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The Problem of the Sacred in Postmodern Museum Practice:
Some Thoughts on the Rideau Street Convent Chapel in the National Gallery of Canada

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A Thesis

in

The Department

of

Art History

Presented in Partial fulfilment of the Requirements
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ABSTRACT

The Problem of the Sacred in Postmodern Museum Practice:
Some Thoughts on the Rideau Street Convent Chapel in the National Gallery of Canada

Marc Duhamel

The Rideau Street Chapel in Ottawa was saved from destruction in 1972 when it was declared a heritage site by the Canadian government. The interior of the building was dismantled and placed in storage until it was reconstructed within the walls of Moshe Safdie's National Gallery of Canada in 1988. It is now part of the permanent collection on display in this Museum.

This study enquires into the detrimental effects of the institutionalization of objects which form the material base for spiritual belief systems. I argue that the National Gallery denies the original liturgical function of the Chapel by presenting it in a synchronic manner, placing the spiritual potency of the work in suspended animation. I investigate how high art museums, which can be considered modern temples of the dominant culture's secular cult of beauty, appropriate the 'spiritual capital' of such works for their own purposes. Such architectural installations become analogous to relics placed in churches of Medieval Pilgrimage Roads, lending their spiritual/aesthetic aura to pilgrims of our era, namely, cultural tourists.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	p.III
Table of Contents	p.IV
Acknowledgements	p.V
List of Figures	p.VII
Introduction	p.1
Chapter 1 A Ship Out of Water	p.5
Chapter 2 Propriety, Façadism, and the Problem of the Sacred: Vitruvian Principles and the Rideau Street Convent Chapel	p.21
Chapter 3 Revelations	p.31
Conclusion	p.62
Bibliography	p.65
Appendix 1: Figures	p.73
Appendix 2: The Mews	p.88
Appendix 3: Plourde's Letter to Dr. Thomson	p.91
Appendix 4: Transcripts of CBC Radio Broadcasts on the Wedding	p.94

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LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Rideau Street Convent Chapel installation in the National Gallery of Canada. View of the altar. Reprinted from: Luc NOPPEN, *In the National Gallery of Canada- "One of the most beautiful chapels in the land"*, Ottawa: The National Gallery of Canada, 1988.

Figure 2. Rideau Street Convent Chapel installation in the National Gallery of Canada. View of the nave. Reprinted from: NOPPEN.

Figure 3. Rideau Street Convent Chapel, May 1972. View of choir with painting of angels. Reprinted from: NOPPEN.

Figure 4. Rideau Street Convent Chapel, c.1890. Reprinted from: NOPPEN.

Figure 5. Robert HENDERY, Hunt Cup of the Montreal Fox Hounds trophy. Reprinted from: Ross FOX, *Presentation Pieces and Trophies from the Henry Birks Collection of Canadian Silver*, Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1985.

Figure 6. SAVAGE & LYMAN, Field Officer's Cup for the Grand Rifle Match of the United Canada. Reprinted from: FOX.

Figure 7. Library of Samuel-de-Champlain elementary school. Photo by author.

Figure 8. Entrance lobby of Samuel-de-Champlain elementary school. Photo by author.

Figure 9. H. BOUQUET, bas-relief wooden carving of ship with maple leaf as sail in lobby of Samuel-de-Champlain elementary school. Photo by author.

Figure 10. Original fresco of the *Pantocrator Majestoso* from the church of San Climent in Taüll, in the *Museu d'Art Nacional de Catalunya*, Barcelona, Spain. Photo by author.

Figure 11. Replica of the *Pantocrator Majestoso* Fresco in the church of San Climent in Taüll, Spain, with artificial lighting. Reprinted from: Stanley MEISLER, "The Case of the Disappearing Frescoes" in *Smithsonian*, Vol. 29, No.1, April 1998, p. 54.

Figure 12. Replica of the *Pantocrator Majestoso* fresco in the church of San Climent in Taüll, Spain, without artificial lighting. Photo by author.

Figure 13. Replica of the original fresco of Santa Maria in Taüll in the church of Santa Maria in Taüll, Spain. Photo by author.

Figure 14. Paul WONG, "Chinaman's Peak: Walking the Mountain", 1992. Reprinted from: Anne DELANEY, "Wong's World- Vancouver-based multi-media artist challenges conventions with provocative images" in *The Montreal Gazette*, November 25, 1995.

Figure 15. Christ Church, Eustis, 1896. Reprinted from: Ross MURRAY, "Eustis church to hit the road" in *The Stanstead Journal*, October 15, 1997, p.14.

INTRODUCTION

In order to embark on a journey, the preparation must be as important as the voyage itself. Sufficient provisions, a sturdy vessel and spare parts in case of breakage are essential in order to ensure that one gets to the port of destination. But sometimes the port of destination is unknown. Astrolabes, compasses, maps, and other navigational materials must all be readily at hand, and an experienced and trustworthy crew are all vital in case the ship encounters turbulent weather. All of this and much more must be taken into account when one decides to undertake a journey into such a voyage. And when all else fails, one must rely on faith to guide the ship to port.

I took such a leap of faith nearly three years ago when I decided to undertake this study, which I consider to have been an intellectual journey. I have endeavoured to understand Ottawa's Rideau Street Convent Chapel at the National Gallery of Canada and the Chapel's inclusion in an idealist history of Canadian architecture. The story of how this building of Neo-Gothic design was saved from the wrecking ball at the eleventh hour captivated me, and the engineering feat required to incorporate it within the permanent home of the National Gallery of Canada stimulated my imagination. The ideological clash which occurs when a formerly sacred site is incorporated within an institution that can arguably be considered to be the high temple of the secular cult of beauty for Canadian culture is, in essence, what this study is about.

The Chapel was built in 1887-87 by priest/architect Georges Bouillon, who was a native of Rimouski, Québec. What distinguished this Chapel, which was added to the "Revere House" complex on Rideau Street in Ottawa the convent of the Grey Nuns, was its wooden polychrome fan vaults imitating those of Westminster Abbey. When the complex was destroyed in 1972, the interior of the Chapel was saved, and was later restored (Figures 1, 2) in the National Gallery of Canada's new home, built by Moshe Safdie in 1988. It is the centrepiece of the Canadian art collection, which surrounds it.

Access to the Chapel is gained by entrance into a garden court which leads to a corridor which eventually opens into the restored building. In contrast with the glamorous display of the Chapel in the Gallery, an undistinguished two story commercial building has taken the place of the greystone complex which housed the Convent. A steakhouse-- "the Loft"--, a video arcade, a bar: "Roj's Boom Boom Saloon" with a representation of a small devil in its logo, a music shop, a tattoo and body piercing parlour, a photo shop, a travel agency, a hair stylist, now occupy the site of the Convent.¹

The National Gallery of Canada produced a book on the Chapel, written by Luc Noppen, entitled *In the National Gallery of Canada "One of the most beautiful chapels in the land"* (1988). This publication traces the origins of the style of the Chapel, and gives a detailed account of its restoration. It also attempts to establish Canon Georges Bouillon as a prominent figure in the history of church architecture in Canada. Yet, I found that it was an incomplete assessment of the Chapel's relocation in the Gallery, where the Chapel becomes both a display and a defining part of its exhibition space. The social and ideological structures the Chapel reinforces by its inclusion within the Gallery are neglected by Noppen and form the basis of my inquiry.

Very little has been written about the 'ritual respect' which is due to sacred architecture. To be worthy of mention at any reasonable length in the written history of Western art, a church must generally be proven to have some interesting aesthetic features which distinguish it or make it a masterwork as determined by standards established within the canon of art history. This becomes doubly problematic, in my opinion, when a church becomes, "A Masterwork on Display"², as one of the chapters in Noppen's book claims the Rideau Street Chapel to be.

¹ As of March 20, 1997.

² Luc NOPPEN, *In the National Gallery of Canada- "One of the most beautiful chapels in the land"*, Ottawa: The National Gallery of Canada, 1988, p.33.

In order to be most effectively critical of the way in which culture is produced within these social structures, this thesis will borrow from several disciplines including sensorial anthropology, traditional art history and critical theory. Such an approach is more holistic than that offered by formalism or a sentimental, "clean" history of the saving of the Chapel as proposed by Noppen in the first chapter of his book.³ This methodology will help me to reconcile my personal bias as a materialist art historian with my cultural heritage as Roman Catholic in order to produce a hybrid methodology which takes into account the influence of these two ways of seeing the world. The readings I have chosen in order to support this approach include Tony Bennett's *Birth of the Museum-- history, theory, politics* (1995) which describes the role of the museum as an enforcer of the cultural elite's hold on the middle class imagination; David Howes' *The Varieties of Sensory Experience* (1991) which is a primer in sensorial anthropology; Martin Jay's *Downcast Eyes* (1993) from whom I borrow the neologism 'ocularcentric'⁴ to describe the sensory imbalance in Western culture which alienates the other senses in favour of sight; John Onians' *Bearers of Meaning-- The Classical Orders in Antiquity, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, (1988) which discusses the historical relevance of Vitruvius' architectural principles; and Paul Frankl's *Principles of Architecture*, (1914) which discusses the concept of the transience of the life of buildings. Simon Schama's suggestion in *Landscape and Memory* (1995) to, "... directly [experience] 'a sense of place,' of using 'the archive of the feet,'"⁵ has been essential for me to reconstruct the sense of memory which is evoked by the Rideau Street Convent Chapel and the other buildings discussed in the course of this study. The concept of a lifespan for buildings is discussed in Paul Frankl's *Principles of Architecture*, and has breathed life into my

³ Ibid., pp.18-24.

⁴ Jay describes 'ocularcentrism' as the domination of sight over the other senses. Martin JAY, *Downcast Eyes- The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993, p.3 and footnote No.7.

⁵ Simon SCHAMA, *Landscape and Memory*, Toronto: Vintage Canada, 1996, p.24.

interpretation of the buildings discussed. I have also conducted extensive primary research at the National Gallery of Canada Library Archives, and researched files from the National Gallery Canadian Collection's curatorial files. This academic foundation, along with fieldwork which I have done at the buildings and installations discussed in this study have given me the basis on which I will elaborate my theory of the transference of the Chapel's sacred essence, its "aura", to use the term as defined by Walter Benjamin in his essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction". (Translation 1968)

Chapter one, **A Ship out of Water**, deals with the history of the Rideau Street Chapel. It examines Noppen's book on the subject, and provides another perspective of the Chapel's history. Chapter two, **Propriety, Façadism, and the Problem of the Sacred: Vitruvian *Decorum* and the Rideau Street Convent Chapel Restoration/Installation**, applies Vitruvius' architectural principle of *decorum* to the Rideau Street Chapel restoration. It discusses the ritual respect which is lacking within the new context. The third and final chapter of this study, **Revelations**, describes architectural revelations throughout Canada and elsewhere which have helped me gain a more holistic comprehension of the significance of the Chapel. I will outline the manner in which each of these encounters has given me a more thorough understanding of the Chapel and my position in relation to the National Gallery installation site. The goal of this critique of the restoration of the Rideau Street Convent Chapel within the National Gallery of Canada is to formulate a strong argument in favour of the preservation of sacred buildings of any religious tradition within their original context, in order to maintain the integrity of these buildings.

CHAPTER ONE
A SHIP OUT OF WATER

*Sail on, O Alma Mater, strong and great,
Sail on, nor fear to brest the Sea
Our hearts, our hopes are all with thee
Our Hearts, our prayers our tears
Our faith triumphant over our fears
Are all with thee, are all with thee
While we your children softly breathe
Farewell, God bless you.⁶*

This poem was part of the closing speech delivered by Gertrude E. Maloney during her valedictory address delivered at the Rideau Street Convent convocation on Thursday, June 2, 1921. Even though there is a sense of melancholy and loss conveyed in this poem, she could not foresee the spectacular fate and near complete destruction which would befall her Alma Mater 51 years after the poem was written. The Convent was sold to Glenview Realty Corporation by the Grey Nuns in May 1971, because of, "...the exodus of the population from the centre of the city to the suburbs, declining enrolment, shortage of teaching staff, and [the deterioration of the] older buildings"⁷ in the complex. The Convent Chapel consecrated to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart was hailed at the time of its construction as, "one of the most beautiful Chapels in the land".⁸ Although Glenview Realty had plans to renovate the old buildings and recycle them for commercial purposes, with the Chapel remaining intact, in a commercial complex which it called 'the Mews'. (Appendix 2) This plan was later rejected as unfeasible and almost the entire

⁶ Curatorial file of the Rideau Street Chapel

⁷ NOPPEN, p.18

⁸ "A Cozy Chapel" in *The Ottawa Daily Citizen*, 19 May 1888. Article fully reprinted in NOPPEN, p.76. Noppen uses the quote from this article in quotation marks as the subtitle for his book.

complex was destroyed in May 1972. The Chapel of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart was declared a heritage site by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada on April 26, 1972, just days before the entire complex was destroyed. The Chapel's fan vaulted ceiling, windows, cast iron steel columns and altar were dismantled and put in storage, waiting for a venue in which it could be reconstructed. Maloney was right in saying that her Alma Mater, "need not fear the brest of sea", since the fan vaulted sails of its nave⁹ were reconstituted in the new building of the National Gallery of Canada, designed by Moshe Safdie 1988, almost exactly a hundred years after the altar was consecrated in 1888. The memory of the Rideau Street Convent had been resurrected through the concerted efforts of the Friends of the National Gallery who raised the funds to incorporate the Chapel within the Gallery. The National Museums Commission employed Harold Kalman, a specialist in architectural conservation to integrate the Chapel within the Gallery, in accordance with Moshe Safdie's design for the new building.

Maloney's sentiments and strong sense of attachment to her Alma Mater were echoed by her fellow alumnae in the reconstituted Chapel's visitors' book for the vernissage for the installation in 1988. A brief sampling of the comments left by graduates and Reverend Sisters associated with the Rideau Street Convent reads as follows: "*une merveille!*", "*Impressionnant et réverbérant*", "*évoque de beaux souvenirs*", "*C'est Fantastique. D'un coup je me suis retrouvée 35 ans en arrière. Félicitations.*"¹⁰ The Chapel in its new context can indeed be considered to be an homage to the memory and faith of all those who were educated in the Rideau Street Convent. But the significance of the Chapel in its new home can, and should be understood at several levels.

⁹ The epistemological root of the word 'nave' is the Latin 'navis', which means ship.

¹⁰ Guest book, Rideau Street Convent Chapel, National Gallery of Canada Library Archives, Rideau Street Convent Chapel file.

In my opinion, Luc Noppen's argument that the Chapel is a masterpiece of Canadian architecture, formulated at length in his book, is a particular assessment of the Chapel considered within the traditional canon of Canadian art history. However, this is an argument that one would expect in a book commissioned by and written on behalf of the National Gallery of Canada. Laurier Lacroix, professor of art history at *l'Université du Québec à Montréal*, suggests that most religious art in Canada is not on a par with international standards on the formal level. In order for art historians to avoid the good versus mediocre debate which is part of traditional, canonical art history, he proposes that, "*Il faudrait peut-être redéfinir les critères en fonction de leur valeur historique! Je crois que l'art religieux est un vecteur de notre identité. Il est précieux.*"¹¹ Noppen's statement of the Chapel's value as a canonical masterpiece in the history of Canadian architecture can be expanded by Lacroix's suggestion. This chapter will attempt to assess what has been lost in the transplantation of the Chapel into the National Gallery.

"*Très beau mais très nu*", wrote one of the alumnae in the visitors' book. This comment is probably due to the fact that the Chapel holds the dual function of exhibition space and memorial monument. The decorative patterns on the walls are lifeless when compared to the original ones; the painted angels on the choir wall are gone (Figure 3) destroyed with the original building, and the pews are also absent, all original elements which brought the Chapel to life (Figure 4). The installation has benches between the cast iron columns, where visitors can rest or read copies of Luc Noppen's book on the Chapel. This leaves the space of the nave open as traditional gallery space where visitors can congregate in large numbers unobstructed. But for people who are used to frequenting Catholic churches, the absence of pews does indeed leave one with the feeling that something is indeed missing from the space.

¹¹ Laurier Lacroix in: Mathieu-Robert SAUVÉ, "Les châteaux du Saint-Laurent- Églises orgues et peintures religieuses témoignent d'un passé créatif" in *Les Diplômés- Revue des diplômés de l'Université de Montréal*, no. 392, printemps 1997, p.13

In my opinion, however, something which emphasizes not only the bareness of the Chapel, but adds to the strangeness of the site, are the dramatic lighting effects. The artificial, static, blueish light emanating from behind the stained glass remind one more of the lighting in an office or a mall than it does natural sunlight. The Chapel in its original site was exposed to natural sunlight, which, unlike the bluish, static light which emanates from behind the stained glass trefoil windows, can change at a moments notice, modifying the mood in the building dramatically. Natural light was an integral part of the liturgical program in churches of the Middle Ages, and was considered to be a personification of Christ entering the building.¹²

I am not advocating that traditional liturgical practices be reinstated in the Rideau Chapel. I only wish to emphasize the elements which helped in defining the original function of the Chapel as a living space where spiritual practices were enacted. The best option would, in my opinion, give the viewers a sense of the history which is associated with the Convent, and how the Chapel served the ritual functions of the Convent's community. Reconsecrating the Chapel without consideration for its historic use problematic option, as has been demonstrated in two incidents where secular use has come under question. The first one is a debate concerning public exhibition of the Chapel's altar which occurred in 1972, when the future of the Chapel was still quite uncertain. The second is a wedding which was held in the Chapel in 1988.

