

Expo '67: Canada's Camelot?

“It’s too much, baby; it’s something else, total environment, romantic synaesthesia, the way things are,” Hugh Hood wrote in the *Tamarack Review* (71) rehearsing as did others the typical vocabulary of the sixties to describe Expo '67: it was “a psychedelic experience” (Walker), “Canada’s Camelot” (MacDonald, “Expo Thousands”), “a color-splashed display of Carnaby Street’s mad mod styles” (“Miniskirts Mix”). But the World’s Fair was not merely stylish and hip; it was also the effective symbol of an apparently vibrant nation perched on the brink of international recognition, “a vehicle for Canadian daring, skill, imagination, science and endeavour” (MacDonald, “Long Live”), and proof, as Deputy Commissioner-General Robert Shaw pointed out in a speech before the Federal-Provincial Tourist Conference, that the nation had “reached maturity after 100 vigorous years” (1). Canada’s self-confidence seemed so dazzling that it even eclipsed those nations from which it had traditionally taken its directives: the description of the British Pavilion as displaying “bulldog determination and dogged grit” and that of the French as “untidy” (Acland, “Space” 6) may be in keeping with the national stereotyping that Canadians have frequently reserved for these two nations, but there will not be too many contexts then or now in which the United States is perceived as encountering difficulties in establishing its country’s identity because of “the cultural and geographic proximity of the United States to Canada” (*Expo 67 Guide*, 152). Indeed, some American visitors were not a little defensive when confronted, in Buckminster Fuller’s geodesic dome, with their

country's eclectic display which relied strongly on popular culture. They found its campiness frivolous, demeaning and uncharacteristic of "our great and glorious country" (qtd. in Fulford 59).¹

Canada's spectacular performance at Expo '67 seemed all the more noteworthy since it finally marked the end of the country's variously fumbling or inconspicuous performances on similar occasions from the 1851 Crystal Palace Exhibition onwards (Kröller, "Canadians"). At the 1867 *Exposition universelle* in Paris, held in the year of Confederation, Canada failed to project the image of vigorous youth conjured up both then and in the year of the Centennial to confirm its competitive strengths. The most frequent complaint raised here and on subsequent occasions concerned Canada's image as a snow-bound wasteland inhabited by ferocious wildlife, a prospect perhaps appealing to adventurous tourists but much less so to potential investors and immigrants. However, even tourists would have had some difficulty perceiving any grandeur in the exhibits, for neither geographical vastness nor a diversified fauna are easy to accommodate within the framework of an exhibition. More often than not, the latter were represented by stuffed specimens, and the former by maps and photographs: "the Great North has two million square miles. What else can you do except photograph it?" a Belgian commentator at the 1958 Brussels World Fair wrote about the Canadian display (Waengler 36). Not all Canadian showings were as inept as that of 1867, which projected—as one dismayed visitor wrote—the image of "an affrighted child . . . crouching behind the forest shadows of the savage age" (Spedon 199), but even as recently as 1958, critics of the Brussels World Fair agreed that Canada's chief virtue consisted in its lack of ostentation; in fact, there seemed more consensus on what it was *not* than on its characteristic attributes: "It's not that Canada is boring, melancholic or unimaginative. It is simply Serious" (Waengler 36).

In Montreal, by contrast, Canada had home-court advantage displaying its wealth not only in pavilion format, but also in the accomplished setting of Expo '67 on a chiefly artificial island, alongside the recently completed St. Lawrence Seaway, and connected to the city by a shiny new Metro system. Montreal thus served as a modern sophisticated gateway to the remainder of a country whose inhabitants had taken charge of it and expressed in the "heavy, brutal, but sensuous command of great masses of material [their] efforts to make a new environment in this tough northern climate" (Acland, "Canadian Buildings" 5). Like the 1893 Columbian Fair in Chicago, Expo '67

was frequently compared to Venice. The initial reason for the comparison may have been the many small canals threading through the site, but the name also conjured up a mercantile prominence and southern location quite in contrast to the geographic and economic isolation projected at previous exhibitions. (That this “southern” re-interpretation of Montreal’s northern location was rhetorical rather than practical became particularly clear in Moshe Safdie’s futurist apartment complex *Habitat*: the complex was said to have “a striking resemblance to the high-density stepped and staggered profile of ancient Mediterranean towns rising from the busy waterfront” [Acland, “Canadian Buildings” 6]; for colour, *Habitat* relied on blooming roof-top gardens, a feature made impossible for long months each year by the severe Montreal winters). Ideologically enhanced by Diefenbaker’s rhetoric of the “northern vision,” the North then seemed a richly promising land beckoning beyond: in keeping with Expo’s participatory approach, the theme pavilion “Man and the Polar Regions” was integrated into the “Man the Explorer” complex; “visitor-explorers” travelled through “an ice-tunnel” and viewed demonstrations of Arctic meteorological phenomena, geological formations, and developments in transport ranging from the “Kayak of the Eskimo” to a submarine, all the while enjoying realistic blasts of Polar air (*Expo 67: Guide Officiel/Official* 51).

