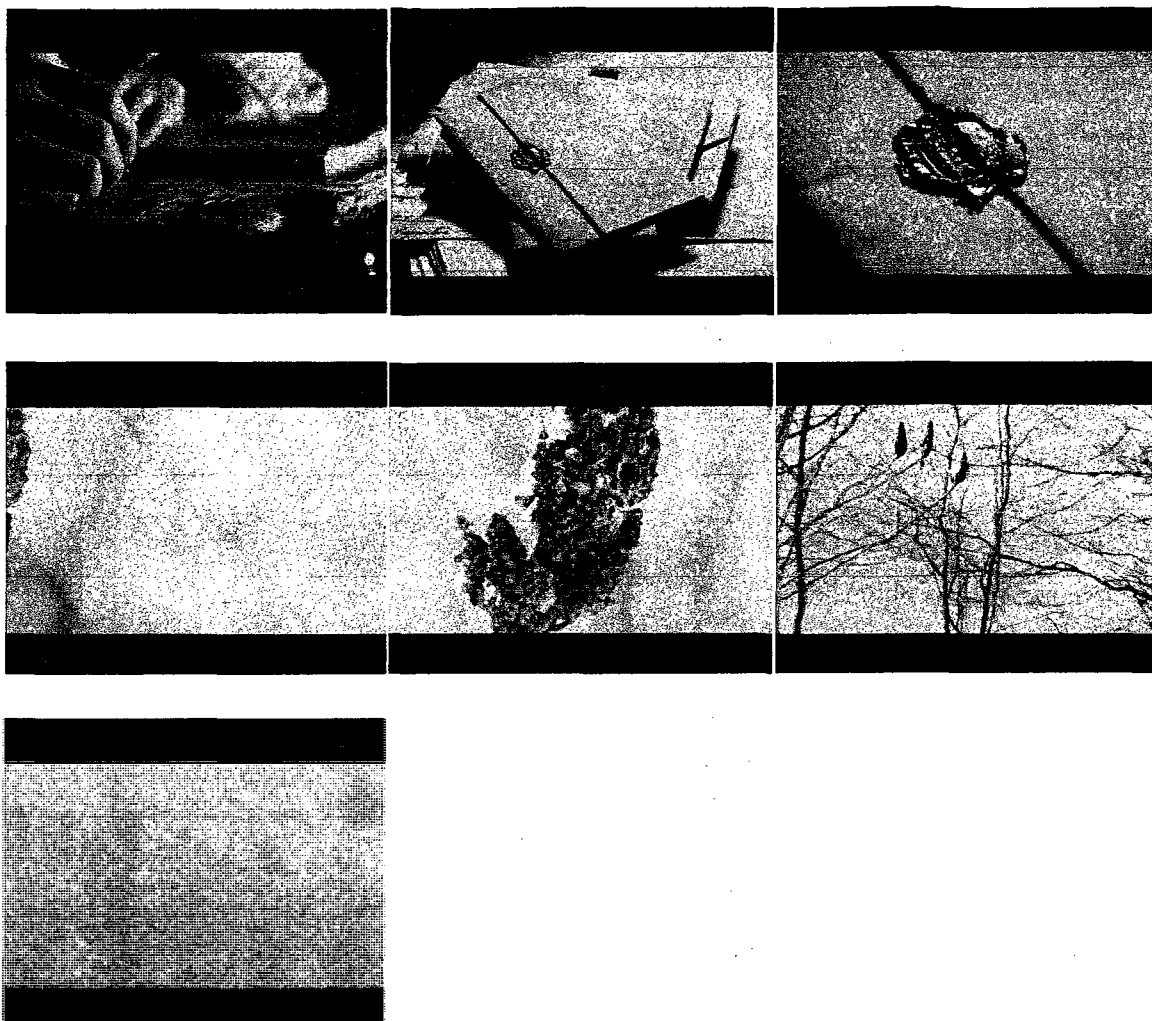


Figure 22

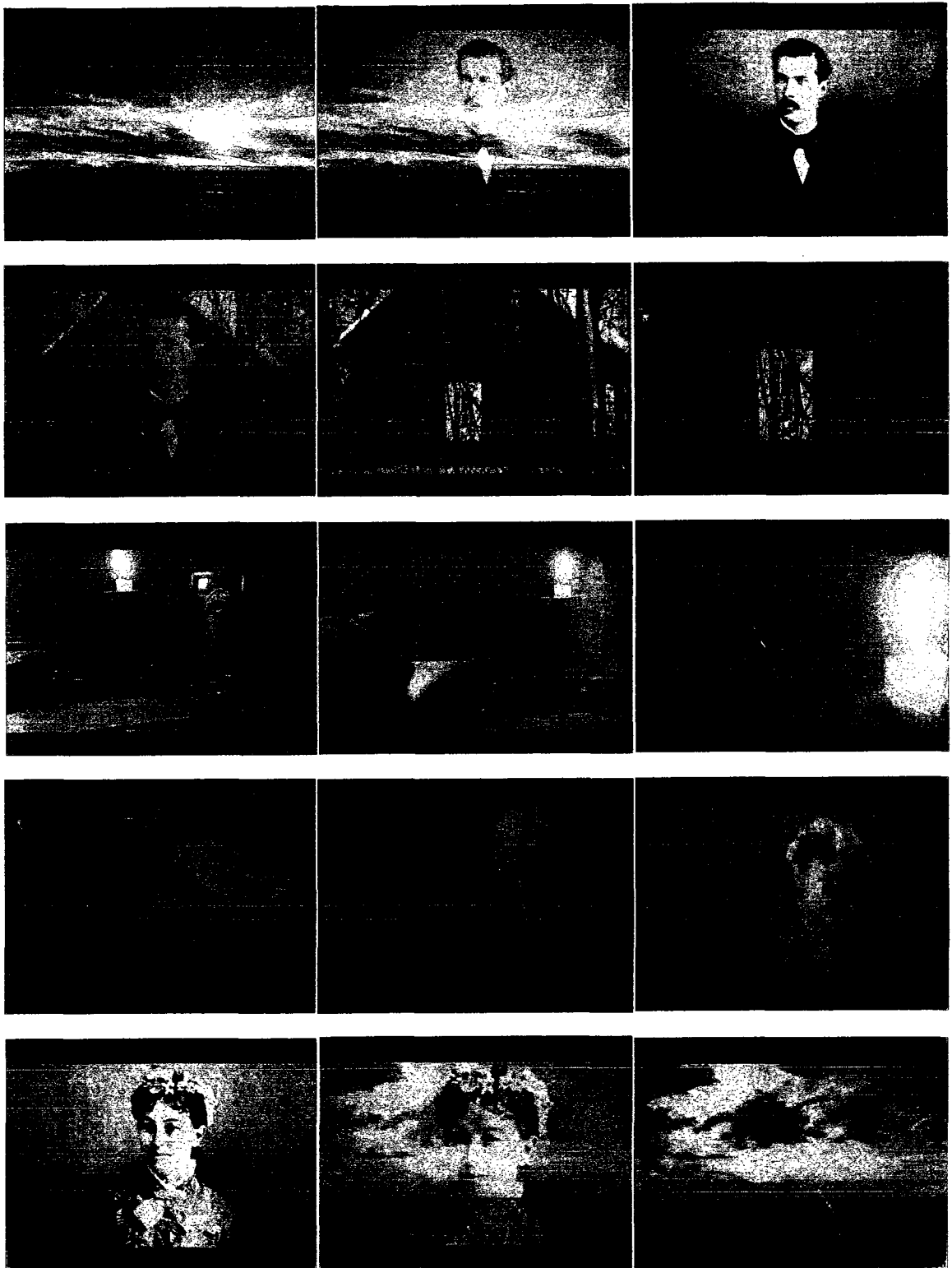


Figure 23

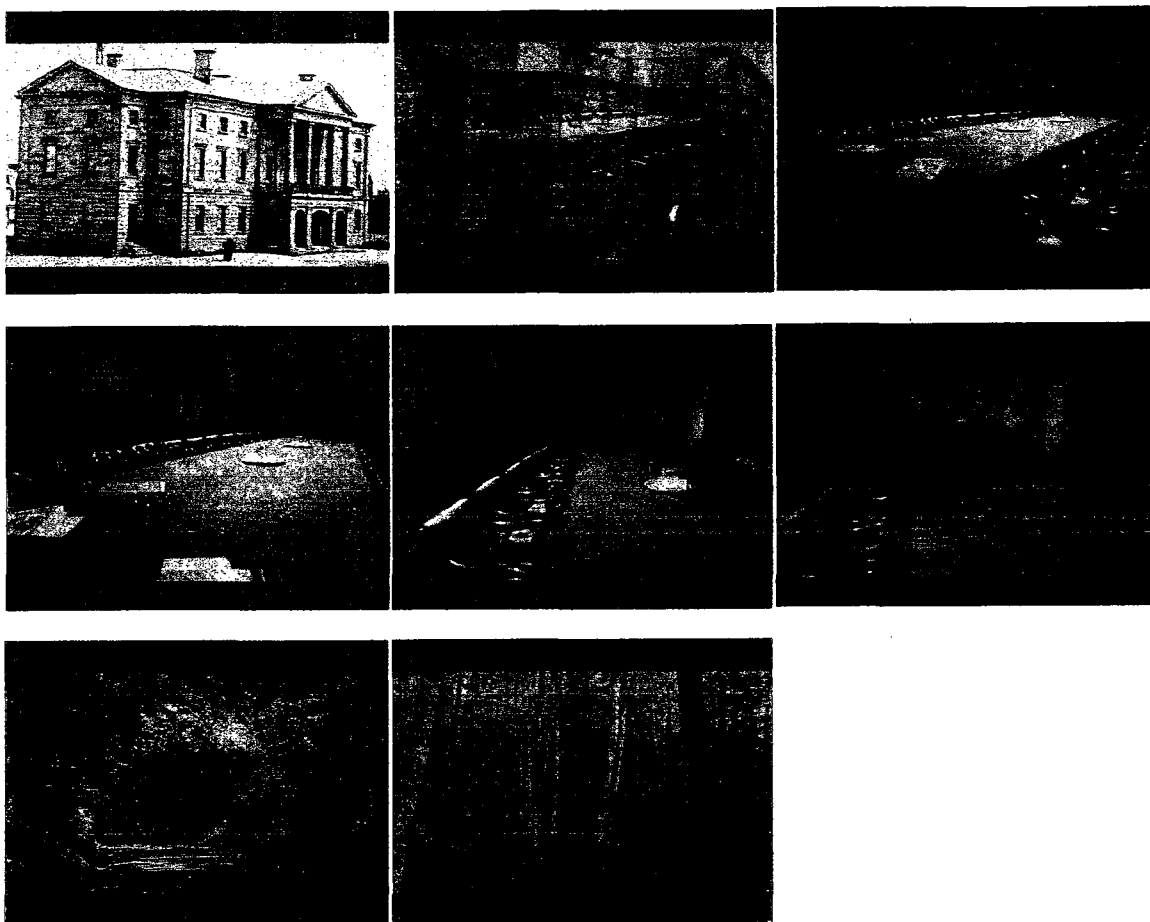


Figure 24



Figure 25



Figure 26a

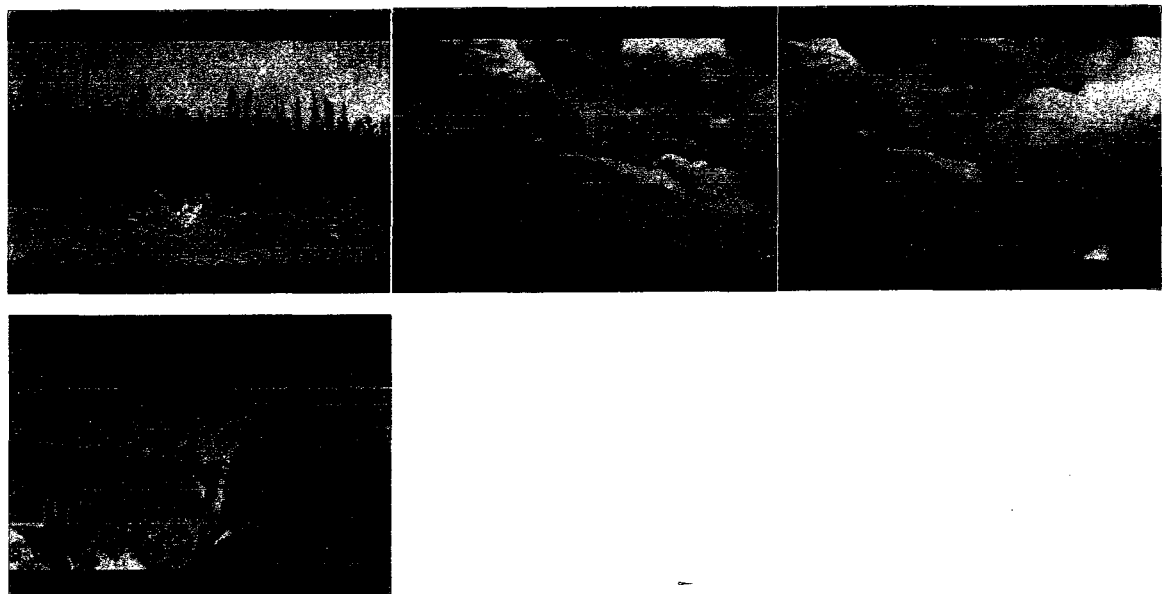


Figure 26b



Figure 26c



Figure 26d

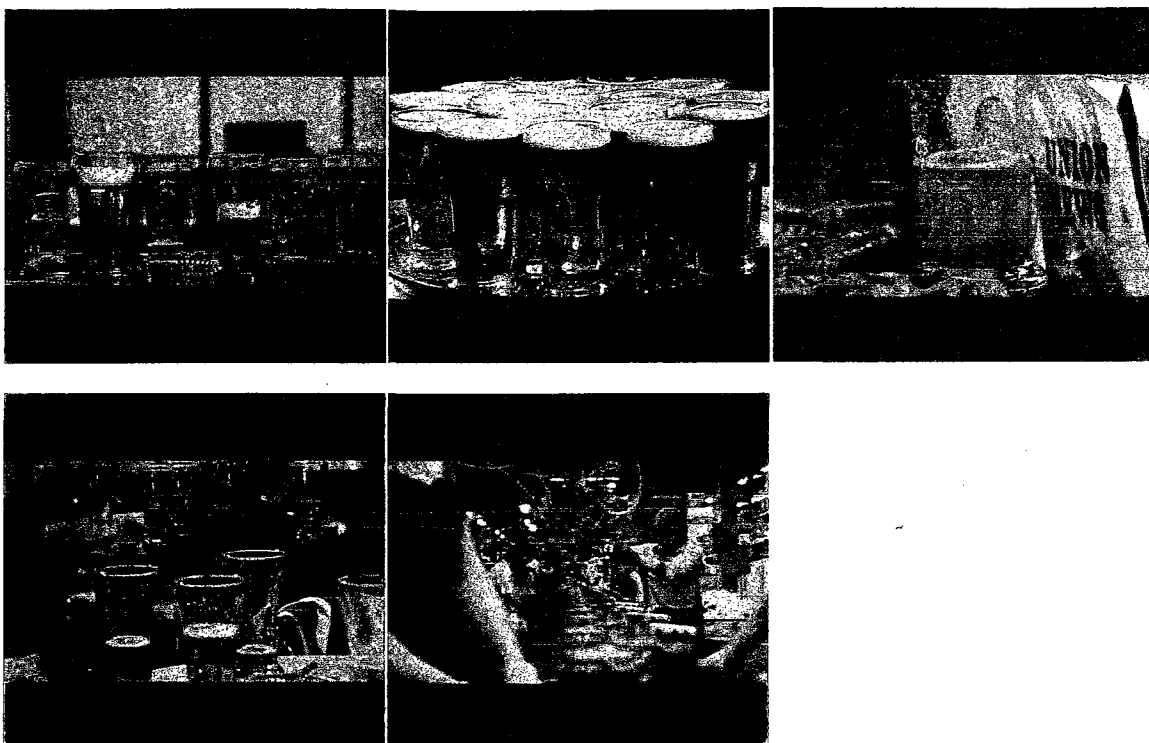


Figure 27





Figure 28



Figure 29

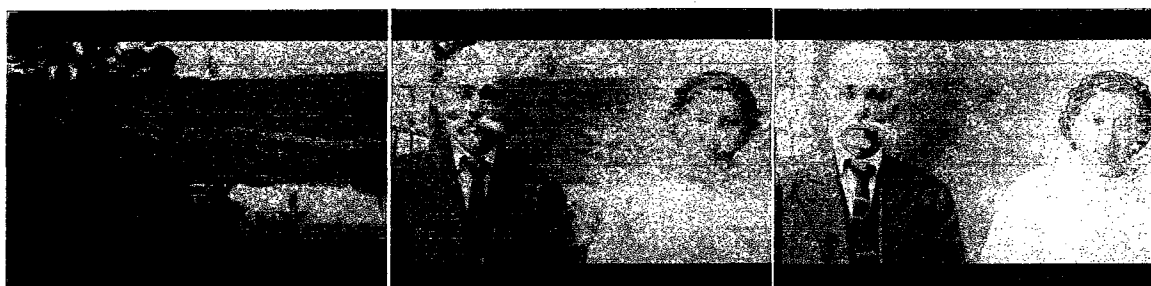


Figure 30

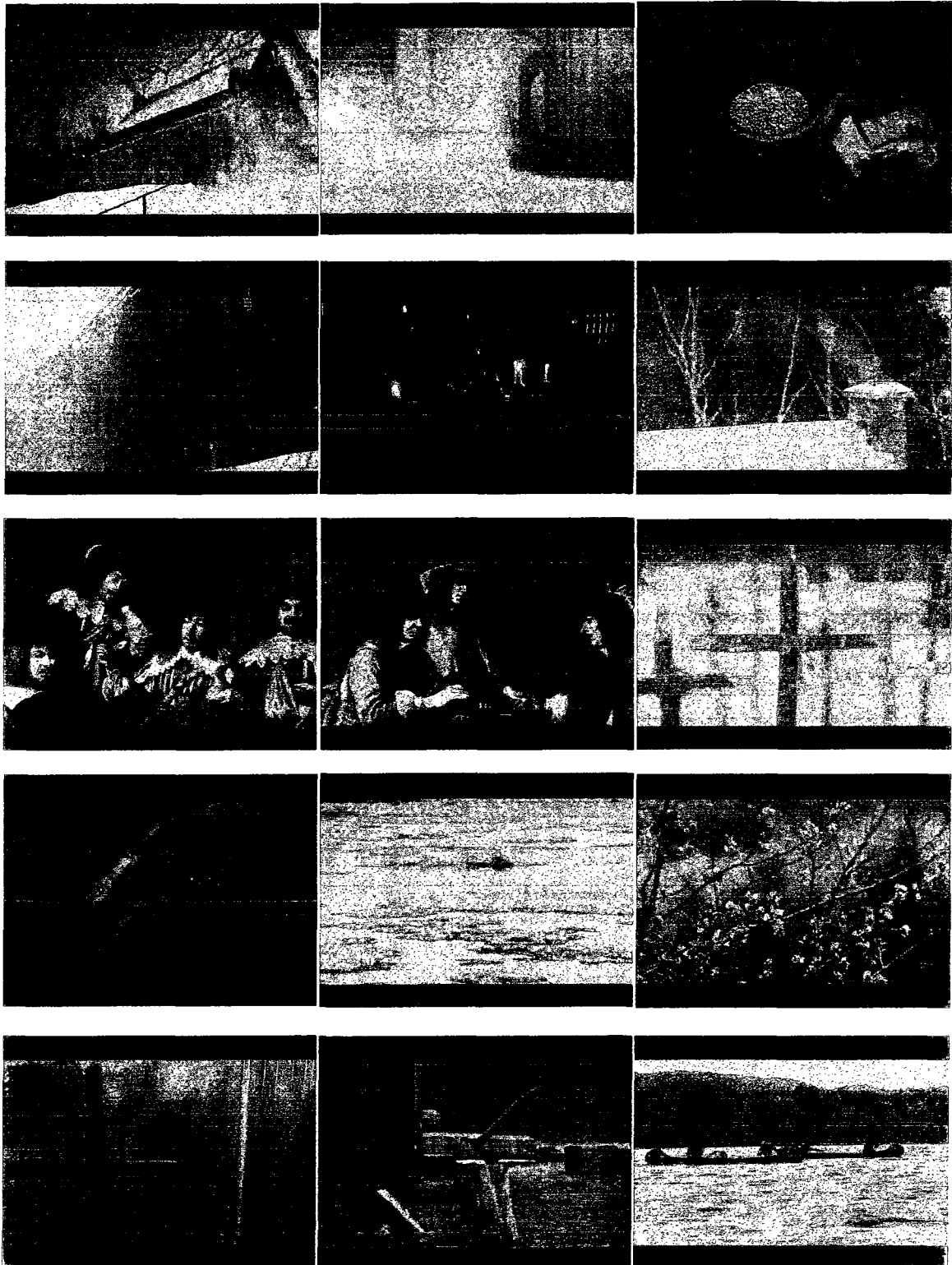


Figure 31



Figure 32a

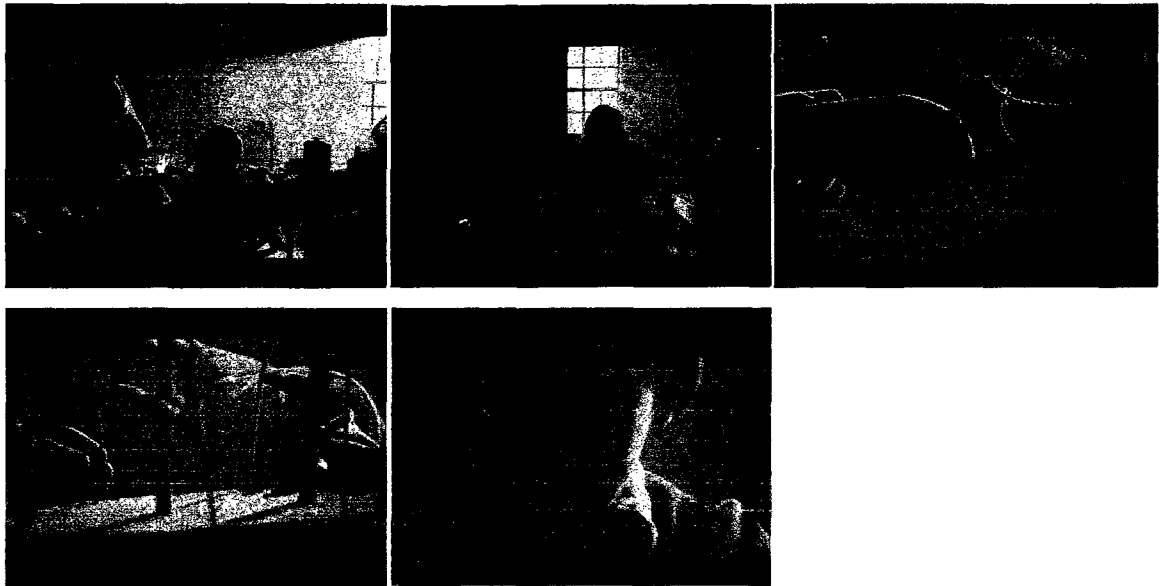


Figure 32b



Figure 32c



Figure 33



Figure 34

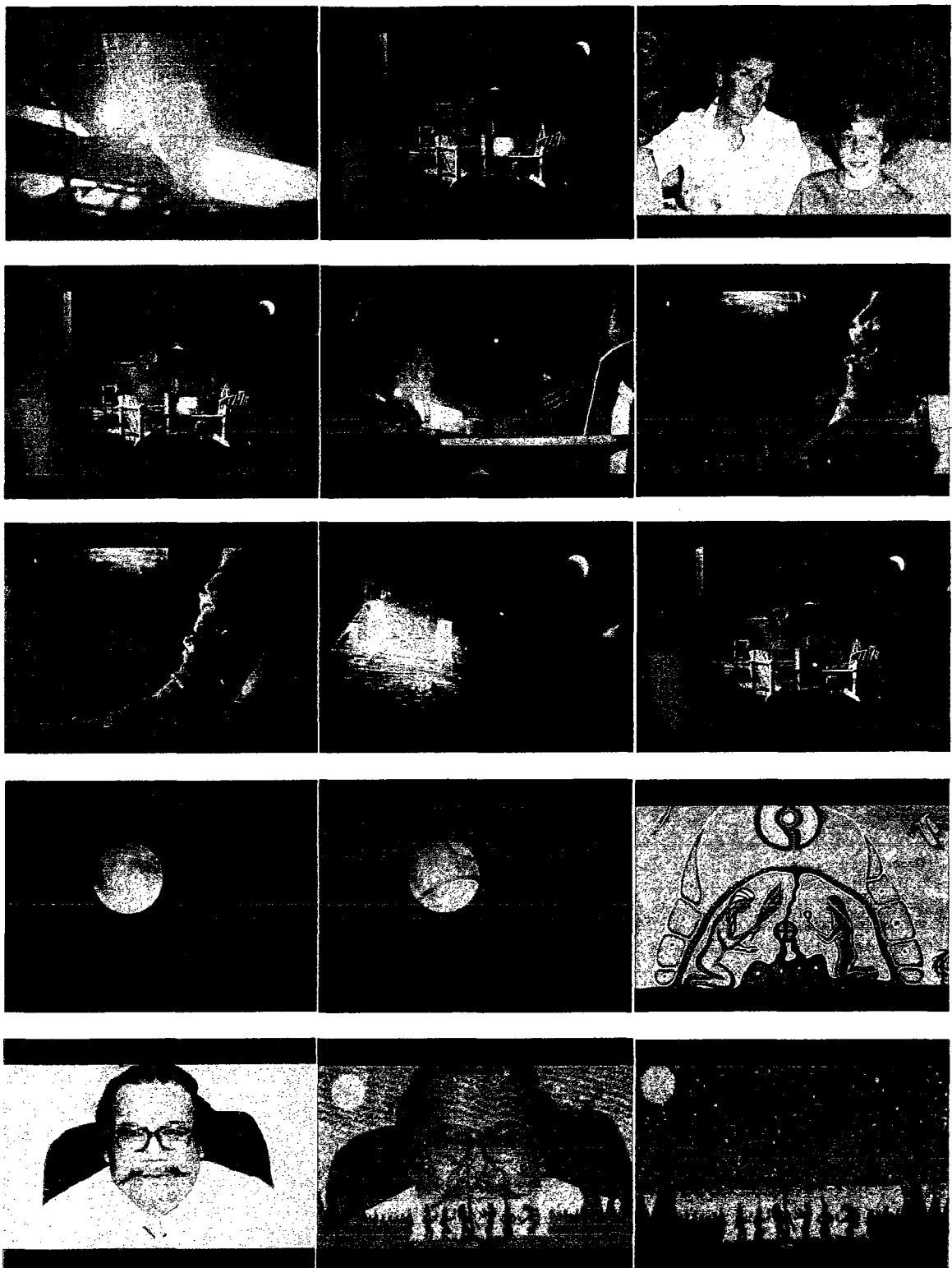


Figure 35

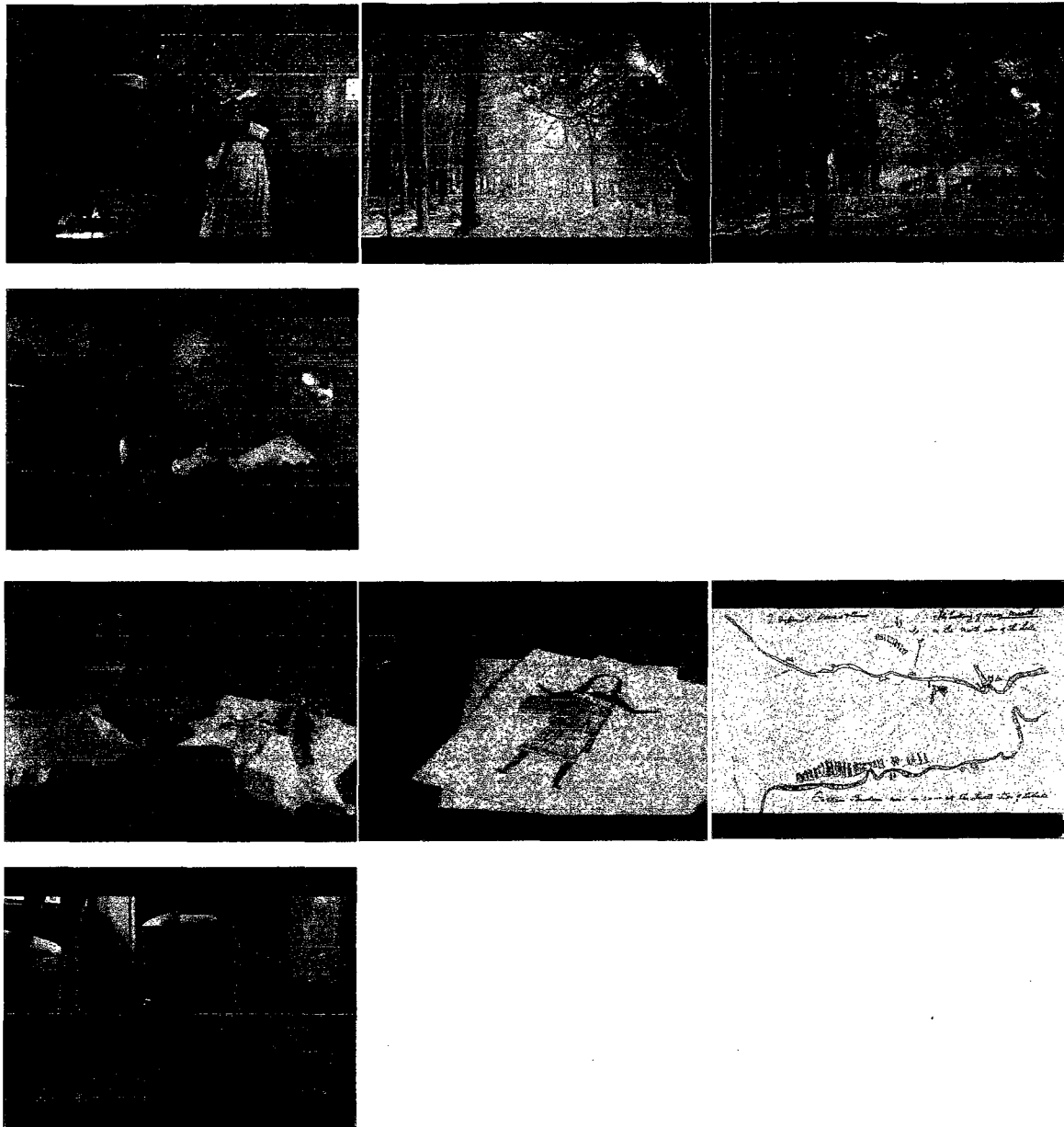


Figure 36





## CHAPTER FOUR

The purpose of Chapter Four is to describe how *Canada: A People's History* situates its audience in the past, and then creates the impression that they are moving through the past, on a journey much like that taken by past Canadians - to Canada as a new home and a better future. The chapter comprises four sections: the screen, the railway, the journey, and utopia. The first section ("The Screen") is concerned with describing the visual field of *C:APH* as a window that opens up onto an historical world, and through which we may enter that world. The second section ("The Railway") focuses on the idea that *C:APH* mimics the visual experience of train travel, and that the series conceives of itself as a nation-building technology like the Canadian Pacific Railway. Additionally, I claim that the perspectives of passenger train windows represent a metaphor of filmic movement that helps to bring disparate images together into a singular experience that suggests a journey through history. The third section ("The Journey") outlines how *C:APH* can be understood as a form of map that lets us negotiate Canadian history and exposes us to the land of Canada as a place of belonging. The fourth and final section of this chapter ("The Utopia") involves revealing the utopian vision inherent in *C:APH*, and I argue that the CBC series projects Canadian history in a form that contains a repeatedly expressed desire for a utopian state. The methodological foundation of the chapter is built with the work of seven theorists. They are: Jacques Lacan, Louis Marin, Roland Barthes, Maurice Charland, Michel de Certeau, Susan Stewart, and Maurice Halbwachs.

## Section 1 – The screen

In this section the video form of *C:APH* is described as a kind of window through which a contemporary audience may affectively experience Canadian history, and so acquire a sense of attachment to that history. The reason for describing the experience of *C:APH* like this is that the series is filmed in a manner that gives the impression that we are seeing the past as if through our own eyes. The argument is supported by four examples taken from *C:APH*. The first illustration comes from Episode Five: a reenactment of a late eighteenth-century evening of festivity among colonialists. The second case in point is from Episode Four and shows the effects of the British bombardment of Québec in 1789. The third example is drawn from Episode Seventeen and shows the 1980 Québec referendum on independence. The fourth and final instance is the presentation in Episode Four of a French patriote's reflections on the defeat at the hands of the British on the Plains of Abraham in 1759. The first two cases allow me to work with and introduce the idea of the visual frame used to structure the passage into the past that is effected by *C:APH*. The second two examples show how the framed spaces of *C:APH* can evoke the experience that is produced by the human eye.

The two theorists employed to support the analysis in this section are Louis Marin, and Roland Barthes. Marin is helpful because of his work on the field of representation,<sup>1</sup> as well as of the frame. Barthes contributes the useful formulation of the photographic image (in fact, any visual medium) as a "laminated object"<sup>2</sup>

The line of reasoning springs from Marin's reference to the "field of representation...[as the] fourth, frontal wall of the scenographic cube."<sup>3</sup> The concept is useful to me in its original form as an image with height, width, and depth (the canvas,

say, being the transparent fourth dimension), because of the sense of volume introduced by the “scenographic cube,” and because of the selectively opaque character of the “fourth wall.” We can see how this works by looking at an example that is taken from Episode Five, and which presents the reenactment of an evening of celebration by eighteenth-century English colonists in Canada (Figure 1). The sequence begins by showing the closed window of a house and then a view of the party that is taking place inside. The next view situates us within the room and gives us the perspective that a partygoer would have. We are then returned to a point of view that is outside and at a distance from the now open window. The last thing that we see is the window being closed by someone inside the house.

The movement of the sequence that I have just described creates the impression that we have entered into the depiction of history and then slipped back out through the window and into the present. In this example and elsewhere in the series, *C:APH* places an emphasis on the window by framing it as a point of access, and then allows us to imagine our own passage through it. In all of these situations, the movement highlights two spaces: the theatrical stage of the series, and the domestic space in which we are seated, watching as the presentation unfolds.

The first approach to the colonial dance is the image of a window that is surrounded by the surrounding darkness of evening. At this point we see the revelers as “what is represented” (Canadian history as it unfolds). Since that scene is inset within a black field, we are also made aware of the television screen as a space that is “representing” (the television broadcast of *C:APH*); the frame of *C:APH* acts to guide viewers into its theater of history. Considering these two fields together – the historical

window and the visual field that frames it – we can see “the one in the other as representation” (the *C:APH* mediated presentation of Canadian history). The desire of this mediated broadcast is to gather us into the same experience of Canadian history and, ultimately, to frame a common perspective on being Canadian. Marin’s ideas on representational space can clarify how these two elements function in *C:APH*. His ideas are used to focus the analysis on the relationship between the frame of the *C:APH*’s lens and these tableaux that are set within its frame. Marin identifies three kinds of framing: the frame as “something upon which the canvas is stretched,”<sup>4</sup> the frame as a limit that renders “the [art]work autonomous in visible space,”<sup>5</sup> and the frame as something that guides or influences the viewer’s reception of the artwork. In the last case, he explains that one image is present as the subject of representation, and we see it within the frame of the other image, which is the one that is making the presentation.<sup>6</sup>

When the camera of *C:APH* frames a scene within which we see a window or window-like opening, it is through this inset, framed space that we enter the historical tableau. The idea is that *C:APH* encourages a sense of personal involvement in history by structuring a framed space through which we may pass and thereby draw our own picture of Canadian history.

In the example of the colonial gathering, we are ushered into a distinctly framed theatrical space that is entirely reenacted. Within *C:APH* we are also presented with archival portrayals and then live recreations of the same scenes or persons. In these cases, we are given an opening onto history where the mediation of *C:APH* is less evident than was the case in the presentation of the seventeenth-century colonial soirée. This is the case with my second example, which comes from the fourth episode’s depiction of the

effects wrought by General Wolfe's bombardment of Québec in 1759 (Figures 2 and 3). It should be noted, however, that while the visual content of this particular narrative is most conducive to my argument, the idea that it supports remains in evidence throughout *C:APH*.

The aftermath of the shelling of Québec by the British is introduced to us with a video shot of mist-covered water – ostensibly the St. Lawrence River at Québec (Figure 2). This opening image then leads into a video shot of a fir tree, the image of which fades into a watercolor rendering that depicts ruined buildings in Québec. The watercolor is then panned from the top to the bottom. As a result, we see the people in the painting who are walking along an avenue that is framed on either side by severely damaged walls. The walls are perforated by the spaces where windows once stood. These empty window openings then become duplicated when the painted image is juxtaposed with a sweeping video shot of actual ruins. It is not evident whether these architectural remains are in Québec and are the result of General Wolfe's artillery, or whether these buildings simply look like those that we see in the painting. The archival patina introduced into the presentation of *C:APH* by the painting nevertheless lends credence to the video image, and what the sequence ends up expressing is the loss of homes, businesses, and community. The two key elements in this case are the confusion of painted and actual ruined walls, and the mimicry of the historical perspective on these walls – we seem to look upon them from the same point of view that the inhabitants of Québec once did.

The flow of the sequence allows us to experience the historical space of Québec through the confusion of actual window frames and their painted reproduction. One of the real walls is close to the camera position and a large empty space in that wall, which once