The first incident did not involve the National Gallery in any way, but is a concrete example of the problem inherent in transferring once sacred objects to the secular realm. It was sparked by a proposal by city of Ottawa Alderman Ed Mulkins in 1972. Mulkins approached officials from the Sparks Street Mall, asking them if they were willing to provide a space in the Mall for, "the altar and other articles from the soon-

¹² See note 84 in present text and Erwin PANOFSKY, "Abbot Suger of St.-Denis" in *Meaning in the Visual Arts*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1955, pp.122-133.

to-be-demolished Rideau Street convent chapel (sic)."¹³ Mulkins claimed that Mall authorities greeted the prospect with great enthusiasm. The Mall would have provided a shelter for the altar, and this was better in Mulkins' opinion than having it, "end up in someone's rec room."¹⁴ Another option envisioned by Mulkins was to move the altar to Nepean Point.¹⁵

One must bear in mind that this plan was devised with full knowledge of the Convent's imminent destruction, and that no plan for conservation of the Chapel had been made concrete at that point in time. Meanwhile, grassroots associations and other organizations, such as Action Sandy Hill, the Save the Convent Committee led by Mary Roaf and Barry Padolsky, A Capital for Canadians, were busy putting pressure on the Federal Government to declare the Chapel a Heritage Site. Eventually the groups won out, and the Chapel was saved from the wrecker's ball.¹⁶ But before this resolution occurred and the Chapel and its parts were placed in storage, the debate concerning the Sparks Street Mall option escalated, spilling over to the other side of the Ottawa River.

City of Hull councilor René Villeneuve was one of the people most vehemently opposed to this plan. In his opinion, placing the altar on Sparks street would have made it vulnerable to profanation. Indeed, he claimed that, "*Pour moi, ce serait une insulte aux choses saintes que d'expédier l'autel du couvent sur la rue Sparks*",¹⁷ adding that he

¹³ "Prayers next on Mall?" in *Ottawa Journal*, May 8, 1972. The article did not identify which other articles were to be specifically included in the arrangement proposed by Alderman Mulkins.

¹⁴ "Mall could get convent altar", article from an unspecified Ottawa periodical. Next to the article, on the photocopy, is a note to architect Hazen Sise, a member of the A Capital for Canadians grassroots organization, from an individual named Suzanne. The note lists the date, the 25 of April, 1972. The note contains the following remark: "Mr. Clack said you hadn't seen this. Sorry the picture isn't the best." Taken from National Gallery of Canada Canadian Art Collection Curatorial File- *Rideau Street Convent Chapel*.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ See NOPPEN, pp.19-24.

¹⁷ "Pour Villeneuve, l'autel est sacré" in *Le Droit*, May 12 1972.

would be ready to take whatever measures were necessary in order to protect it. He was ready to purchase it and, "*même l'amener sur son propre terrain pour protéger cet autel, 'une valeur religieuse certaine pour les chrétiens'*".¹⁸ The heritage value of the altar was important for Villeneuve, but it was the sacred connotation which the altar carries that took precedence for him as a Roman Catholic. The setting of Sparks Street or Nepean Point where Mulkins conceived that open-air non-denominational Sunday church services could be held during less intemperate times of the year would probably have offended Villeneuve and other Roman Catholics. Mulkins even considered the possibility of holding weddings at the refurbished altar, which brings us to the second incident I wish to discuss, where a direct confrontation between the National Gallery's authorities and the Roman Catholic Church occurred.

Harold Kalman of Commonwealth Resources Management, the company responsible for the installation of the fan vault ceiling in the new Gallery, and his fiancée Linda Clark were granted permission to hold their wedding in the Chapel installation by Gallery director, Dr. Shirley Thomson. She no doubt considered that this was an appropriate symbolic gesture of thanks, granting this permission to someone whose skill and craftsmanship had been so essential in rebuilding the Chapel within the Gallery. This caught the attention of some Catholics,¹⁹ which elicited a strong response of opposition from the Archbishopric of Ottawa. (Appendix 3) Monsignor Joseph-Aurèle Plourde wrote an impassioned letter to Dr. Thomson, expressing the dismay which authorities in the Church felt towards the ceremony. Mgr. Plourde writes, "We find inappropriate that

¹⁸ Ibid. Italics by author.

¹⁹ An article by Jeff HEINRICH, "Architect calls RC clergy hypocrites" in *The Ottawa Citizen*, Wednesday, August 24, 1988, B2, states that, "Archbishop Joseph-Aurèle Plourde, members of the Sisters of Charity and convent alumni (sic) have objected to the marriage ceremony, held on Tuesday night." Although I have no other sources which state that other people might have been opposed to the ceremony, it is quite likely that other Catholics in the community might have voiced their opposition to both the National Gallery and the Archdiocese of Ottawa.

the Chapel which was consecrated uniquely for religious purposes, and has served as such from its official opening in 1888, should now become the decor to enhance an act of purely secular law."²⁰ In order to prepare for the possible political backlash to this request, a Museum official, wrote a short note on the letter. The message, written to Charles C. Hill, reads, "Charlie-- -see letter from archbichopric -we must make an articulate stand."²¹ This "articulate stand" was taken in the media by both Charles Hill and Shirley Thomson.

In a report for a CBC Newsday radio broadcast, (Appendix 4) Shirley Thomson pointed out that, "the Chapel is deconsecrated, otherwise it wouldn't be in a museum. It would be in a church."²² The fact remains, however, that although the Chapel denotes an aura of sacredness for the museum visiting public, and the deconsecration of the site should have made the issue unproblematic from a purely rational point of view, the ambiguity caused by the inclusion of the Chapel in the Gallery is a potential source of confusion. Mgr. Plourde further elaborates the issue:

We are aware that the Chapel is now the property of the National Gallery, consequently, of the rights which this privilege implies. However, *the heart has its reasons which in our case, can hardly be stilled*. We feel very strongly that there is something to be said for the authenticity and integrity of the cultural tradition which the Chapel symbolizes.²³

²⁰ National Gallery of Canada Library Archive, 7265-R01 V1, Exhibition Permanent Collection -Rideau Chapel.

²¹ National Gallery of Canada Library Archive, Exhibition Permanent Collection - Rideau Chapel.

²² Newsday, CBC/CBOT, August 23, 1988, 18:00.

²³ National Gallery of Canada Library Archive, 7265-R01 V1, Exhibition Permanent Collection -Rideau Chapel. Italics by author.

Ultimately, Dr. Thomson and Mgr. Plourde met together before the wedding took place to settle their differences in a friendly manner, and the wedding was held as planned, on August 23, 1988.

However, this incident brought back tensions from the time of the destruction of the Chapel. Barry Padolsky, an Ottawa architect and head of the Save the Convent committee, directed some rather strong comments in the direction of the Sisters of Charity, calling them hypocrites. Padolsky told the *Ottawa Citizen* that, "...the same nuns and priests who have called the secular ceremony a desecration of the Rideau Street Convent chapel (sic) didn't do anything to save it from demolition 16 years ago... 'We found at the time they were unco-operative'."²⁴ Padolsky also said, "I think it's the height of hypocrisy for them to object to the use of the chapel (sic) when it was them who abandoned it to the wreckers in the first place."²⁵ This brings up the contradictory aspect of Mgr. Plourde's argument, since the Roman Catholic Church did not attempt to save the building in the first place. Mgr. Plourde's call for the preservation of the Chapel's, "authenticity and integrity of the cultural tradition which [it] symbolizes", is belated. If the Church was sincere its concern, it would have preserved the Chapel in its original site before the Convent was destroyed in 1972. However, in spite of the irresponsible attitude of their "spiritual leaders" in the case of the Rideau Street Chapel, people raised in the Catholic tradition have certain conditioned responses to the material manifestations of their faith.

In his article entitled "On Collecting Art and Culture", James Clifford writes, "What 'value', however, is stripped from an altarpiece when it is moved out of a functioning church (or when its church begins to function as a museum)? Its specific power or sacredness is relocated to a general aesthetic realm."²⁶ For people of specific

²⁴ HEINRICH.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ James CLIFFORD, "On Collecting Art and Culture" in *Out There: Marginalization and*

faiths, these objects, even though they might be deconsecrated, still hold strong spiritual connotations as manifestations of ritual practices, as objects which help in the profession of their faith. Carol Duncan²⁷ and Linda Nochlin²⁸ argue that contemporary high art museums can be considered to be temples dedicated to the worship of the secular cult of beauty, placing emphasis on the, arguably, transcendental value of the beauty of formerly sacred objects contained within their walls. I would argue that high art museums do a similar disservice to sacred objects of cultures of the First World as ethnographic museums do to objects of sacred traditions of colonized cultures.

The reclaiming of objects of spiritual value by Native peoples from ethnographic museums has some parallels with the installation of the Chapel in the National Gallery of Canada. Jim Thunder, a Plains Cree, went on a pilgrimage of his own in 1988-89, comparable in breadth to the quest which Medieval pilgrims took to Santiago de Compostella. He set out to reclaim a sacred medicinal bundle from the American Museum of Natural History, by running from Alberta to New York City.²⁹ This object's

Contemporary Cultures, Cambridge, MA and London, England: The New Museum of Contemporary Art and The MIT Press, 1990, p.149.

²⁷ See Carol DUNCAN, *Civilizing Rituals- Inside Public Art Museums*, New York: Routledge, 1995.

²⁸ See Linda NOCHLIN, "Museums and Radicals: A History of Emergencies", in *Art in America* Vol.59, no.4 (July-August 1971), pp.26-39.

²⁹ For more on Thunder's run, see the following sources:

"Cree man to run to New York for sacred bundle" in *Windspeaker*, vol. 6, (21), July 29, 1988

Greg HEATON, "The temptations of Big Bear: controversy dogs a great chief's 'descendant' who plans to repatriate a sacred Cree relic" in *Western Report*, vol. 3, (32), August 29, 1988

"Run for bundle on despite critics" in *Windspeaker*, vol. 6, (26), September 2, 1988

"Lack of money halts Thunder" in *Windspeaker*, vol.6, (43), December 30, 1988

Everett LAMBERT, "Thunder near sacred bundle" *Windspeaker*, vol. 6, (46), January 20, 1989

"Cross-continent run to recover important Cree artifacts" in *The New Weekly Magazine*, vol. 3, (8), March 1, 1989

"No bundle for runner" in *Windspeaker*, vol. 7, (4), March 3, 1989

"Scientists to decide bundle's fate" in *Windspeaker*, March 10, 1989

spiritual authority is as real to Thunder as the power of relics is for Catholic pilgrims. Thunder's words on this matter reiterate this fact; he states, "I wouldn't run from Alberta for an historical artifact. This is alive. It has **power**."³⁰ Thunder's example differs from that of the Chapel in that another ideological clash is present- that of a colonized culture confronting the dominant culture which appropriated an object of potent symbolic and spiritual significance for the Plains Cree. Ultimately, however, Thunder wished to restore the sacred object's dormant energy by bringing it back to a community which could appreciate it for its living spiritual worth. However, the sacred bundle which Thunder wished to repatriate still sits, in the American Museum of Natural History in New York's display case.

The problematic of the institutionalization of culture and its decontextualization of works of religious importance finds its roots in the eighteenth century beginnings of the museum. Linda Nochlin has written about the nationalization of the property of the clergy following looting and destruction of a great number of the Catholic Church's monuments and works of art in post-Revolution France. In fact, as Nochlin points out, the National Assembly of France, following the nationalization decree:

...almost at once had to make provisions for the preservation and protection of the works of art which fell under this heading. It was precisely in these emergency circumstances that the Commission des Monuments came into being. Rescued from the fury of the people by revolutionary art lovers and scholars, the visual objectifications of tyranny, superstition and oppression were, through the alchemy

"Thunder unlikely to get his bundle" in *Calgary Herald*, March 23, 1989

"Cree Question to be raised by Native's run" in *Toronto Star*, April 10, 1989

"Chief's kin want probe of Thunder's 'sacred' run" in *Montreal Gazette*, April 10, 1989

"Thunder rejected" in *Windspeaker*, vol. 7, (6), April 14, 1989.

³⁰ Gail Guthrie VALASKAKIS, "Postcards of my Past: The Indian as Artefact" in *Relocating Cultural Studies; Developments in Theory and Research*, London, New York: Routledge, (Valda Blundell, John Shepherd, and Ian Taylor, eds.), 1993, p.163.

Emphasis by author.

of the museum, transformed into the National Heritage, the most precious possession of the people.³¹

The use and display of spiritual artifacts raises concerns about the purpose of museums as agents of cultural imperialism within this power structure. James Clifford states that, "In the West... collecting has long been a strategy for the deployment of a possessive self, culture, and authenticity."³² Nochlin supports this, demonstrating in her work that museums provide a physical venue for the display of the dominant culture's hegemony, a place to house its trophies. The Chapel itself is treated as gallery space, and it also currently holds nineteenth century trophies and presentation pieces from the Henry Birks collection of Canadian Silver, which extends the metaphor and reality of it as an exhibition space. (Figures 5, 6) This is ironic, since the Chapel, an architectural *object* integrated within the museum's walls, has itself become one of the National Gallery's trophies. The sacred building, transformed into a beautiful object, through the decontextualizing power of the museum has, paradoxically, been housed in a place where it is venerated as sacred according to the conventions of Western art. The presence of the Chapel within the Gallery also helps in 'consecrating' the National Gallery as the high temple of the secular cult of beauty for Canadian culture.

In her essay "Kinds of Knowing" for the *Land, Spirit, Power* exhibition at the National Gallery of Canada of 1992, Charlotte Townsend-Gault talks about how specific objects have spiritual importance for First Nations, how they, "...hold meaning for people inasmuch as they represent and encapsulate a system of beliefs, an ideology. They are the

³¹ Linda Nochlin, "Museums and Radicals: A History of Emergencies", in *Art in America* Vol.59, no.4 (July-August 1971), p.30.

³² James Clifford, "On Collecting Art and Culture", in *Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures*, New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1992 (Russell Ferguson, Martha Gever, Trinh T. Minh-ha, Cornel West eds.), p.143.

symbolic capital, amassed in both the past *and* the present."³³ One of the problems facing works of art when they enter the museum context is that they are re-invested with new meaning in the present. As pointed out in the introduction of the catalogue to this same exhibition, "Modern society has, to a large extent, lost the sense of the sacred. This may be nowhere more evident than in its contradictory, contemporary attitudes to the land. The 'spirit of a place,' or the 'the spirit of the land,' is often spoken about lightly."³⁴ The example of the Rideau Street Chapel indicates that the lack of ritual respect which the dominant culture has for Native land also extends to hallowed sites which belong to its own cultural traditions. The cultural specificity and circumstances which surrounded the integration of the Chapel in the Gallery and the reclaiming of the sacred bundle by Thunder greatly differ, but at the core of each problem is the detrimental effect which the institutionalization of culture has on objects of sacred traditions. The manner in which artefacts which stem from the cultural tradition of the dominant culture are presented in museums differs from that of colonized peoples. Indeed, sacred objects from the material culture of the former are written about from a perspective which considers significant achievements in this field as works of art, whereas sacred objects from the material culture of the latter have historically been framed in anthropological terms. According to Tony Bennett:

...a division between the producers and consumers of knowledge- a division which assume[s] an architectural form in the relations between the hidden spaces of the museum, where knowledge [is] produced and organized in camera, and its public spaces, where knowledge [is] offered for passive consumption- the museum [becomes] a site where bodies, constantly under surveillance, [are] to be rendered docile.³⁵

³³ Charlotte Townsend-Gault, "Kinds of Knowing" in *Land Spirit Power*, Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1992, p.80-1.

³⁴ Introduction, *Land Spirit Power*, Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, (Diana Nemiroff, Robert Houle, and Charlotte Townsend-Gault eds.), 1992, p.12.

³⁵ Tony BENNETT, *The Birth of the Museum- History, theory, politics*, London and

The program of the museum is to condition the public mind. Surveillance seeks to condition responses, as Paul Virilio states:

*Quand on se sent surveillé [...], on est conditionné, et il y a une sorte de commandement. La [surveillance] est un commandement des comportements. En même temps qu'elle dissuade les délinquants, elle modifie le comportements de tout le monde.*³⁶

The viewer is also reminded of the state's power by the fact that the Gallery is an imposing structure, both physically and metaphysically. The intention is to reinforce the social power structures which the traditional canon of art history embodies. But viewers have the potential to negotiate around these structures by informing themselves of the debates and controversial issues surrounding certain pieces.

How can a critical viewer subvert these ideological structures to gain a more thorough, respectful understanding of the works put on display? Postcolonial theory has offered a solid discursive foundation for the reconsideration of objects from the sacred traditions of colonized peoples, and has recently caused museums such as the Canadian Museum of Civilization to reevaluate their own structures in order to incorporate the concept of ritual respect for the spiritual traditions and material culture of Native peoples. What would happen if works of sacred art from the dominant class were analyzed through an anthropological perspective? Going beyond offering a historical perspective on the object's significance, it would help to bring a more holistic understanding of the function of these objects for people who are alienated from these traditions by a society which is becoming increasingly secularized. To do justice to the significance of sacred art, Jeanne

New York: Routledge, 1995, p.89.