It need not be pointed out that despite its anti-hegemonic modes of representation—the fractured points of view provided by multi-screen theatres and mixed media—Expo’s initial concept and much of its realization left many of the traditional hierarchies intact: Montreal’s representation as the gateway to a world conquered by man was only the most obvious of these. However, the exposition also provided the site for strains within and challenges to these hierarchies, the effects of which were going to be considerable and lasting not only in Canadian culture. The difficulties with Expo’s ideological profile begin with its motto, “Terre des hommes,” borrowed from Antoine de Saint-Exupéry’s 1939 book of the same title. The parallel was not meant to be casual: Saint-Exupéry’s widow participated in the opening ceremonies, and Michèle Lalonde-André Prévost’s oratorio *Terre des hommes*, performed on the same occasion, leans strongly on the French writer’s idealist rhetoric. Saint-Exupéry’s celebration of non-factional and cooperative brotherhood among all humankind acquired wide currency especially among North-American readers during the war years and beyond, partly because his maxims—not exceptionally original in them-

selves—were embedded in some of the most poetic evocations of flying that had been produced to date, thus providing a welcome antidote, or so it seemed, to wartime preoccupations which perceived flight primarily as an instrument of death. At the same time, Saint-Exupéry's world view, like that of other legendary aviators, is distinctly elitist, positing a group of exceptional men as mythic dragon-slayers and leaders in a world increasingly mired in materialism and populism. This community of supermen, as some of his critics have pointed out, smacks of Fascism, and Saint-Exupéry's avowed preference for Nietzsche does not help to dispel the impression (Rumbold and Stewart 206-7).

The choice of Saint-Exupéry's vision to headline Expo '67 is all the more extraordinary since Canadian interpretations of human aspiration and its frequent trope, flying, tend to be ironized by expressions of modesty, responsibility and self-doubt: even the myth of the Avro Arrow, arguably the most persistently romanticized aircraft in Canadian history, displays some of these qualities (Kröller 1994). For the reasons already described, modesty and self-doubt were of course not desirable qualities to project in a nation ready to "fly," but the troublesome elements of Saint-Exupéry's philosophy which organizers had carefully sifted from their own reading of *Terre des hommes* and others of his works, nevertheless continued to be relevant in ways not always comfortable to the authorities. Although he did not refer to Saint Exupéry specifically, *arts/canada's* editor read Alexander Calder's 67-foot-high sculpture "Man," commissioned for Expo '67 by International Nickel, as an anachronism monumentally—and grotesquely— intruding into "a world in which humanist values are either wholly eclipsed, or rapidly vanishing" ("The Editor's Page," n.p.). It is also quite apropos that Calder's stables lacked the fluid grace and inspiring ambiguity of his mobiles: "Man's" upward gesture, rather than projecting proud aspiration, could easily be mistaken for that of a man unhappily "grounded" and seeking to escape from circumstances unable to sustain his presumption.

Expo '67 became famous for providing lenses, frames, and perspectives through which to read images in several different ways. Marshall McLuhan's theories provided one of the most frequently evoked frameworks to do so. But while commentators tended to emphasize the aesthetic avant-gardism of McLuhan's ideas, which helped to conceptualize the "multi-sensory total-environment poem" (Theall 3) that was Expo, his critique of the media as makers rather than reporters of new became equally relevant. The

photography exhibition “The Camera as Witness” was designed to show “man engaged in new forms of co-operation that transcend class and race, views him exploring new frontiers of learning: surveys his conflicts, violence, love, suffering, labor” (Bantey 50). Instead, it developed into a case study of the political uses of images, photography in particular, when the Deputy-Commissioner-General of the Greek Pavilion complained against the inclusion of a 1962 photograph showing a Turkish Cypriot woman grieving her husband’s death in a Greek attack. Not only was the photograph removed altogether but the captions of all other 250 photographs were also eliminated “lest the viewer understand too well what the camera witnessed” (“Photography at Expo”); thus specifically historical statements were changed into relatively harmless universalist ones. (In an ironic coincidence, and one that McLuhan would have relished, the entry on “Photography as Witness” in *Bill Bantey’s Expo ’67* is juxtaposed with a reproduction of Henri Matisse’s muscular “L’Esclave,” rendered powerless because both of his arms are missing.)