held a window, frames another more distant wall that is also pierced by voids where windows once stood. The result of combining the watercolor of the ruined buildings, with two separate video images of the walls, is that we are presented with an image that appears to include three visual layers (that of the watercolor, and those of the two video shots). The net impression is that the watercolor seems to be located in between the two video images. The surface of *C:APH* (considering the television screen as a kind of canvas) is thereby made to appear indeterminate, and the walls look as if they hold within themselves a memory of past events. The mediation effected by *C:APH* is not announced as clearly as in the case of the colonial's evening dance, but the frame of the documentary lens of *C:APH* is nonetheless the figurative window through we are given an impression of the past. We also find ourselves looking up at the ruined walls as if we were standing in the place of the people that we see in the painted reproduction that begins this sequence. In the end, we are not only given a perspective on the past (the cityscape of a ruined Québec), we are also given a perspective that may have been experienced by people in that past.

After we see both videoed and painted walls get merged together, *Canada: A People's History* shows us another watercolor that presents a different view of tumbled-down buildings (Figure 3). In the foreground of the watercolor we see two British soldiers and what appears to be a mother holding an infant in her arms. The watercolor image will be faded into a video recreation. What the producers of *C:APH* have done is recreate a scene that bears a very close resemblance to that of the watercolor, and the visual sequence takes us from the watercolor to the recreation. The effect of this transition from painted to reenacted scene, is to make the painting appear to come to life.

The depth in the reconstructed scene, which has a wall in the foreground and another in the background, enhances the effect of transforming the two-dimensional painting into a three-dimensional world. The foreground and background walls in the reenacted scene mark off three areas of space: in front of the foreground wall, in between the two walls (where the main action of the scene takes place), and behind the background wall (this is made apparent by an actor who moves past an open doorway in the wall). The critical outcome of this layering of space is to suggest that the area in front of the foreground wall forms a part of the recreated scene. Thus, the room in which the audience of *C:APH* is seated forms a part of the history that the audience is watching.

In order to elucidate this point, I now refer to Barthes's contention that photography belongs to "that class of laminated objects whose two leaves cannot be separated without destroying them both: the window pane and the landscape."<sup>7</sup> Although Barthes speaks of photography, the idea holds true in *C:APH* for the videographic re-framing of archival imagery, the direct address of actors, and historical reenactments. The importance of Barthes's formulation to this analysis is that it underlines the nature of representation as a shared space (we cannot separate what we see from the manner in which we see it).

What is happening in the above examples, and others like them that are found throughout *C:APH*, is that the past as witnessed by the people who lived it is being visually bridged to the experience of this history in the present. The result is achieved through what Barthes's calls a "laminated object," or as Certeau puts it, "fictions, painted windows, [and] mirror-panes."<sup>8</sup> Both descriptions fit the in-between point of the imagery in *Canada: A People's History* that articulates the series' presentation and its subsequent

re-imaging in the mind of the audience. The term “articulate” is used to refer to this expression of history that connects past and present. Here, I am concentrating on the permeable nature and illusory depth of the surface of representation or what might otherwise be called the canvas of *C:APH*. The surface is constructed in such a way as to create a passageway into the historical theatre that is mounted by *C:APH*. The effect of this passage, which has been illustrated to this point by using the examples of the colonial dance and the Québec ruins, is that we are connected to history by sight.

The concepts of the representational cube’s fourth wall, frames of reference, and the image as a laminated form, all lead to my proposal that the visual trope of *C:APH* is the experience of the human eye. *C:APH* evinces such a desire to have its audience witness the past (by actually seeing the experiences of witnesses of the past) that there is very nearly an urge to join the lens of the documentary camera together with the eye of the viewer. Most often in *C:APH* this is made apparent by very tight close-ups of people’s faces, and on these occasions we find ourselves quite literally eye-to-eye with historical figures. Figure 4 provides some examples of this. At other times in *C:APH* it is the technique of zooming that coaxes us into a closer proximity with what we are being shown. In each instance, the result is comparable: bringing the past and present together through a point of union that evokes the human eye. A third example is taken from Episode Four, and shows a period during the 1980 Québec referendum on independence (Figure 5). In this case, we are not looking at, or through, a window frame, nor are we seeing the framing that is achieved by a camera. Instead, we are made to stare directly into the human eye that saw history.



The events of the referendum as seen in *C:APH* consist of two families' experiences. One family supports independence, while one family favors remaining within Canada. The story unfolds by moving from one family's perspective to that of the other, all the while including public reactions and opinions on the approaching referendum. When the tale comes to a close, we find ourselves watching archival news coverage of the results as they are announced to supporters of independence. The news camera eventually focuses on the visage of a distraught man who is holding a newborn in his arms. The man can clearly be identified as the father of one of the two families whose experiences structure this story. We first see the man at a normal magnification, and then *C:APH* enlarges the footage to an extreme degree, eventually transforming him into a nearly absurd monumentalization. At its height, the blowup becomes large enough to let us see the scanning lines of the video. After this, the screen goes momentarily black, before we see the man once again at a normal magnification.

*C:APH* certainly needs us to fully experience the passion and anguish that were generated by the 1980 referendum, and it seeks to do this by symbolically leading our sight through the man's iris and into his eye. The black screen that occurs in between the hugely magnified eye and the man's normally presented image symbolically marks the point of passage through the cornea itself. In vision, the cornea is the lens that links thought and experience and thereby stands at an important junction in the production of memory. On the one hand, *C:APH* signifies the incredible emotional experience of the referendum by exaggerating the proportions of the man and so emphasizing his grief; but on the other hand, by figuratively passing into his eye, we are put in a position to inherit these experiences. The idea of inheritance is suggested because the perspective that we

have of his eye, as he gets larger and larger, would be fairly logical from the perspective of the baby that he holds in his arms. We can infer that the child will eventually grow up and might still retain this impression of his father's emotional experience. It could be argued that that childhood impression contributed in some way to the shaping of the child's later development. Or, in this example, the experience of witnessing the past events of the Québec referendum, as presented in *C:APH*, can reshape our present-day understanding of Canada and Canadian identity.

The discussion in this section now draws to a close by fleshing out the argument that we are not only given eye contact with historical witnesses, we are also given the perspective and experience of those eyes. We can see how intangible memories get visualized and expressed in the series by looking at how the aftermath of the conflict on the Plains of Abraham outside Québec in 1759 is presented in Episode Four (Figure 6). After the outcome of the battle has been shown, we see the ruminations of a French patriot on the military loss. As in the example of the colonial party, the initial view is through a many-paned window. This time the audience is presented with a viewpoint that looks out onto the windows of other, nearby buildings. The shot then dissolves into an interior view that shows a wooden chair, which is placed next to a white wall that is crisscrossed with shadows. The camera lens then shifts from a shot of the chair and over to a shot of a single candle that is placed upon a small table. The image of the candle eventually fades into a shot of a twilight sky, which is the closing image of both the sequence and the chapter.

What the imagery is supported by, and what it supports, is the memory of a sense of loss. In effect, what the historical figure was thinking and feeling. The survivor of the

battle rues the defeat, and he is concerned for the future unity of his people. The sense of isolation and longing is expressed by the view through the window, which positions the viewer in darkness, gazing out at the warmth of distant buildings. Loss and the desire for another person are also signified by the empty chair, which suggests an absent human form. The impression of a meditation on solitude is then compounded by the image of the candle, upon which our gaze is made to linger before we are taken outside to see the late-evening sky. Together, the window, chair, candle, and sunset form the structure that supports our impression of someone else's historical experience.