³⁶ Paul VIRILIO in André VITALIS, "Le regard omniprésent de la vidéosurveillance-- être vu sans jamais voir" in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, No. 528, Mars 1998, p.27

Cannizzo, in a general discussion of the role of museums in her article entitled "Reading the National Collections: Museums as Cultural Texts", proposes a consideration of the ethnographic context within which the work was produced.³⁷ She states, for example, that:

Gothic art is art only by metamorphosis. We, through our treatment of what are in reality altar pieces, reliquaries and so forth, through our calling them art, exhibiting them in galleries, buying them at auction, have transformed these objects into Art. I would like them to be transformed once again into material culture, so that they speak to us of their makers and *that* society and not so much of our own contemporary aesthetic judgments.³⁸

I agree with most of Cannizzo's statement, but I believe she falls into the trap of considering artefacts from a distant time as material manifestations of dead cultures. The formal characteristic of works which stem from the Catholic tradition, as is most certainly the case with Gothic and Neo- Gothic roots, still have strong connotations for people who find their roots within it. Emphasis on how the work speaks to *this*, our present society, is as important as how it speaks of the society which produced it.

One could argue that the National Gallery appropriates the "symbolic capital" of the Chapel, to 'consecrate' its own space as the temple of secular beauty for Canadian culture. Pierre Bourdieu defines "symbolic capital" in the following manner, "'Symbolic capital' is to be understood as economic or political capital that is disavowed, misrecognized and thereby recognized, hence legitimate, a 'credit' which, under certain conditions, and always in the long run, guarantees 'economic' profits."³⁹ As such, the

³⁷ Jeanne CANNIZO, "Reading the National Collections: Museums as Cultural Texts" in Leslie H. TEPPER, ed., *Toward the 21st Century: New Directions for Canada's National Museums*, Canadian Museum of Civilization Mercury Series Directorate Paper No. 5, 1989, p.162.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp.162-3. Emphasis by Cannizzo.

³⁹ Pierre Bourdieu, "The Production of Belief: Contribution to an Economy of Symbolic

symbolic value of the Rideau Street Chapel helps to perpetuate, indeed to legitimate the canonical structures and ideology of the dominant capitalist class through the privileged status it holds in the museum and in literature which help in propagating its canonical nature. Noppen confirms this in the opening of his book on the Chapel as he states that:

A museum, by its very nature, endows a work of art with a certain status if only by preserving it for posterity. Thus, the installation of the interior decor of the chapel of the Rideau Street Convent in the National Gallery confers on that work a particular standing, and it is noteworthy, too, in that few museums have chosen to showcase elements of architecture.⁴⁰

In this quote, Noppen advances the theory that it is the National Gallery which imbues the Chapel with a special status, but the two buildings complement one another in a symbolic dialogue of mutual legitimization. The museum personifies the canon, and the Chapel, although subservient to these new, secular rules, also becomes part of the canon by virtue of its inclusion in the Museum.

However broad Bourdieu makes his definition of 'symbolic capital', I find the concept to be limiting, and perhaps even misleading when applied to the ethnographic specificity of works of art which once served ritual purposes. I would propose the concept of 'spiritual capital' to better explain this reality which I believe is often overlooked and like 'symbolic capital', misrecognized in sacred works of art. I would propose that the degree of reification of spiritual power or authority which is manifest in a specific sacred (art) object determines the amount of 'spiritual capital' with which it is imbued. For example, a consecrated tabernacle in a Catholic Church is priceless to a devout Roman Catholic. More than a mere symbol of the divinity for someone who is part of this specific group, it is the place where the Godhead resides in the form of the

Goods" in *The Field of Cultural Production- Essays on Art and Literature*, Great Britain: Columbia University Press, 1993, p.75.

⁴⁰ Noppen, p.17.

Host. The value which even a deconsecrated work holds for someone with these specific beliefs, can be sufficient to cause the faithful to protect these objects when they feel that their integrity is threatened in some way. This was demonstrated by Hull councillor Villeneuve's desire to purchase the Chapel's altar. Mgr. Plourde's initial reaction when faced with the prospect of Harold Kalman's secular wedding being held in the Chapel would also indicate a similar memory trace of the former spiritual use of the Chapel.

The Chapel which was an integral part of the spiritual life of Gertrude E. Maloney's Alma Mater is now, in my estimation, like a ship out of water. It cannot "brest the Sea" as it once did, a spiritual scull bottled in a glass galleon whose ritual purposes are limited to the confined lakes and rivers of secular worship. But in spite of the potentially problematic readings one can make of the Chapel in its new setting, in spite of the ambiguities inherent in its recontextualization, the installation now in the National Gallery is a monument to Maloney's memories and to those of all who were touched in some way or other by the Sisters of Charity. A spiritual spark, a remnant from its past voyages remains, even as it lies disquietingly still...

CHAPTER TWO

**PROPRIETY, FAÇADISM, AND THE PROBLEM OF THE SACRED:
VITRUVIAN *DECORUM* AND THE RIDEAU STREET CONVENT CHAPEL
INSTALLATION/RESTORATION**

FAÇADE n.f. (it. *facciata*). 1. Chacune des faces extérieures d'un bâtiment. *Façade principale, façade postérieure, façades latérales*. 2. Face d'un bâtiment sur laquelle s'ouvre l'entrée principale, donnant sur la rue ou le chemin d'accès. 3. Fig. Apparence trompeuse d'une personne. *Sa gentillesse n'est qu'une façade.*⁴¹

People bring their social and cultural traditions with them when they intrude upon the planned symmetry of buildings. They deconstruct the vision imposed upon them by museums by processing what is on display within its walls through culturally biased lenses. The traditional role of the façade in the design of a building is to prepare the viewer for the experience which awaits her or him upon entrance into the building. But the postmodern practice of façadism incorporates an element of surprise for the viewer. The organic relationship between the exterior and interior of a building is severed. After a brief general discussion of the application of façadism and Vitruvian architectural principles in this chapter, I will evaluate how these can be applied to the example of the Rideau Street Chapel restoration/installation in light of the compromised spiritual significance of this building in the context of the National Gallery.

Bernard Tschumi terms the relationship which humans have with their built environment as being one of violence:

⁴¹ *Le Petit Larousse Illustré 1995*, Paris: Larousse, p.425

1. There is no architecture without action, no architecture without events, no architecture without program.
2. By extension, there is no architecture without violence.

The first of these statements runs against the mainstream of architectural thought by refusing to favor space at the expense of action. The second statement argues that although the logic of objects and the logic of man are independent in their relations to the world, *they inevitably face one another in an intense confrontation*. Any relationship between a building and its users is one of violence, for any use means the intrusion of a human body into a given space, the intrusion of one into another. This intrusion is inherent in the idea of architecture; *any reduction of architecture to its spaces at the expense of its events is as simplistic as the reduction of architecture to its facades*.⁴²

The façades of buildings, like the psychological ones put up by people, can be deceptive. In many cases façadism is applied in the most superficial manner, with little or no consideration for the traditions which [in]formed the building's original purpose(s). The original program, the reason for which the edifice was built, is often supplanted by the new function which the building is slated to serve.

Although preservation of heritage can have religious overtones, it is also a political, stoic ideal. In his book entitled *Principles of Architectural History*, which was originally published in German in 1914, Paul Frankl proposes a way to look at buildings which acknowledges, 82 years before the publication of Tschumi's book, the importance of considering how events shape the purpose and importance of a building's signification:

Buildings may last mechanically and chemically longer than pictures, but their life span as living works of art is often much shorter. [...] A building dies as soon as the life within it has vanished, even if we know the customs of the people who once belonged to it. Nevertheless, a trace of

⁴² Bernard TSCHUMI, *Architecture and Disjunction*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1996: 121-122. Emphasis by author.

this vanished life remains behind in the building to the extent that the purpose is incarnated in the form of the space.⁴³

What is the implication of Frankl's statement when applied to the specific case of the Rideau Street Chapel? I would argue that the form of the Chapel evokes the liturgical function which it used to serve. It is a material manifestation which strongly connotes the religious ceremonies once held there, and this "trace of its vanished life" still persists in spite of deconsecration.

When art historians discuss Vitruvius's (c.90-20 BCE) work *De Architectura Libri Decem* (the Ten Books of Architecture), the concepts which generally receive attention are *Firmitas*, *Venustas* and *Commoditas* (form, beauty and function). But as Ricardo L. Castro has pointed out in his essay "Significant Buildings of the 1980s", one concept which is often overlooked, and which is as important as the first three is the notion of propriety, or *Decorum*.⁴⁴ Could this notion be adapted to postmodern architecture, especially when considering the recycling, restoration and urban environment where sacred buildings interact or intersect with secular space? Vitruvius defines propriety as, "...that perfection in style which comes when a work is authoritatively constructed on approved principles. It arises from *prescription*, from *usage*, or from *nature*."⁴⁵

Vitruvius recognized that since about the third century BCE, architectural expenditures had become a primary means of winning electoral support in the Roman Republic. Generals who came back from successful military campaigns were expected by the senate to contribute to the welfare of the state by expending large sums of money for

⁴³ Paul FRANKL, *Principles of Architectural History*, Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1968, pp.159-60.

⁴⁴ Ricardo L. CASTRO, "Significant Buildings of the 1980's" in *Grassroots Greystones & Glass Towers*, Montréal: Véhicule Press, 1991, p.115.

⁴⁵ Marcus Pollio VITRUVIUS (translated by Morris Hickey Morgan), *Vitruvius: The Ten Books of Architecture*, New York: Dover Publications, 1960, p.14. Emphasis by author.

public buildings, which asserted the power of the Roman state to its citizens.⁴⁶

Architecture was a physical manifestation of that power, an ideological tool which could be used by the governing classes at once to reassure common citizens of the Republic's might, while at the same time embodying the upper class's superiority to plebians. As such, architecture in Rome had become almost as important a political tool for statesmen as the art of rhetoric.⁴⁷

Vitruvius in his attempt to elevate the status of architecture to that of rhetoric, dedicated his *De Architectura* to Caesar's nephew and successor, Augustus.⁴⁸ The concept of *decorum* finds its roots within Greek philosophy. Onians states that: "*Decor* (or rather *decorum*) is, then, a Greek idea, formulated as a means of ensuring that people followed the pattern of nature. It had a central place in Aristotle's *Ethics* and in his *Rhetoric*. Later it had been taken up enthusiastically by the Stoics, who asserted that man should "live according to nature"". ⁴⁹ Indeed, Vitruvius provides the first recorded attempt to naturalize the orders of architecture,⁵⁰

Decorum incorporates the concept of "appropriateness" of buildings, with the moral superiority of Romans, and is an integral part of the Stoicist appreciation of architecture. Vitruvius' definition of the principle of *decorum* incorporates the ideal that a great man, Augustus, ruler of a great country, should build great buildings which reflect the power he has over the people he is divinely entitled to govern.⁵¹ He combines this concept of Roman moral superiority with mathematical reasoning, technical mastery, and

⁴⁶ John ONIANS, *Bearers of Meaning- The Classical Orders in Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988, p.33.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ ONIANS, p.37.

⁵⁰ See Joseph RYKWERT, *On Adam's house in Paradise : the idea of the primitive hut in architectural history*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1981, pp.105-140.

⁵¹ Onians, p.33.

attention to proportions in all parts of buildings to justify why architecture should become a science in the Roman state.⁵²

The dedication of his written work to Augustus, like Virgil's dedication of the *Aeneid* to this same man, ensured that he fulfilled his civic duty as a loyal servant to the state, in line with the stoic ideal which was of paramount importance in Roman society in Vitruvius's time. Literature, especially epic poetry like Virgil's, was a powerful tool of persuasion. Although Vitruvius's *De Architectura* was a more functional work of literature, the stoic respect he pays to Augustus was probably as important as the practical aspects of his work. As much as his rational thinking helped in solidifying his arguments, the elaborate dedication of his work to the ruler definitely helped in giving them credibility.

In Vitruvius's opinion, a work of quality must consider form or structure, function and beauty. According to this principle, the form of the building must follow the function for which it was built in order for beauty to result in the finished product. These general principles have been adopted as standards of aesthetic judgment through the ages. They have also been applied to varying extents to the judgment of sculpture, painting and crafts up to our era. Vitruvius had specific and detailed prescriptions as to how these principles were to be applied to architecture.

The notion of *decorum* in architecture comes into play in a tangible manner when Vitruvius discusses the orders of architecture. In chapter II of the first book, Vitruvius describes *The Fundamental Principles of Architecture*, of which *decorum* is one.

[...] From prescription, in the case of hypaethral edifices, open to the sky, in honour of Jupiter Lightning, the Heaven, the Sun, or the Moon: for these are gods whose semblances and manifestations we behold before our eyes in the sky when it is cloudless and bright. The temples of Minerva, Mars, and Hercules will be Doric, since the virile strength of these gods

⁵² Ibid.

makes daintiness entirely inappropriate for their houses. In the temples to Venus, Flora, Proserpine, Spring-Water, and the Nymphs, the Corinthian order will be found to have particular significance, because these are delicate divinities and so its rather slender outlines, its flowers, leaves, and ornamental volutes will lend propriety where it is due. The construction of temples of the Ionic order to Juno, Diana, Father Bacchus, and other gods of that kind, will be in keeping with the middle position which they hold; for the building of such will be an appropriate combination of the severity of the Doric and the delicacy of the Corinthian.

6. Propriety arises from usage when buildings having magnificent interiors are provided with elegant entrance-courts to correspond; for there will be no propriety in the spectacle of an elegant interior approached by a low, mean entrance. Or, if dentils be carved in the cornice of a Doric entablature or triglyphs represented in the Ionic entablature over the cushion-shaped capitals of the columns, *the effect will be spoilt by the transfer of the peculiarities of the one order of building to the other, the usage in each class having been fixed long ago.*

7. Finally, propriety will be due to natural causes if, for example, *in the case of all sacred precincts we select very healthy neighborhoods with suitable springs of water in the places where the fanes are to be built, particularly in the case of those to Aesculapius and to Health, gods by whose healing powers great numbers of the sick are apparently cured. For when their diseased bodies are transferred from an unhealthy to a healthy spot, and treated with waters from health-giving springs, they will the more speedily grow well. The result will be that the divinity will stand in higher esteem and find his dignity increased, all owing to the nature of his site.* There will also be natural propriety in using an eastern light for bedrooms and libraries, a western light in winter for baths and winter apartments, and a northern light for picture galleries and other places in which a steady light is needed; for that quarter of the sky grows neither light nor dark with the course of the sun, but remains steady and unshifting all day long.⁵³

It would seem possible to collapse propriety and style, given the definitive prescriptions which Vitruvius assigns to each order of architecture. But the common thread which ties each elaborate definition of the sub-principles of *decorum*-- prescription, usage, nature-- goes beyond style and suggests an underlying theme of ritual respect.

⁵³ VITRUVIUS, p.15.

I have italicized the parts of the previous quote which reflect this aspect of the principle of *decorum*, the most important of which being, "The result will be that the divinity will stand in higher esteem and find his dignity increased, all owing to the nature of his site." But respect for the integrity of the orders of architecture is also important when considering its impact on the message which is transmitted by the building.

What would be the place of *decorum* in architectural practice in the postmodern era? Certainly, the role of pagan goddesses and gods or even the relation of the orders in Christian architecture has very little to do with the relationship which postmodern secular viewers have with their built environment. Indeed, Modernism, with its emphasis on purity of form, or letting the 'structure speak for itself', has done away with the orders of architecture, in an attempt to establish a new building vocabulary. Ornate capitals, mouldings, and other classical elements have resurged in postmodern building practice, but as mere decorative elements which only superficially refer to the significance which the orders had before the advent of Modernism. At the same time, spirituality has become increasingly marginalized within the secular society in which we live. Cathedrals have given way to high-rises as the most elaborate and costly building types to erect. Is there a place for the respect of sacred traditions and buildings erected for the specific purpose of worship within postmodernity?

In his article "Significant buildings of the 1980s", Ricardo L. Castro likens façadism to taxidermy. He points out that this procedure only aims at, "...keep[ing] the skin of buildings, complying with developers' demands for maximum floor rentability while preserving a certified heritage front in an attempt to pacify those concerned with architectural preservation."⁵⁴ Former executive director of Heritage Montreal, Joshua Wolfe expands on Castro's point, remarking that, "When taken to excess, the preservation of façades and other bits and pieces of a building is exploitative, akin to necrophelia.

⁵⁴ CASTRO, p.112.

Present design requirements too often seek the rearrangement of an old structure, leading the contemporary architect to neglect the spirit of the original building."⁵⁵ These descriptions of buildings as organic entities approach Frankl's call for considering buildings as living things.

The problem which is posed by façadism takes on particular significance when this method of preservation is applied to sacred buildings. Churches are especially resonant with spiritual connotations which tap deeply into people's identity and belief systems. Whereas the 'architectural taxidermy' of façadism guts a building's interior, the reverse has been done to the *Rideau Street Chapel*, resulting in what I refer to as 'architectural surgery'. Transplanted within a new building the Chapel becomes an aesthetic relic within the high temple of the secular cult of beauty for Canadian culture. The entire display space of the Gallery is in fact a giant ambulatory for tourists, the secular pilgrims of our era, to witness the aesthetic achievements, in both the secular and sacred arts within a quasi-religious context. The designation of the Rideau Street Chapel to the status of aesthetic relic brings about the question of the propriety of this recontextualization.