Equally offensive to political personnel, but not so easily removed, were the images and captions in the pavilion of the Indians of Canada, a display which became a significant milestone in Native self-assertion during a decade when this process was as yet hesitant; bearing witness to this effect, F.R. Scott turned some of the inscriptions and treaty texts into accusatory found poems in his collection *Trouvailles* (1967), but the impact in the original context must have been infinitely more powerful. While Governor-General Roland Michener, Commissioner-General Pierre Dupuy “and eight other Expo bosses” probably felt safe “hoisting beer and chomping buffalo meat in the midst of a joking group of Indian chiefs” (“Indians Have Day” n.p.) on Indians of Canada Day, the impression inside the pavilion was anything but reassuring. Highly critical of white paternalism, the exhibits exposed a social system which appropriated Native customs and disadvantaged Native children at every step. Designed by Natives, the pavilion was financed by the Canadian government which clearly expected to be depicted in a positive light. Instead, the exhibit turned into an act of provocation featuring large panels which proclaimed a Native child’s disadvantage in the white school-system, and photographs which juxtaposed neglected Native children with well-fed white ones. Indian Affairs Minister Arthur Laing complained that “the contributions of the Canadian government to Indians had not been given recognition” (“Indian Pavilion”), but

the organizers insisted that their display was legitimate, deriving additional strength from a show of solidarity by Mexican Indians also present on the Expo grounds.

In one of the many montages at Expo which failed to deliver quite the message that they were intended to, the Indians of Canada Pavilion was located in close proximity to the Christian Pavilion, a building designed to convey “a historic step in the forward march of ecumenism,” as the official Expo guide pointed out (187). The military tone of this entry acquires a positively menacing quality when one reads that a “shaft of light superimpose[d] the Christian cross” (*Bill Bantey's Expo* 62) on the symbols of Native religion displayed at the Indians of Canada pavilion. Native leaders decried the hypocrisy of a religion and culture which forbade them to pursue their own rituals under the potlach laws but encouraged them to revive these very rituals “because they [were] interesting art forms” which would help to enhance the ethnic picturesqueness of the fair (“White Man’s Taboo”). While the Christian Pavilion implicitly interpreted the cross as a symbol of increasing human understanding, the Native version suggested that, on the contrary, it had been used to cancel out other belief systems. In other words, this display reversed the process at the “Photography as Witness” exhibit by insisting on the historical specificity of the image and of its effects, rather than neutralizing it into a symbol.

While visitors to the Indians of Canada Pavilion could not help but notice its general opposition to stereotype, there is little evidence that Expo '67 was similarly crucial for the assertion of women, or at least not immediately so. In fact, press coverage of Expo provides a rich area for the study of gender-encoded language and standards as they were apparently wielded without much self-consciousness during the sixties and beyond, although they had been exposed in Betty Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique* (1962) and elsewhere. In so doing, the media were not only confirming general societal practices but also the philosophy specifically chosen for the occasion of the fair. While Calder’s “Man” and Saint-Exupéry’s “Terre des hommes” nominally included both men and women, the emphasis was clearly on the male portion of humanity, and Saint-Exupéry’s vision of a legendary race of supermen contained a strong tinge of misogyny. Especially apparent in *Courrier Sud* (1929), but also implied elsewhere, Saint-Exupéry’s interpretation of romantic love pitches a masculine world “where facts, duty, and responsibility matter” against a feminine world characterized by “weakness,

a propensity to lament and to pity oneself, to the selfish indulgence of one's suffering" (Masters 15).

In keeping with this relegation of women to an emotional and trivial realm which must be controlled at all cost if mankind is to accomplish its forward march into civilization, women at Expo were marginalized from the beginning and yet frequently placed in charge of the protocol that would leave their menfolk's advance unencumbered by distracting concerns. "Few women will be mentioned when history accords credit for the success of Expo," one paper wrote before introducing, as one of the exceptions, Mrs. Robert Shaw: "always gracious and charming . . . the fair's official hostess . . . performed a staggering round of social functions" ("Leading Lady"). Like other women at the fair, she too however dropped safely out of sight after its closure: many were housewives who returned to their homes without unduly burdening the unemployment figures. In an emulation of the infamous spouses' programmes at academic conferences and political summits, Expo deployed a "feminine secretariat" which looked "after the wives of visiting heads and their female staff" (Thompson). Protocol and etiquette formed part of the 10-week training curriculum for the more than two hundred women who were hired as Canadian hostesses at the fair, and who were also instructed in Canadian history, geography, economy, and first-aid. Requirements for suitable applicants (or "girls" as they were invariably called) read like those for a prairie school teacher in the earlier part of this century: "[she] must be between 20 and 35, physically fit, intelligent, attractive, neat and pleasant, of good character, [a] Canadian citizen . . . and preferably single ("Expo Seeks"). The stylization of Expo hostesses into miniskirted versions of the traditional teacher-and-nurse stereotype reached comical proportions in a report on a hostess from B.C. whose medical training came in handy during a flight back "to Vancouver for the PNE where she and another hostess *manned* the Expo booth": when a passenger fell ill, she "found herself *the ministering angel in flight*" (emphasis mine) (French).