The transformation of actual experience into visual recollection is expressed when objects are reproduced in an ephemeral form (for example, a chair and then its shadow). To buttress this claim, I point to the manner in which we are moved from an outward to an inward gaze. The point of transfer is the intermingling of the rectangles of the window frame with the geometric shapes of the chair's shadow. In this movement, we not only shift from an outside to an inside – or, from what the man saw to what he felt – we also see something tangible and then its intangible resemblance. We are certainly aware that we are seeing through a window, but when we are then brought inside, for a moment the confusion of window frames and shadow forms prevents us from being certain of where we are going or what we are seeing. The visual shift expresses the conversion of sight into recollection.

At the beginning of this section I argued that our introduction to the colonial dance reveals *C:APH*'s act of representation (wherein its lens frames our understanding of what we see). The depiction in *C:APH* of the Québec ruins mingles archival and recreated scenes so that the archival image documents the reenactment, while the

reenactment brings the archival image to life. Now, in the case of the French patriot, we are inside someone's emotional space and we seem to be witnessing history with their eyes

The transformational process is then repeated in the Plains of Abraham aftermath when we are taken back outside to look at the evening sky. Our interior view goes from being a meditative gaze upon a candle – we are seemingly alone with our thoughts – through a dissolve of the image of the candle, to the darkly red sky. At the beginning of this example, the solid forms of a window and a chair were mingled and regenerated by shadows as if to suggest that the physical presence that once was, now remains only in the delicate forms of memory. At the end of this same sequence it is the ephemeral light of the candle that becomes the more enduring light of the sun. The sequence thus moves between permanence and ephemerality (or, in another sense, presence and memory). The space within which we find ourselves has also changed by the end of the sequence, since we are no longer in or looking out at human structures. The all-encompassing sky that now fills our visual sense can be interpreted as the national space. We have left an enclosed space (that of the French patriot's subjectivity) and have entered a more ethereal realm (what can be called the imagined space of the nation, which arches over all the people's homes in the land). And in this manner, the memories of the French patriot, which we came to experience with his own sight and thoughts, have been symbolically transferred into the sheltering space of Canada.

All of the examples in this section deal with the transparent nature of the surface of representation that we see in *C:APH*, and the illusory depth of that surface, which together produce a passageway that carries us into the past. The act of witnessing and the

subsequent visual manifestation of emotion – the passage that is the eye and the experience that is provoked in us – are what draw us ever onward through the history of Canada that we witness in *C:APH*.

## **Section 2 – The railway**

In this section the experience of *C:APH* is equated with the experience of train travel. The discussion is based on three factors. First, *C:APH* sees Canadian history as a journey. Second, the CPR is a central element in the founding and history of Canada. And finally, third, *C:APH* positions itself as the latest in a long line of communication systems that, like the CPR, unify the Canadian people.

The work of four theoreticians is brought to bear during the course of the investigation in this section. Michel de Certeau's ruminations on the relationship between landscape, railway car, and traveler structure the description of *C:APH* as a collective passage of personal experience. Maurice Charland helps to clarify the relationship between communications technology and lived experience in Canadian nationalism. Louis Marin's ability to render the act of reading into visual terms helps me illustrate the process of reading we undertake while watching *C:APH*. Finally, Susan Stewart's work adds an understanding of how nostalgia plays a role in the illustration of history as a journey.

Three points from *C:APH* support the analysis that is undertaken throughout this section of the chapter. The first is taken from Episode Eleven and depicts the westward passage in Canada of European immigrants during the nineteenth century (Figure 7). The second is drawn from Episode Ten, and is another presentation of Europeans' trip by rail to the Canadian West during the nineteenth century (Figure 8a/b). And the third case,

shown in Figure 9, is taken from Episode Nine and shows the trip to Montréal that a thirteen-year-old Louis Riel took in 1857.

The first point of discussion determines how the amalgamation of archival and contemporary imagery in *C:APH* acts as an illusory journey through an historical landscape. For example, the chapter called “Strangers Within Our Gates,” from Episode Eleven, begins with video footage of railway tracks, the perspective of which places us directly above the rails as they blur beneath us (Figure 7). The initial shot shows the track diminishing into the distance and each successive framing of the track brings it into an increasingly vertical position. By the end of the sequence, we are looking directly at a close-up of track that is now moving from the top of the camera frame to the bottom. The shot of the railway line fades into an archival photograph that shows a man and a boy sitting inside a railway carriage and gazing directly back at the camera lens. The photograph appears on the screen as it slowly rotates in a clockwise direction until it is first brought into alignment with the lens of *C:APH*, and then taken out of alignment, so that it is skewed to the right. The magnification of the photograph is gradually increased during its rotation, so that finally, the window frame of the railway carriage is barely seen and the faces of the passengers loom large in the television frame. Three other photographs follow, and each is rotated in the same way as the first photograph was. The first shows a woman and three children; in the second we see a solitary woman; and the third photograph is a group portrait of two young men with four women. The chapter is brought to a close by the series of four photographs. Each image is treated in the same manner. After each photograph’s initial appearance, it is slowly magnified until one or more central human subjects are made to fill the television screen. During the full

sequence, we can see video footage of a passing prairie landscape that has been shot through a window and combined with the archival imagery.

The twisting movement of the photographs is not logical in so far as they are portraits. For that matter, neither is the perspective that we have of the railway track, which first passes directly under our feet and then directly in front of our faces as it moves from the top of the frame to the bottom. It is also clear that only the first of the four photographs depicts train passengers. The other three photo-portraits do not show any hint of travel, but the photographs receive a sense of movement from the video footage of blurring tracks that they are combined with. *Canada: A People's History* has brought these different elements together to present us with a story of immigrants traveling to western Canada. We can understand this because we see the moving tracks and then the pictures of train passengers. Placing the video landscape together with the photographs extends the signification, since the portraits now appear to be inside a train. And so, the immigrants appear to be traveling through the landscape. At the same time, the manner of this presentation's construction suggests that we, too, are traveling. Our journey is into Canadian history and it is made possible by *C:APH*. In this sense, the railway tracks that blur from top to bottom are suggestive of film moving behind a projector lens. The slowly turning photographs imply an alignment of perspective (we are brought into eye-to-eye contact), and the gradual magnification of the imagery creates the impression that the pictures are approaching us. In other words, the historical frame of reference that is signified by the train window is lined-up with the present-day frame of reference – the framing made by *C:APH*. In this case, as the immigrants looked out onto

the passing landscape, we now look through the window to see a passing Canadian historical panorama.

The point in this part of my argument is that the archival material has been storyboarded together to form a train of images, which then produces the illusion of two journeys: one undertaken by long-dead immigrants who figuratively travel in the imagination of the audience, and the other undertaken by a contemporary audience that not only moves through archival materials but also into an understanding of Canadian history.

The railway metaphor shows how *C:APH* creates the illusion of an historical journey, and outlines how *C:APH* integrates itself as a medium of collective experience. In this way, the structure that guides and limits our visual experience of Canada is a fixed sequence of images, rather than a set of windows that offer particular views of a passing landscape. The movement that is produced is illusory, since we remain seated in a stationary domestic space. The archival imagery is also given the illusion of movement when it is combined with the video footage. I equate the outcome of the still/video combination with Certeau's observation of the railway passenger and landscape relationship. Certeau is referring to the illusory appearance of movement between two realms of immobility: one that is the interior space of the train, and the other the unmoving world "of things, [like] towering mountains, stretches of green field and forest, [and] arrested villages."<sup>9</sup> The landscape only appears to move because the observer of the scene is in motion. Certeau states: "The train...[is] a speculative experience of the world: being outside of these things that stay there, detached and absolute...They have only *trompe-l'oeil* movements...vision alone continually undoes



and remakes the relationships between these fixed elements" (italics in original).<sup>10</sup> I am thinking about the illusion of reality that is imparted to the archival material in *C:APH* by the act of panning the camera as well as juxtaposing the archival materials with reenacted scenes.

In the abovementioned example of immigrants traveling into the West by train, we are treated to people looking back at us from within the window frame of a railcar, and people in portraits who return our gaze. In these instances of archival presence, we are witness to an opening within which the spectral presence of someone resides. The historical document – a portrait photograph, for example – is much like what Certeau describes as “saints and blessed souls placed in the halos-holes...[of] railway cars.”<sup>11</sup> Certeau’s description can be understood by imagining what passengers in a train would look like to us when the train passed us by. Each window would frame the head and shoulders of a passenger, some of whom would be looking out at the landscape and/or us, and some of whom would be absorbed with their place in the train. What intrigues Certeau, and what also interests me, is the infusion of life into a system of technology. For Certeau, it is a question of the people in a train (not just the fact that they sit inside, but also that human society and the mechanical network of the railway are mutually entwined). In my argument Certeau’s idea of halo holes does not simply mean train windows, it also references the space that is created by a frame. Another kind of halo hole is the television screen where the images remain ethereal, only gaining a form of life in the imagination of an audience. *C:APH* is the experience of a videographic production that brings history to life in our imaginations; a process whereby the archival image (the window of the train) contains an historical life that comes to life in the imagination of the

person who witnesses (or holds) the archival photograph. The space of the image is therefore a conduit between what was recorded and what we re-imagine as we look at it. The space of the image, like the window of the train, is a conduit between two worlds – the space of the audience and the realm of Canadian history that *Canada: A People's History* carries the audience through.

*C:APH* is like a train of imagery that travels across the video screen at the same time that it is projected into the viewer's imagination. Here, it is as if there is an actual picture produced in the mind's eye of each viewer. The point is illustrated with the above sequence, which depicts the westward travel of European immigrants. The passengers in the photograph figuratively lean, or are projected, into the audience's viewing space as Canadian history enters the homes of Canadians. We can think of this as the image of the outside world that is projected onto the retina of the human eye. The effect is rather pronounced in the photograph of travelers who lean out of the window, but the idea is true to *C:APH* as a whole because the content of the series is projected (in the cinematographic sense) into the imagination of its audience. Marin refers to something like this when he talks about an "act of reading [that] projects upon an interior screen animated spectral doubles...[that] reconstitute...the story"<sup>12</sup> in the imagination of the reader.

My second example illustrates the desire in *C:APH* to associate Canadians with their national landscape, so that they do not just see Canadian history, they are also familiarized with the country in which it occurred. In Episode Ten, we are presented with the story of European immigrants who are traveling to their new homes in the Canadian west (Figure 8a). The group of images begins with a shot of the Parliament Buildings in

Ottawa, and then presents us with video footage of detail views of a steam locomotive. We then see an archival photograph of a crowded train platform, an archival photograph of railway passengers, and then finally an immigration poster. For the purpose of clarity, I will discuss this imagery in three stages: the view from the parliament buildings to the locomotive, the photograph of the train platform, and the photograph of the passengers juxtaposed to the immigration poster, followed by a view of the immigration poster on its own.

What we see first, from the Parliament Buildings to the train, is the signification of a central power that drives a greater system. The sequence begins with a view through an archway, which looks out at the tower on the West Block of the Parliament Buildings. We are then shown a sequence of views: details of a steam locomotive. First, we see a group of whistles on top of the engine, then a ground-level view of the driving wheels and valve box, followed by views of a swinging bell, coupler knuckles, and finally the lower half of a driving wheel. The forms of the parliamentary tower and the group of steam whistles both present a peaked shape in the middle of the frame, echoing each other and thereby suggesting a connection between the political driving force of Canada and the mechanical driving force of the engine that drives the westward immigration. Interestingly, the tower in question happens to be on the West Block of the Parliamentary Buildings, west being the same direction as that to be taken by the stream of European immigrants. This creates the impression that some animating force extends from the political heart of the nation in order to reach for and claim the western regions.

When we see the engine by way of its parts (the piston and valve box, the bell, the coupler, and then the wheel) we are impelled us to imagine the whole. That is, we conjure

an image of the entire locomotive in our imagination. We thus build it with the visual material that *C:APH* supplies to us. The idea of parts becoming a whole is a reflection of the process and intent of *C:APH*. The series intends to show us a national history through a multiplicity of personal perspectives, and so unify a present-day audience through a collective historical experience. Thus, when we see parts of a (whole) subject, we are building not only a whole history from archival and contemporary video components, but we are also forming what Benedict O. Anderson refers to as an “imagined community.”<sup>13</sup>

Anderson’s idea of an imagined community is based on his argument that while the vast majority of citizens of any given nation will never meet each other face to face, nationally-oriented publications like newspapers allow the population to imagine themselves as a collective. This happens because as we sit in our kitchen each morning reading the national newspaper, we can readily imagine people in our neighborhood, town, and province doing the same thing at the same time. Extend this conception over the country and we can see in our mind’s eye a people united by a shared activity. Anderson refers to this as an “extraordinary mass ceremony: the almost precisely simultaneous consumption (‘imagining’) of the newspaper.”<sup>14</sup> That it is a newspaper heightens the effect of common interest, since the contents of this kind of publication are directed towards issues and concerns that supposedly impact its readership. Thus, in the end, not only can we see ourselves as members of a national collective, we can also understand ourselves struggling in a common cause. In the viewing experience of *Canada: A People’s History*, we are presented with a comparable thing. We are apparently being exposed to the facts of Canadian history (the series’ journalistic ethos echoing the national newspaper’s supposedly detached take on current events), and we

can understand this experience of Canadian history as something that is being shared with people across Canada as they too watch *C:APH*. In this sense, it is the citizenry who form the engine that drives the nation.

In addition, something like the newspaper implies a community of readers moving through a shared time. This is suggested in, for example, the date that is printed at the top of the front page (and, oftentimes, the date of origin for the paper itself in the banner or logo). More important is that the act of reading is “incessantly repeated at daily or half-daily intervals throughout the calendar,” so that the reader can be “reassured that the imagined world [derived from reading the paper] is visibly rooted in everyday life.”<sup>15</sup> As we watch the regular broadcasts of *Canada: A People's History* unfold, we are treated to an historical world that is clearly grounded in the everyday experiences of people. We are not only drawn into a rhythm of watching, but we can also recognize the daily rhythms that we see in Canadian history. Thus, the past is more like the present than it would otherwise be, and we can feel more a part of some great community moving forward in the experience of a shared national time.

In Episode Ten of *C:APH*, immediately after the shot of the locomotive's driving wheel, we are shown an archival photograph of three small children standing close together. And in this, the second of the three parts of the sequence, I contend that we see the security of inclusion and idea of the individual becoming a group (thus, the growth of a people). While keeping the same magnification, the lens of *C:APH* then pulls back slightly, pans upwards and to the left, and so reveals that the children are standing in the foreground of a photograph of a large crowd on a train platform. Next to the platform we can see a steam engine at the head of a passenger train. What *C:APH* expresses at this

point is somewhat ambivalent. Are we about to leave? Have we already arrived? Or are we at a way station on a longer journey? Rather than trying to understand the implication of the image strictly in terms of its contents, we must look to what *C:APH* does when it moves through that archival record. By first framing, and thereby isolating, the small group of children, and then filling in the frame with the crowded platform, *C:APH* signals a move from the vulnerability of being lost in space to the comfort of a community. The movement of the lens over the photograph leads our eyes from the children to the crowd. And if we continue to look further in that direction we see the passenger train that is behind the crowd. The reason behind the multiplication of people, in other words, is the train.

And finally, in the third part of the sequence that is being analyzing here, when we see the window of the train and then the immigration poster, we are not only looking at people eye-to-eye, we are seeing their reflection in an idealized landscape (Figure 8b). We are initially shown an archival photograph of two passengers, a man and a young boy, looking back at us through the window of a passenger car. The magnification of the photograph is gradually increased so that the television screen tightly frames the window frame of the passenger car. When the photograph is then slowly faded into an image of an immigration poster, the man and boy in the photograph are aligned with a circular opening in the poster that reveals a painting of wheat fields. The passage into the oculus of the poster symbolizes a look into the national heartland, with the round opening emblemizing an iris and the prairies the inner space of the nation as Subject. However, we are not only looking into the land. With the returned gaze of the immigrants who faded into that opening, the people become a part of the landscape that looks back at us.

The whole sequence then, from parliament to prairie, reminds us that the historical expression that is made by *C:APH* is directed to us through the landscape.

The first section of this chapter, titled “The Screen,” described the act of watching *C:APH* to be like looking through a window onto history. Previously in the current section (“The Railway”), the argument was made that the filmic movement in *C:APH* mimics the experience of a passenger who looks out of the window of a moving train. Now, the depiction of Louis Riel’s trip to eastern Canadian in 1885 provides an illustration of how *C:APH* positions the viewers as the protagonist in history, so that we seem to see an actual historical Canadian landscape passing by on our television screen (Figure 9). This has the effect of turning our domestic space into a vehicle that is carrying us through the national past. The purpose here is twofold: first, to detail how *C:APH* frames a passage that links personal space with the national landscape, and second, to reinforce the idea that the journey that is formed by *C:APH* involves a process of growth that necessitates loss. The concept of loss in growth can be understood by thinking of a childhood that is lost upon reaching adulthood. With this procedure there is a suggestion that the loss inherent in the diasporic condition is a precondition of the growth that is depicted upon entrance to a Canada that is envisioned in *C:APH* as being welcoming. I say this because in the vast majority of narratives that make up *C:APH*, the movement is one from loss to belonging and promise. And it is a narrative movement which insinuates that we, as witnesses to Canadian history, become something greater ourselves – we grow individually and as a people – as a result of that experience. The process that drives this growth in us, is the acquisition of a nationally-inflected memory.

Louis Riel went to Montréal and the College of the Sulpician Fathers to study for the priesthood. The sudden death of Louis's father in January 1864 was so unsettling that by 1866 Louis was no longer able to continue his studies. In order to support his mother who was now in debt, he worked as a law clerk in Montréal. Riel then moved to Chicago, and afterward to St. Paul, Minnesota. He eventually returned home to St. Boniface in 1868.<sup>16</sup>

Our first point of view in Riel's journey is one that looks out onto a passing landscape of autumn foliage. The camera then pulls back to reveal a passenger train interior. In front of a window there is a small table on which we see a letter from Riel's mother together with her photograph. The perspective in this opening series of images would be awkward for an actual passenger in the train since it looks straight out of the window. Ordinarily, a person would be seated either facing forward or backward relative to the direction of travel. In addition, the manner in which the photograph and letter are placed upon the table would seem to indicate a reader seated right at the camera position. The placement suggests that the viewers of *C:APH* are the ones who read the letter and look upon the photograph as theirs. This has the effect of establishing a more intimate involvement on the part of the audience with the history that is being shown. The camera then moves closer to the table and reveals the photograph to be a portrait of an older woman. A photo-portrait of a young Riel then gradually emerges until it fills the screen and puts his face to the memory that we have seen up to that point.<sup>17</sup>

The gradual manifestation of Riel's childhood portrait, which also slowly obscures the image of his mother, has two consequences. First, it suggests a boy coming into his own as he becomes separated from his mother and his home. And second, since



his portrait eventually fills the screen altogether, it replaces the three-dimensional space of the train interior with a two-dimensional space. Now, instead of seeing a teleplay unfold before us, we seem to be looking at a framed portrait, with the frame being provided by the television console. Riel's mother would have been left with a mental image very much like this portrait of Riel until he returned to her in 1868 (when he would be four years older). In this way, while the presentation of Riel's story positions us as Riel in the train, we can also imagine ourselves in the position of a Mother who yearned for her son. (As if rather than looking at a television-framed portrait in our living room, we are the mother(s) of Riel looking at his framed photographic portrait, which sits in a room in their home). Thus, not only can we imagine ourselves aching for what we have left behind (here, it would be as Riel who longs for his mother), but we can also see how our departure causes the object of our affections to desire us. This reciprocal desiring knits us very tightly into the experience of history that we see in *C:APH*.

The photograph of Riel as a child fades into a group portrait of students who are gathered next to a large stone building. From this image, we are taken through two photographs; the first shows a Métis family next to a teepee, and the second shows a Native person seated next to a teepee. During these images, we are told of Riel's time at the seminary as a child who, unlike the other students, had seen Native culture on a firsthand basis. We are then told of the sudden death of Riel's father. Here, we are shown a reenacted setting that is comprised of a candle, quill, letter, and a framed portrait of Riel's father. After this, we see a portrait of Riel's two sisters, because he is writing the letter to them. Here, the voiceover states that, regarding the impact of his father's death, "Louis Riel soon recovers, and makes a decision that will change the destiny of a people

and a country.” The whole sequence, from the train ride to his letter that he writes to his sisters, is the prelude to the ninth episode.<sup>18</sup>

The conflation of our point of view with Riel’s memory of his parting image of his mother, does not simply leave us with a memory, it imbues us with a sense of nostalgic longing. Two elements in particular are involved in this process: the photograph of the mother whom he has left behind, and the framed autumn landscape that rushes past the train window. *C:APH* manages to integrate the onward rushing movement of a child becoming a man, the loss of a mother who is seen in the photograph and in the letter, and the there-ness of a landscape that in our fast movement through it continually eludes our grasp. The landscape becomes an object of longing much like the photographs and the letter. *C:APH* makes them all souvenirs that evoke nostalgia. Here, it is expressed as a yearning for youth (in Riel’s portrait), a point of origin (the mother figure), and a sense of belonging (the passing landscape). As Susan Stewart explains, “Temporally, the souvenir moves history into private time.”<sup>19</sup> And, as a consequence, “The souvenir reduces the public, the monumental, and the three-dimensional into the...two-dimensional representation, that which can be appropriated within the privatized view of the individuated subject.”<sup>20</sup> Thus, the photo-portrait of the mother, the letter that links mother to son, and the passing landscape (signaling the life’s journey that is being taken) become souvenirs – objects upon which an attachment to the past is delicately draped, and through which a desire to recoup the past can be experienced by us as an audience.

*Canada: A People’s History* reinforces the immediacy of our encounter with history by closely aligning the presentation of the past with our living rooms. This occurs in Riel’s story when the camera pulls back from the window, which looks out onto the

autumn scenery, to reveal the train interior. At first, we see only the orange, yellow, and red leaves of the passing trees and it seems as though the television screen that we are looking at is a window onto a passing landscape. When the camera pulls back to reveal the passenger train interior, we realize that we were actually looking through a window, except that it is a window in the train Riel is supposedly traveling in. The historical theatre of *C:APH* and the living rooms in which it is experienced, are aligned by this camera movement. The linkage is strengthened because at first, our own room and furniture were in front of the window, and then, when the camera dollies back, we can see the letter and the photograph of Riel's mother that are lying in front of the same window. These two archival objects now seem to project out into space as if they are sitting on a coffee table that is positioned in front of the audience's television. In effect, the domestic space of the audience acquires the illusion of being a kind of passenger car that is carrying its occupants through a Canadian historical landscape.