Charles C. Hill, Curator of Canadian Art at the National Gallery admits that the Chapel space is somewhat sterile and impractically set up. However, he states that there is a concerted effort on the part of the Gallery to try and make the space live again. Several performances by world-class musicians, dancers, performance, and visual artists such as Betty Goodwin are scheduled on a regular basis in the Chapel.⁵⁶ But in spite of

⁵⁵ Joshua WOLFE, "The Façade Fad: Saving Face Isn't Always Enough" in Bryan Demchinsky ed., *Grassroots, Greystones & Glass Towers*, Montreal: Véhicule Press, 1991, p.173.

For more on façadism, see Magali Sarfatti LARSON, *Behind the Postmodern facade: architectural change in late twentieth century America*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.

⁵⁶ Conversation with Charles C. Hill held on March 20, 1997.

these efforts, the problem of ritual respect in the use of the Chapel's space, I argue, is one which will remain problematic as long as it remains in the Gallery. This lack in the current way in which the Chapel is presented could be addressed by mounting an exhibition within the installation to better explain the use and history of the Chapel when it was a living building. This should be done in order to qualify the aesthetic mold imposed upon it, and bring forth aspects of the Chapel which are silenced in the present exhibit. In an interview with author Dan Turner, Moshe Safdie describes the significance of the Rideau Street Chapel as follows:

Safdie: "You don't enter the chapel from a gallery. You enter it from a courtyard of about equal volume, but open to the sky. I don't think most people realize what the experience of the chapel is, but they feel it. You come into a courtyard and there's color: flowers, blue sky, pink walls. And then you enter another room and it's got the fan-vault ceiling, with a lot of blue in it, all vary ornate. And I think there's a connection. The courtyard experience prepares you for the chapel experience, and gives you something much more exciting than what you'd get if you had come from one of the vaulted rooms. I think it makes it less of an exhibit and more of a natural sequence.

Taking that little [passage] around a corner is very important. Because it pulls you off the normal way of moving, and takes you under to a connected place, but a mysterious one. I think the formal language of the overall gallery is in harmony with the formal language of the chapel.⁵⁷

What is implied by his statement that people "feel" what the "experience" of the Chapel is supposed to mean?

Why does the passage take on such importance? It could be conceived as a symbol of spiritual initiation, a preparatory journey from the Edenic experience of the garden court. As the viewer walks into the passage, which snakes itself into the entrance

⁵⁷ Dan TURNER, *Safdie's Gallery- An Interview with the Architect*, 1989, p.17.

of the Chapel, she or he is reminded of the grassroots effort to save the Chapel which has been made concrete on what has been called the "Wall of Honour". It reads:

The chapel was saved through the efforts of: -A Capital for Canadians - Heritage Committee -Action Sandy Hill -Save the Convent Committee - Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development -National Research Council of Canada -The National Gallery of Canada -Numerous individuals.

Perhaps the architect has shown proper *decorum* in architectural practice when the Chapel installation is read in this manner, paying respect to those who cherished the reconstructed building. However, when one enters into the reconstructed Chapel, there is most definitely a sense of loss which is felt by some viewers confronted with the installation. The Chapel could have been saved if more attention had been paid to it by the Roman Catholic Church before it was too late. But beyond this the sacred meaning attached to the building has been subverted, the building's 'spiritual capital' almost entirely converted to 'symbolic capital' in order to suit the purpose of a secular institution. A more appropriate method of exhibiting this installation would have been to include the historic use of the Chapel. Or perhaps it would have been better to let a dead building rest, instead of imposing on it a signification which is out of touch with its past reality and ritual function. To reiterate Vitruvius' prescription on propriety, he states that, when it is properly applied, "The result will be that the divinity will stand in higher esteem and find his dignity increased, all owing to the nature of his site."

CHAPTER THREE

REVELATIONS

I. Revelation number one: Samuel-de-Champlain elementary school

*Partons à l'aventure
Partons dès maintenant
Partons à l'aventure
Partons sans perdre de temps*

This verse has been taken from the theme song from my Confirmation Sacrament, entitled *Partons à l'aventure!* Like much of my Catholic heritage, this song is but a fragment of an identity which I have only started to try to piece back together in the course of writing this study. I remember practicing this song in a chorus with my classmates for the Confirmation ceremony at Easter. And as I am writing this I can remember the school library at Samuel-de-Champlain elementary, where I practiced the song with my 5th grade classmates. Interjections between the chorus and the verses of "*Ohé partons! (lead voice) Ohé partons! (chorus answers) Partons dès maintenant! (lead) Partons dès maintenant! (Chorus)*", "*Larguons les amares*", hoisting of the sails, tending to the boards, and other details which must be attended to in order to make sure that a ship is sea-worthy were all part of the verses of this song. Those words, and the melody of the song have brought back a flood of images from my youth-- the red string necklaces with a silhouette of a boat carved in wood we had to wear at the ceremony, the sunlight filtering through the black gridded windows of the library where we prepared for the ceremony, the poems which we had written on paper boats which covered a board in the church during the Easter ceremony, having to dress like little sailors for the ceremony... Poetry and song have triggered visual, audio, and tactile memories of a site and time still not too distant in my life which was supposed to transform all of us who

partook in it, becoming shipmates in the 'great adventure' which was that of the Catholic Church.

Every child enrolled in the Catholic public school system in Québec in the 1970's had to take part in this ceremony. Much has happened in Québec's social and political landscape since those days when the province's youth was still massively indoctrinated to become devout Catholics. Around this time, Québec went through its first referendum on sovereignty, in 1980. The shift from a democracy which was still dominated by the Catholic Church's ideological stranglehold on the population and key members of government to a system which became increasingly secularized on the basis of Québec's 'catching up' with the rest of North America in scientific, social, and economic fields had started in the 1940's, but it is only between 1960-66 that the most dramatic changes started taking place. Jean Lesage and the Québec Liberal party's *équipe du tonnerre* gave birth to the era which has been coined the Quiet Revolution, which concretized these changes.⁵⁸ This was the most important, radical shift in Québec politics. The Quiet Revolution freed Québec from a political system which was a *de facto* feudal Jansenist theocracy to a modern democracy. The dramatic decline in church attendance was paralleled by the fact that stores started to open on Sundays in the eighties. For many people, the allegiance they held to the Catholic Church was transposed to the Sovereignty movement. However, I believe that to posit the Sovereignty movement as *the* alternative which all devout French speaking Québécois turned to as the Church lost its hold is a

⁵⁸ The writing team of *Destinies-- Canadian History since Confederation*, argues that most of the changes had taken place by 1964, but that the Union Nationale continued the reforms when reelected in 1966, as did Robert Bourassa's Liberals in 1970, and René Levesque's Parti Québécois from 1976-80. These authors argue that, "...the Quiet Revolution, in spite of pauses, lasted two decades."

Francis, R. Douglas, Jones, Richard, and Smith, Donald B., *Destinies-- Canadian History since Confederation*, Toronto: Harcourt Brace Canada, 1992, p.399. See also Ibid. pp.393-98 for changes which started to occur in Québec society before the Quiet Revolution.

dangerous mistake.⁵⁹ Political figures in Lower Canada and subsequently Québec have tried to create a French Canadian nation separate from the rest of Canada since Conquest, and this current of political thought evolved in parallel to the Church's ideological hold on the population.⁶⁰ The Catholic Church has had such a powerful influence on the political affairs of the province that it is easy to confuse and conflate the sacred and secular currents. It is true that many people who felt cheated by the Church's repressive stance no doubt felt, and still feel, that the realistic chance of achieving Sovereignty in their lifetime might arouse a certain degree of fanaticism. This especially holds true when an elected party whose ultimate goal is to achieve this political independence, the Parti Québécois, is in power and spurs the dominant population of the province in this direction. But this debate will ultimately find its resolution by political, not religious means.

⁵⁹ See Ian Darragh, "Quebec's Quandry" in *National Geographic*, Vol. 192, No.5, pp.46-67.

⁶⁰ The Church was placed at odds with the movement for a French Canadian nation when it maintained its neutrality during the Patriotic uprisings of 1847-48. The British Crown allowed freedom of religion for Francophones and gave the Church large sums of money in return for a guarantee from the Church that it would use its political influence keep the flock faithful to the Crown and discourage revolutionary behaviour. The Catholic Church in Québec had become, in the 19th century, an agent of the British crown, helping to ensure that the *habitants* would not revolt against their 'masters'. It was during this era that the reigns of power of the Church were tightened in French Canada. Little states that: "By 1848 the Church found itself with both motives and the means to launch a full-scale colonization drive [in the Eastern Townships]. Not only had the exodus from the cover-crowded seigneuries to the United States reached alarming proportions, but the hierarchy's collaboration with the British authorities during the Rebellions of 1837-38, and with the La Fontaine party during the forties, had brought it the rewards of increased clerical recruitment from France and a more dominant role in French-Canadian society."

J.I. Little, "The Catholic Church and French-Canadian Colonization of the Eastern Townships, 1821-51" in *Revue de l'Université d'Ottawa/ University of Ottawa Quarterly*, LII, 1982, p.151.

For more on the social context within which these changes took place, see Mason WADE, *The French Canadians, 1760-1967*, Toronto : Macmillan Co. of Canada, 1968.

One aspect of the dissolution of the Catholic Church's influence on Québec society which is overlooked because of the mainstream media's obsession with the Sovereignty issue, is that people have attempted to find other alternatives to fill the huge gap which has been created by the Church's apparent downfall.⁶¹ For all of its repressive power, the Church did hold out the possibility of filling a basic human need-- belief. And one of the ways in which this belief system was propagated within Quebec society was through the use of symbols.

⁶¹ Ian Darragh writes that the Roman Catholic Church's ideological hold of the minds of the population of Québec has been severely compromised, "... in the space of a generation, and now 19 percent of couples live in common-law relationships, while 44 percent of children are born out of wedlock. ""So powerful was the Catholic Church in Quebec that its collapse has left a deep void", observes Lysiane Gagnon, a columnist with Montreal's *La Presse*." Ibid., pp. 62-3. Nationalism, she believes, has become the religion of many Québécois. While it is true that there has been a severe reaction against the Church and all of its traditions in Québec, this statement, which conflates statistics which can be interpreted as proof of the Québécois degeneracy with their shift in allegiance to Sovereignty is quite disturbing for two reasons. Firstly, it vilifies Québec nationalists without considering the historic social changes which have given birth to the political movement, making it appear as "evil". Secondly, it denies the complexities of the changes which have taken place on the spiritual landscape in Québec in the 1970's and 1980's. The shift from a collective world perception to a more individual way of thinking brought about by the modernization of Québec has caused people to seek alternative faiths, and the Church has actively tried to respond to the pressures of modernity by offering alternatives of its own.

For more on this subject, see:

Pauline CÔTÉ, *Les Transactions Politiques des Croyants-- Charismatiques et Témoins de Jéhovah dans le Québec des années 1970 et 1980*, Ottawa: Les Presses de l'Université d'Ottawa, 1993

Karla POEWE, *Charismatic Christianity as a Global Culture*, Columbia, S.C. :University of South Carolina Press, 1994.

And the following articles in: Jean Paul ROULEAU and Jacques ZYLBERBERG, *Les Mouvements Religieux Aujourd'hui Théories et Pratiques-- Les Cahiers de recherches en sciences de la religion, vol.5*, Montréal: Les Éditions Bellarmin, 1994:

Jean-Paul ROULEAU, "Mouvements religieux aujourd'hui"

Paul-André TURCOTTE, "Les abstentionnistes, ceux qui refusent l'institution"

Jean-Guy VAILLANCOUR, "Les groupes socio-politiques progressistes dans le catholicisme québécois contemporain"

Jacques ZYLBERBERG and Jean-Paul MONTMINY, "Soumission charismatique: thanatologie d'un mouvement sacré".

These images, and the past which they evoke, have as much to do with how I experienced architecture in my youth as the walls of Samuel-de-Champlain elementary school themselves. It is not a feeling of nostalgia which has brought me back to the school to see what the walls of its library would awaken within me nearly twenty years later. I have been there to see whether this rather nondescript site would awaken a conditioned response to symbols which I thought I had banished from my mind a long time ago.

The library (Figure 7) does not at all look like it used to when I was young. The colours are different-- the mustard yellow curtains which adorned the windows of this room have been replaced by cerulean blue ones. Gone are the dark brown protective grills around the windows. Computers are now in the classroom. Everything seems a little smaller from my vantage point as an adult. So much has changed. But the walls still sing that melody to me, in spite of enclosing a rather nondescript room filled with metal shelves holding books. None of the symbolic trappings of the Catholic Church were there to reinforce the memories which the poem evoked in my mind, however. Those had to be found elsewhere in the building.

The entrance lobby of the school (Figure 8) still has visual reminders of this institution's allegiance to the Catholic Church and the Eurocentric history which has been promulgated within the system. A seemingly hand-carved wooden crucifix with Christ in robes stands between a picture of the bishop of the diocese of St-Jean, Mgr. Bernard Hubert, who was appointed to this position when I was in attendance at Samuel-de Champlain, and a reproduction of a print depicting the school's namesake, the French explorer, Samuel de Champlain. The *Commission Scolaire de Brossard* is still a Catholic school board, and these images will no doubt remain until the day school boards become linguistically based, a logical continuation of the secularization of Québec society. These images struck an ideological chord with me, a sense of understanding of how deep my indoctrination was, and this in a *public* school.

Above the glass pane which separates the lobby from the secretary's office is a stylized wooden carving of a boat with a maple leaf as a sail. (Figure 9) This symbol provides a synthesis for the joint mission of the Catholic Church and the public school system in Québec. To use Pierre Bourdieu's terminology, it is a material manifestation of the 'symbolic capital' which has been invested by both Church and State to ensure the formation of loyal, strong, Catholic citizens. This symbol refers to the song and theme of the Confirmation ceremony, but how does it all relate to the history of the Rideau Street Convent Chapel, apart from the fact that Getrude E. Maloney's valadictory poem also refers to her alma mater as a ship?

The answer to this question is vital in order to understand how the Catholic Church has been perpetuated in the French Canadian context. The symbol of the ship is a powerful one which directly relates to at least one story in the Old Testament and three parables written in the New Testament. The following are my own hermeneutical readings of these tales, based on knowledge which I gained by paying attention during the *cathéchèse* part of class in elementary school.

The most commonly known story, recounted in Genesis 6-9, is that of Noah's Ark. Apart from being a symbol of the Church, and the protection it would offer to the faithful in the most desperate of times, the resolution of the story of the Ark is one of the most important to show the concrete relationship between God and the faithful. After the flood, God establishes the first Covenant with the people of Israel, "*Voici à quoi je m'engage: Jamais plus la grande inondation ne supprimera la vie sur terre; il n'y aura plus de grande inondation pour ravager la terre... L'arc-en-ciel est le signe de l'alliance que j'ai pris à l'égard de tous les êtres qui vivent sur la terre*".⁶²

⁶² *La Bible- Ancien et Nouveau Testament*, Toronto: Société Biblique Canadienne, 1987, Genèse, 9:11 and 17, Ancien Testament, p.13.

The first New Testament parable, recounted in Matthew 4:18-25, Mark 1:16-20 and Luke 5:1-11, relates how Jesus recruits four of his disciples, fishermen plying their trade on the shores of lake Galilae. He tells them, "*Venez avec moi et je ferai de vous des pêcheurs d'hommes.*"⁶³ He therefore offers them to join the crew a new ship, the Church, which will fish for souls instead of food.

The second parable, from Matthew 8:23-27, Mark 4:35-41, and Luke 8 22:25, relates how Jesus quells a storm while he and his disciples are sailing in a small ship. The fact that Jesus sarcastically tells the disciples, "*Pourquoi avez-vous si peur? Comment votre foi est petite!*",⁶⁴ is a reminder of the Covenant and that they should not fear as long as they are within the boat. In this story, Christ takes the place of the rainbow as the symbol of the New Covenant between God and the faithful, and indeed, his disciples react in awe before him by saying, "*Quel genre d'homme est-ce pour que même les vents et l'eau du lac lui obéissent?*"⁶⁵

The third story, found in Matthew 14:22-33, Mark 6:45-52, and John 6:16-21, tells the tale of how Jesus walked on water to join his disciples in a ship the middle of lake Galilae. This tale from the scriptures is used to symbolize that Jesus personifies the Church, and that faith in him can make the impossible possible. Like a ship, the symbol of the Church, he can walk on troubled waters and rescue the earthly Church in times of peril if its members demonstrate a strong faith in him. His disciples, upon seeing him fear that the figure which is coming towards them is an apparition, and they doubt that it is in fact him. In Matthew's recounting of the tale, Peter asks, "*Seigneur, si c'est bien toi, ordonne que j'aille vers toi sur l'eau.*"⁶⁶ Jesus calls to him, and Peter walks on water to him until the wind, a symbolic reminder of the flood in Genesis, scares him and shatters

⁶³ Ibid., Matthieu 4:19, Nouveau Testament, p.8.

⁶⁴ Ibid., Matthieu 8:26, Nouveau Testament, p.14.

⁶⁵ Ibid., Matthieu 8:27, Nouveau Testament, p.14.