Thus even capable, resourceful women at Expo were diminished by belittling clichés, and the interiorization of this attitude was such that there was either feeble or no protest or even assent. No protest is recorded from the American poet Denise Levertov when John Robert Colombo described her as "a youngish faculty wife" because she had voiced a policy of general harmony and understanding at one of Expo's many cultural events, and when her Belgian colleague Karl Jonckheere thanked her "for having the name

Denise. This is also my wife's name. I am particularly pleased that she is here today delivering a paper rather than preparing a dinner somewhere else" (Colombo 146). Perhaps the most chilling commentary on women's roles in the year of Expo occurs in the women's magazine *Chatelaine*. *Chatelaine*, which ran its own pavilion, the highly successful "Chatelaine Expo Home," lavished much attention on the event throughout the year. As an arbiter of sensibility and good taste, the magazine reported with mild horror on Centennial embroidery and rug-making projects undertaken by women across the nation ("a dozen needle-worked chairs" for the Fathers of Confederation Memorial Centre in Charlottetown, "a fourteen-by-ten-foot rug, portraying the Houses of Parliament bordered by the provincial flowers, with end panels depicting Canadian industry and an outside border of the provincial crests" [Sinclair 111]); it was more favourably inclined toward women's organizations' many charitable projects supporting Native people and "the coloured" in Nova Scotia. *Chatelaine* readers also proved their mettle by mapping out 10-dollar-a-day family excursions to Expo as if they were major battles with every possible casualty anticipated and pre-solved on filing cards in a 9 1/2 by 7 1/2 inch accordion file holding 12-20 slots (Culver).

No matter how strenuous her activities were, however, the kind of woman whom *Chatelaine* was prepared to endorse was careful to restrict herself to domestic, charitable, and social work; she was not to exchange her compassionate and poetic femininity for mere rationality and ambition, thus becoming a "pistol-packing" or "phallic" woman. These quotations are taken from a 1967 article written by none other than the redoubtable Barbara Frum, who reports on the work of McGill psychiatrist Karl Stern. While much of Stern's work sounds like an endorsement of new-age feminism, his real agenda becomes clear when he targets "single women, like Simone de Beauvoir who refused to marry and bear children" (134), as neurotic and incomplete. Frum's article, disturbingly dispassionate, frames a 40-page spread on the fair, with an excerpt from the official guide containing information thought to be especially interesting to women.

Nothing could illustrate better the limiting brackets that still confined them than this layout. The cover bears the festive portrait of a young woman in stylish Expo fashions, complete with the controversial Expo symbol on her earrings. At a time of extended debate over virtually every national symbol, the logo, "[a] vertical line, joined by two arms forming a 'y' and reaching up to the heavens in a gesture of exultation or prayer" (Shaw 1), roused the ire

of some Members of Parliament, Diefenbaker among them, because it seemed “weird.” The most telling complaint was that it appeared to be “[a] beatnik type of symbol” (“Fair Gets Symbol”), creating a troublesome association of the fair’s avowed endorsement of world peace with alternative (that is, leftist) youth culture. Expo became notable for its development of a sign language (much of it still widely in use) that allowed users to transcend communication and language barriers. Instead, the signs occasionally highlighted these barriers even more strongly than language would have done: thus, the signs denoting washrooms for men and women respectively created embarrassing confusion until the sign for women had been gender-encoded with greater exaggeration than before: women really were a species apart, and one not quite on par with “l’homme des terres.”

It is furthermore no coincidence that at least one observer (marginal as his comments may have been) suspected the campiness of Expo in general and of the American pavilion in particular as undermining established gender roles when he called it a “blatant victory of the homosexual” (qtd. in Fulford 59). As we will see, lay-out and display techniques occasionally developed a powerful rhetoric of their own which challenged the intended message contained therein. As a result, commentators frequently increased their own conservative rhetoric to compensate for any disorientation created by the displays: on these occasions, the media produced a shadow-version of Expo, pulling its unrulier shapes into familiar dichotomies.

