

pour cent, la constitution d'une élite grâce aux alliances, un déclin de la fécondité avant les autres groupes sociaux et une mortalité moindre que dans le reste de la population.

Dans les éléments qui font la particularité de la noblesse coloniale, il faut noter, qu'en ce qui concerne le célibat ecclésiastique, les femmes sont recrutées par les grandes congrégations religieuses que sont les Ursulines et les Augustines, qui, progressivement, "canadianisent" leurs effectifs alors que les jeunes hommes nobles ont tendance à s'exiler, faute de pouvoir entrer dans les communautés religieuses au Canada qui leur ferment leurs portes. Par contre, à défaut peut-être d'un bassin matrimonial noble suffisant, la recherche d'un conjoint s'étend plus largement qu'en France et comprend de riches roturiers (marchands, hauts dirigeants...).

A la fin de l'ouvrage, l'auteur fournit plusieurs listes des membres de la noblesse canadienne répartis en différents sous-groupes et une bibliographie sélective rassemblant des références variées sur la "plupart" des membres de la noblesse canadienne.

L'utilisation des sources de première comme de seconde main telles que les registres paroissiaux, les dictionnaires et les répertoires généalogiques de la noblesse, les biographies des grands noms et des correspondances diverses démontre une recherche de l'exhaustivité. Il faut aussi souligner l'utilisation du gigantesque fichier de population informatisé du Programme de recherche en démographie historique (P.R.D.H.) de l'Université de Montréal. La reconstitution des fiches de familles à partir des actes de baptême, mariage, et sépultures permet de recueillir moult informations qui autorisent la confection de multiples tableaux et la mise à jour de corrélations fructueuses, en suivant les méthodes démographiques qui ont, depuis longtemps, fait leurs preuves.

Cet ouvrage constitue une contribution intéressante, démographiquement parlant surtout, à l'histoire des groupes sociaux canadiens-français: la noblesse coloniale existe et se définit par rapport à son alter ego métropolitain mais aussi par rapport au reste de la population coloniale tout en s'en dissociant dans ses comportements démographiques précurseurs, comme dans ses pratiques matrimoniales, marquées par l'ouverture à la bourgeoisie. Une telle étude serait avantageusement complétée par une analyse du patrimoine de la noblesse en Nouvelle-France qui viendrait éclairer son assise foncière et financière et, plus globalement, les bases de son pouvoir ou de son influence.

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Fake? The Art of Deception. MARK JONES, ed. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990. 312 p. ISBN 0-520-0786-0 (cased) 0-520-07087-9 (paper).

A catalogue of an exhibition organized by the British Museum and displayed there during the summer of 1990, this book tackles interesting philosophical issues while remaining fun to read and examine. The sub-title should have been "the art and science of deception" since the forger must be highly knowledgeable not only about the style and the historical possibility of what is being faked, but also the corresponding technique. Most of the 335 items in the exhibition are from the British Museum with loans from individuals and institutions such as the Beinecke Library at Yale, the British Library, the Victoria and Albert Museum, and even the Louvre. The objects are from all over the world — Europe, Africa, the Americas, and Asia — and in all possible media — photographs, film, philately, coins, medals, furniture, decorative arts, manuscripts, musical instruments, military documents, newspaper, strange and wonderful items such as the furry trout and mermen, and of course paintings which one usually associates with the subject of fakes. The British Museum is to be congratulated for having the courage to organize such an exhibition and admit to fakes in its collection. (Although there have recently been several similar shows, the British Museum may have been the pioneer in 1961.)

The essays address many issues connected with fakes, the first being the reason for such an exhibition. Far from being exhibited, the usual route is that once an item is declared a fake it is removed from display, hidden away, or even destroyed. The exhibition organizer and editor of the catalogue, Mark Jones, deplors this practice. "Fakes provide unrivalled evidence of the values and perceptions of those who made them and of those for whom they were made." They are "an ever changing portrait of human desires [because] [e]ach society, each generation, fakes the thing it covets most." In Canada, Krieghoff paintings are thought most frequently to be faked, although the recently convicted Joseph Olah faked Emily Carr, A. Y. Jackson, and Alex Colville. The work of all these artists fetch high prices at auction and they are also judged to exemplify the Canadian artistic spirit. Fakes also remind us of the fallibility of experts because all perception is determined by the structure of expectations that underpins it. Present a document to a scholar who has been searching for something similar and it will be hard to convince the scholar that it is a fake. The book is full of marvellous accounts of such incidents where the fake fit a cherished theory and was therefore accepted as genuine.

There is a provocative essay by David Lowenthal on the nature of fakes, on how and why they have existed for over 3000 years. Faking and the problems of authenticity are particularly salient in our time because of the trend towards the "commodification" of culture which leads to "authentic" reconstructions and questionable re-enactments of historical events. The History Hall of the Canadian Museum of Civilization comes to mind. How about the "authentic revival" of music played on period instruments, rebuilding the burnt out hall in Windsor castle, or reconstructing colonial Williamsburg?¹ When these replacements are presented as the equivalent of the real historical performance or object, they devalue the original. Even copying works, which was and, in some places, still is regarded as a legitimate way of keeping a tradition alive, is a potentially shady activity. There is an excellent essay on textual forgery, the oldest type of fake, where it is not the object but the untouchable concept which is the fake. An essay on the techniques of creating forgeries is accompanied hand-in-hand—so-to-speak—with a chapter on the scientific detection of the same. The authors also point out that the late twentieth century is not the great age of faking relics of the past, but of the commercial counterfeit, the fake Rolex watch, imitation Dior perfume, or Chivas Regal scotch. The last essay deals with objects whose status as to fake or genuine is still being debated.

But why does an often beautiful object which is declared a fake lose its virtue immediately? Once declared fake it loses its value as a relic, as a direct link with the hand of the artist and it "loosen[s] our hold on reality, deform[s] and falsif[ies] our understanding of the past."

The major portion of the book is a catalogue of the objects in the exhibition. This section is a result of an enormous collaboration of ninety-four contributors, each identified by initials. The history and context of each piece is given in fascinating detail. Many, though not all, are illustrated, mostly in black and white but also some in colour. The objects are intriguing, frequently beautiful, and one appreciates them despite the fact that they are fakes. The rare collector had similar reactions: they were pleased that artists of such high calibre still existed. Sometimes genuine items are illustrated beside the fakes providing an introduction to the complexities of connoisseurship.

My few criticisms of the book include the following: not every item is illustrated; the page layout in three columns tends to get confusing; and better differentiation in type would have allowed for easier visual selection of information. But overall it is a beautiful book and contains a wealth of unusual material.

Notes

- 1 Interesting reading along the same lines: Umberto Eco, *Travels in Hyper-reality* (New York, 1986) and Ada Louise Huxtable, "Inventing American Reality," *The New York Review of Books* (3 December 1992).

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