⁶⁶ Ibid., Matthieu 14:28, Nouveau Testament, p.26

his faith, causing him to sink. Jesus saves him before he drowns, and asks him, "*Comme ta foi est petite! Pourquoi as-tu douté?*"⁶⁷ Since Christ represented as the embodiment of God's New Covenant with humanity in this tale, Peter had nothing to fear, hence Christ's cynical response. But this tale also demonstrates the supremacy of the spiritual Church over the Earthly one, of which Peter is a symbol. The intended moral of this tale is to show that with spiritual faith, even the impossible can be accomplished.

I distinctly remember being taught the significance of these stories as part of our curriculum, which refer directly to the importance of ships within Catholic symbology. The image of the ship symbolically consecrates the space in which the image finds itself, and serves as a reminder for these stories-- be it the lobby of a school, paper ships on a board in a school library, or a wooden effigy put around the neck of school children. But the potency of the symbol transcends even this, and must be understood not only as part of the Church as a spiritual institution, but to churches as buildings. Indeed, the architectural significance of the ship as a symbol can be linked to the fact that the main part of the church where the faithful gather is called the nave. The word nave is derived from the Latin *navis*, which means ship. The origin of this tradition of considering church buildings as ships dates back to the late fourth century. A passage in the church order entitled the *Apostolic Constitutions* reads, "The church must be long in shape and must face east; in this way it resembles a ship".⁶⁸ The faithful, the spiritual bounty which Jesus set out his disciples to fish, gather and pray in the nave of the building. The wooden carving at Samuel-de-Champlain elementary school links this building with the symbolic tradition of the Church as *navis*, and marks it as part of the Roman Catholic Church's spiritual fleet. The power of this symbol is diluted, and one can easily overlook

⁶⁷ Ibid., Matthieu 14:31, Nouveau Testament, p.26

⁶⁸ Theodor KLAUSER, *A Short History of the Western Liturgy-- An Account and Some Reflections*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979 (Trans. from the German by John Halliburton), p.143.

it as the power of the Church seems to wane in Modern times. But it indicates that architecture is a powerful ideological tool when read within the social context. Once the image of Mgr. Hubert, the crucifix, and the ship are brought down from the lobby of Samuel-de-Champlain, if they are indeed brought down when linguistic school boards are instituted in Québec, a part of the building's life will be put to rest. However, it is important to consider that their placement in this school is not arbitrary, and that, although this wasn't a school run by a religious order like the Rideau Street Convent was, the Church laid claim to the minds and souls of the youths who were educated within its walls. Samuel-de-Champlain elementary school could be considered as part of the enormous fleet of public buildings which were under the control of the Roman Catholic Church.

II. Revelation number two: the church of Santa Maria in Taüll, Spain.

The first true revelation that the method which I have applied to my interpretation of the Rideau Street Convent Chapel could be used in other circumstances took place within the context of a presentation of my thesis subject which I made at the "Aesthetics and Religion" Symposium at Pompeu Fabreu University in Barcelona, held in October, 1996. Following some discussions with fellow academics at the conference, I decided to visit a small village in the Spanish Pyrenées by the name of Taüll, in order to see the church of San Climent, whose original Romanesque apsidial frescoes I had seen only days before as part of the permanent collection of the *Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya* (Figure 10). I found that the problem of ocularcentric display of sacred architectural elements which is a central problem of the display of the Rideau Street Chapel was amplified twentifold in the case of the *Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya*. But in contrast with the Rideau Street Chapel, the original buildings from which the frescoes were taken were still standing, and generally accessible.

The frescoes from a great number of First Romanesque, a building style which probably originated in tenth-eleventh century Lombardy, churches in the Pyrenées and from the countryside surrounding Barcelona were taken from their original sites to be placed on permanent display for the public in the *Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya*. This practice started in the 1920's, after the looting of the frescoes of the church of Santa Maria de Mur by Lluís Plandiura in 1919.⁶⁹ The reasons for this were practical: many of them were deteriorating because of age and damage. It was also done in order to prevent further looting of these sites because they were considered a part of the collective national heritage of the Catalan people. This implies political motives: the Spanish government aimed to keep this prized collection within its borders. These powerful symbols of Spanish nationality could be used to inspire national pride. They are now on display in a museum which has, "*Con objeto de aumentar sus fondos y de cubrir de un modo planificado todos los campos de la historia del arte, el Museo sigue ya una política de adquisiciones mesurada, y proyecta una atracción de donaciones concebida como un servicio al país, que ayuda al mismo tiempo a proteger el patrimonio nacional.*"⁷⁰ In spite of the fact that this particular excerpt was written in Spanish, the national heritage which this text claims the museum has a mission to protect is that of the Catalan state, not that of Spain.⁷¹

⁶⁹ For more on the history of the frescoes, see: *Prefiguración del Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya*, Barcelona: Lunwerg Editores y Olimpiada Cultural, 1992, pp.53-55.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p.16

⁷¹ The original text of *Prefiguración del Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya* is written in Catalan.

For more on the question of modern Catalan nationhood see:

Edward C. HANSON, *Rural Catalonia under the Franco regime : the fate of regional culture since the Spanish Civil War*, Cambridge ; New York : Cambridge University Press, 1977

Richard HERR & John H.R. POLT, *Iberian identity : essays on the nature of identity in Portugal and Spain*, Berkeley : Institute of International Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 1989

The national consciousness of the modern Catalan state has emerged from centuries of rivalry between Barcelona, the capital of Catalonia, and Madrid, the capital of Spain and of Catalonia's rival region, Castille. The tension between these rival regions has manifested itself in repression of the culture and people of Catalonia through the centuries. For example, in 1716, "...King Philip V banned the use of [the] Catalan [language] in teaching, publishing and government."⁷² But the repression which is most fresh in the Catalan people's mind is much more recent than that. Catalonia was a stronghold of anti-fascist sentiment during the Spanish Civil war of 1936-1939. Francisco Franco (1892-1975), the fascist general who won the war against the republican forces and imposed himself as dictator of Spain, imposed similar measures on the region.⁷³ It was Franco's governmental policy that Catalan should not be even be spoken: "...activists from Franco's Falange party abused people whom they caught speaking Catalan in public [with the cry "Perro Catalán, habla en cristiano!" (Catalan dog, speak christian!)] as late as the 1960s."⁷⁴ Complex social change which occurred after Franco died in 1975 eventually gave way to period of relative *détente* with the reinstatement of democracy in Spain.⁷⁵ But Catalan nationalist sentiment grew during this time. The most dramatic expression of Catalan pride on the international stage came in 1986, when Barcelona was awarded with the privilege to hold the 1992 Olympic Summer Games.

Michael KEATING, *Les défis du nationalisme moderne : Québec, Catalogne, Écosse*, Montréal : Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1997

Kenneth MEDHURST, *The Basques and Catalans*, London : Minority Rights Group, 1987

Pierre VILAR, *La Catalogne dans l'Espagne moderne : recherches sur les fondements économiques des structures nationales*, Paris : S.E.V.P.E.N., 1962.

⁷² Andrew PHILLIPS, "A city in Love with Itself" in *MacLean's*, Vol. 105, No. 30, July 27, 1992, p.37

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ For a detailed account of the changes which took place in Spain from 1969 to 1982 see Paul PRESTON, *The Triumph of Democracy in Spain*, London: Routledge, 1986.

Astronomical amounts of money were invested to prepare and restructure Barcelona, the capital of Catalonia for the Games. In fact:

The national and regional governments [invested] a total of about \$9 billion over four years-- while private investors spent another 2\$ billion. That allowed city officials to put into effect plans that they had drawn up years before. "We knew where we wanted the city to go," says Xavier Roig, a onetime graduate student at Carleton University in Ottawa who now runs the mayor's office. "We just used the Olympics as an excuse to speed development and do 20 years' work in five years."⁷⁶

This provided Catalonia with the opportunity to flaunt its pride on a worldwide stage, as a projected 3.5 billion viewers got the opportunity to see the games on television.⁷⁷

Journalist Pico Iyer reported that:

The most prominent country in the early going [...] had been one that did not march [during the international parade at the Games' opening ceremonies] but made its presence felt at every turn: independent-minded Catalonia, which is determined to cast these as the Catalan, not the Spanish, Games. [...] Barcelona was eager not just to show off its faster, higher, stronger self-- reconstruction is almost as trendy as deconstruction here-- but to emphasize its distance from the Spain of myth, and of Madrid. **FREEDOM FOR CATALONIA** signs (in English) were draped from balconies and shoulders, and buttons and stickers proclaiming Catalanian independence were handed out even to kids from California. The Catalan flag, four bloodred fingers on a field of yellow, seemed to be fluttering from every window-- 28 of them on a single building!-- and not one Spanish banner was in sight. As the opening arrow approached, every other shop seemed to be saying *benvinguts*-- "welcome" in the new Olympic language of Catalan-- to what was locally known as the *Jocs Olimpics*.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ PHILLIPS, p.37.

⁷⁷ Pico IYER, "Benvinguts to the Catalan Games!-- Barcelona flashes its many stylish differences as the arc of the opening arrow begins the daling five ring show" in *Time*, Vol. 140, No. 5, August 3, 1992, p.48.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.* Emphasis by Iyer.

Although, "Only about 10 per cent of voters support outright independence",⁷⁹ the independence movement in Catalonia has made a strong mark on the culture of that region, and how culture is being written about in this region, something which could never have happened during Franco's regime.

The *Pantocrator Majestuoso* fresco of the church of San Climent in Taüll, whose replica (Figures 11, 12) I saw in the church where it was originally painted, has been traditionally written about in Spanish art historical books as a strong symbol of Spanish identity.⁸⁰ Josep Puig i Cadafalch, architect, Catalan nationalist at the beginning of the twentieth century and author of the seminal work on First Romanesque churches in Catalonia, *L'arquitectura romànica a Catalunya*, was the first art historian to consider the frescoes from Romanesque churches to be symbols of Catalan Nationalism. Stanley Meisler recounts why the Romanesque era has such importance for the cultural identity of Catalonia:

For Catalans, the era has special meaning: Catalonia emerged as an independent power during those years. It was natural that Catalans, inspired by the resurgence of nationalist feeling that came out of the 19th-century Romantic movement in Europe, would begin almost a hundred years ago to study and preserve their more than 2300 Romanesque Cathedrals, monasteries, convents and churches."⁸¹

⁷⁹ PHILLIPS, p.37.

⁸⁰ The text of *Ars Hispaniae*, however, presents them as symbols of Spanish Nationalism. For information on the frescoes and the architecture of San Climent see: Juan Antonio GAYA NUÑO and José GUIDOL RICART, *Ars Hispaniae- Historica Universal del Arte Hispánico, Volumen Quinto: Arquitectura y Escultura Románica*, Madrid: Editorial Plus-Ultra, 1948, p.34.

José GUIDOL RICART and Walter William SPENCER COOK, *Ars Hispaniae- Historica Universal del Arte Hispánico, Volumen Sexto: Pintura e Imaginería Románicas*, Madrid: Editorial Plus-Ultra, 1950, pp. 32-43.

⁸¹ Stanley MEISLER, "The Case of the Disappearing Frescoes" in *Smithsonian*, Vol. 29, No.1, April 1998, p.54.

The problems which I have already discussed concerning the placement of the Rideau Street Chapel within the National Gallery of Canada are paralleled by the collection of Romanesque frescoes in the *Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya*. The authentic frescoes of San Climent and many others taken from churches built during the same era are now found in a museum which transparently promotes Catalan nationalism. Meisler states that the *Museu* has consciously tried to maintain an aura of authenticity in its presentation of the Romanesque frescoes, "In an effort to simulate the original experience of seeing the frescoes, the museum has fashioned several rooms with apses that suggest the churches from which the paintings came."⁸² Some, like that of the *Pantocrator Majestuoso* of Taüll, (Figure 10) even have an arcade to the side, simulating the feeling of the interior of a Romanesque church. Meisler adds, however, "But it is hard to imagine that you are sitting in a cold, dark, somber church when you contemplate the magnificence and power of the museum's paintings."⁸³ Many of them were the feature attraction of the *Prefiguración* exhibition held in the *Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya* in the context of the 1992 Olympics, showing the pride of this emergent national power to the world. At this point in time, only the Romanesque collection is on display, but once the permanent display is complete the *Museu* will resemble the Canadian Museum of Civilization's Hall of History in that it will propose a path for interpretation of the culture of an independent Catalan state.

The problem of the placement of installations of sacred architectural elements in the Catalan museum case goes beyond that posed by the Rideau Street Chapel. This is not only because of the sheer number of such installations which are on permanent display within the *Museu*, but because the discourse on authenticity takes a very peculiar twist, especially in the case of the *Pantocrator Majestuoso* of San Climent in Taüll. The

⁸² Ibid., p.58.

⁸³ Ibid.

church is the first prominent structure which greets visitors who enter this small mountain *pueblito*.

Instead, the floodlights (Figure 11) ensured that the tourist *saw* the iconic replica of the image which was used as a symbol for Catalan or Spanish nationalism in the place where the original was located for centuries before being relocated. I took pictures of the apse, but unfortunately the first impression which was left by my initial contact with the fresco was so strong that my disappointment only faded lightly. Perhaps other factors also contributed to my failure to feel the new atmosphere left by the shutting of the lights in the church. Perhaps it was fatigue. The bus and taxi ride through the Spanish countryside and Pyrenées was approximately eight hours long, and I did feel a little tired, in spite of the fact that the tectonic tidal waves of the Pyrenées illuminated by the light of dawn had left me in awe. Perhaps it was the fact that even with the lights out, this was a dead church. (Figure 12) The church had some vestiges of its past history placed *pêle-mêle* in the side aisles: a baroque reredos which was evidently placed in the apse for some time, polychrome statues, paintings set on the floor next to a processional hand held platform, and other implements set out of the way of the central featured attraction. This was, after all, a national treasure which was now used for secularized ends. The saturated light of the spotlight drowned out the subtle way in which natural light plays with the with the fresco and the building as a whole. This display was set up to accommodate tourists who want to see the 'masterpiece' on display, as the focal point of the building, within its original context and to perpetuate the Catalan nationalist agenda.

Another church built during the same era as San Climent also exists in Taüll. This building, which has been consecrated as Santa Maria of Taüll also has the distinctive square campanile and herringbone masonry imported by Lombard masons during the XI and XII centuries featured at San Climent. The disappointment which I felt in visiting San Climent made me approach Santa Maria with a certain degree of cynicism-- I was

expecting this church and its frescoes to be presented in a manner similar to those in the church which greets visitors at the entrance of the town.

I opened the creaky wooden door which led into the nave. And sure enough, there were replicas of the original frescoes, which I also saw in the *Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya*. But, in contrast with San Climent, the only light which filled the diminutive nave of Santa Maria was the natural light which came from the vertical openings in the nave and side aisles, the door, a window above the entrance and the offertory candles burning to the left of the apse. The darkness was heavy, but enchanting, enveloping the space within, while the living light of the candles and that of the sun, sheltering behind thin clouds in the sky, the lancet windows allowing it just enough space to join the flickering dance of the candlelight which was taking place within the consecrated space.

This is what I had come for. The only one of my senses which was being appealed to was still sight, but I had a sense that this was how the church was meant to be seen, indeed felt and conceived of by Medieval worshippers. The temple, an expression of human culture, was at play with nature at the moment which I entered it, letting the "Light of the World" lilt into it. I completed the picture, a participant in a moment of celebration with the World. For a moment, I was hoisted on top of the World, riding the tectonic waves of the Pyrenées in an ancient vessel whose sails were filled with the gentle light of the sun.

Although I have deconstructed it, fragmenting the experience by putting it into words, the space of Santa Maria of Taüll (Figure 13) left me with a sense of holistic integrity, not of detached elements integrated to a whole as was the case with the frescoes in the Museu and in San Climent. It was a moment of mystical, not sentimental, nor aesthetic intensity. Using this as a basis for academic research might seem convoluted, as it is subjective, but I believe that it reflects a standardized architectural program on the part of the Church to enforce ideological concepts of communion between humans and nature with the temple as a an intersection for this purpose. The orientation of the church

of Santa Maria and San Climent in Taüll suggest a conscious will to use the light of the sun for purposes of worship within the multi-sensory experience of Catholic Communion. Both altars are directed towards the East, the direction from which the sun rises.⁸⁴ Mass was usually celebrated in the morning, the time at which during which the most sunlight would be allowed to filter into the churches' naves. The effect created by the glaring sunlight, which I have only partially experienced because I experienced the effect which sunlight had on the churches during the afternoon,⁸⁵ is one which diffuses the images in the frescoes, which makes them appear to be hazy. The living light and its quickly changing nature would have a phantasmagoric effect on the painted images, in effect bringing them to life.

Liturgical practice, through its use of various sensory stimulants, helped to underline the way in which society was subdivided at the time. The elevated steps leading to the platform demonstrated physically how the clergy was in a higher social strata than the peasantry. The fact that the Mass was celebrated in Latin, which rendered

⁸⁴ One of the conclusions, or principles for building churches, which Theodor Klauser draws in Appendix II of his *Short History of the Western Liturgy*, entitled: "Guiding Principles for Designing and Building a Church in the Spirit of the Roman Liturgy (Compiled in 1947 by order of and with the assistance of the Liturgical Commission and published in 1949 by the Aschendorff Press in Munster)" is that:

"It would be a mistake to abandon without good reason the venerable tradition of building our churches to face East. We should rather help the faithful to understand and to become aware once more of the profound and beautiful symbolism of turning East for prayer, thereby bringing to life once more the direction in which churches today are orientated. [...]...ideally, the object of turning East is to face God and His only begotten Son, who like the sun, are thought of as enthroned in the East and coming from the East. Now, however, this 'coming' or 'advent of God in His Theophany takes place on our altars; hence in a Christian church, the object of turning East for prayer is to face the altar; and, therefore, both priest and people have to turn towards the altar." KLAUSER, p.165. The tradition of worshipping the sun as a personification of divine essence predates this building tradition as well as Christianity. See JAY, pp.11-12 and notes.