Perhaps the most obvious area where such adjustments occurred concerned displays illustrating Cold War oppositions with the United States and the Soviet Union as chief rivals (a particular poignancy was added by the fact that the U.S.S.R., which at one stage had competed with Canada for the privilege of hosting the world exhibition, was celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Revolution in 1967). The competitiveness between the United States and the Soviet Union first dominated the Brussels World Fair; here as at other world fairs, architecture was suspected of displaying specific nationalistic characteristics, but commentators could be relied upon to assign opposing ideological values to very similar architectural features depending on which bloc they happened to be covering: “The Soviet building [is] enormous, monolithic and heavy looking in spite of its translucent glass walls and the United States building light, airy and sophisticated.” This reporter from *Saturday Night* was at least critical enough, however, to suspect the U.S. pavilion of “a somewhat elaborate attempt at looking friendly

and informal” (Waengler 35), a comment which equally applies to the 1967 U.S. display. Here, however, the *Memorial Album*, a highly opinionated text quite different from the emphatic striving for neutral language more usual in the albums and guides produced on similar occasions, assumed that the U.S. pavilion contained “a subtle and amusing display, the spirit of the United States, not its statistics” and therefore “in contrast to the Soviet entry, [did] not contain a single slogan” (152). In Montreal, an ingenious way was designed both to maintain the opposition of East and West and to overcome it in the harmonious spirit of the event: the two very large and conspicuous pavilions loomed across from each other on the Ile St. Hélène and the Ile Notre Dame respectively, separated by the Le Moyne Channel but connected by the “Cosmos Walk,” aptly entitled because both pavilions contained large space science exhibits.

Yet while these two buildings attracted considerable attention, the real opposition of East-West ideologies was played out elsewhere, namely in the Cuban and the Czech pavilions, with the latter arguably the most popular and complex at the entire fair. Both displays encouraged visitors to view communism as culturally specific, not monolithic, but the Czechs’ exhibition techniques made it less easy to dismiss their display as Eastern propaganda disguised by hypocritical western imagery. I have not come across a single extended negative criticism of the Czech pavilion, and it can be argued that its success contributed to strengthening the insistence, throughout the long years following the failure of the Prague Spring, of advocates such as Kundera, Havel, and Skvorecky, that the intellectual and cultural heritage of Central Europe was leaning more strongly towards the West than the East—with all of the distortions that such an insistence would create in its turn.

Disagreements over the Cuban pavilion started with its appearance which Western observers interpreted as cubist, therefore mainstream modern, while the architect, Sergio Baroni, insisted that the building was “an off-shoot of Cuban experiments in prefabricated housing.” Similar conflicts arose in the interpretation of the interior where observers commended the effective use of photography to illustrate different stages in the Cuban revolution, drawing visitors into the process with enlargements “which [spilled] off the walls to floors and ceilings” and which deployed reversal printing to suggest Cubans’ ghost-like existence in pre-Castro Cuba. Instead of presenting the dour educational approach stereotypically associated with Communism, the Cuban pavilion featured a “psychedelic” environment,

and it was even possible to normalize communist allegory into whimsical fantasy: “a man on a bicycle [representing] the expendable middle class, or scurrying rats [symbolizing] foreign-trained counter-revolutionaries” were opaque, but intriguingly so, and the visitor left the pavilion having been both entertained and taught a lesson “of violence, revolution and a people on the march” (*Expo* 67 148).

Compared to its dismissal, in *Canadian Architect*, as “rather jolly” in appearance but too propagandistic in the end (“one mewling shriek of protest and complaint” [Stankiewicz 50]), the *Memorial Album*’s assessment of the Cuban Pavilion was then reasonably appreciative, but the author still takes pains to trivialize the display out of any lasting seriousness. Patronizing the hostesses is one way of doing so; shifting the description to exotic clichés, another. Attired in “chic two-piece white wool suits with white Chanel boots,” the “girls” attractively met the “heavy demands . . . made on their intelligence and diplomacy,” a feat apparently worth pointing out although all of the women were university students. Using one of the italicized (and exoticizing) markers typical of colonial discourse, the author interprets their summer uniform (“inspired by the white shirts of Cuban peasants”) as an ethnic fashion item, “a *guayabera* or shift, in apricot” (*Expo* 67 151). No italicization is necessary to point out the specialties in the pavilion’s Coney bar, which are listed with all the exaggerated lusciousness of a pretentious menu (“Baked Pineapple Canoe is filled with lobster chunks, mixed with mushrooms and pineapple, laced with cream and sherry and covered with Hollandaise sauce”). Food and drink were as good as could be expected from an exotic location, and there was comfort in its none-too-elegant plenty.