We are not so much moving through physical space, as we are moving in our imaginations through representational space. The window pane, which separates us from the passing scenery, stands as a metaphor for a picture because both present us with a visual field that we may experience but not touch. In the example here (and in the other examples as well), we are imaginatively inside the historical scene. No matter how real it may actually look, or for that matter how authentic its components, we are not there – either in the past or in the recreation. Unlike a theme park where we might touch objects and even sit upon period furniture, with *C:APH* we can only imagine ourselves in the place of history.

In this section I have shown, using the two cases that involve European immigrants traveling to western Canada, that *C:APH* combines archival material with video footage so that the still images acquire a sense of motion, and the immigrants appear to be traveling once more along the rail line and through a prairie landscape. I have also demonstrated, with the example of Riel's train trip to Montreal in 1885, that we are given the impression of being on the move through an historical landscape. In this latter instance, the theatrical presentation of history is conjoined to our living room through the alignment of train window and television screen.

### Section 3 – The journey

In the preceding section the idea of movement, or travel, underpinned the way in which *Canada: A People's History* infused archival materials with a renewed sense of life. In this section, *C:APH* is considered to be a record of another kind of journey. Instead of a migration, such as that undertaken by European immigrants at the turn of the twentieth century, "The Journey" refers to the process of a life being lived. A central premise of *C:APH* is that Canada came into being as the result of explorers, adventurers, people seeking a better life, as well as those people who were forcibly removed from their homelands. What the stories of these people's lives entail is a journey to a better life in a new home. To this theme of travelers as an important root of Canada, we can add the idea of a sense of home being generated through what John Berger calls "the story of a life being lived."<sup>21</sup> In this way, Nigel Rapport and Andrew Dawson argue home becomes the place "where one's identity is best grounded."<sup>22</sup> All of this establishes the use of maps in *C:APH* as a means of visualizing the historical process by which people came to locate Canada as the place of their self-definition.<sup>23</sup>

The analysis is supported with three examples. The first two illustrations are from Episode One. Each shows different events in Jacques Cartier's exploration of the St. Lawrence River valley during the early part of the sixteenth century (Figure 10 and Figure 11). The final illustrative material in this section of Chapter Four comes from Episode Ten and depicts a period in the early 1880s during the construction of the transcontinental railway (Figure 12 through Figure 16).

The examples that involve the narrative of Cartier support the illustration here of how the imagery in *C:APH* is linked together to create a form of journey that can be followed. The material from Episode Two, in which we see Champlain, allows me to clarify how we can read *C:APH* like a map and so journey through history in our imagination. The last illustration, which depicts the CPR's construction, allows me to bring all of the abovementioned points together and show how they operate in one selection from *C:APH*. Here, we can see the gradual process by which the struggle of people to establish themselves in a new home, lead to the emergence of community and country.

The first objective of this section is to show how a connection between the objects that we see in *C:APH* is established in our memory. The material in question begins with a computer-generated diagram of the northeastern part of Canada (Figure 10). A thin white line first appears in the upper-right corner of the diagram, and then slowly winds its way between Newfoundland and the coast of Labrador, before working its way down into the Gulf of the St. Lawrence. The purpose of the line is to depict Jacques Cartier's first voyage to the New World. As the line nears the mouth of the St. Lawrence River, the image of the diagram with the line fades into a video image of a fog-shrouded body of

water. The visage of an actor portraying Cartier then gradually emerges on the screen. As Cartier describes his efforts to navigate the unknown, his face fades into a cropped view of an antique map of the St. Lawrence River region. The camera then pans along the map starting from some handwritten inscriptions and stopping at a colored drawing that shows two opposing groups of figures. The two central, facing figures in each group have their hands extended in greeting. What the scene presents is Cartier's first encounter with the local inhabitants. From out of this image, a video reenactment of that event then plays out on the screen. Rather than seeing Cartier, we are presented with two of his men rowing to shore and exchanging metal tools for the furs of two Natives. After the trading takes place, the scene changes to a twilight view of a shoreline. After this, another coastal view appears. During this process we momentarily see the fading image of the first shoreline view, together with the emerging form of the second one.

Later in the story of Cartier's narrative, in a chapter entitled "Hochelaga," we are presented with the tale of how Cartier inveigled a local chief, Donnacona, into letting him take the chief's two sons to France and the court of François I, in 1534 (Figure 11). We do not see the two Natives travel to Europe, but we do see them when they are in France and wondering at the fabric and style of the Western clothing that they have been made to wear. The construction of their eventual return home begins with another close-up of the same antique map that was used in the first meeting between Cartier's men and the local Natives. The camera pans the map starting at the Gulf of St. Lawrence, then moves down along the river, past the same two groups of figures posed in mutual greeting, before coming to rest on the word "Canada" that is written on the map in large typeface. The scene then fades into a video image of a river shoreline at twilight. The shot is identical to

the first one that was used in Cartier's narrative. *C:APH* then repeats the technique of cross-fading from one view to the next. In this case, the second shot is altogether different from first. At the end, we see the sons of Donnacona sitting in council with their father and recounting their experiences at the French court.

The two instances in which one coastal scene is faded out as another comes into view represents the first point of interest. It is reasonable to surmise that the intent of *C:APH* at these junctures is to suggest the meeting of two worlds, which is in fact what is taking place in Cartier's story. When *C:APH* brings the first encounter to a close, and when it illustrates the return trip of Donnacona's sons, we see that a featureless space between two landmasses is bridged. *C:APH* suggests a connection in both cases by fading away one coastline as the next comes into view.

The sequence that carries us from one coastal view to the next exemplifies how, throughout *C:APH*, one likeness departs while nevertheless remaining an image in our memory. When we remember that absent form, it influences our reception of subsequent images, which can themselves redefine what we have just seen. We can think of this as the process of signification. Here, the production of meaning occurs in the journey from sign to sign, with each subsequent sign being inflected by, as well as modifying, the previous sign. When we follow along with the presentation of *C:APH*, we are creating a web of traces in our memory (signifying things as we go along) that ties together the objects and scenes that we see (for example, photographs, paintings, as well as the images of actors directly addressing the camera).

The underlying premise of *C:APH* – the expression of Canadian history and its apprehension in the present – is also at play in this example, when we think of the old and

new worlds as the past and the present. When we see Cartier entering a world that is unfamiliar to him, we are also encountering a past that may well be unknown to us. The procedure incorporates two movements. The first passes us through a space by showing us events from the past, and the second one carries us through a geographic landscape (ergo, the train metaphor that was used in the previous section of this chapter of my thesis).

The meeting between Cartier and the Natives was meeting of two worldviews – European and Native. As historians are at pains to point out,<sup>24</sup> the encounter reshaped how each people subsequently saw and understood the world. *C:APH* shows us the encounter and later depicts its ramifications, but at the same time our encounter with *C:APH* represents a before and after in our understanding of Canadian history, and by extension of Canada. The point is that we are on an imaginative journey from object to object as we watch *C:APH*. The trip that we take shapes how we will eventually come to see the world (specifically Canada), because it is providing us with the framework that orients our new perspective.

The sequential arrangement of archival materials in *C:APH* provides the metaphorical map line from which viewers can then re-imagine an historical world. Two aspects of a map are relevant to this analysis. The first is that the map represents a selection of relations that model the world, resulting in a point of reference that intercedes between a viewer and their lived space. The second consideration is that maps provide a common frame of orientation that a multitude of people can nevertheless put to their own, personal applications. By way of explanation, I turn to Louis Marin, who writes that “the discursive figure of the...[map] that is itself the selection of relations of



elements in the world, [is] the construction of the world in the form of an analogic model that covers over reality with the network of its lines and surfaces.”<sup>25</sup> The construction of *C:APH* models an historical reality which then intervenes between the national past and us. Yet despite its construction of a particular route, we can still come away with our own specific experiences.

The visualization in *C:APH* of the initial encounter between some of Cartier’s men and local Natives, provides a case in point for what happens when viewers read the picture map of the series by interpretatively linking together (and thereby inserting themselves into) its imagery. As Marin wrote, “I look at the map - when I follow with my finger the route of a road...a figure is extracted ...of a projected journey, even if it is an imaginary one...[and so] locus has become space...[that] ‘awakens’ to narrative and the *loci* are opened up to the various practices that change and transform them.”<sup>26</sup> Marin speaks of a journey, which implies a beginning and an end, and that idea applies to the entirety of *C:APH* (as a seventeen-part series). We can also understand “journey” as a metaphor for a life of experiences. If we look back at our life, say, as we look at our collection of personal photographs, each one of these images can be understood as a locus. When we remember the moments that are captured in the images, they return to life.

Now we can think of how *C:APH* converts or “awakens” an archival image into an apparently living simulacrum, which our subsequent interpretation can “change and transform” during our journey. When we encounter the events in *C:APH* they awaken in our imagination, and our memory of them can modify how we understand the Canadian

past. As Halbwachs explains, when he speaks of the meeting between individual and collection memory,

The individual memory, in order to corroborate and make precise and even to cover the gaps in its remembrances, relies upon, relocates itself within, [and] momentarily merges with, the collective memory. Nonetheless, it still goes its own way, gradually assimilating any acquired deposits. The collective memory, for its part, encompasses the individual memories while remaining distinct from them.<sup>27</sup>

The point here is that the accumulation of memories (the Halbwachian assimilation of acquired deposits) involves movement. That is, memory is not a static thing, but something that involves an active engagement with the world we live in. The portrayal in *C:APH* of Cartier's meeting with the Natives illuminates the point. The sequence represents the expression of a time and place that then comes to life. During our encounter with that dramatic reenactment, as well as *C:APH* as a whole, an exchange takes place between what *C:APH* presents and what we come away with. The historical journey that is mapped out by the series then becomes part of the journey that is our own life's experience.

My view of "map" sees it as a network of traces that can provide a passage from the present into the past, since we are given a story to read that is written with the recollections of an historical other. *C:APH* gives these recollections visual form, so that we move between (memory) visualizations. A web of traces structures the visual linking of these representational spaces that we read as we follow along with the history.

The idea here is less the instillation of a sense of history in viewers, than it is their provision with a sense that the "ordinary" lives that they are leading are nevertheless journeys that can contribute to the ongoing formation of Canada. The use of maps

introduces images of a journey undertaken, and, when we are the travelers, journeys that later come to define who we are. As a consequence, we are defining who we are by where we have been. Unlike a photograph or painting, the map is a record of movement through space, which is something that can contribute to an understanding of one's relationship to place. Otherwise stated, the audience of *C:APH* can become aware that as they move through the events in their lives, they are inscribing their own sense of belonging (in the sense that Berger, and Rapport and Dawson refer to when they talk about a sense of home, belonging, a life lived, and mobility).

The third of the three examples in this section is taken from the chapter entitled "That Little Wooden Box," which is in Episode Ten and shows events in the settlement of the Canadian West near the turn of the nineteenth century. The objective here is to underline how the series constructs a map that subtly expresses a people's attachment to the national landscape. The purpose of the discussion that follows is to show that the lived experiences of people – the journey of their lives – is what leaves a record in the archives as well as leaving a mark upon the land. We understand our attachment to place through the referent of the map, which is produced by the act of living.

The first three parts that comprise "The Little Wooden Box" introduces us directly to the theme of the chapter, which is a passage into the West (Figure 12). The first thing that we see is a video shot of prairie grasses, which is then faded into a tightly cropped view of an archival photograph. The tight cropping of the photograph presents just the grassy foreground of the scene. The next views alternate between a close-up of a wagon and a wider shot that shows us the environment through which the wagon is moving. During this switching back and forth between images, we can also see that the

person riding in the wagon is a woman, and that she appears to be distracted by insects. Eventually the wagon passes in front of the camera and, as it moves out of the frame, we can see a cairn that is topped with a wooden crucifix. The screen then goes black. The story that we have seen is about a woman who was so tormented by stinging insects that she shot herself to death. While certainly a depiction of the hardships that were faced by settlers, as an opening to the chapter the tale of the woman's suicide lets *C:APH* plant the cairn and crucifix as landmarks in our minds that can direct our reception of the subsequent representations. We begin the story of settlement with a loss that, however melancholic, in *C:APH* is a sign of attachment to the land of Canada because it signals an ancestral determination to establish a life in Canada.

The second of the three segments of "The Little Wooden Box" begins with a photo-portrait of Prime Minister John A. Macdonald (Figure 13). This is then faded into a video panorama of the Prairies, which is faded into an archival map of the same region. After this, we see a reenactment of laying track. Instead of a crucifix, we now see the land being marked by a structure that facilitates a collective journey through the land (and that also reprises the importance, noted above, of railway imagery in *C:APH*). The video footage of men laying steel rails is dissolved into a photograph of a track gang, and that image is then faded into another photograph, which shows a moving train. The picture of the train is panned from left to right before it is blended into a reenacted scene of a passenger car interior. Inside the car, just below its windows, we can see a table covered with maps and map-making tools.

The row of windows on the passenger car allows travelers to have distinctive perspectives on a shared landscape, and the map with map-making tools suggest the

process of scripting these different views into a coherent sequence. We can think of this scene as a metaphor for the storyboarding process that stood as the initial structure of *C:APH*. With the maps that are lying on the table below the windows, we have a link between *C:APH* and its audience. The table with the maps is situated between the space of the audience and the passing landscape that can be seen through the windows in the background of the train interior. What the whole progression is doing, by using archival elements and combining them with video reenactments, is creating a map or cartographic reading of a space that was previously unreadable.

Map-making as a connection between *C:APH* and us (and thus between Canadian history and Canadians) is reinforced as the sequence continues (Figure 14). When the passenger car interior fades from view we are presented with a close-up of one of the maps on the table. The camera then pans to the right from the title of the map and reveals two compasses (one is for navigation, while the other is for drawing). The inclusion of the two compasses is intriguing, since the series seeks to reacquaint people with a national historical landscape. The magnetic compass allows the user to locate him/herself in an unfamiliar space, and we can think of this as a sign of *C:APH* – something that lets us locate ourselves in relation to Canadian history. The other form of compass that we see here is one that allows a user to inscribe a particular (and personal) point of reference within that space – and we can think of this as the imaginative experience with which we are left after having watched *C:APH*.

While the full sequence of three parts has moved us from a wooden crucifix upon a cairn, through the laying of track, to map-making, we are always seeing a process in which the lived experiences of historical Canadians involved writing themselves into the

landscape. We are not simply seeing Canadian history; we are repeatedly exposed to maps as records of traces that refer to a living presence in the land. The act of locating ourselves in the land is meant to say not only that we now know where we are, but also that the process of locating has been a defining act. All of which is to say that the journey that is our life leaves a mark by which we can later express ourselves.

The expression of an attachment to place continues when the lens carries on panning from the two compasses and over to the right, so that we are able to gaze at the map itself. This lets us see topographic features such as the region's river systems. The image of a skein of river-ways on the map then fades into a video shot of a prairie horizon. After a moment, an archival photograph of a new settlement comes into view and gradually replaces the image of the prairies. A studio portrait of a settler then replaces the photograph of the town, after which we see a photograph of a train depot. The depot proves to be a detail of a larger scene that shows a town, and as this wider townscape fades from view we are given a video shot of a prairie horizon that is darkened by approaching rain showers. When *C:APH* moves us from the map through the prairie image and into the archival photograph of the town, it is almost as if we are seeing rivers in the form of metaphoric veins of a human continuity, flowing into the land and nourishing the growth of a nation.

The third segment of the example from the chapter called "That Little Wooden Box" continues the same theme of a people who are in the act of inscribing themselves into Canada (Figure 15). We see this in a story that shows people heading west by wagon train. First, a wide view of an archival photograph showing a long wagon train is seen, before the lens of *C:APH* zooms in on five wagons. The next photograph shows a

different wagon train, but the upper portion of the image is shown before we see the wagons in the lower part of the photograph. The result is that we see an empty landscape that has the tracks of the wagons visible near the bottom of the frame, and then the objects that made those marks upon the landscape.

The human subject of the wagon-train journey is a woman who is headed to her new home and husband. When we arrive at her destination (the chapter's titular "little wooden box" is a reference to the small size and unadorned character of the structure), we see it first in an archival photograph and then supposedly again, this time in a video shot of a prairie landscape in winter (Figure 16). In the distance of this scene, we can barely distinguish a structure that appears vaguely similar to the one that we saw in the photograph. Although not quite so morbid, the distant mark in the landscape that is made by the dwelling is an echo of the gravesite that opened the chapter. The blank space of the winter landscape nearly overwhelms any sense of domestic warmth, and while the speck urges our eyes to seek it out, it suggests that it is on the sacrifice of those who have gone before us that we build our lives in an unforgiving landscape.

Just as the historical train passengers and wagon-train riders mapped out an unfamiliar geographic space, so the audience of *Canada: A People's History* maps out a visual understanding of an unfamiliar historical space. In other words, we are watching the building of a system of communication that linked the nascent nation together and ensured its continued existence. We are watching – metaphorically – the series' construction of a system that communicates a panoramic understanding of Canadian history that will, in the hopes of the series' producers, rebuild a collective belonging in the experience of Canada. Not only are the images presenting us with scenes with show

marks upon the land that are signs for an emotional attachment to place; the visual material of *C:APH* also causes us to imaginatively inscribe ourselves into the land of Canada.

#### **Section 4 – The utopia**

The objective of this section is to how *Canada: A People's History* sees Canada as the place of refuge and of hope for the many dispossessed people who dreamed of a better life. In this sense, the journey that we have seen historical figures undertake has utopia as its destination. The history of utopia presents us with a considerable list of the forms that it can take or be given.<sup>28</sup> According to Ruth Levitas, the “idea of utopia implicit in most lay usage of the term is of a perfect society which is impossible and unattainable.”<sup>29</sup> However, it is perhaps less the fact that it can be achieved that is crucial, and more the act of striving for a utopian ideal that matters. As Levitas puts it, “Utopias...are blueprints of the good (or even perfect) society, imagined elsewhere and intended as prescriptions for the near future.”<sup>30</sup> Zygmunt Bauman identifies four functions of utopia: to show that current conditions are not the only possibility for society, to provide an aiming point for a future condition, to present the future as a set of projects that vie with each other, and to shape historical incidents.<sup>31</sup> And, if what the producers of *C:APH* fear is true, that there is a disconnection of contemporary Canadians from Canadian history, an impending loss of control over Canadian content, and a tsunami of foreign culture that threatens to swamp a sense of Canadian-ness, then current conditions are not favorable and should be changed by a more utopian outlook. In a case like this, where society is viewed as being in decline, then since the future is no longer a bright prospect, Levitas argues, “utopia must be placed in the past.”<sup>32</sup> She also points out



two locations for utopia: in space, where it is generally located elsewhere and is imaginary, and in time, where it is located within the collective and can be made real through the efforts of the group.<sup>33</sup> With a national future deemed to be under a degree of threat, *Canada: A People's History* turns to the past in order to generate a hopeful vision to look forward to.

The visual sign in *C:APH* of the future is the distant horizon, which is used to imply a place of promise and becoming. We can see this in Episode Ten's narrative of the immigration by Europeans into the West during the early twentieth century (Figure 17). Here, the visuals move from the promise of an immigration poster to a distant vista of a mountain range. The latter is illusory, however, since it eventually proves to be a large bank of far-away, sun-reddened clouds. The play between hard substance and ethereality, or the mountains and clouds, is a demonstration of how what we hold in our imagination is a form of desire that drives us forward. The eye wants to make something of an initially indecipherable object, almost as if we are symbolizing bits of the Real. Unlike the Symbolic, which we can think of in terms of naming or signs that refer to something and thereby create a thing and its referent,<sup>34</sup> the Real is undifferentiated and outside language altogether. We can understand it as all that cannot be named or consciously conceived of. In Lacan's words, the Real involves "a relation to something that always lies on the edge of our conceptual elaborations which we are always thinking about, which we sometimes speak of, and which, strictly speaking, we can't grasp, and which is nonetheless there."<sup>35</sup> The process that takes place here, as we move from mountains to clouds, is how *C:APH* leads us on from one image to the next as we look for a fixed sense of meaning and identity.

The utopian distance that we can detect in *C:APH*, can be clarified with an example from Episode Seven, which comes at the end of a narrative of the unification of Upper and Lower Canada in 1841. The sequence shows an archival photograph of the Rocky Mountains and then another archival photograph, this time of a steam engine at rest atop a wooden bridge that has an open, square, central trestle<sup>36</sup> (Figure 18). The story that has led us to this point has taken place in the two eastern Canadas, but the ending takes us across the continent and British Columbia, which has yet to become part of Canada. The coast-to-coast movement creates a narrative frame that can imply the eventual national form, and the archival subject of a steam engine insinuates the eventual driving force of a railway that binds that nation into being. We can surmise that the intent of this sequence is to show that by bridging the political and social differences in Upper and Lower Canada something greater was created.

When we look into the visualization in *C:APH* of “something greater,” we see that it contains within itself another frame, and the creation of another space, that also lead to a brighter, utopian, national future. The gap that was bridged can be understood as a reference to the partnership of Robert Baldwin and Louis Hippolyte Lafontaine that encouraged the political cooperation between Upper and Lower Canada at the start of the 1840s.<sup>37</sup> By using a photograph that shows a bridge, *C:APH* refers to Baldwin and Lafontaine’s act of cooperation that spanned a cultural gulf between the Canadas. Interestingly, the railway bridge that we see in the photograph creates a new area of representation. What this refers to is the distant, indefinite space that is framed by the trestle’s square opening. As we look at our television screen and into its representational space, we are given another image of a distant place to search out with our (desiring)

eyes. The closing image of a train atop a bridge is itself a scene that opens out onto another space, which is seen in the distance that is framed by the trestle of the bridge. There, in the distance, lies the utopian vision that *C:APH* has of Canada, for Canadians. Depictions like these, which blend representational realms through a point of infinity, function as the series' depiction of passage and transformation.

The sign for that transitional space in *C:APH* is a sunlit horizon. Each of these images represents what can be called a becoming place, which is also a reference to Canada as a country where people can make something of themselves. We can consider the sun at the horizon as a sign of becoming because it marks a transition between one point or condition and another. It is as though, as Roland Schaer remarks, "[t]he island of Utopia...this paradoxically terrestrial and nowhere place is found."<sup>38</sup> For instance, when we see images of a sunrise or a sunset, they can both refer to a change (night to day, or vice versa). In the case of the horizon, we are dealing with an imagined location since we can never actually arrive at the horizon itself. The location of the horizon always remains changeable at best, something with indefinite boundaries like the transition from night to day. In that regard, J.C. Davis calls utopia "a shimmering mirage on the edge of our consciousness."<sup>39</sup> The sun itself is not a symbol of transition, but it is a remote and sunlit horizon that indicates a position of transition. Sunrises and sunsets occur frequently throughout *C:APH*. For example, in the prologue to Episode Nine we see an archival photograph of a curving railway track, which is slowly faded into a video shot of a cloud formation that is dramatically lit by the sun that is low on the horizon (Figure 19). Here, *C:APH* is showing the brighter space of hope towards which immigrants traveled, and towards which we are also being carried by *C:APH*. We see the same significations in

Episode Seven and the story of nineteenth-century European immigrants coming to Canada (Figure 20). The ship carrying the soon-to-be Canadians first appears floating both on a dark red sea and in a frame that has no perspectival reference, and which eventually fades into a brighter image of a coastline in morning light. In the movement from darkness to light, and a featureless space to a coastline, the immigrants are seen in the process of becoming (Canadians).