⁸⁵ I was in San Climent from 14:45 to 15:15, thin cirrus clouds partially filling the sky, and in Santa Maria from 16:00 to 16:20, with the same conditions and a few relatively thicker clouds in the sky.

the specific meaning of what was said to the peasants during the celebration of the Eucharist inaccessible to them also highlighted the clergy's superiority as a learned class. The incense, a luxury item whose exotic perfume worshippers did not get to experience in their daily lives, provided an olfactory link between the material and spiritual worlds. The tactile stimulation provided by Holy Water during baptisms, blessings, or when the faithful made the sign of the cross as they entered the church, was a reminder of the envelopment within the faith, symbolically cleansing the sinful nature of humanity as convened by the Church. The fact which the holy wafer, which according to the conventions laid by the Church was ultimately the only way in which Salvation could be achieved, was handed from the clergy to the people also was a performative way of underlining the clergy's social superiority over the peasantry. But what of the purpose of the frescoes in this program? In the case of the representation of Christ at San Climent, the play between sunlight, filtering into the church through the small window under this figure which holds a book in its left hand which states "*Ego Sum Lux Mundi*", which seemed to emphasize the importance of which natural light has to the meaning of the scene depicted. At Santa Maria, where the central figure is a representation of the Virgin with Child, the light coming through the window can be interpreted as an allegorical representation of the Immaculate Conception, the Divinity penetrating the image of the Virgin, completing the composition animating it with the Mystical message which it is meant to impart for the assembled worshippers. In both these cases, the light of the sun as a personification of the Divinity plays a critical factor in the understanding of the paintings' signification. The liturgical program would not work as efficiently if one of the sensory stimulants were to be omitted. The building is but a vessel which allows for this pedagogical reinforcement of the difference between classes within Medieval society.

But the consideration of the celebration of the Eucharist as a mystical ceremony which provided salvation for those who hold the faith must not be underestimated. It has helped to shape the cultural identity of a great number of people within our society. Since

my view of the world stems from the Catholic tradition, I believe it is important for people to confront the collective guilt caused by the Catholic Church's abuses through the centuries. But it is equally important for people who stem from this tradition to come to terms and acknowledge that the Church is an important part of who they are.

Reconciliation with one's own cultural heritage can be a painful process. The pedagogy of the Church often places cultural barriers which tend to divide people who consider this subject to be taboo because of the Church's history of intolerance and repression towards other cultures. But this heritage also comprises of a performative aspect which should be celebrated.

Josep Puig i Cadafalch attempted to maintain the integrity of Romanesque churches which he was researching at the beginning of the century. He was not able to do so with many of them, since many were in remote regions, and some were heavily damaged. It is interesting to note, however, that in the case of the church of Santa Maria in Tarrassa, a town near Barcelona, it is reported that, "...he insisted that the paintings remain on the walls."⁸⁶ Of Meisler's own admission, the craftsmanship of these frescoes is far inferior to those of the *Pantocrator Majestoso* of Taüll, and as a consequence, are less important to the canon of Catalan art. However, unlike Meisler who seems to suggest that these were "old"⁸⁷ paintings to be left in their site for authenticity, Puig i Cadafalch was probably sensible to the fact that the maintaining of the integrity of the site went beyond the painting's "age". The maintaining of frescoes in their original sites no doubt gave more clout to his Nationalist agenda, by showing that the Romanesque buildings of Catalonia were still alive, with their frescoes, used as symbols which

⁸⁶ MEISLER, p.55.

⁸⁷ "...a visitor, standing in front of the frescoes in the apse of the dark, dank church [of Santa Maria in Tarrassa], built of thick, powdery walls, is always conscious of how old they are". Ibid.

embodied the birth of their national spirit still intact in the heart of the buildings would make a stronger case for the resilience of the Catalan spirit.

III. Revelation number three: Paul Wong's *Chinaman's Peak— Walking the Mountain in the National Gallery of Canada*

This third revelation actually preceded the second one which I have just described. It is only with hindsight that I realize the impact which it has had upon me. Indeed, the ocularcentric manner in which the Rideau Street Convent Chapel is presented in the National Gallery left me with a sensory emptiness which confused me. Something was definitely missing in the presentation of this building type with which I was familiar. The Chapel's resurrection in the Gallery lacked a sense of conviction which I found in a work of contemporary art on display in the National Gallery itself...

The smell of incense permeated the air as I opened the glass doors leading to the gallery space allotted for the temporary retrospective exhibition of Paul Wong's (1955-), a Canadian artist of Chinese origin who does video, performance, and installation art works, entitled *On Becoming a Man*⁸⁸ (1995) in the National Gallery of Canada's contemporary Canadian art gallery. I was tired both physically and mentally, and felt a headache coming on. My thesis project was still in its infancy, and I had been doing some preliminary studies on the Rideau Street Convent Chapel and its relationship with the Gallery's exhibition space as a whole. I was invigorated by the sweet perfume. I walked through Wong's exhibition, looking at the works on display and felt my senses waking up. But I still didn't come face to face with the source of the overpowering smell. I felt that the incense was part of the general theme of the exhibition, linking all the pieces together by means of olfactory stimulation from a dissimulated source. The effect

⁸⁸ Paul, WONG, *Paul Wong : on becoming a man = un homme en puissance*, Ottawa : National Gallery of Canada, 1995.

was quite satisfactory, especially in contrast with my earlier visit of the rest of the Gallery, where the only one of my senses which was being appealed to was my vision. I did not visit the rooms in any sort of sequence, making my own itinerary across the various rooms of the museum's contemporary art gallery where Wong's work was exhibited. It is quite by accident that I stumbled upon the final piece (for me) of the exhibition, and at the same time the source of the smell-- the slowly burning incense which was part and perhaps contributed to the success of the strongest piece in Wong's exhibition: "Chinaman's Peak: Walking the Mountain". (Figure 14)

I had passed by the room earlier on, but hesitated in entering because of the intensity which the installation generated in its forms. A coffin with banners with Chinese characters behind it at either side framing a television set where a video was playing, the sound of firecrackers emanating from speakers, urns with incense and oranges lying in ashes, cigarettes placed on tables, and other objects filled the room. As Elspeth Sage states in her article on the initial exhibition of the piece at the Banff Centre for the Arts, the piece is, "Unstable in its meaning or placement, the existence of the coffin and accompanying ritual objects had created a barrier, not to be crossed, certainly not to be touched."⁸⁹ Perhaps it is because of my overwhelming desire to feel the piece's intensity that I hesitated so much. I had to prepare my heart to enter in a place which was special. One cannot enter in a place of ritual without first coming to terms with one's feelings. The sense of aura which emanated from this piece was vibrant, alive like none of the other ones I had seen in the Gallery. The sense of ritual in this space was much stronger than that found in the Rideau Street Chapel restoration/installation. I entered.

I immediately was made to feel welcome. Ritual offerings abounded in the room. In stark contrast with the rest of the Gallery's pieces, where sight was the primary sense

⁸⁹ Elspeth SAGE, "Ritual Respect-- Chinaman's Peak: Walking the Mountain, by Paul Wong at the Banff Centre, Summer 1993" in *Harbour*, vol.2, #3, Spring 1993, p.54.

appealed to, all of my senses were being engaged in "Chinaman's Peak: Walking the Mountain." Taste: oranges, scotch bottles, cigarettes, steamed buns. Hearing: the music, loud firecrackers and bottle rockets, and voices explaining the concept behind the piece in the video set in a pagoda-like structure behind the central coffin. Smell: the aforementioned incense which acted as a sensory messenger that some intense ritual was taking place- the boundaries between the world of the living and the spirit world were brought that much closer by this sensory detail. And perhaps more important than any of these other sensory factors, or perhaps by virtue of the fact that they were all appealed to simultaneously, I had a sense of the artist coming to terms with his own perception of the world, a reconciliation with his own cultural heritage. Certainly, the piece was aesthetically appealing, but the viewer's sense of spirituality is also being entreated by the artist in making the piece, a reverential sense of imparting a part of himself to the audience.

In researching the piece, I found that Wong's goals in making "Chinaman's Peak: Walking the Mountain", which carried through the theme of the exhibition as whole, paralleled the goals which I first set out to achieve in writing this thesis. He says of the exhibition, "It's...I really see evidence of the *journey* of becoming a man. In fact, the show is called On Becoming a Man... And this exhibition really is evidence of that journey, the journey of trying to come to terms of being an artist, being a man, being a teacher, being a lover, all those things."⁹⁰

My means of transportation on my journey has been different from Wong's, but my goal is similar in the sense that I am trying to come to terms with my own cultural heritage. On talking about "Chinaman's Peak: Walking the Mountain", Wong said that

⁹⁰ Transcript of an interview with Paul Wong by Shelagh Rogers on a National broadcast of *The Arts Tonight* on CBC-FM, September 25, 1995, 19h17, p.7.

the various offerings found in the room were placed there in order to remember and honour those who have departed the material world:

These are objects that one pours over the grave or one that burns and sends up in smoke. They say that if you take care of those in the afterworld, if they are content then we'll be content and happy in our world. There's nothing worse than having hungry, restless souls disturbing our world. [...] it is [about] reconciliation. It is [about] becoming more whole. It's allowing one's histories to become one and not separate. It's recognizing that each of these... those people, their histories, elements in the work and... belong together. That they shouldn't be separated. Because they all form a part of who I am. And that's okay.⁹¹

But there is also a sense of loss in Wong's work. He admits that he doesn't know for sure exactly how the *haang sang*, a ritual form of ancestral worship which translates into Walking the Mountain, is practiced.⁹² But this detachment from his Chinese roots doesn't prevent him from acting the ceremony out in his own personal way. It is a memorial piece, done in honour of his father, Wong's friends Ken Fletcher and Paul Speed,⁹³ and the, "Chinese railway workers, most of whom were only referred to by a number and almost always followed with the denomination 'Chink'."⁹⁴ The video on the pagoda-like altar of the installation features an enactment of the ritual which can be conceived as, "a clear instruction manual for the uninitiated of how to walk the mountain."⁹⁵ The original presentation of the piece at the Banff Centre for the Arts in 1993 was followed by a performance by those in attendance to actively participate in the

⁹¹ Ibid., p.6 and Chris DAFOE, "From confrontation to transformation" in *The Globe and Mail*, Tuesday, February 9, 1993.

⁹² SAGE, p.55.

⁹³ SAGE, p.57.

⁹⁴ SAGE, p.57. For more on the plight of the Chinese railway workers who built the Canadian railway, see: Donald MACKAY, *The Asian dream : the Pacific Rim and Canada's national railway*, Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1986.

⁹⁵ SAGE, p.55.

ritual following the unveiling of the installation. The participants, having the privilege of being close to nature, of having the opportunity to complete the ritual process suggested by the piece, which completed the work for them. "Chinaman's Peak: Walking the Mountain's" placement within the National Gallery, reflects a sense of loss of the work's potency as well, as Ottawa's urban landscape does not offer those who experience the piece the opportunity of completing the process of 'walking the mountain'. But the piece, even outside of its ritual and cultural context, still reflects the artist's reverence for his cultural heritage and the hybrid spiritual traditions which helped him to shape it.

After spending the meditative moment in Santa Maria in Taüll which I have described earlier roughly a year after seeing Paul Wong's piece, I had the opportunity to complete an important part of my journey. I wandered out on the mountainside, serenely taking in the magical vigour of the scenery which surrounded me, opening my sails to become one with the sky and the tectonic waves which kept me afloat...

IV. Revelation number four: The National Gallery and the Houses of Parliament

I was casually listening to the news on *Société Radio Canada* on the night of February 24, 1998. On that night, the Honourable Paul Martin, Minister of Finance in the Chrétien cabinet, delivered his budget to the Canadian population, and was going to be interviewed live in one of the lobbies of the Houses of Parliament by an SRC journalist. The camera started at the ceiling and slowly panned downwards to where the Minister and journalist were seated. But even as the ceiling disappeared from the camera lense's limited scope, it remained imprinted in my mind's eye. Neo-Gothic columns supporting the ceiling were adorned by a motif with which I was familiar. Fan vaulting. Interest in the budget dwindled, as the power of the 'symbolic capital' with which this motif is imbued took precedence over the discussion on the Nation's 'economic capital' which was taking place at ground level. Immediately, I started wondering what links could be made

between the Rideau Street Chapel's fan vaulted motif in heart of National Gallery and the links which could be made between it and the similar motif which was also present in the heart of the Parliament building.

The Houses of Parliament are built in the Neo-Gothic style, which stylistically mimics the Houses of Parliament in London, designed by Sir Charles Barry and Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin (1812-52). More than a mere romantic formal reintrepretor of Gothic forms, Pugin had a specific program which he wished to impose on the architecture of the British Empire, and beyond, through his use and promotion of the Neo-Gothic style. Indeed, Georg Germann asserts that, "When Pugin published his second pamphlet in 1836, it became apparent that he was interested, not only in the revival of a particular style of architecture, but also in the restoration of the Christian world order in which that style had been grounded."⁹⁶ A devout Catholic, converted at the age of 23,⁹⁷ Pugin advanced that the Catholic Church is the only true one and that the architectural forms which best express the Golden era of Catholicism are those which were generated in the Middle Ages, more specifically those which fall under the heading of Gothic. Pugin asserted that, "...after a most close and impartial investigation, I feel perfectly convinced the Roman Catholic Church is the only true one, and the only one in which the grand and sublime [i.e., Gothic] style of architecture can ever be restored."⁹⁸ It was Pugin's conviction that a propagation of Gothic architecture would bring about a spiritual renaissance. The Gothic shapes of the Houses of Parliament in London are imbued with enough 'symbolic capital' to consecrate this building within the bounds of

⁹⁶ Georg GERMANN, *Gothic revival in Europe and Britain: sources, influences and ideas*, London, Lund Humphries [for] the Architectural Association, 1972 (Trans. by Gerald Onn), p.70.

⁹⁷ He also started assisting on the design of the British Houses of Parliament at this time. GERMANN, p.69

⁹⁸ Germann took this quote from: Benjamin Ferrey, *Recollections of A. W. N. Pugin*, 1861, p.88. GERMANN, p.70.

Pugin's theory. The lines between religion and government are blurred by the majesty of the government building and the use of architectural motifs which one finds more often in church architecture than in public buildings. This effect is also achieved in the Canadian Houses of Parliament, and although I doubt that the fan vaulting of the Rideau Street Chapel might have influenced the design of the ceiling of the lobby where Paul Martin was being interviewed, the formal relationship between this lobby and the new location where the Rideau Street Chapel's ceiling is found can lead to an interesting reading of the relationship between The National Gallery and the Canadian Houses of Parliament.

Safdie's plans for the National Gallery are based on a postmodern reinterpretation of the Neo-Gothic style. The Great Hall of the Gallery echoes, in glass and steel, the shape of the Parliament's Library across the Ottawa River. The plan of the Gallery appropriates other aspects of the Neo-Gothic aesthetic, and in doing so also appropriates some of its ideological trappings. Here is the reading which I believe can be made of the symbolic importance of the Chapel to the ideological programme of the Gallery. As I have discussed earlier in this study, architectural design can evoke the liturgical meaning of a building even though it has been deconsecrated. The Parliament is to political decision-making in Canada what the National Gallery is to the canon of Canadian art. It symbolizes the highest authority in relation to the visual arts in the country. The formal link between the fan vaulting in the Houses of Parliament and that of the Chapel in the Gallery is but another detail which links the two buildings.

What was the position of Georges Bouillon, the architect of the Rideau Street Chapel in relation to the ideology attached with the Neo-Gothic aesthetic? As Noppen points out:

...the Perpendicular style is a formal arrangement that is recognized as typically British, and most notably a feature of the reign of Henry VII, the founder of the Tudor dynasty. Fan vaults were in fact the last properly Gothic works to be erected before 1534, when Henry VIII proclaimed the Act of Supremacy designating himself head of the Church of England. It

therefore significant to see George Bouillon, building a Roman Catholic chapel in 1887-88 in Ottawa, and returning to an architectural style associated with the last hurrah of Catholicism in Britain. It can be seen as his way of paying tribute to that world, which he appreciated- and as his letters prove- while at the same time remaining consistent with a religious commitment that led him to oppose in no uncertain terms (again revealed in his correspondence) all non-Catholic religious groups.⁹⁹

It is surprising to note that Noppen does not draw any parallels between the writings of Bouillon and those of Pugin, especially those found in his book entitled *An Apology for the Revival of Christian Architecture in England*. This book, published in 1843, proved to be instrumental in spreading the popularity of the Neo Gothic movement both within the British Empire as well as in other countries around the world. Bouillon was a traveling scholar¹⁰⁰ as well as an architect, and it is very unlikely that he did not come into direct contact with this work during the course of his career as an architect. Like Bouillon's correspondence, the writing in Pugin's *Apology* is replete with categorical opposition to any form of architecture apart from the one which he believes to be the ultimate expression of Catholic¹⁰¹ faith, that is to say that which draws direct inspiration from Gothic forms. He views the Renaissance as a decadent period, challenging the spiritual decadence of which he thought the classical detailing incorporated in the architecture of this era to be a portent of moral decadence. Indeed, Pugin states that:

The change which took place in the sixteenth century was not a matter of mere taste, but a change of soul; it was a great contention between Christian and pagan ideas, in which the latter triumphed, and for the first time *inconsistency* in architectural design was developed. Previous to that period, architecture has always been a correct type of the various systems,

⁹⁹ NOPPEN, pp.40-41.