The Czech pavilion by contrast derived much of its appeal from its unique blend of pervasive elegance—down to the glass-blown ashtrays in the restaurant—and immense popular appeal. To the horror of museum curators, the Czechs transported seemingly every movable national treasure to Montreal, creating an exhibition of extraordinary historical depth and creative richness. Because its insistence on craftsmanship endorsed “a creative ideal based on dignity,” the Czech pavilion was perhaps the one place on the Expo site which not only unsettled preconceived notions about an Eastern-bloc country’s self-definition, but also powerfully affirmed the values of humanism: a lengthy assessment in the *Canadian Forum* cited William Blake, Geoffrey Chaucer, William Morris, Thomas More, Maxim

Gorky, Abraham Lincoln and Walt Whitman in an effort to celebrate this “coherent and uniform essay” (Howard 139) on the virtues of dignified human accomplishment.

At the same time, the Czech pavilion rejected elitist museum culture and made full use of participatory techniques. While multi-media displays in other pavilions were often an appropriate expression of “our mixed-up modern times” (Michener 93), polyvision cinema and multi-media performances in the Czech pavilion were read as an affirmation of free agency and democratic process. In a concept now widely used in children’s books, *Kinoautomat* involved audiences at every turn of the plot, asking them to decide the course of events by majority vote; in *Laterna magica*, even inanimate objects acquired a graceful energy of their own, as they were moved about the stage by performers invisible because shrouded in black velvet. Other popular pavilions still provided cause for anxiety because they often all too blatantly indicated that Expo’s theme was anachronistic if not fraudulent, but the Czech pavilion offered reassurance as well as exhilaration in the knowledge that all was not lost. Such idyllic faith was possible, it may be argued, precisely because the display avoided historical specificity of the kind manifest in the Cuban pavilion. And yet like the opposition of the American and Soviet pavilions, the message of the Czech exhibit was eminently political: in the midst of the Cold War, stylish Western humanism triumphed not only over cloutish Eastern communism, but an earlier Eastern variant of humanism as well. It is surely no accident that the *Canadian Forum*’s list of authors and thinkers whose spirit is said to have inspired the Czech display includes only one Russian, Maxim Gorky.

The romantic enthusiasm generated by the Czech pavilion is particularly striking if compared with the cynicism generally expressed by Québécois separatists observing the fair. Officially, Expo ’67 served as one of the many Centennial undertakings designed to support the myth of Canada as a bicultural and bilingual nation; unofficially, it became an expression of apparently irreconcilable strains: in a number of ways, Expo as faulty nationalist metaphor mirrors its shortcomings as humanist and ethnic metaphor from the beginning. The Fair was meant as a visible expression of pan-Canadian cooperation, a venture that “could not have been done by any part of Canada alone.” It provided proof that “Québec seizes all opportunities to cooperate with others [and] had no desire to isolate itself from the world” (Lebel, n.p.). At the same time, the nationwide search for bilin-

gual hostesses fuelled the suspicion that Expo 67 was unduly weighted toward Québec, a suspicion reiterated when French was used during meetings with unilingual Anglophones in attendance. The language question also ruffled feathers across the border: American observers, already rattled by their country's "frivolous" display, did not take kindly to the reproach that the Marines serving as guides in their pavilion spoke no or insufficient French: "The poor French heard is probably only the Canadian French," Paul Friedlander of *The New York Times* scoffed.

Parti-pris, one of the most belligerent and articulate separatist publications of the time, closely observed the efforts of "fédérastes" to "montrer, démontrer, forger, peinturlurer, éclairer, façonner quelque chose qu'ils appellent Canada" (Tremblay 187), and one of the journal's chief targets was Expo's attempts to create a bilingual idiom. "Centre bilingual centre," "Centre validation centre," "Visit-Visitez Expo" and "Support Supportons Expo 67" were all derided as the coloniser's new game, "celle de jouer au Français" ("Colonialisme" 195). Expo—and the Centennial in general—have frequently been cited as one of the chief sources for the willful bastardization of the French language (willful because motivated by immediate political expediency), and *Parti-pris* gleefully observed that some of these linguistic strategies conveyed messages not intended by their creators. Cereal boxes and paper towels for instance now bore the French instructions "Pour séparer, tirer la languette" or "Ouvrir en séparant ici," both carrying unintentional political connotations. While ridiculing Expo and the Centennial as the "Centenaire de notre humiliation" ("Que faire?"), *Parti-pris* still deplored missed opportunities to demonstrate Québec's excellence to the world: the province's film-makers were underrepresented, they pointed out, and the artistic programme developed to decorate the new Metro stations was inferior. In one of the most dramatic developments of Québécois self-expression linked to Expo, Michèle Lalonde moved from *Terre des hommes*, a long poem/oratorio commissioned for Expo, to her famous *poème-affiche* "Speak White." While the former remains limited by a neutral idealistic message in keeping with the fair's motto, the latter became the fiery symbol of the October 1970 events.