The handling of light in *C:APH* is an important part of the series' expression of Canada as a place of attachment and growth. My intent is to argue that shafts of light are employed in the series to symbolically mark the point at which historical depiction occurs. Since we are dealing with a visual record of the past, light plays a crucial part in the transformation of the present into visual records that eventually become archival points of contact for those once present lives and places. Light is also that which allows us to see the archival document and thereby "bring something to light" in the revelatory sense. At these instances in *C:APH* when we are given a vanishing point at which only an ephemeral illumination can be seen, *C:APH* is presenting its favorite fantasy – reaching into the distance and bringing the past back to life. In order to illustrate this claim, I now use an example from Episode Six, which presents David Thompson's experiences as a teenager in western Canada during the mid 1780s (Figure 21).

The story of Thompson's westward trip begins with a set of panoramas. At first we see nothing but sky and land, and then we see a line of clouds along the horizon. The clouds gradually become a distant mountain range as *C:APH* changes the video shots. The mountains grow quite large in the frame before their image is faded into a painting of a Native encampment in the foothills. In the passage from flatlands to mountain range

and then Native camp, we see a movement across a visual bridge that, to use the words of Louis Marin, is the "neutral place, the interval structure, [which] is in the process of becoming a *lisière*. It is becoming a fringe structure that consists on the one side in a well-determined edge and on the other side in an edge fraying."<sup>40</sup> We cross the frame of an image of which we have a clear impression, only to have it slowly unravel into another scene. Thus, the painted representation of the Native encampment, materializes into being as if found again in some state of suspended animation.

The face of utopia is constructed with two components. One part is the unmarked landscapes themselves, which are suggestive of limitless places of origin (and, in a large majority of cases, the landscape that appears on screen is described as the site of a future province, city, or agrarian settlement). The second aspect is the sun that sits at the horizon and symbolizes a gigantic eye that overlooks these Eden-like places. We seem to be returning the gaze of natural panoramas that suggest the bliss of an original completeness. Drawing upon Lacanian terms, the sight of the glowing sun and the unbounded landscape embodies the bliss of the pre-linguistic infant's totality, which is overlooked by the all-embracing form of the Mother.<sup>41</sup>

As the symbolic gaze of the Mother, the sunlight horizon marks the sight of a utopia that Marin indicates is "nowhere, or the place of happiness."<sup>42</sup> Thought of in Lacanian terms, this means a reunification with the totality of being that is the pre-Subjective state of the Real. Lacan describes the Real as "a relation to something which always lies on the edge of our conceptual elaborations, which we are always thinking about...[but] can't grasp, and which is nonetheless there."<sup>43</sup> As a utopian image, it is described by Marin as "[t]he limitless horizon...where it seems possible to have a

glimpse of the other side of the sky, a “beyond-space”...in terms of which a bridge seems to be established between the visible and the invisible.”<sup>44</sup> I integrate the positions of Marin and Lacan to argue that the horizon provides the sight of the Other and the site of our Lacanian desire for the Other. As Lacan explains, “desire is produced in the beyond of the demand”<sup>45</sup> and “*a man’s desire is the desire of the Other*” (italics in original).<sup>46</sup> In *C:APH*, sunsets represent the eye of a space, the desire and the unworldly 'beyond' place of the land, that symbolically envelops the seer.

The repeated conjugation in *C:APH* of the human and geographic faces of Canada does two things. First, the multitude of portrait images sustains the rhythm of its presentation of a people’s national history (we are always reminded of the series’ central theme), and second, it creates a face that gazes back at us. I am not thinking about the returned gaze in terms of one particular instance, where we see a particular portrait of a settler that is superimposed on a landscape. Rather, it is a case of considering the cumulative effect of all the faces and landscapes that have been seen as producing a composite form – as if they were all layered one on top of the other as a kind of palimpsest image. Thus, over the course of *C:APH*, we have looked into an historical geo-human portrait of Canada that has gazed back into our eyes, making the Lacanian gaze an important element of the bridge between the history in *C:APH* and the series’ contemporary audience.

Operating in tandem with sunsets and boundless landscapes, therefore, the human face functions as a point of emotional transfer between viewers and the series’ national vision. My examination of the landscape and portrait amalgamations continues to be inspired by a Lacanian perspective in order to claim that if the unmarked landscape can

be understood as the Real, then the use of human and momentarily transparent portraits converts a portion of this space into a recognizable and readable form. The human face can then be understood as a signifier much like a word, which gives us the means to understand or express a concept. In *C:APH*, the face is a signifier under which we find the signified – the Canadian landscape of origin.

We can see a distant horizon and sun, in combination with archival portraits, as a symbolic expression of utopia when John A. Macdonald's westward trip on the newly completed CPR in the summer of 1886 is depicted in Episode Ten (Figure 22). The trip certainly allowed Macdonald to more directly experience the landscape and people of the country he was striving to build and defend as prime minister. As historian Donald Creighton observes, "[t]he journey would give ...[Macdonald] a badly needed holiday, a knowledge of the great new country he was creating, a chance to show himself to its new inhabitants and to quiet the rising storm of their protests in Manitoba."<sup>47</sup> The reason for the unrest, which was not limited to Manitoba, was the monopoly clause in the Canadian Pacific Railway Charter which prevented for twenty years the construction of any railway to the south of its own line. On the one hand, this blocked American railway companies from venturing north, but it also prevented Canadian entrepreneurs from laying alternative branch lines to ship livestock and grain from the southern prairies. The result was a monopoly held by the CPR on freight rates.<sup>48</sup> Creighton also points out that Macdonald had already been "planning a programme of pre-election activities which would occupy many weeks and take him very far afield."<sup>49</sup> Macdonald began the train trip to the west from Ottawa on July 10, 1886 with his wife Agnes, his secretary Joseph Pope, RCMP officer Fred White, and two servants.<sup>50</sup> They reached Port Moody, British

Columbia on July 24 and took a steamer to Victoria, B.C.<sup>51</sup> The return trip included several stops for speeches, and show of support for a provincial Conservative government in Manitoba; Macdonald and his fellow travelers returned to Ottawa on August 30, 1886.<sup>52</sup> The trip to the west coast of Canada, then, nicely dovetailed Macdonald's personal experience with political benefit.

Macdonald's arrival in the Rocky Mountains is shown in *C:APH* by means of a photograph of him and his wife, along with their five traveling companions. They are all standing next to a train that is at rest upon a bridge over the Stave River, near Mission, British Columbia, on July 24, 1886.<sup>53</sup> The photograph then fades into a video panorama across flat land and a pastel sky with a sun that is near the horizon. A series of five photographs that show settlers in their new lands and homes then emerges out of that landscape vista.

The first of these five photographs shows seven well-dressed individuals (four young girls, one young boy, and two men) standing in a wheat field.<sup>54</sup> As the photograph appears on screen the sunset from the videoed landscape panorama is aligned in the photograph's center. The photo is then panned from bottom up, so that we are given the suggestion that a new crop (of people) is beginning to emerge from an idyllic space. The next photograph presents us with six settlers outside of a sod house, after which we see a closely cropped group portrait of well-dressed-people sitting on the steps of a clapboard building. The next photograph shows a sod house behind a woman holding an infant, a small child supporting itself by holding onto a chair, and a man holding a donkey's lead. The last photograph depicts a sod house behind a team of three horses, which are held by a man who is standing next to a kneeling woman. The last image fades back into a



twilight sky, much like that which opened the sequence, and against which we see a steam train crossing the frame from right to left.<sup>55</sup>

The intent of the sequence is to present the realization of Macdonald's dream project of a railway line being laid across Canada. On the surface, we can say that the purpose of the railway was to overcome the great distance of Canada and tie the country together. However, the actual reasons were more specific, various, and complex. During the 1860s, as far as Macdonald was concerned, American whiskey traders and settlers represented a threat to any aspirations Canada may have had for the west. American railroad interests in the form of the Northern Pacific had designs on the North West, and conceived of building a line across the continent that would be close enough to Canadian territory that it would pre-empt the need for a Canadian railway line.<sup>56</sup> Therefore, the railway was not simply the result of some sudden desire on the part of people to become united. Rather, it was at least in part, a defensive reaction to a perceived threat of encroachment. As a result, in 1869 the Conservative government, then led by Macdonald, negotiated the acquisition of the North West from the Hudson's Bay Company. In 1870, the same government brought Manitoba into the country with the negotiation of the Manitoba Act. Immediately afterward, Macdonald initiated the construction of the Dawson route, a road and water route to Red River in what is now Manitoba. In a sense, Macdonald then extended the railway as a defensive line against American encroachment when, in 1871, he promised the government of British Columbia that upon B.C.'s commitment to confederation, it would be linked by rail to the rest of Canada within ten years. The Canadian Pacific Railway was accordingly founded in 1873 with Sir Hugh Allen in charge of building the link to the west coast. Soon after, it came to light that

Allen had received the contract while also making campaign contributions to the Conservative Party of Macdonald, who in the ensuing scandal was voted out of office. Macdonald was returned to office in 1878, however, based on the appeal to voters of his protectionist “National Policy.” The primary elements of the policy were increased trade between the eastern and western regions of Canada, more European immigration to settle and develop the West, and the building of the transcontinental railway. On November 7, 1885, the main line of the railway was completed in a ceremony that took place at Craigellachie, on the Eagle Pass of the Selkirk Mountains.<sup>57</sup> The purpose of the CPR was to connect widely separated parts of the country, but to do so in the name of political expediency, economic necessity, and national sovereignty.

The railway is frequently cited as a primary building block of the Canadian nation,<sup>58</sup> so it is unsurprising to see that *C:APH* follows its presentation of Macdonald’s trip on the finished railway with a set of photographs that depict settlers in the new West. It appears as though the CPR has left a line of human settlements in its wake. And in what was once empty space, the photographs of people standing in wheat and outside their sod houses give us a vision the future promise of a young nation in the rising crop of archival images. They are archival scenes and so now are a history to the present-tense dream visualization of the series. In other words, Macdonald looked back and saw a utopian vista in which we now recognize a people. Macdonald’s journey is suggestive of utopia, in part, because as Krishan Kumar points out, throughout the history of utopia, we find that utopia is structured by “the narrative of a journey...[where] the traveler in space and time...happens upon utopia...meet[s] its people, usually at first its ordinary people, observes them at work and play, [and] sees their dwellings and their cities.”<sup>59</sup> At the close

of the sequence, the train that is seen traveling between earth and sky carries us towards the implied promise of a nation. The train symbolizes the national story continuing to wind its way into its future, with the future seen as some gauzy, distant watercolor, sky. As an audience, we are sharing in this idea of a journey. A catchphrase of *C:APH* is that it presents “history as it actually happened,” and it also hopes to make people see that as ordinary Canadians, they themselves are making history happen. The point is emphatically made as *Canada: A People's History* comes to a close. In the epilogue, called “The Journey,” we are given a brief summary of what the series has presented, followed by a sequence of behind-the-scene shots in which we see the series’ voiceover, Maggie Huculak, onscreen in a recording studio. She says, “Every story you have seen is still evolving. You are creating it now.”<sup>60</sup>

*C:APH* also presents an imaginative blossoming of a national people from within a utopian space, when we watch the chapter of Episode Six that is called “The Masterwork” (Figure 23). The title refers to David Thompson’s completed “Map of the North-West Territory of the Province of Canada,” (1814).<sup>61</sup> The cases of Macdonald and Thompson both involve technologies that facilitate the spanning of great distances (the railway, and the map). And, in both instances we are made witness to a utopia that results from these technologies that were driven forward in Canada by two historic figures. In the example of Macdonald, we see an immediate result – the railway to British Columbia seems to give birth to a prairie people. However, in the example of Thompson, we are to see a development of the Canadian people over time (from Thompson’s death in 1857 to film of a twentieth-century city).

In "The Masterwork," we are carried through a progression of scenes that are taken from the presentation in *C:APH* of David Thompson's story. After this, the camera pans over a stack of antique books before showing us the shawl-covered form of David Thompson sitting in a rocking chair by the fireside. The implication of the imagery is that as Thompson sits staring into the flames, he calls to mind experiences from his past. As the visual passage continues, the seated figure of Thompson is seen to gradually join with and then disappear into a mountain and river panorama. His spirit of adventure and exploration is so much a part of the land, it would seem, that he is taken into its celestial realm upon his passing. An outcome is that we can come to hold our memory of his life within the same space, since after he has disappeared from view we are left to gaze at the twilight sky.

Soon after the figure of Thompson has faded from view, we see scenes from the future emerge onto the screen. They range from a painted picture of a riverside community through to filmed scenes of an early twentieth-century urban center. The cityscapes are finally seen to disappear back into the same landscape shot of mountains, river, and sun that opened the chapter. Except for a slight shift in composition, the only difference between the two landscapes is that the first is given a reddish overall tint, while the second has light golden highlights. Since the same mountain-dominated landscape bookends the images of community, the social landscape of the nation appears to come into being as part of an eternal cycle. However much variation there has been in the demographics of Canada over time, the landscape space lends a source of permanence and sameness to the characterization of the Canadian people.

The sequence of natural landscapes and community that follow Thompson's demise is reflected in the overall visual conclusion of *C:APH* (Figure 24). At the end of the last episode, viewers are transported through a perspective that is framed by the branches of a fir tree, and they come to look out over partially melted ice floating on water. In the distance of this scene is the same mountain river setting that highlighted the end of Thompson's story. At this point, the camera seems to pull back into the space of the tree and the screen darkens somewhat. Archival news footage then emerges from within this crepuscular space. We see the crowds around and atop the Berlin Wall as it is slowly demolished in 1989, and then we see the solitary figure of resistance who stands in front of a line of tanks in Tiananmen Square, in 1989. The lone figure and the tank are then subsumed within the gradual appearance of an image of the sun. The sun slowly but surely disappears into a nighttime shot of skyscrapers.

Of the many events that could be shown from the world of the series' production, the ones that we see at its conclusion are powerful expressions of people's participation in, and influence upon, history. Above all, rather than simply seeing a celebration of dissolving borders, we are presented with a celebration of people escaping or resisting tyranny and as a result being able to freely express themselves in a new, utopian land. In effect, this is what the immigrant heritage of Canadians has always been known for (within the frame of *C:APH*). The events that we see are also those that have been captured through a journalistic lens, as well as being events that highlight the relationship between ordinary people and the greater sweep of history (the man who confronts a tank while he holds shopping bags being a prime case in point). The visual cycle summarizes key issues that have permeated *C:APH*. Canadians have always been show in the series

as people who struggle to escape deprivation and realize themselves in the seemingly utopian space of Canada. Once having established themselves, they are shown to vigorously defend what they have built for themselves and their families. What *Canada: A People's History* might achieve, is the enlistment of a people in a freely chosen defense of what it means to be Canadian.

By envisioning the people as a part of the national landscape, and as beings who strive to establish themselves within the national space of Canada, *C:APH* has tried to transform the breaking down of an old world into an act that repeatedly builds Canada anew. The last image of the sun in *C:APH*, which follow the image of the man in Tiananmen Square, and is seen glittering against the skyscrapers of a metropolis, signals the natural and national eye of Canada, and it still backgrounds the people who are symbolically present in the geometric dazzle of a new technological organization. With the overlay of blazing sun and evening metropolis it might be said, the light of the national spirit is now reflected in the many viewpoints that have been encapsulated by the frame of *C:APH*.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Two publications stand out in this regard: *To Destroy Painting*. Mette Hjort, trans. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995; and *On Representation*. Catherine Porter, trans. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001.

<sup>2</sup>Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*. Richard Howard, trans. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 6.

<sup>3</sup>Louis Marin, "The Frame of Representation and Some of its Figures," in *Rhetoric of the Frame: Essays on the Boundaries of the Artwork*. Paul Duro, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 80.

<sup>4</sup>Louis Marin, "The Frame of Representation and Some of its Figures," in *The Rhetoric of the Frame: Essays on the Boundaries of the Artwork*. Paul Duro, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 82.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid*, 82.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid*, 85.

<sup>7</sup>Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 6.

<sup>8</sup>Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Steven Rendall, trans. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 150.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid*, 111.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid*, 111-2.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid*, 113.

<sup>12</sup>Louis Marin, *Utopics: The Semiological Play of Textual Spaces*. Robert A. Vollrath, trans. (New Jersey: Humanities Press International, Inc., 1990), 63.

<sup>13</sup>Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. (London: New York: Verso, 1991) 5-6, and 22-6.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid*, 35.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid*, 35-6.

<sup>16</sup>Louis Riel was the oldest of eleven children born to Louis Riel Sr. and Julie Lagimonière on October 22, 1844 at the Red River Settlement, now called St. Boniface, Manitoba. He was Métis because his paternal grandmother was Chippewa; the term "Métis" or "métisse" means "to mix." Jennifer Reid, *Louis Riel and the Creation of Modern Canada*:

*Mythic Discourse and the Postcolonial State*. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008), 1-2.

<sup>17</sup>The photograph is the earliest known photograph of Riel and on the bottom carries the inscription: "Lapres and Lavergne, 360 Rue St. Denis, Montreal." The photographer is identified only as "Baldwin." The image is dated ca. 1858, and is located in the University of Manitoba Archives and Special Collections (PC 107).

<sup>18</sup>Interestingly, *Canada: A People's History* downplays the role of Riel's father. Thomas Flanagan argues that Riel's father must have had a considerable influent upon him because "the elder Riel was...one of the most forceful spirits among the métis...[who] played a memorable role in...[breaking] the monopoly of the Hudson's Bay Company" on the fur trade in the area surrounding St. Boniface. (Thomas Flanagan, *Louis 'David' Riel: 'Prophet of the New World'*. rev. ed. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996: 4-5). Flanagan goes on to assert that "Louis Riel idolized his father, and he conceived of his own political activities as a continuation of his father's work." (Flanagan, 5) On the trip to Montréal, where in *C:APH* we see Riel in a train and seeming to be gazing at his mother's image, in history, when Louis began his journey to Montréal, Riel met his father who was returning to St. Boniface; it was the last time Riel saw his father, and the meeting was apparently "touching." (Flanagan, 7) Riel was struck very hard by his father's death, so much so that Riel's behavior during his period of mourning became the basis for the belief that he was "deranged, believing himself to be someone other than Louis Riel and endowing himself with a messianic role." (Flanagan, 14) Albert Braz also suggests a link between the impact of the father's death and Louis Riel's later obsession with Métis nationalism, bouts of apparent derangement, and messianic tendencies. Albert Braz, *The False Traitor "Louis Riel in Canadian Culture*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 22-4.

<sup>19</sup>Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*, 138.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid*, 138.

<sup>21</sup>John Berger, *And Our Faces, My Heart, Brief as Photos*. (London: Writers & Readers, 1984) Hall, Stuart "Cultural Identity and Diaspora" in *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference* Ed. Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990), 64.

<sup>22</sup>Nigel Rapport and Andrew Dawson, "Home and Movement: A Polemic," in *Migrants of Identity: Perceptions of Home in a World of Movement*. (Oxford; New York: Berg, 1998), 21.

<sup>23</sup>The idea of the diasporic experience and its importance, as well as the relationship between home and fixity and movement to *Canada: A People's History* is fully discussed in Chapter Three.

<sup>24</sup>For example, see: Peter C. Mancall and James H. Merrell, *American Encounters: Natives and Newcomers from European Contact to Indian Removal, 1500-1850*. New York: Routledge, 2000, especially in this volume, see Cornelius Jaenen, "Amerindian Views of French



Culture in the Seventeenth Century” (68-95), and James H. Merrell, “The Indians’ New World: The Catawba Experience” (26-51); William W. Fitzhugh, *Cultures in Contact: The Impact of European Contacts on Native American Cultural Institutions, A.D. 1000-1800*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1985; and Thomas J. Scanlan, *Colonial Writing and the New World, 1583-1671: Allegories of Desire*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

<sup>25</sup>Marin, *Utopics*, 42.

<sup>26</sup>*Ibid*, 42.

<sup>27</sup>Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*. F. J. Ditter and V. Yazdi, trans. (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1980), 50-1.

<sup>28</sup>Ernst Bloch puts forward an idea of utopia as transformative, that is, it entirely reworks an existing condition or set of conditions (Ernst Bloch, *The Spirit of Utopia*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000; and Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986). Karl Mannheim is another proponent of utopia as transformative, arguing that utopia is signaled by ideas that are incongruous with and transcendent of reality, which do not match the world as it is, and which “when they pass over into conduct, tend to shatter, either partially or wholly, the order of things prevailing at that time” (K. Mann, *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge*. Louis Wirth and Edward Shils, trans. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1953): 192). We can also find anti-utopias, or dystopias in works like H.G. Wells’s *The Time Machine* (1895) and *The Island of Dr Moreau* (1896), Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World* (1932), and George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949). They may also propose the future as a better place. For instance, writings like William Morris’s *News from Nowhere* (1890), and Edward Bellamy’s *Looking Backward* (1888). Although Thomas More’s opus *Utopia* (Louvain, 1516) is frequently cited as the first appearance of utopia, the concept can be traced back to the idea of an earthly paradise. We can see the image of utopia in the biblical Eden, in Arcadia as the secluded region inhabited by trouble-free and happy people in ancient Greece, in the Middle English work called “Cockayne” ca. 913 A.D., a place of idle pleasure that is entirely absent of want, David Hume’s *The Perfect Moral Commonwealth*, 1758, which posits a perfect world as being dependant upon the exemplary performance of every individual in it.

<sup>29</sup>Ruth Levitas, “Introduction: the elusive idea of utopia,” in *History of the Human Sciences*. vol. 16.1 (2003), 4.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid*, 4.

<sup>31</sup>Zygmunt Bauman, *Socialism: The Active Utopia*. (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1976), 13-7.

<sup>32</sup>Ruth Levitas, “Sociology and Utopia,” in *Sociology* vol. 13.1 (1976), 30.

<sup>33</sup>*Ibid*, 25.

<sup>34</sup>For Lacan's elaboration on this, see "Function and Field of Speech and Language," in *Écrits: A Selection*. A. Sheridan, trans. (New York: W.W.Norton & Company, 1977): 30-113.

<sup>35</sup>Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: Book II. The Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Sylvana Tomaselli (New York: W.W.Norton&Co., 1978), 96.