¹⁰⁰ Bouillon travelled to Mexico, Istanbul, Palestine, Malta, Italy, France, Algeria, Spain, as well as throughout the United States and Canada. For more on Bouillon's travels, see NOPPEN, pp.77-97.

¹⁰¹ For Pugin, the Roman Catholic Church was the only true Church, and he uses Christianity and Catholicism interchangeably in his text.

in which it was employed; but, from the moment the Christians adopted this fatal mistake, of reviving classic design, the principles of architecture have been plunged into miserable confusion.¹⁰²

His critique of what he views as inconsistency of style is even more blatantly, if xenophobically, expressed in the following statement:

If we worshipped Jupiter, or were votaries of Juggernaut, we should raise a temple, or erect a pagoda. If we believed in Mahomet, we should mount the crescent, and raise a mosque. If we burnt our dead, and offered animals to the gods, we should use cinerary urns, and carve sacrificial friezes of bulls and goats. If we denied Christ, we should reject his Cross. For all these would be natural consequences: but, in the name of common sense, whilst we glory in being Englishmen, let us have an architecture, the arrangement and details of which will alike remind us of our faith and our country, - an architecture whose beauties we may claim as our own, whose symbols have originated in our religion and our customs. Such an architecture is to be found in the works of our great ancestors, whose noble conceptions and mighty works were originated and perfected under a faith and system, for the most part common with our own; for strange as it may appear, the difference between us and our English forefathers, on examination, will prove slight indeed, compared with those nations, from whom we have been accustomed for the last century to borrow types, as being the best suited to our present habits.¹⁰³

That Bouillon would have thought along those lines, as Noppen seems to suggest in his quote, is also consistent with the French Canadian Canon's *oeuvre* as well as his writings. Apart from his plans for a *Nova Sancta Sophia*,¹⁰⁴ whose design was based on the Byzantine basilica of St. Sophia in Constantinople and was never built, the vast majority of Bouillon's works, as Noppen demonstrates in his survey of the architect's work in his book on the Rideau Street Chapel, are designed in the Gothic style. Indeed, Bouillon

¹⁰² Augustus Welby Northmore PUGIN, *An Apology for the Revival of Christian Architecture in England*, London: John Weale, 1843, p.7.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p.6.

¹⁰⁴ For more on Bouillon's *Nova Sancta Sophia*, see NOPPEN, pp.95-7.

manifests his allegiance to the cultural and moral superiority which Pugin professes the Roman Catholic Church to hold by virtue of what he believes to be the greatest architectural expression of this faith by consistently referring to the Gothic aesthetic in his buildings. There is little doubt that Pugin's intolerant attitude towards other religions can also be conceived as repressive. But at the same time, he sets out to protect his distinct identity, which he perceived as being threatened, by referring to a time which he conceived to be the Golden Age of England and Catholicism. The links between Church and State are quite thin- his program is not limited to sacred architecture. The use of the Neo-Gothic style is not limited to religious buildings. In fact, he considers a public building, the new Houses of Parliament, in the following manner:

The long lines of fronts and excessive repetition are certainly not in accordance with the ancient spirit of civil architecture, but the detail is most consoling. We have the arms and badges of a long succession of our kings; images of ecclesiastical, military, and royal personages; appropriate legends in beautiful text run on every scroll; each emblem in characteristic [of the elite classes] of our country. [...] This building is the morning star of the great revival of national architecture and art: it is a complete and practical refutation of those men who venture to assert that pointed architecture is not suitable for public edifices...¹⁰⁵

The temporal seat of government for the British Empire, a personification of the character of this state, is executed in a style which is adapted from sacred architecture. What is alluded to by this formal amalgamation is that the Imperial mission to colonize the world is also one of religious importance. That the design of Canadian Houses of Parliament mimics this building, and in turn, the manner in which the National Gallery also appropriates this architectural language, suggests the Imperialistic ancestry of the design of the museum. Indeed, Tony Bennett states that by the end nineteenth century, shortly

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 10, note 6.

after Pugin had elaborated on the political/religious programme behind the Neo-Gothic aesthetic, museums were transformed:

from semi-private institutions restricted largely to the ruling and professional classes into major organs of the state dedicated to the instruction and edification of the general public. As a consequence of these changes, museums were regarded by the end of the century as major vehicles for the fulfillment of the state's new educative and moral role in relation to the population as a whole. While late nineteenth century museums were thus intended *for* the people, they were certainly not *of* the people in the sense of displaying any interest in the lives, habits, and customs of either the contemporary working classes of pre-industrial societies. If museums were regarded as providing object lessons in things, their central message was to materialize the power of the ruling classes [...] in the interest of promoting a general acceptance of ruling class authority.¹⁰⁶

The tradition within which the National Gallery functions is very similar to this, especially in regard to the way in which it presents the Rideau Street Chapel. The Chapel represents the local history of a segment of the local population of Ottawa. The Grey Nuns helped several generations of young women from all social classes in the Ottawa region to get an education. Yet, the way in which the Chapel is presented in the Gallery, as a mere architectural element as I have discussed in chapter two, which tends to sentimentalize¹⁰⁷ the past when the Chapel was created as a generalized 'golden age' of Catholicism in Canada. The danger in this is that people from different backgrounds might feel intimidated from this imposed view of Catholicism's superiority when they enter into a formerly sacred site which directly reminds them of this culture's legacy of oppression. As Bennett states:

¹⁰⁶ BENNETT, p.109.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p.110.

The extension of the social range of museum concerns in the post-war period, then, is a new departure. Yet while, in a relative sense, it is one to be welcomed, the consequence is often as Gramsci suggests: namely to represent the cultures of subordinate social classes not in their real complexity, but 'as a "picturesque" element'. As a consequence, the terms in which the ways of life of such classes are represented are often so mortgaged to the dominant culture that 'the people' are encountered usually only in those massively idealized and deeply regressive forms which stalk the middle-class imagination.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

CONCLUSION

The spiritual and social aspects of Catholicism mold and inform one another. Instead of denying either aspect, I have chosen to confront both of them in my analysis of the Rideau Street Chapel restoration/installation to address interpretations which I feel have been overlooked. Having been influenced by the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, I have chosen to reconcile the influence it has had on me with my current academic formation. I hope to have created a coherent hybrid theory which brings to light my particular reality. It is one thing to be opposed to the dogmas and legacy of oppression of the Roman Catholic Church, which I am, and it is quite another to deny the influence it has had in shaping how I perceive the world. To do so, I believe, would be intellectually dishonest on my part. Pierre Bourdieu states that:

*Le mouvement, rendu possible par la politique de déréglementation d'un marché pur et parfait, s'accomplit à travers l'action transformatrice et, il faut bien le dire **destructrice** de toutes les mesures politiques [...] visant à **mettre en question les structures collectives** capables de faire obstacle à la logique du marché pur: nation, dont la marge de manoeuvre ne cesse de décroître; groupes de travail, avec, par exemple, l'individualisation des salaires et des carrières en fonction des compétences individuelles et l'atomisation des travailleurs qui en résulte; collectifs de défense des droits des travailleurs, syndicats, associations, coopératives; famille même, qui, à travers la constitution de marchés par classes d'âge, perd une part de son contrôle sur la consommation.¹⁰⁹*

The ideological foundations of the Neo-Gothic aesthetic, as expounded by Pugin and the Ecclesiologists of the Cambridge Camden Society are based on the concept of a

¹⁰⁹ Pierre BOURDIEU, "L'essence du néolibéralisme-- Cette utopie, en voie de réalisation, d'une exploitation sans limite" in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, No. 528, Mars 1998, p.3. For more on the foundations of the neo-liberal philosophy, see Michel BERNARD, *L'Utopie Néolibérale*, Montréal: Les Éditions du Nouveau québécois and la Chaire d'études socio-économiques de l'UQAM.

spiritual renaissance which would be brought about by the propagation of what they arbitrarily conceived to be the correct style of building. Moshe Safdie's design for the National Gallery refers to the Neo-Gothic aesthetic by its formal association with the Houses of Parliament, the exterior of the Great Hall of the National Gallery being an architectural reply to the Parliament's Library, and the fan vaults of the Rideau Street Chapel echo those found inside the Parliament. The material manifestation of the Catholic faith which the Neo-Gothic forms inspired, have been diluted to the point of not directly influencing postmodern aesthetic, or at least rendering it hard to decipher for the uninformed viewer. It would be a mistake, however, to deny Neo-Gothic's historical importance in imposing the dominant ideology's concept of the canon of art history on viewers who enter within the confines of the museum. As I elaborated in Chapter 2 the question of architectural propriety is inextricably linked with historic use of the Chapel and the sacred significance with which its material presence has been invested over time.

The changing of function, of recycling, has given many religious structures a new lease on life. But often, these new functions clash with the original purpose for which the buildings were erected. Architectural transplantation, such as the Rideau Street Chapel and the frescoes in the *Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya* does not always compromise the original function of the building, unless of course, as is the case with both of these examples, the sacred building is integrated within a new one which imposes a confrontation between the two.

In closing, I believe that the problems posed by the clash of ideologies which invariably occur when changing the function of a building of religious significance is a realm of study which offers a wide variety of opportunities. It will be interesting to see how a Late Capitalist state deals with these cultural treasures as we enter the 21st century. It is far less problematic when a building's religious significance is maintained, even when it is transplanted, as was the case with Christ Church in Eustis (Figure 15). In 1997, this Anglican church in the Eastern Townships faced problems similar to that

which the Rideau Convent did in 1972. Dwindling attendance and uncertain future for the building,¹¹⁰ caused the community to consider alternatives to preserve this building. The Eustis church has been deconstructed and moved, "...to Quebec Lodge Camp on Lake Massawippi where it will begin a new life as the camp's chapel."¹¹¹ The building stands on its own, and is not subjugated to a reading imposed on it by another, secular institution, as in the case of both the Rideau Street Chapel in the National Gallery or the Romanesque frescoes in the *Museu d'Art de Catalunya*. In contrast, the same way that the carving of a ship in Samuel-de-Champlain elementary school helps in 'consecrating' this building as part of the Church's property, the inclusion of the Rideau Street Chapel within the walls of the National Gallery helps to 'consecrate' it as the high temple of the secular cult of beauty for Canadian culture. I wonder what Gertrude E. Maloney would have to say about the journey of her Convent and my journey...

¹¹⁰ Murray, Ross, "Eustis church to hit the road" in *The Stanstead Journal*, October 15, 1997, p.14.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

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APPENDIX 1: FIGURES



Figure 1. Rideau Street Convent Chapel installation in the National Gallery of Canada. View of the altar. Reprinted from: Luc NOPPEN, *In the National Gallery of Canada- "One of the most beautiful chapels in the land"*, Ottawa: The National gallery of Canada. 1988.



Figure 2. Rideau Street Convent Chapel installation in the National Gallery of Canada. View of the nave. Reprinted from: NOPPEN.



Figure 3. Rideau Street Convent Chapel, May 1972. View of choir with painting of angels. Reprinted from: NOPPEN.

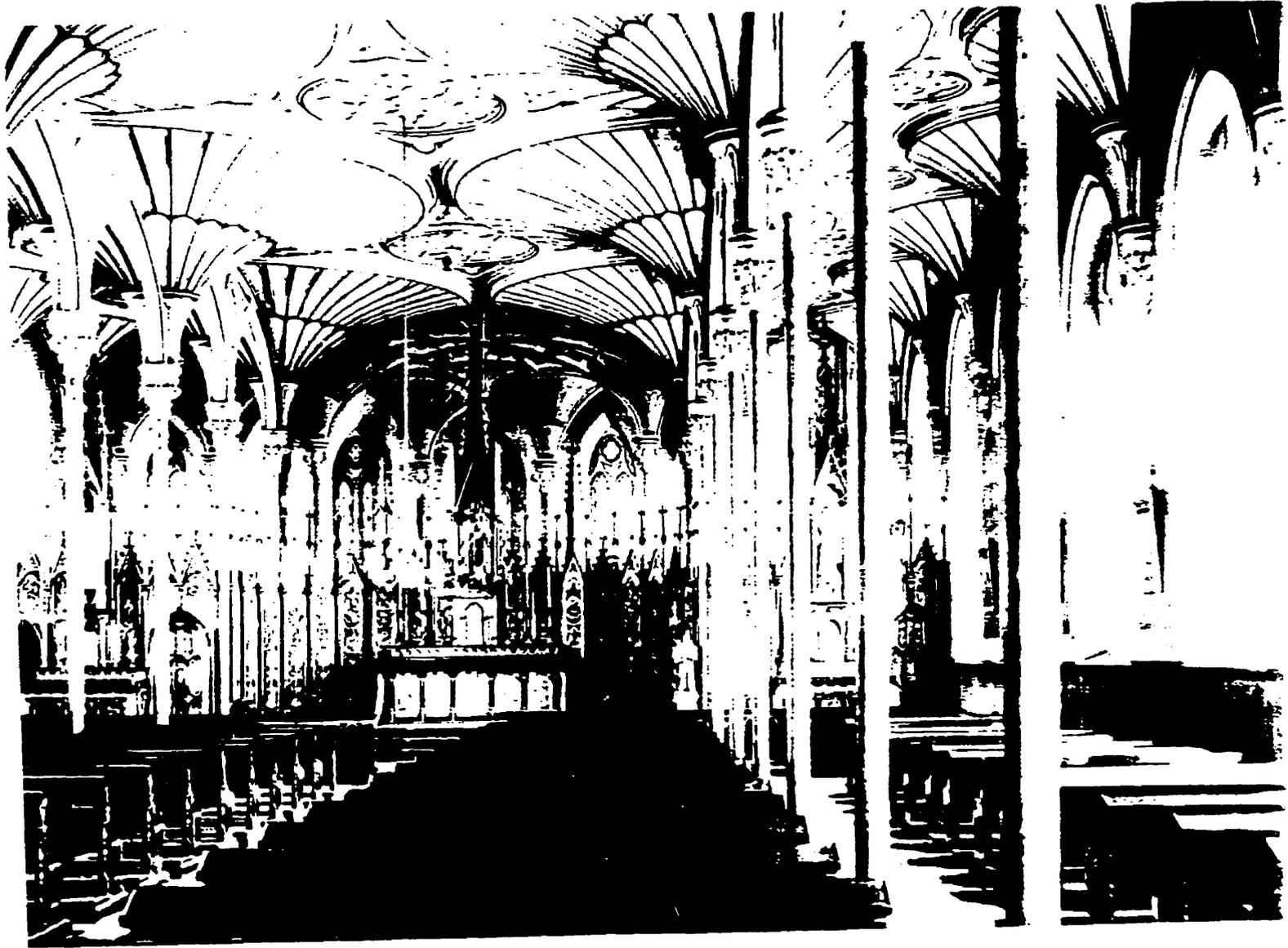


Figure 4. Rideau Street Convent Chapel. c.1890. Reprinted from: NOPPEN.



Figure 5. Robert HENDERY, "Hunt Cup of the Montreal Fox Hounds trophy". Reprinted from: Ross FOX, *Presentation Pieces and Trophies from the Henry Birks Collection of Canadian Silver*. Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1985.



Figure 6. SAVAGE & LYMAN. "Field Officer's Cup for the Grand Rifle Match of the United Canada". Reprinted from: FOX.



Figure 7. Library of Samuel-de-Champlain elementary school. Photo by author.



Figure 8. Entrance lobby of Samuel-de-Champlain elementary school. Photo by author.



Figure 9. H. BOUQUET, bas-relief wooden carving of ship with maple leaf as sail in lobby of Samuel-de-Champlain elementary school.



Figure 10. Original fresco of the *Pantocrator Majestoso* from the church of San Climent in Taüll, in the *Museu d'Art Nacional de Catalunya*, Barcelona, Spain. Photo by author.



Figure 11. Replica of the *Pantocrator Majestoso* Fresco in the church of San Climent in Taüll, Spain. Reprinted from: Stanley MEISLER, "The Case of the Disappearing Frescoes" in *Smithsonian*, Vol. 29, No.1, April 1998, p. 54.