Equally spectacular, in its own way, was Nicole Brossard's affirmation of feminism at the 1975 Rencontre québécoise internationale des écrivains entitled "La Femme et l'écriture." At Expo Brossard had been an organizer of the cultural programme in an environment where, as we have seen,

articulate feminism was virtually unheard of. In a sense, Brossard's subsequent development was more far-reaching than Lalonde's because, while Brossard embraced Québec separatism, she also had the courage to critique its male proponents for their more obvious biases and limitations. She was joined by *Châtelaine's* long-time editor Fernande St. Martin, who had used her editorials to educate her readers gently in greater political self-assurance even at a time when her magazine, as we have seen, was anything but a feminist publication (Des Rivières 100).

The aftermath of Expo '67 mirrors that of other similarly euphoric world expositions. Initially there had been ambitious plans to turn the site into a lasting humanist utopia by establishing "an institute for the advancement of man" which was to "divine the basic causes of conflicts among societies studying the dynamics of nationalism, and the reasons underdeveloped societies don't nurture entrepreneurial skills" (Newman). But even as the Fair drew to a close, reporters seemed to read apocalyptic doom in the cracks and peeling paint that were beginning to disfigure the flimsy buildings; ten years after Expo, *Weekend Magazine* featured a large photo-essay juxtaposing the dilapidated buildings with the enthusiastic pronouncements showered on Expo in 1967, evidently implying that few of its dreams had come true. Since then occasional news items related to the fair complain about continuing debts incurred by the event (McKenna) or report on the sale of display items ("African masks and carvings, wooden models of Spanish sailing ships, chandeliers, mounted antelope heads, a large model train, antique swords, an ivory tusk and a suit of arms") left behind by nations which could not afford to ship them back ("Montreal Expo"). But despite the tawdriness of these items, Expo remains a powerful cultural symbol and, in the end, a much more poignant commentary on its times than its organizers were expecting it to be.²

NOTES

- 1 This response represents an interesting extension of the so-called "Kitchen Debate" between Richard Nixon and Nikita Khrushchev at the 1959 American Exhibition in Moscow. Soviet media and politicians read the exhibition as "a display of wretched excess and bourgeois trivia," that is, as self-indulgent clutter denoting the absence of a clear social programme. Nixon, by contrast, lectured his hosts on the true meaning of the exhibit: "The latest in kitchen consumerism stood for the basic tenets of the American way of life. Freedom" (Marling 245). The Expo '67 exhibit lacked the pragmatism of

kitchen gadgetry: instead it suggested in its apparently disorderly plenty the freedom to choose even triviality if desired. Such conclusions, however, were incompatible with patriotic rhetoric: they certainly did not convince the average American visitor that his or her country represented an effective bulwark against communism.

- 2 In 1996, *The Globe and Mail* published a loving but also critical tribute to Expo. The piece celebrates the fair as “the principal emblem of a golden age” (Mitchell D1), citing demographic and economic factors as contributing to the general euphoria, but also pointing out that “the centennial celebrations were part of a well-organized government-sponsored strategy to make Canadians feel good” (D5). There is plenty of evidence, Mitchell points out, that, contrary to their reputation from hindsight, many things in the sixties were still very traditional indeed.

WORKS CITED

- Acland, James. “Expo: The Space Frame Fair.” *arts/canada* 24 (Apr. 1967): 4-8.
 ——. “Expo: The Canadian Buildings.” *arts/canada* (May 1967): 4-11.
 Bantey, Bill. *Bill Bantey’s Expo 67*. Montreal: Gazette, 1967.
 “Colonialisme quotidien: centre bilingue centre.” *Parti-pris* 4 (mai-août 1967): 195-6.
 Colombo, John Robert. “Poetry at Expo.” *Canadian Forum* 47 (1967): 145-7.
 Culver, Eleanor. “Expo 67 Here We Come.” *Chatelaine* May 1967: 169-78.
 Des Rivières, Marie-José. *Châtelaine et la littérature (1960-1975)*. Montréal: l’Hexagone, 1992.
 “The Editor’s Page.” *arts/canada* 24.4 (Apr. 1967): n.p.
 “Expo Seeks 225 Bilingual Canadian Women.” *Globe and Mail*. Undated clipping. Vancouver Public Library.
Expo 67: Guide Officiel/Official. Toronto: MacLean-Hunter, 1967.
Expo 67: The Memorial Album of the First Category Universal and International Exhibition Held in Montreal from the Twenty-Seventh of April to the Twenty-Ninth of October Nineteen Hundred and Sixty-Seven. Scarborough: Nelson, 1968.
 “Fair Gets Symbols Crossed as MPs Snub ‘Weird’ Design.” Unidentified clipping. Vancouver Public Library.
 French, Terry. “B.C.’s Top Applicants for Expo Hostess Impress.” *Vancouver Province* 24 Sept. 1966: 34.
 Friedlander, Paul J.C. “A Citizen’s Eye-View of the U.S. Pavilion at Expo 67.” *New York Times* 2 July 1967: 10xx.
 Frum, Barbara. “The Dangerous Disappearance of ‘Woman.’” *Chatelaine* May 1967: 18, 133-6.
 Fulford, Robert. *This Was Expo*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1968.
 Hood, Hugh. “It’s a Small World.” *Tamarack Review* 44 (Summer 1967): 70-82.
 Howard, Irene. “Creative Man and His World: Three Interpretations at Expo.” *Canadian Forum* 47 (Sept. 1967): 137-9.
 “Indian Pavilion Tries Not To Be Restful.” *Globe and Mail* 1 May 1967: 17.
 “Indians Have Day at Expo.” *Vancouver Sun* 5 Aug. 1967: 10.
 Kröller, Eva-Marie. “Canadians at World Expositions.” *Canadian Travellers in Europe, 1851-1900*. Vancouver, University of BC P, 1987. 149-165.
 ——. “Fear of Flying? The Myth of Daedalus and Icarus in Canadian Culture.” *Journal of*