<sup>36</sup>The photograph is located in the McCord Museum, Notman Archives, MP-1993.6.1.22, and is titled "Locomotive on Old Ottertail Creek Bridge, 1885." The photographer is Oliver B. Buell.

<sup>37</sup>During the middle of the 1830s, the British Colonies of Upper and Lower Canada were dominated by elites, to the detriment of the elected assemblies. This unfair practice of governance led to rebellions in both Canadas. Once the unrest had been quelled, the British sent Lord Durham to determine what had gone so grievously wrong in the colonies. An outcome of Durham's report in 1839 was the union of Upper and Lower Canada. When the election for the new governing body was called in 1841, Louis Hippolyte LaFontaine was a candidate in the riding of Terrebonne (Lower Canada), and Robert Baldwin was a candidate in two ridings – Fourth York, and Hastings (Upper Canada). Due to politically sponsored thuggery at the riding of Terrebonne, LaFontaine was not elected. Baldwin, on the other hand, dominated two ridings. Both men were reformers, supportive of the union of the two Canadas. In order to further an alliance across the divisions of culture, religion, and language (Upper Canada being Anglo dominated, and Lower Canada being strongly French), Baldwin maneuvered to have LaFontaine run for election in the riding of Fourth York. LaFontaine won, and the victory generated an impression of solidarity across French and English lines, is something that has been remarked upon to this day. John C. Dent, *The Last Forty Years: The Union of 1841 to Confederation*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1972.

<sup>38</sup>Roland Schaer, "Utopia: Space, Time, History," in *Utopia: The Search for the Ideal Society in the Western World*. G. Claeys and L. T. Sargent, eds. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 5.

<sup>39</sup>J.C. Davis "Utopia and the New World, 1500-1700," in *Utopia: The Search for the Ideal Society in the Western World*. G. Claeys and L. T. Sargent, eds. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 96.

<sup>40</sup>Louis Marin, "The Frontiers of Utopia," in *Utopias and the Millenium*. S. Bann and K. Kumar, eds. (London: Reaktion Books, 1993), 410.

<sup>41</sup>In particular: Jacques Lacan, "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I," in *Écrit: A Selection*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1977; and by the same author, "Of the Gaze as *Objet Petit a*," in *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*. J.A.Miller, ed., A. Sheridan, trans. (New York: W.W.Norton & Company, 1978): 67-122.

<sup>42</sup>Marin, "The Frontiers of Utopia," 407.

<sup>43</sup>Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: Book II: The Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis 1954-1955*. Jacques-Alain Miller, ed. (New York: W.W.Norton & Company, 1988), 96.

<sup>44</sup>Marin, "Frontiers of Utopia: Past and Present," 407.

<sup>45</sup>Jacques Lacan, *Écrits*. Alan Sheridan, trans. (New York; London: W. W. Norton & Company, 1977), 265.

<sup>46</sup>Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, 38.

<sup>47</sup>Donald Creighton, *John A. Macdonald: The Old Chieftain*. (Toronto: The MacMillan Company of Canada, Ltd., 1965), 458.

<sup>48</sup>Henry C. Klassen, *Eye on the Future: Business People in Calgary and the Bow Valley, 1870-1900*. (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2002), 227.

<sup>49</sup>Creighton, *John A. Macdonald: The Old Chieftain*, 457.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid*, 458.

<sup>51</sup>*Ibid*, 461.

<sup>52</sup>*Ibid*, 461-2.

<sup>53</sup>The photograph is located in the Glenbow Museum Archives (NA-4967-132), and is titled "Sir John and Lady Macdonald at Stave River, British Columbia. The photographer is Oliver B. Buell.

<sup>54</sup>The photograph is located in the Provincial Archives of Alberta (B520), and is titled "Tall wheat up to men's hats." The photograph is dated ca. 1903-1923, and the photographer is Ernest Brown.

<sup>55</sup>The filmic image of the train is taken from the CBC production of Pierre Berton's two books on the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway (*The National Dream* Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1970; and *The Last Spike* Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1971). The mini-series was called *The National Dream* and was produced in 1974 by the CBC. The footage of the train is used during the presentation of the credits. The sequence is also used on the cover of Berton's abridged *The National Dream* and *The Last Spike*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1974.

<sup>56</sup>Leonard Bertram Irwin, *Pacific Railways and Nationalism in the Canadian-American Northwest, 1845-1873*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1968.

<sup>57</sup>For example, see: Andy Albert den Otter, *The Philosophy of Railways: The Transcontinental Railway Idea in British North America*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press,

1997; John Lorne McDougall, *Canadian Pacific: A Brief History*. Montréal: McGill University Press, 1968; William M. McKee, *Trail of Iron: the CPR and the Birth of the West, 1830-1930*. Vancouver: Glenbow-Alberta Institute, 1983; and Richard Gwyn, *John A., The Man Who Made Us: The Life and Times of John A. Macdonald*. Volume One: 1815-1867. Toronto: Random House, Canada, 2007; and Donald Swainson, *Sir John A. Macdonald; the Man and the Politician*. Kingston: Quarry Press, 1989.

<sup>58</sup>For example, see: Hugh A. Dempsey, ed. *The CPR West: The Iron Road and the Making of a Nation*. Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1984; John A. Eagle *The Canadian Pacific Railway and the development of Western Canada, 1896-1914*. Montréal-Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989; Leonard B. Irwin, *Pacific Railways and Nationalism in the Canadian-American Northwest, 1845-1873*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1968; and Arthur S. Morton, *History of Prairie Settlement*. Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1938.

<sup>59</sup>Krishan Kumar, *Utopianism*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 89.

<sup>60</sup>The epilogue begins with a low-level aerial shot of a river, then we see technicians preparing a map, a wagon led by two men, an aerial view of Rocky Mountains, four shots of Inuit, petroglyphs, West Coast native dancers, a plains Native, snow-covered mountains, and a European sailing ship (with the exception of the wagon and two men that is from Episode Ten, all of the preceding images are from Episode One), filles du roi (Two); then coureur des bois in two canoes, a New France farmer plowing his land, several Acadians using scythes in a field, and the Acadian landscape (Three); then cannons firing from the Fortress of Louisbourg, and a scene from the fighting upon the Plains of Abraham (Four); then we see one scene of fighting during the War of 1812 (Five), before we see a sequence from the Loyalist's displacement (Four); then we see settlers arriving at Red River, Manitoba, (Nine); next, nineteenth-century European settlers crowded on board a ship, and a video of a steam passenger train crossing the prairies (Ten); a depiction of post-Second World War refugees arriving in Canada (Eleven); then, Cambodians packed onboard a flimsy boat (Seventeen); then people descending stairs from the upper to the lower parts of Québec City (Fifteen), Newfoundlanders outside their home (Fifteen); then Native protesters (Sixteen); then a scene from the first referendum in Québec (Seventeen); then some Asian refugees (Seventeen); then an Aislin cartoon depicting Prime Minister Brian Mulroney (Seventeen); then some middle-aged women parading outside of the parliament buildings in Ottawa (Fifteen); then some autumn foliage; then a journalist selecting images from a contact sheet (Sixteen); then a view of the ocean; then a large drawing compassing that is scribing a circle on a map (Seventeen); and then the voiceover for the English series, Maggie Hucculak, appears sitting in a recording studio and in the process of speaking the words that we are hearing. After we see her, we are shown a sequence of shots that reveal the production process of *Canada: A People's History*. The last image that we see, and which follows the behind-the-scenes footage, is an archival photographic close up of a young girl who is staring directly at the lens.

<sup>61</sup>The map measures approximately 213 cm in height and 328 cm in width, and is located in the Archives of Ontario (Reference code: F 443, R-C(U), AO 1541).