Figure 12. Replica of the *Pantocrator Majestuoso* fresco in the church of San Climent in Taüll, Spain, without artificial lighting. Photo by author

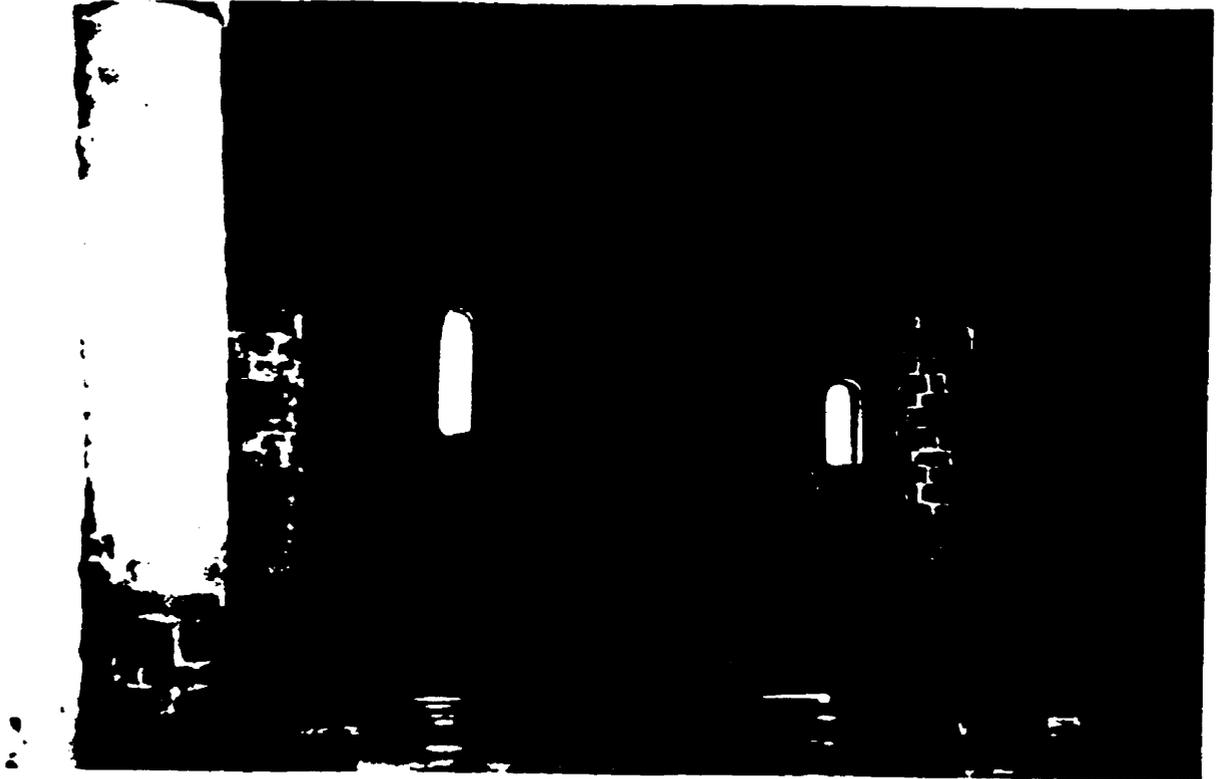


Figure 13. Replica of the original fresco of Santa Maria in Taüll in the church of Santa Maria in Taüll, Spain. Photo by author.



Figure 14. Paul WONG. "Chinaman's Peak: Walking the Mountain", 1992. Reprinted from: Anne DELANEY. "Wong's World- Vancouver-based multi-media artist challenges conventions with provocative images" in *The Montreal Gazette*. November 25, 1995



Figure 15. Christ Church, Eustis, 1896. Reprinted from: Ross MURRAY, "Eustis church to hit the road" in *The Stanstead Journal*, October 15, 1997: 14

APPENDIX 2: 'THE MEWS'

The Mews

New shopping area brings back a touch of Bytown

By Burt Heward
Citizen staff writer

A new, 40-store shopping area facing in on a courtyard behind the former Rideau Street Convent will be called The Mews—but it could have been named The Meeting Place.

In it, modern commerce will meet historic Bytown. oont-pah music from a beer garden will mingle in the courtyard with violin music from an elegant restaurant, students and ordinary peo-

ple will rub shoulders with professionals and cosmopolitans.

The developers, Glenview Realty (Ottawa) Limited, hope the two storeys of specialty shops and boutiques (connected by a wooden promenade deck at the second-storey level) and two other storeys of offices for lawyers, artists and professionals will inject life and style into the historic atmosphere and serenity of the courtyard.

It would have been hard to maintain the historic atmosphere had the convent been only one building, but the property—bounded by Rideau, Waller, Besserer and Cumberland Streets—actually contains six buildings.

The challenge for architect Harry Ala-Kanitti is to make modern retailing at home in six different but connected buildings without sacrificing the historic quality.

The heavy-timber promenade—which gives the courtyard the look of an Elizabethan theatre—will have to go up and down stairs because of the different levels at certain points in the original buildings.

Lothian Mews in Toronto, a shopping-restaurant haven off Bloor Street, last week won a Massey Medal for excellence in the urban environment. The judges described it as "one of those small, surprising and intimate places into which the pedestrian can withdraw to enjoy another scale of the city's design," a place to dine and lounge around away from King Automobile.

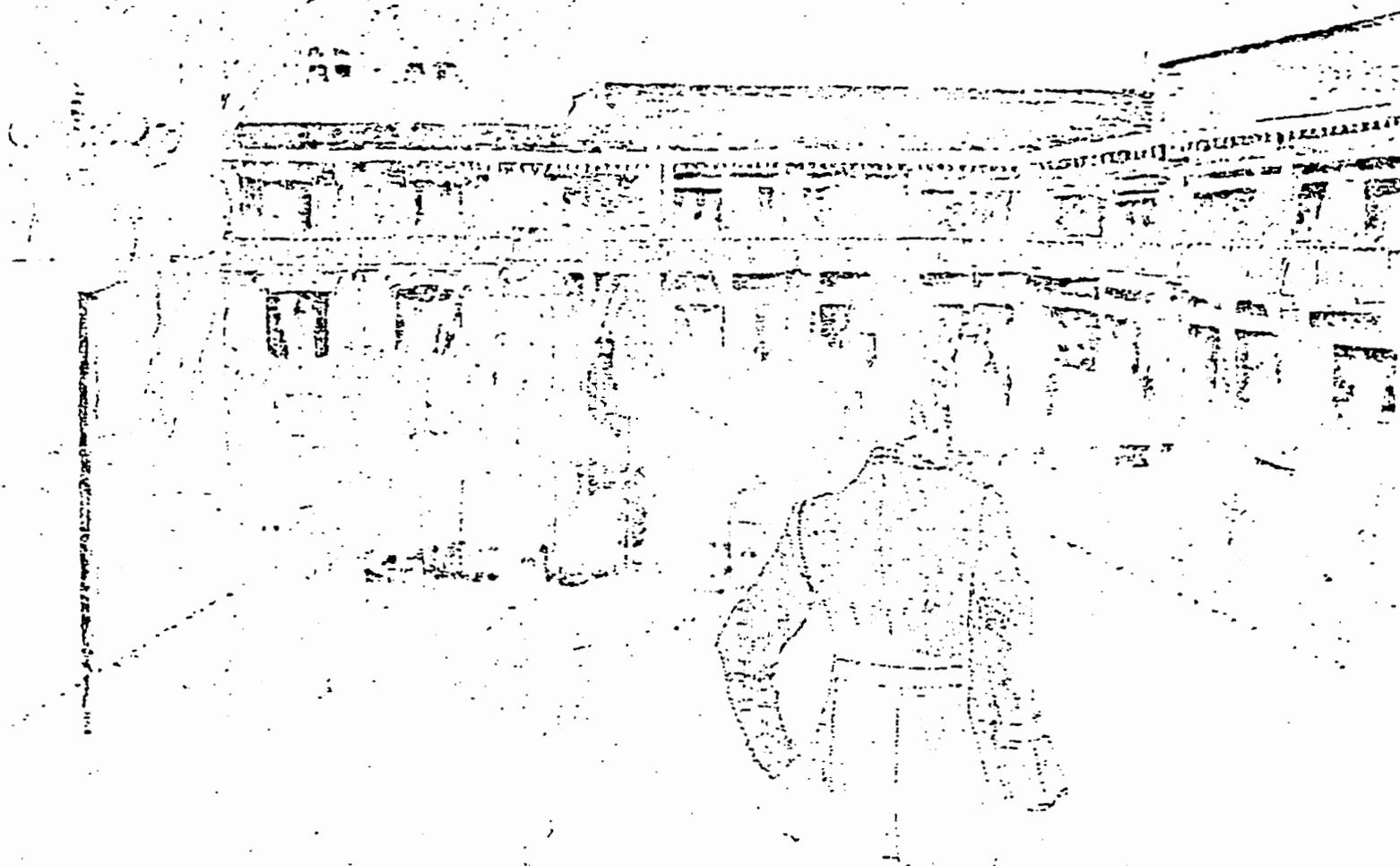
A hideaway

Originally a cage for a hawk, a mew has also come to mean a secret place, a hideaway.

The model for most mews (tiny streets of town houses or shops behind residential or commercial streets) were the Mews at Charing Cross,



New life for old convent



Artist's view of old Rideau Street Convent court yard as shopping area

London, where the royal stables had been built in the Middle Ages on the site of the royal hawk cage.

To enclose The Mews completely, Glenview is building a 9,000-square-foot, two-storey structure along Rideau from the convent to Cumberland. There will be openings to the courtyard on Rideau, Waller and Besserer.

L'Abbe Construction Limited began the work last month and should have the Mews ready for business next March, said Jack Rabinovich of Glenview Realty.

To keep the historic atmosphere, the workers will use only the original win-

The Ottawa Citizen

Tuesday, December 14, 1971. Page 23

dows and other openings in the masonry, although the main street entrances will have to be made more open, inviting and commercial, less institutional, said Mr. Ala-Kantti.

Outdoor tables

Both the elegant cafe with the violins—on a terrace halfway between the courtyard and the balcony-promenade—and the beer garden with oom-pah band

will have outdoor tables and chairs, adding to the Champs-Elysees atmosphere.

Also contributing to the European town-square feeling will be street vendors and warm-weather kiosks along the side of the courtyard, greenery and landscaping and a water fountain in the courtyard.

The original Mathews-Revere Hotel opened on the site in 1856 and was sold

three years later to Grey Nuns for a bill school. Over the years, extensions were added. Waller, then two on Rideau. A chapel, which will be maintained as the high restaurant, was designed by Father Brouillon and built in 1888. About 1930, rooms were built on Besserer and just 10 years later a gymnasium was added. The building will be subdivided into shops and offices).

Signs will be in raised lettering, mounted separately on the stonework with direct lighting—as in the neon, Las Vegas hang of many modern signs.

APPENDIX 3: PLOURDE'S LETTER TO DR. THOMSON

August 5, 1988

Dr. Shirley Thomson, Director
National Gallery of Canada
380 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, Ontario

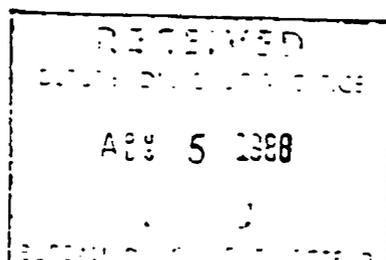
Dear Dr. Thomson:

On behalf of the [REDACTED] please allow me to express our dismay on hearing of the forthcoming civil marriage which is to take place in the Rideau Convent Chapel of the National Gallery.

We find inappropriate that the Chapel which was consecrated uniquely for religious purposes, and has served as such from its official opening in 1888, should now become the decor to enhance an act of purely secular law.

We are aware that the Chapel is now the property of the National Gallery, consequently, of the rights which this privilege implies. However, the heart has its reasons which in our case, can hardly be stilled. We feel very strongly that there is something to be said for the authenticity and integrity of the cultural tradition which the Chapel symbolizes; that a measure of respect is due to the priest architect, Canon Bouillon's vision of architectural beauty, itself motivated by Mother Teresa -- the Director of the Convent at the time -- that is, an artistic beauty for the Sisters, the students and friends of the Convent throughout the succeeding generations. Nothing short of a similar vision could have made it possible for the architects of the restoration team within the Gallery to recapture, amidst the broken parts of demolition, so faithful a re-creation of Canon Bouillon's vision, the very setting with its authentic atmosphere and spirit.

I believe I can speak for all [REDACTED] when considering the above-mentioned gesture as a breach in the identification of their cultural heritage which they so fondly recognize as their own. The Chapel was a key place in the Institution and served to strengthen the cultural ties that still draw them together. Furthermore, I can hardly believe that the public response resulting from this event can be underestimated. In fact, the Chapel seems to exert a considerable impact on the public at large. Its gracious architecture and warm hospitality helps to make it a focus of artistic activities as well as a mecca of peaceful contemplation for thousands who, with reverence and respect, fall under the spell of its spiritual inspiration.



But for all our concern about the Chapel's promise for the future, we still like to remain hopeful. We know that the key to the situation rests with your authoritative judgement and seal of approval that could protect the sense of identity the Chapel symbolizes and which we cherish as [REDACTED] cultural heritage.

We thank you, Dr. Thomson, for the consideration you might choose to give to the object of our solicitude respectfully submitted to your authority.

Yours sincerely,

c.c. Mr. Gyde Sheppard, Vice-President
National Gallery of Canada

**APPENDIX 4: TRANSCRIPTS OF CBC RADIO BROADCASTS ON THE
WEDDING**

M.T.T. [MEDIA TAPES AND TRANSCRIPTS] LTD. 185 SPARKS STREET ●3RD FLOOR ●OTTAWA K1P 5B9 - (613) 236-4695 - FAX (613) 236-3370	
PROGRAM: NEWSDAY EMISSION:	DATE: AUGUST 23. 1988 DATE:
NETWORK / STATION: RESEAU / STATION: CBC/CBOT	TIME: HEURE: 18:00

CONTROVERSY OVER WEDDING

CBOT: One of the most spectacular displays at Canada's new National Gallery is the restored chapel from the convent that used to grace Rideau Street. Well just for today the Chapel is more than simply something to admire. Erik Sorenson has the story.

REPORTER: It took four years for the Rideau Street Chapel to be restored and reassembled as a permanent exhibit at the new National Gallery. Harold Kelman(?) was a key figure in putting the 1,200 pieces of the chapel back together.

HAROLD KELMAN: It's a great deal of fun somehow trying to figure out where everything went. We were right most of the time.

REPORTER: For Kelman, the restoration was a labour of love and this summer arranged with the gallery to be married in

the chapel. That upset some Catholics who felt the chapel should no longer be used for religious ceremonies, but the gallery's Director says there's nothing inappropriate about holding the wedding in the chapel.

SHIRLEY THOMSON: The chapel is deconsecrated, otherwise it wouldn't be in a museum. It would be in a church.

REPORTER: However Shirley Thomson says it won't happen again and Reverend Pat Powers says that's good enough for the Archbishop.

REVEREND
PAT POWERS: We still feel that's regrettable because we really feel that it was restored so that it could be used to display religious art, but Archbishop Plourde understood.

REPORTER: Harold Kelman is delighted to be marrying his bride, Linda Clark in the chapel here. He's not so happy it started a controversy. That is however perhaps the price to be paid for the distinction of being the first and last couple to be wed in the National Gallery's Rideau Chapel.

Erik Sorenson, CBC News, Ottawa.

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185 SPARKS STREET #3RD FLOOR #OTTAWA K1P 5B9 - (613) 236-4695 - FAX (613) 236-3370	
PROGRAM: CE SOIR EMISSION:	DATE: 22 AOÛT 1988 DATE:
NETWORK / STATION: RESEAU / STATION: RADIO CANADA/CBOFT	TIME: HEURE: 18H00

MARIAGE CÉLÉBRÉ AU MUSÉE DES BEAUX-ARTS

CBOFT: Un mariage qui doit être célébré demain dans l'intimité et la simplicité suscite tout un émoi dans certains milieux catholiques. La controverse découle de la décision de la directions du Musée des beaux-arts d'autoriser la tenue d'un mariage civil dans l'ancienne chapelle du couvent Rideau, chappelle restaurée et reconstruite à l'intérieur du musée.

REPORTER: Demain, à la fermeture du musée, une fois que les derniers visiteurs auront quitté les lieux, un petit groupe ira célébrer une noce dans l'enceinte de la chapelle Rideau. Une cérémonie qui ne durera que quelques minutes puisqu'il s'agit d'un mariage civil mais qui avant d'avoir lieu aura suscité une controverse et soulevé la colère de nombreux catholiques dont l'archevêque d'Ottawa Mgr. Plourde qui a eu un entretien avec Sherley Thompson, directrice du musée.

RÉVÉREND PAT POWERS: Dr Thompson a assuré Mgr. Plourde que ça (p.p. archidiocèse d'Ottawa) ne se reproduira jamais. Mgr. Plourde est très heureux

et ils ont eu une très bonne conversation et nous sommes de voisins. Et monsieur Plourde est très très heureux de la façon que le Dr Thompson s'est empressée pour le rencontrer et pour régler le problème.

REPORTER: Mais au musée, juste en face on explique que
 l'on avait guère le choix et que pareil événement sera
le premier et le dernier de son genre.

CHARLES HILL: Il y avait plusieurs personnes personnes dans
(conservateur
d'art canadien) l'équipe de la construction du musée qui ont joué des
rôles clé pour la réalisation du musée et puis le musée a certains
moments a accordé un certain bénéfice au point de vue des souhaits pour
rendre accessible certaines parties de l'edifice pour des réceptions.

REPORTER: Le couple qui convolera demain en justes noces
 souhaitait une cérémonie privée empreinte de
simplicité. Il a donc préféré ne pas ajouter aux commentaires déjà
formulés.

Élise Brunet pour Ce Soir.