- Canadian Studies* 128.4 (Winter 1993-94): 102-16.
- "Leading Lady of Expo Sums Up." *Vancouver Province* 7 Nov. 1967: 24.
- Lebel, Ronald, "7,000 Shiver in Cold to Watch Expo Fire Die." *Globe and Mail* 30 Oct. 1967: 1.
- MacDonald, Ian. "Expo Thousands Say Au Revoir: Canada's Camelot Slips Away." *Vancouver Sun* 28 Oct. 1967: 1.
- . "Long Live Man and His World: Expo Ends with Tears, Praise." *Vancouver Sun* 30 Oct. 1967: 1.
- McKenna, Barrie. "Expo Bill Still Dogs Montreal." *Globe and Mail* 17 Nov. 1992: A1.
- Marling, Karal Ann. *As Seen On TV: The Visual Culture of Everyday Life in the 1950s*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1994.
- Masters, Brian. *A Student's Guide to Saint-Exupéry*. London, Heinemann, 1972.
- Michener, Wendy. "Movies at Expo—Where's It All Happening This Year? In Film, Baby." *MacLean's* June 1967: 93.
- "Miniskirts Mix with Tradition at Britain's Bold Entry for Expo." *Globe and Mail* 22 April 1967: 11.
- Mitchell, Alana. "When the good times rolled." *Globe and Mail*. 29 June, 1996: D1, D5.
- "Montreal Expo World Fair Relics to Go on Block." *Vancouver Sun* 25 Nov. 1987.
- Newman, Peter C. "Long Range Plans to Use Site: Expo to Leave Some Worthy Legacy." Unidentified clipping. Vancouver Public Library.
- "Photography at Expo." *arts/canada* 24: 6-7 (June-July supp., 1967): 6.
- "Que faire? éditorial" *Parti-pris* 4 (mai-août 1964): 3.
- Rumbold, Richard and Lady Margaret Stewart. *The Winged Life: A Portrait of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, Poet and Airman*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1953.
- Shaw, Robert. "The 1967 World Exhibition—Work in Progress: Text of an Address by Mr. R.F. Shaw, Deputy Commissioner-General, Canadian World Exhibition, before the 18th Federal-Provincial Tourist Conference, Ottawa, Nov.26, 1963." *Statements and Speeches*. #63/24. Ottawa: Information Division, Dept. of External Affairs. 1-5.
- Sinclair, Catherine. "What Women Are Doing For Canada's Centennial." *Chatelaine* April 1967: 38-9, 111-3.
- Spedon, Andrew. *Sketches of a Tour from Canada to Paris, By Way of the British Isles, During the Summer of 1867*. Montreal: Lovell, 1868.
- Stankiewicz, Audrey. "The Last Word." *Canadian Architect* 12 (July-Dec. 1967): 47-50.
- Theall, Donald F. "Expo 67: Unique Art Form." *arts/canada* 24 (April 1967): 3.
- Thompson, Peter. "Extra-Special Service: Red (and Green) Carpets for VIP Visitors to Expo." Unidentified clipping. Vancouver Public Library.
- Tremblay, Gaëtan. "Le Québec politique." *Parti-pris* 4 (mai-août 1967): 187-8.
- Waengler, Ernest. "The Brussels Fair—and Canada." *Saturday Night* 73 (5 July 1958): 16-17, 36-7.
- Walker, John R. "A Psychedelic Experience." *Vancouver Province* 3 April 1967: 7.
- "White Man's Taboo Ends: Tribes to Take Rites to Fair." *Vancouver Province* 11 June 1964, n.p.