Figure 1

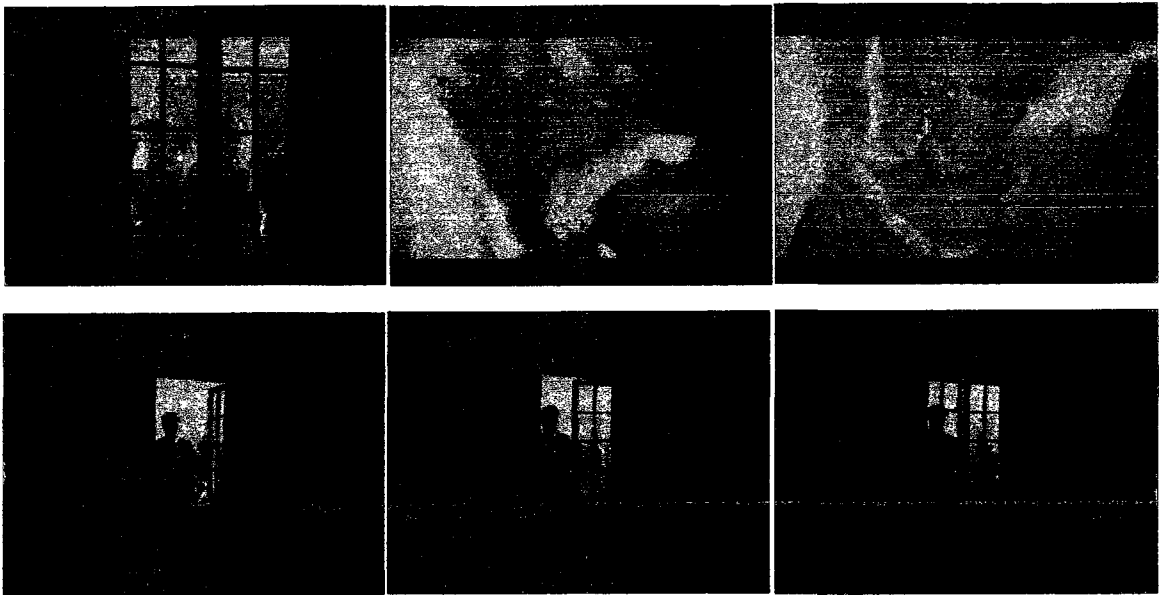


Figure 2

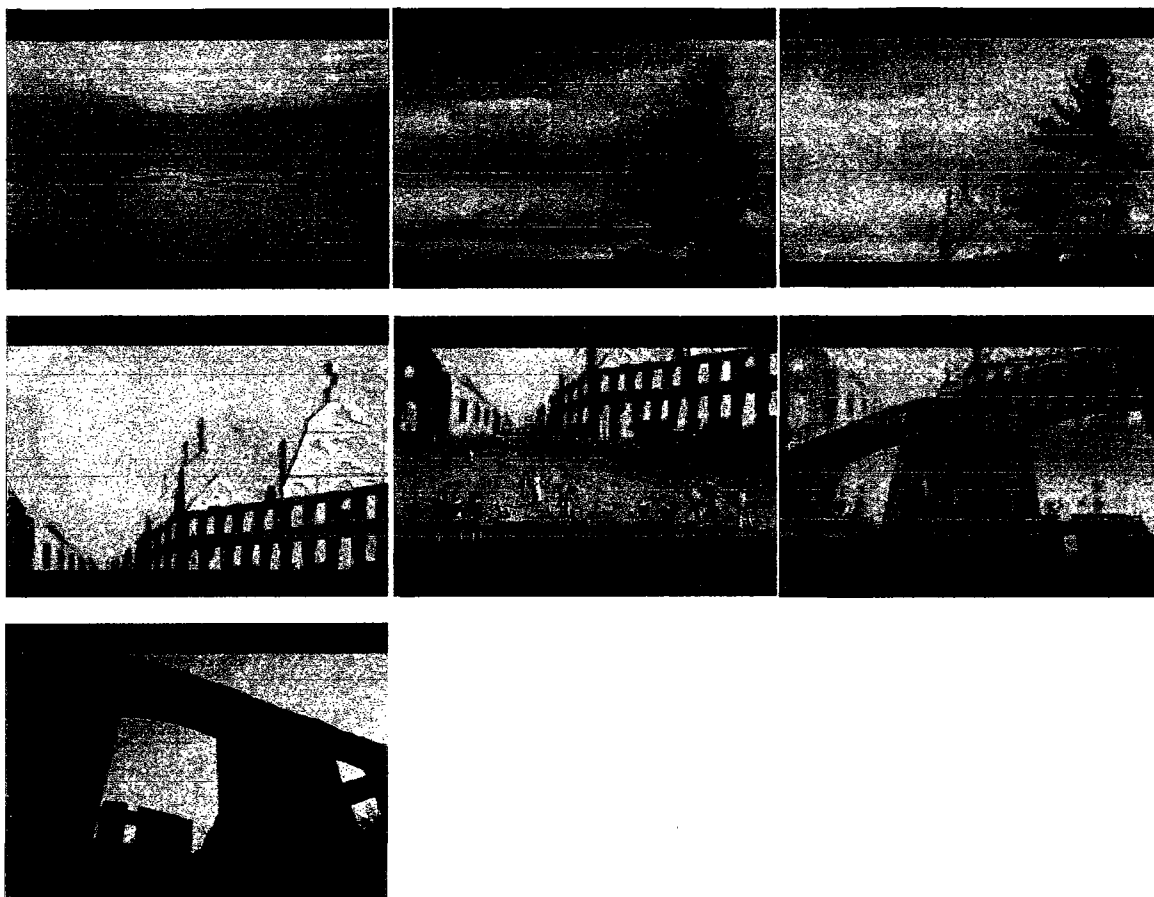


Figure 3

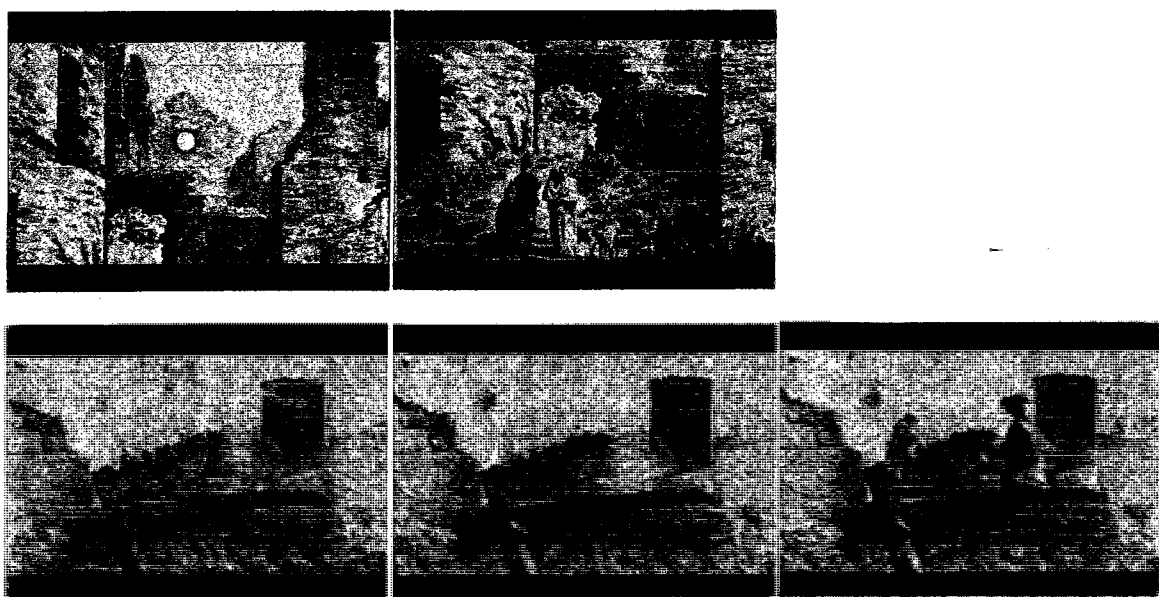


Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6

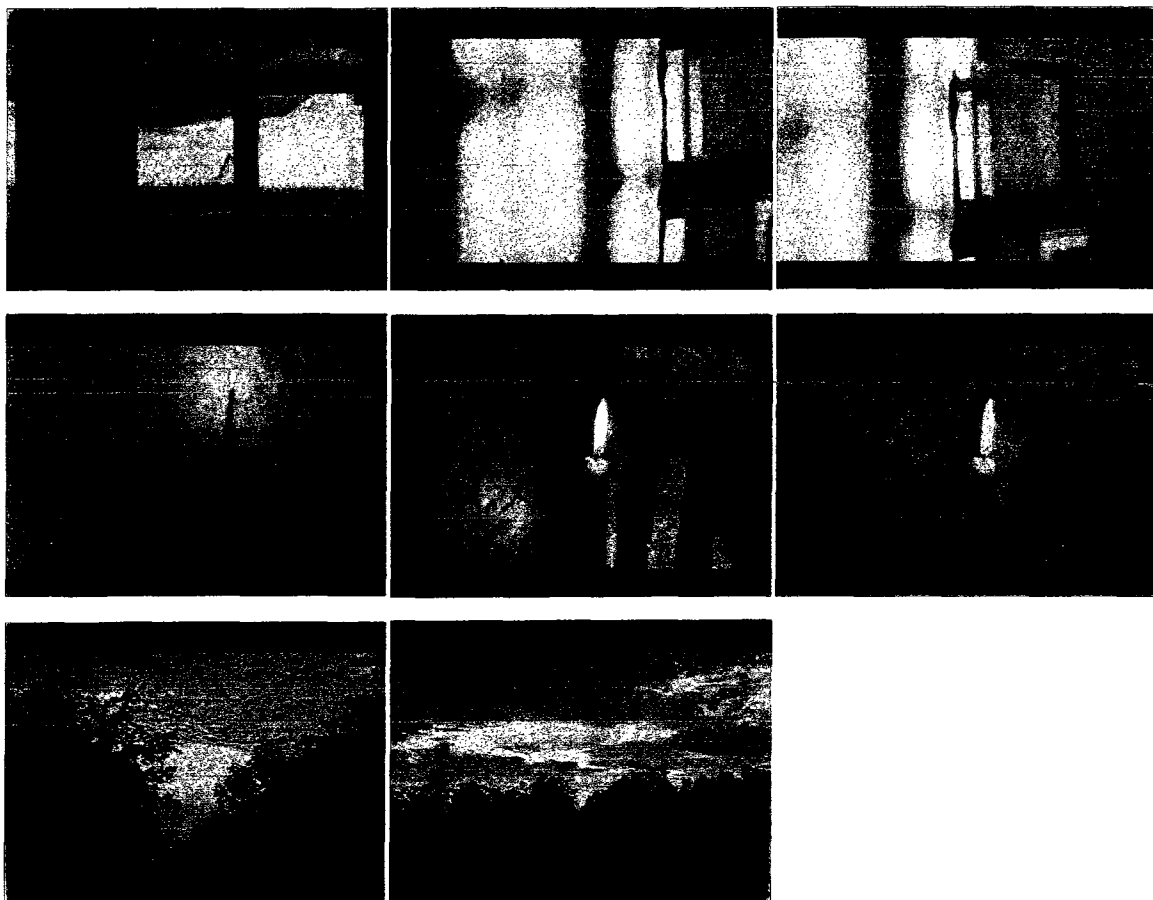




Figure 7



Figure 8a

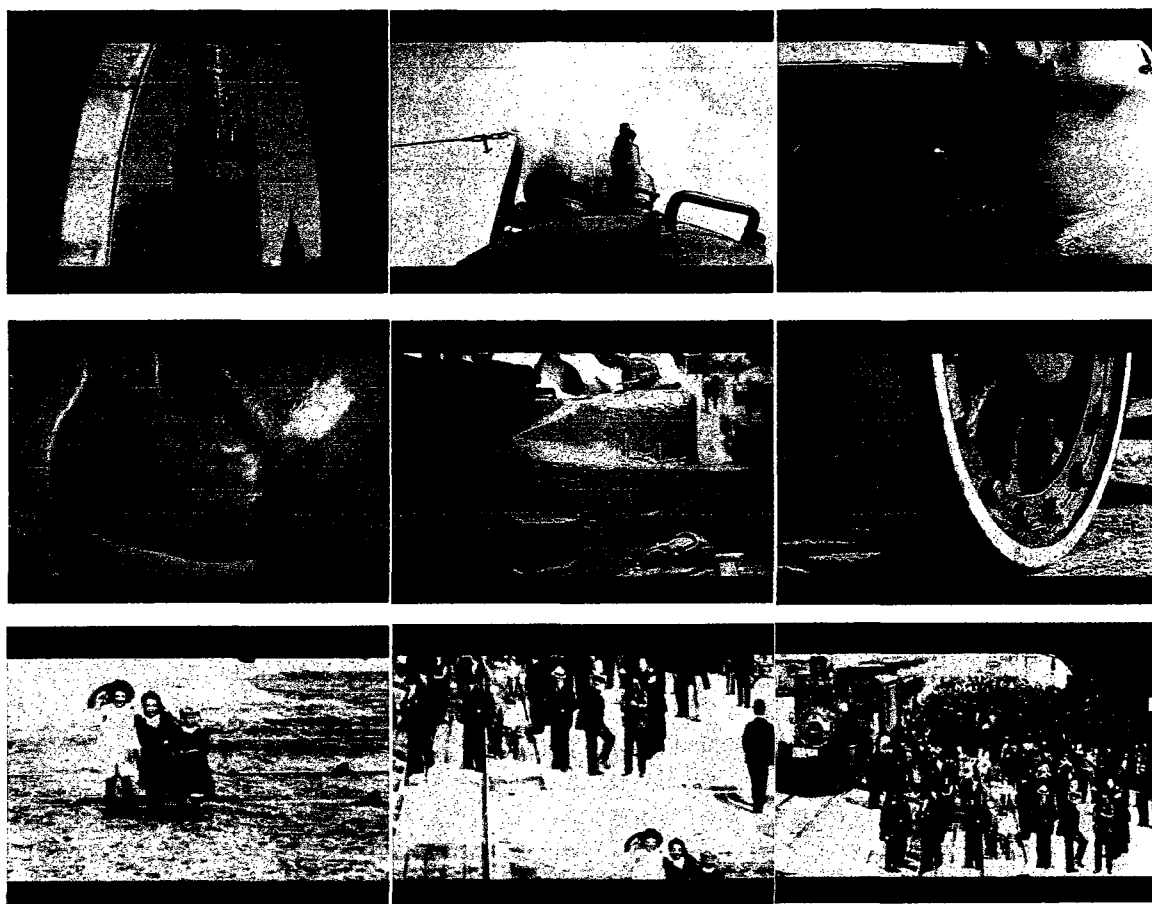


Figure 8b

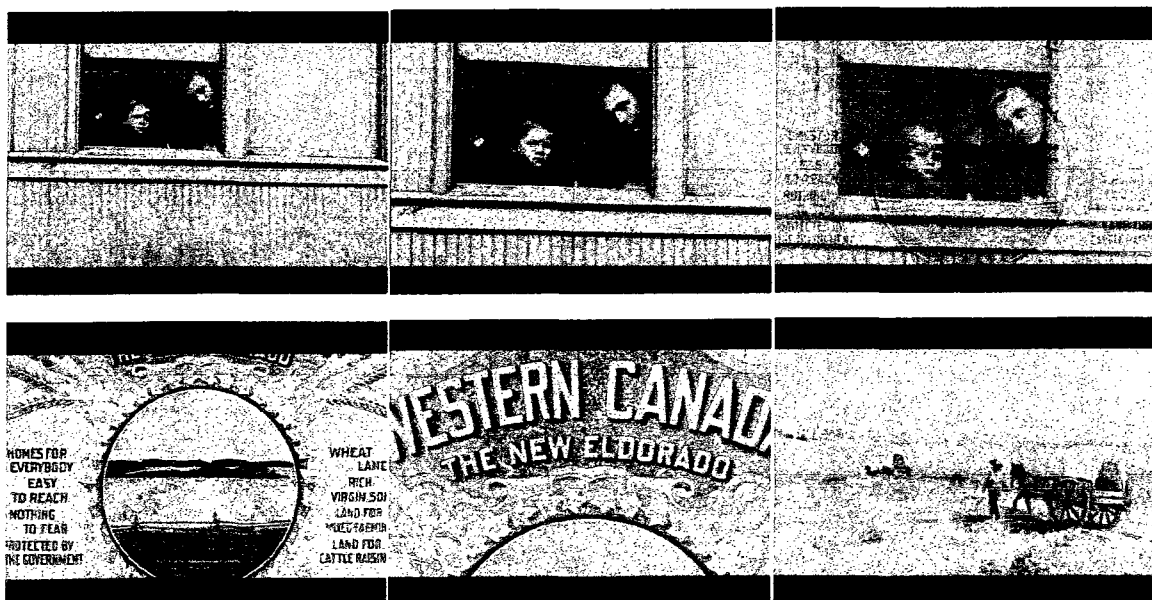


Figure 9

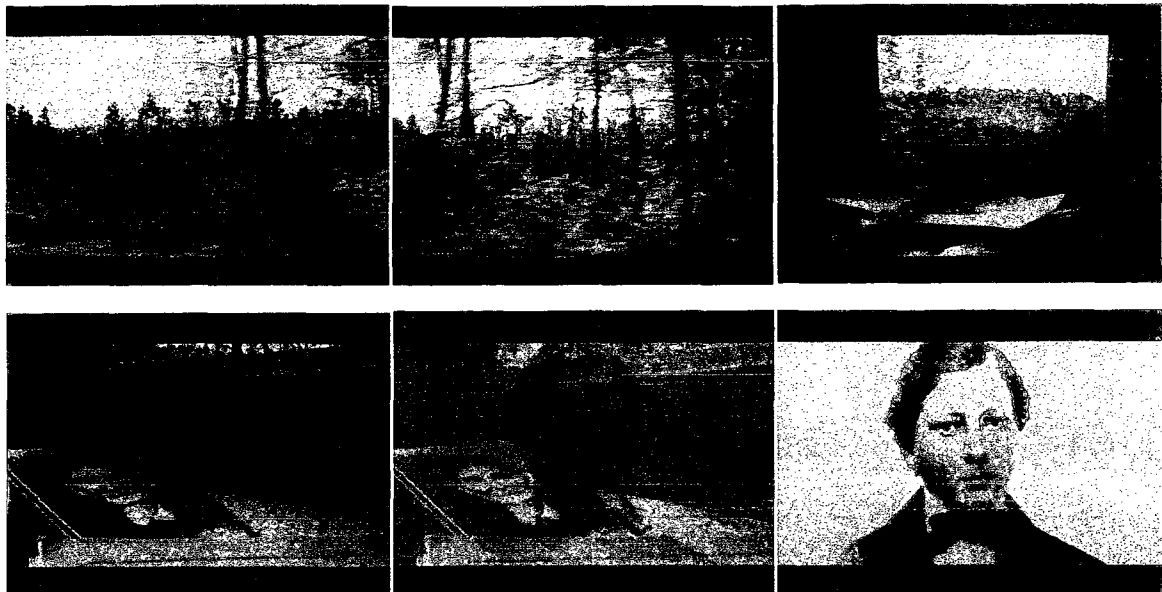


Figure 10

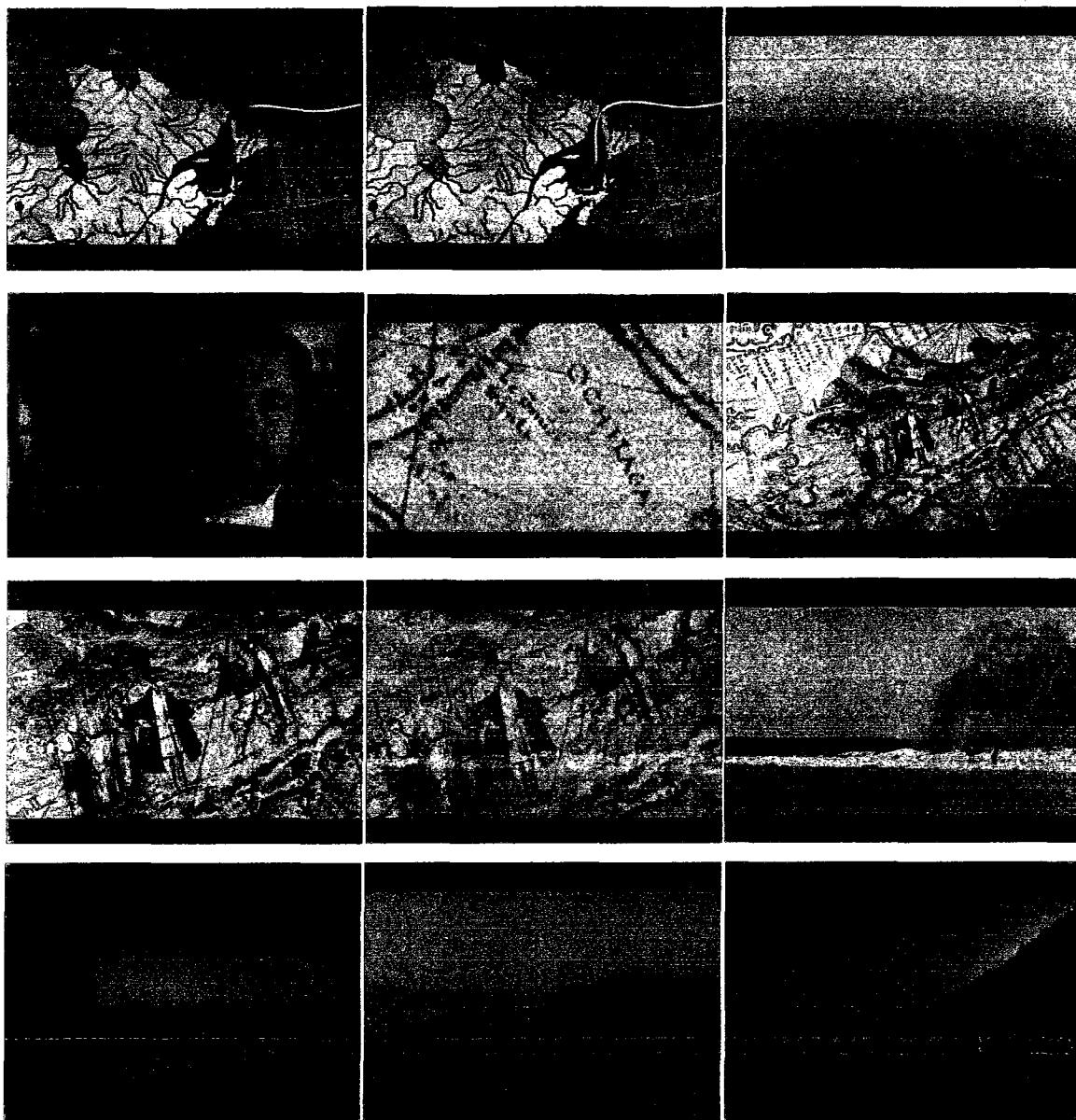


Figure 11

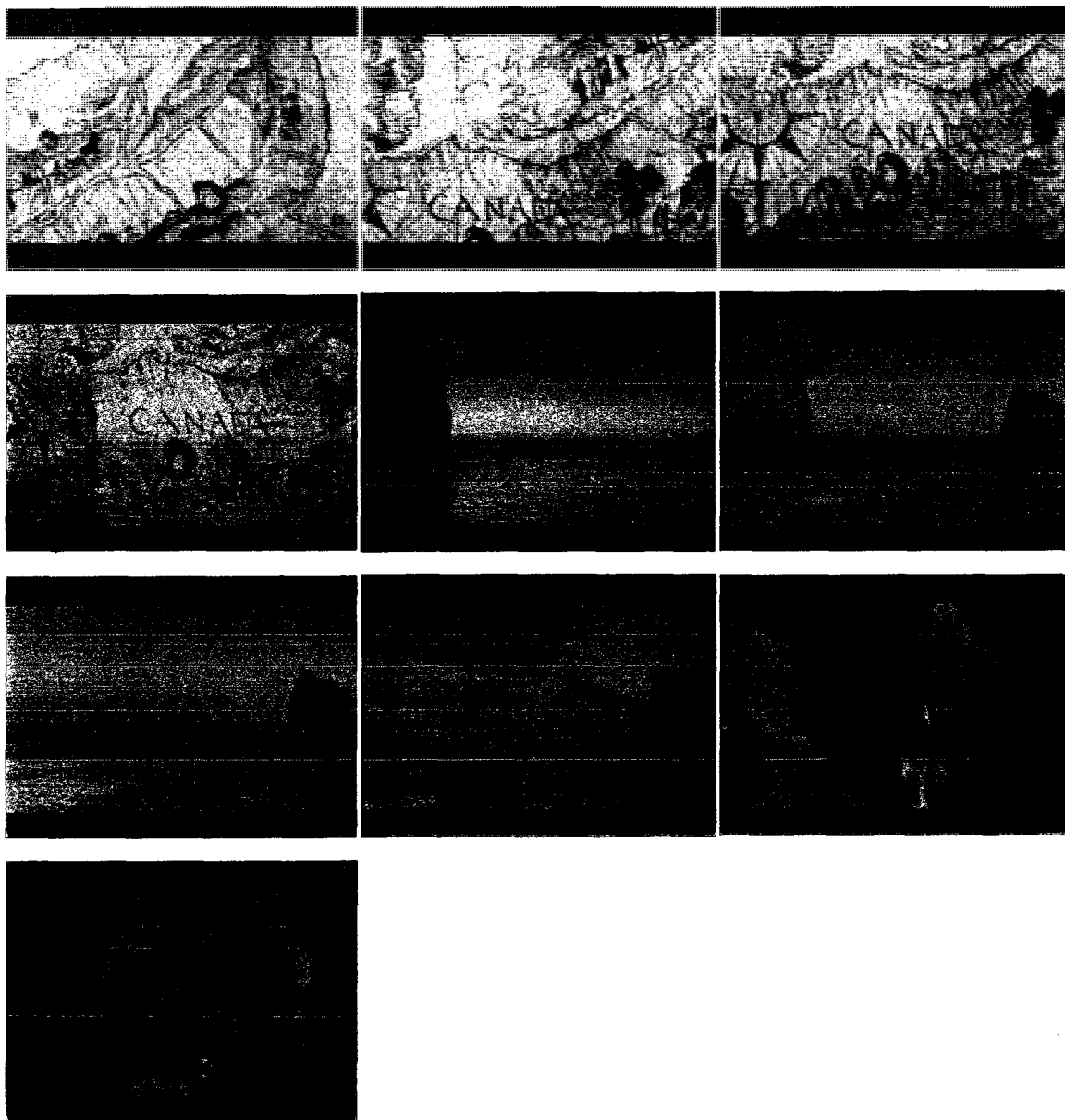


Figure 12

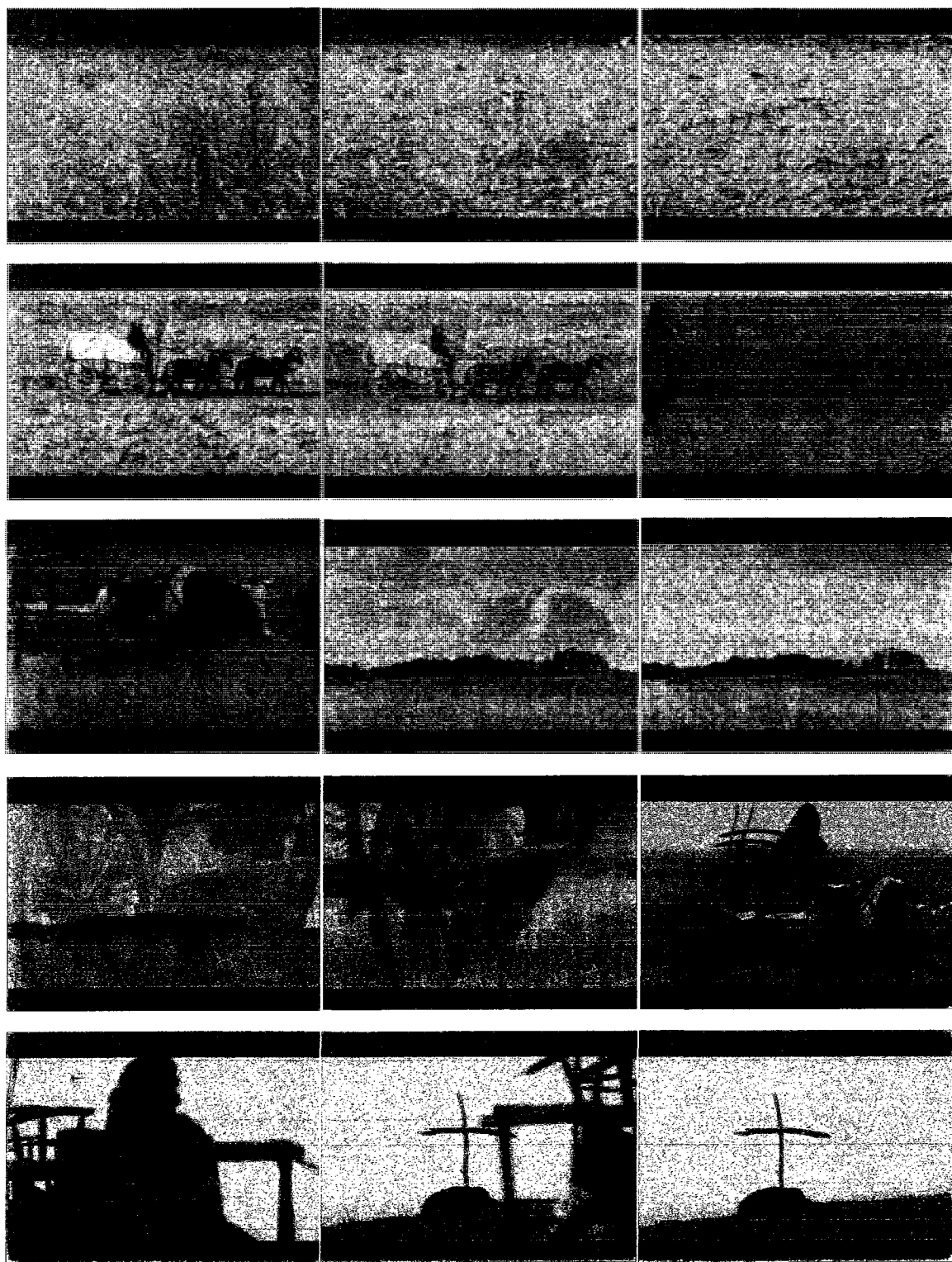


Figure 13



Figure 14





Figure 15

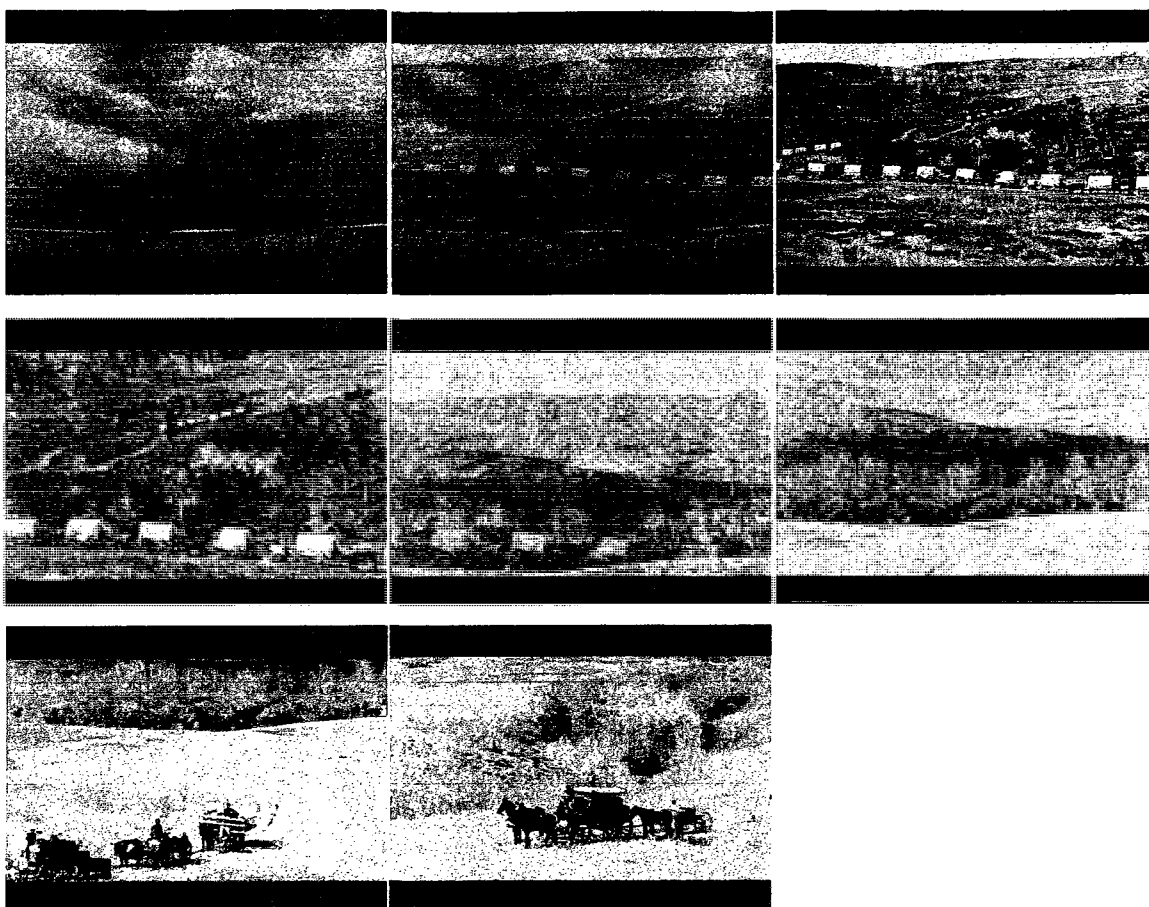


Figure 16

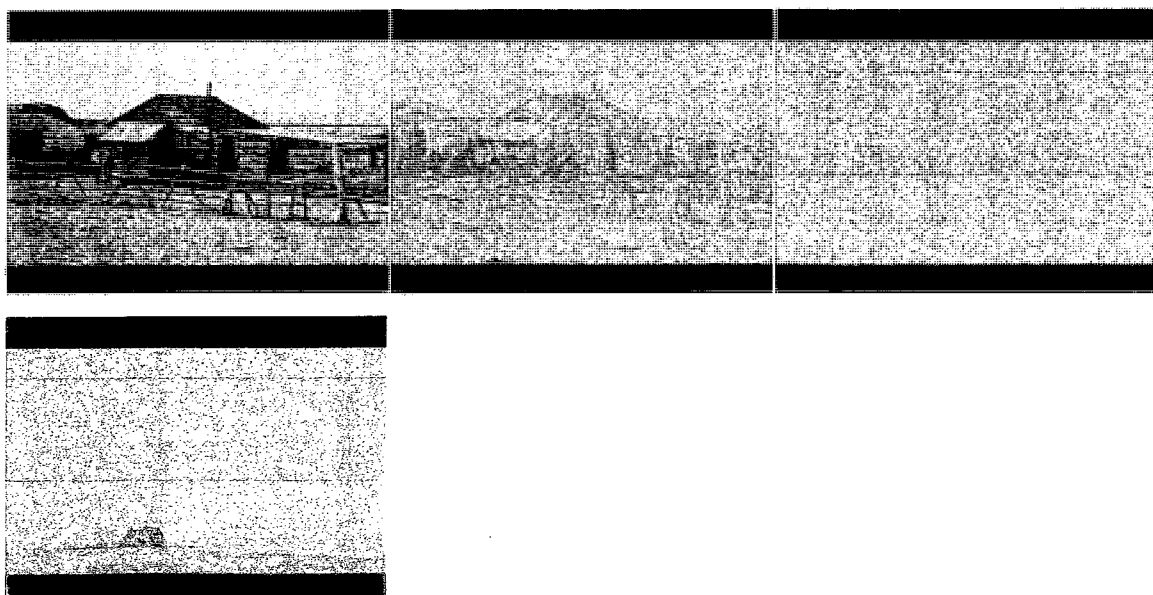


Figure 17

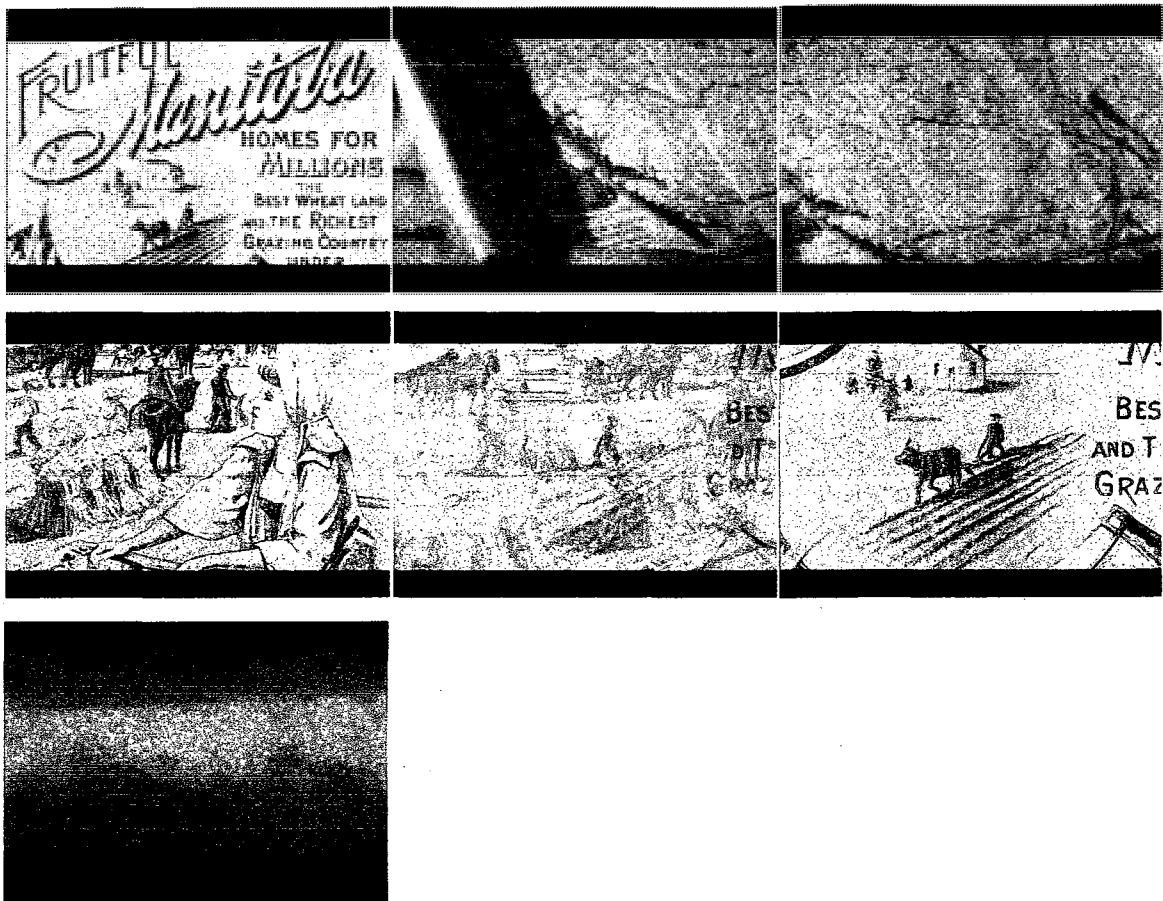


Figure 18



Figure 19

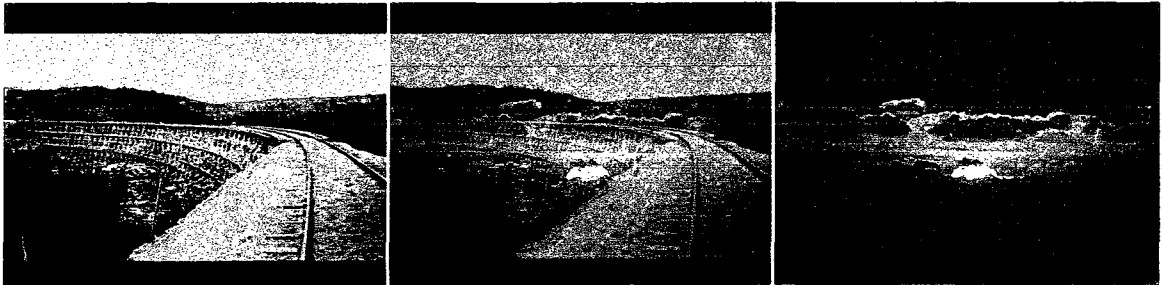


Figure 20



Figure 21

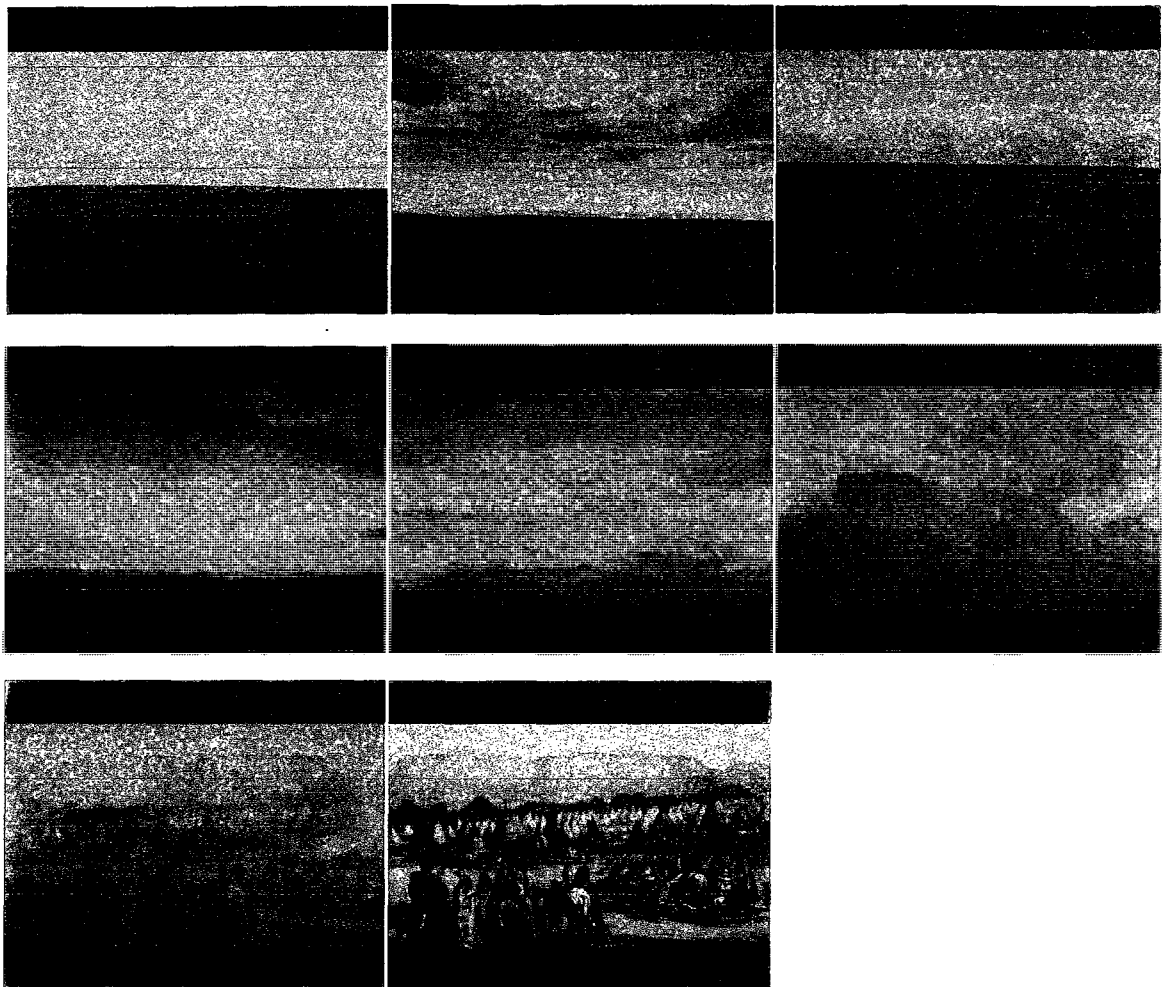


Figure 22



Figure 23

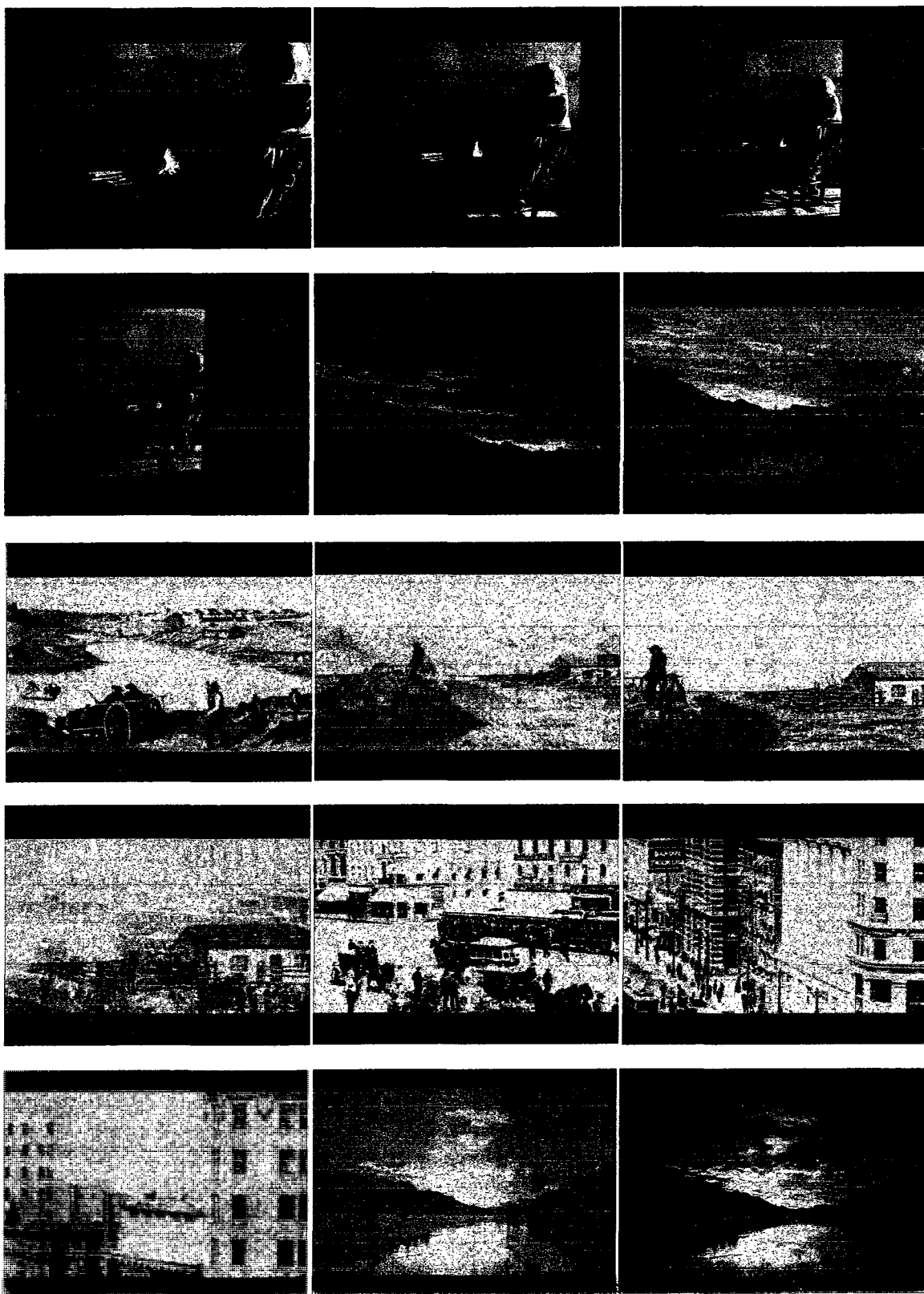
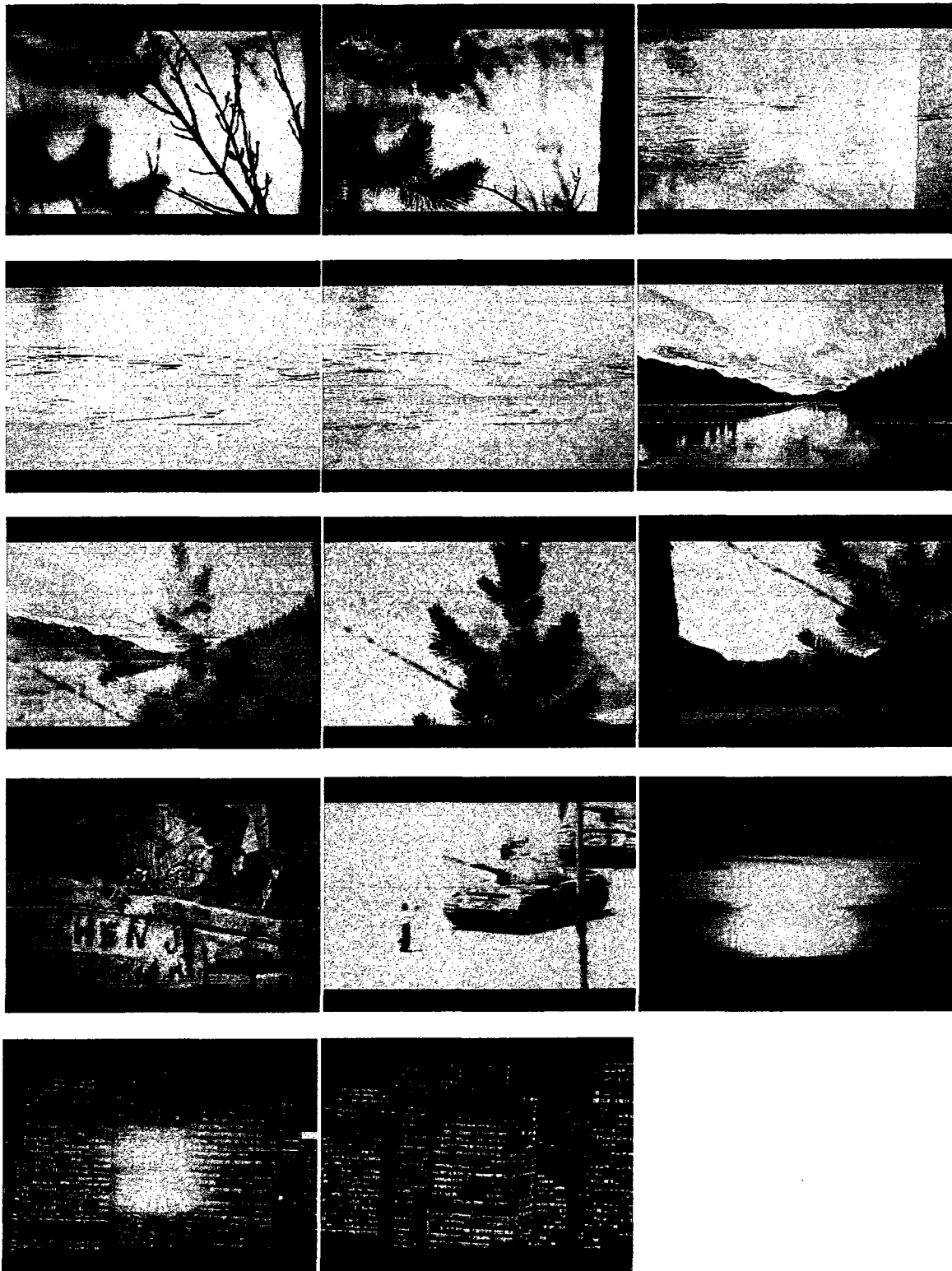


Figure 24



## Conclusion

*Canada: A People's History* attempts to give its audience the experience of history as it actually happened by visually conjoining the past with the present. The makers of the series frame the past for us so that we seem to pass through a window and enter Canadian history. An instance of this occurs in the series' presentation of an eighteenth-century colonialists' party, where we seem to surreptitiously enter and exit through an open window. The impression of moving within the past is reinforced by *C:APH* when it positions us within the historical figure's point of view, such as when we are given the recollections of the French patriot in the aftermath of the Battle on the Plains of Abraham. The basis for our witnessing of the past is again visual, except this time it is closely linked to an emotional foundation.

What matters is that it is the human eye that generates a record or a framed composition of events, which can then be used as a point of return to the past. The point is underscored with the example of representation of the 1980 referendum in Québec, which not only accents the grief-stricken man's eye, but also foregrounds the domestic space as a world that is made up of self-representations. We see this in the many photographs and the television screens in each of the families' homes (as well as in the public space). The picture space, as an historical record that originates from the experience of the eye, is what can connect one generation with the next.

*Canada: A People's History* works with the tropes of the window and the human eye to show how history is carried between generations, and to make us feel that we are actually moving through the past. The instances in which we see European immigration into the Canadian West reveal how, through combining archival materials with video



recreations, the past is made to move before us. Not only that, but our living rooms become like passenger cars that move through Canadian history: a process made plain in the case of Riel's trip east by train.

The map, or narrative webbing, on which the visual material in *C:APH* is based, is an historical record that has been inscribed by the lives of past Canadians. We follow the visual records that those before us have left behind, but we trace these paintings, drawings, photographs, and film clips in an arrangement established by the makers of *Canada: A People's History*.

A question raised by this dissertation is: "Why has it been done in the discipline of Art History?" By way of explanation I point to the incorporation of a wide range of visual arts media in *Canada: A People's History*. As noted throughout my dissertation, during the course of *C:APH* we see paintings, drawings, photographs, as well as archival film and video footage. The various media appear singly and in combination. In this way, the CBC series' use of visual material calls to mind the practice of collage. The inclusion of diverse media within a single frame creates a polyvalent work. On the one hand this technique lets one subject be seen from several points of view. On the other hand, the varying indexical nature of the media (for example, painting versus photography versus film or video) problematizes the illusion of representation and its capacity for truth.<sup>1</sup> A prime example of collage and its dynamics can be found in the works of Robert Rauschenberg (1925-2008).

An immediate observation on Robert Rauschenberg is that he links his work to the real world through the inclusion of objects that are taken from the everyday (for example, the debris of popular culture like silk-screened images from news media, as

well as personal images like family snapshots). In fact, Rauschenberg has stated that, "I always wanted my works – whatever happened in the studio – to look more like what was going on outside the window."<sup>2</sup> An excellent example of this is *Canyon* (1959), which includes a family photograph, bits of political posters, a print of the Statue of Liberty, and objects that were either retrieved from the trash or purchased.

Rauschenberg not only threads lived experience into his work by using such disparate materials, he also sets up a dialogue between life and representation on two levels. First, the seemingly free association of materials in *Canyon* allows the viewer to concoct their own connections and so produce a personalized reading of the artwork. Second, Rauschenberg juxtaposes different media so that their relative degrees of indexicality sets up a dialogue between them, and between the media and the viewer.

The dialogic nature of collage is evident in *Canyon* in the interaction between a photograph of an infant and a colored print of The Statue of Liberty. The upraised torch of the statue mirrors the gesture of the infant in the family photograph. But the viewer must cope with a number of other counterpoints, each of which foreground the experience of the image. For example, Rauschenberg contrasted mass production and personal creation by aligning the printed screen of the statue's image with the family snapshot format. Additionally, the photograph and the commercial print are both surrounded on the canvas by smears of paint. The fact that the paint is freely applied and does not show an identifiable form, underlines the gesture of the image-maker. Artifice is further emphasized by the stuffed eagle that seems to have popped out of the cardboard box that sits on a wooden board projecting from the flat surface of the work. Suspended from the end of some string that is tied to the board is a pillow. By projecting into the

space of the gallery, the stuffed eagle, box, board, and pillow work against pictorial illusionism. The engaging character of *Canyon* lets viewers clearly see that the image is constructed, that it comes from life, and that they can effectively personalize its meaning.

The art of Robert Rauschenberg could easily engender a considerable discussion on meaning and illusion in the image. Yet my brief discussion of *Canyon* is occupied with issues that are at the core of what my dissertation has accomplished in its analysis of *Canada: A People's History*. Rauschenberg not only uses different media, he makes their characteristics and degrees of indexicality an integral part of our reception of the finished artwork. Yet *C:APH* selects and mingles media in a way that implies an innocence towards the different indexical nature inherent in them; for instance, a photograph, reenactment, or a painting. A major accomplishment of my dissertation is revealing how the archival materials and contemporary reenactments operate together to create what is in effect an illusion of history as it actually happened.

A medium is a medium due to what we consider its positive aspects, things like color, texture, fidelity, as well as things that are considered to be limitations, for example, a flat canvas or the restrictions imposed by the frame. Painting, photography, drawing, and film are unique mediums and generate particular impressions of our world of experience. Also, they each have a distinctive relation to truth –they faithfully replicate the subject in their own manner (for instance, a painting reveals the presence of the artist in its brushstrokes, while a photograph appears to show a mechanical, and unbiased reproduction of the subject, and despite its photographic precision, archival film often carries a jittery, silent, and partly scratched view of the subject).

In *Canada: A People's History*, one visual medium follows another as if they are both accomplishing the same thing as they represent the subject. *C:APH* does not discriminate between the capacity of the different modes of representation (painting, photograph, or film) to capture and convey historical reality. The pictures in question seem to be treated as though they were pinned in the tray of a vivisectionist who is searching for preconceived notions. The practice of freely intermixing media in *C:APH* also obscures the actual historical content of the media. The imagery becomes naught but appearances, cosmetically applied to the CBC series' journalistic intention. With the preponderance of stories rooted in conflict (social and cultural unrest in Canada, as well as military actions within and without the nation's borders), drama, and human emotion, it may even be suggested that the truth value of the image has been supplemented, if not supplanted altogether by a shock value. By this I mean that the emotional impact of the image can outweigh the impression of historical fact. An art historian would have problems with these approaches and, as I pointed out in the Introduction, this dissertation represents a detailed examination of the use of images to present a history.

The art historical weight and value of the voices and histories particular to all of the paintings, film and video, drawings, and photographs that are present in *Canada: A People's History* must be taken into account. This is not to suggest that the makers of *C:APH* have somehow failed or were mischievous. The intent of the CBC series' producers was to show a history of Canada as it actually happened, and to do this in a dramatic and entertaining manner; thus, as noted in Chapter One, a large audience would have to be attracted to the series and so justify production costs. The problem raised by the CBC series is the mix-and-match approach to image types that the producers have

adopted. What remains to be done, and what this dissertation lays the groundwork for, is a catalogue raisonn  of *C:APH*. The catalogue of the imagery in *Canada: A People's History* would provide information on each image's date of production, maker, materials, present location, original application, as well as facts on the subject matter contained in the representation. In this way, readers will have a point of entry into a history of the images that are contained in the CBC series' presentation of Canadian history.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>For example, see: Rosalind Krauss, "Perpetual Inventory," in *October* 88 (Spring, 1999): 86-116. Krauss discusses indexicality and illusion in reference to the work of Robert Rauschenberg. For related discussions on representation in art, see: Roland Barthes, "The Photographic Message," in *Image, Music, Text*. Stephen Heath, trans. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977): 15-31; Ernst Gombrich, *Art and Illusion*. London: Phaidon, 1977; E. Gombrich, *The Uses of Images*. London: Phaidon, 2000; Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations*. (New York: Schocken Books, 1985): 217-251; Louis Marin, "Toward a Theory of Reading in the Visual Arts: Poussin's 'The Arcadian Shepherds'," in *The Art of Art History*. Donald Preziosi, ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998): 263-75; and Martha Rosler, "In, Around, and Afterthoughts (on documentary photography)," in *The Contest of Meaning: Critical Histories of Photography*. Richard Bolton, ed. (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989): 303-333.

<sup>2</sup>Paul Taylor, "Robert Rauschenberg: I can't even afford my works anymore" (interview), in *Interview* 20.12 (December, 1990): 146.

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