SOME THOUGHTS ON CANADIAN AND AMERICAN ECLECTICISM IN PUBLIC ARCHITECTURE

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PREFACE

The paper examines the specificity of 19th and early 20th century Eclectic Movement as it applied to public architecture in Canada and compares the Movement's position to the corresponding current in the United States. This divergence manifested itself most eloquently in the architecture of the public buildings of the two capitals, Ottawa, and Washington. Canada, like most western nations, did not escape the cultural penchant of the times. In some ways, it followed steadfastly the architectural path of their neighbour to the south, but in other ways it looked to Europe for its muses and its models. It was not until the latter part of the 19th century that Canada found its own voice and defined a distinct image for much of its public architecture. Ideology as well as taste played a part in formulating the national stylistic differences, but so did the issue of cultural nationalism. Furthermore, the question of stylistic disparity is somewhat blurred by a unique paradoxical condition: many (and some of the best) of Canada's significant public buildings were designed by American architects who either followed their own well-determined design tenets or whose perspective on architecture and architectural history differed significantly from those of their Canadian colleagues. In other words, the lure of the past existed in both countries, but the visions were different.

INTRODUCTION

> **eclectic**: *a. & n. (Ancient philosopher) selecting from each school of thought such doctrines as pleases him; (person, doctrine) borrowing freely from various sources; not exclusive in opinion, taste, etc*.[1]

Eclecticism was the dominant movement in Western architecture from about 1870 to 1930, the period stretching from the mid-Victorian era to the early 20th century. It died a natural death with the advent of Modernism and the shift from conservative architectural thinking of the Beaux Arts to the more socially progressive movement in Europe and America. The free adaptation of historical styles, be it for symbolic, aesthetic, or doctrinaire reasons became irrelevant and anathema to architects once they came to accept that both socio-democratic ideals of the modern world and authority of program should constitute the foundation of a new architecture. Stated differently, social, and functional parameters should take precedence over historical erudition.

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[1] Concise Oxford Dictionary

The dogmatic and iconoclastic position of the Modern Movement together with its moralistic views of architecture discounted the traditional architectural culture to one of dishonesty, sterility and of little consequence. By the 1930s, Eclecticism was nearly totally dismissed by the critics and practitioners. Yet, looking back today at this period from 1870 to 1930, one remains astonished by the sheer inventiveness, the erudition, and the absolute beauty of many of the buildings of that era. Walter Kidney, a historian of the eclectic movement in America writes:

> *Not only were the forms of historic architecture valuable through their beauty, but they came to our times freighted with historic associations that every cultured person was familiar with, and that seemed to suggest, even to demand, that a certain building, in a certain place, be built in some one of a rather restricted range style* [2]

The 19th century architects felt totally comfortable borrowing from all styles and periods, from Egyptian to Islamic, from to Gothic to Classical, or from Elizabethan to Baroque, depending on the circumstances, the nature of the building or the whims of the author. The most prevalent choices in Canada and in the United States were for the Neo-Gothic, the Neo-Classical, and the Picturesque manners. The former two were held up by some critics to be explicit alternatives to one another as they symbolized different values, eras, and cultures. It would be more accurate, in fact, to argued that 19th century applied architectural leanings should not be defined in terms of Classical and Gothic antecedents, but in terms of contrasting Rationalist and Romantic approaches, where Romantic encompasses, besides the Neo-Gothic, the equally important but less widespread Neo-Romanesque, Neo-Moorish, Neo-Byzantine, Neo-Elizabethan, Neo-Egyptian, Neo-Renaissance, and other styles.

As was the case for most western countries, buildings in Canada were designed by borrowing from just about any architectural culture. The choice depended on the purpose of the building, the significance of the institution, the locale, the religious bias, or even the personality or the whims of the architect (and/or his client). Examples of Canadian Eclecticism are numerous, varied, often interesting, and spread from coast to coast. Amongst the many wide-ranging examples are the monumental Sun Life Assurance Company Building in Montreal by Darling and Pearson *(Fig. 1)*, the imposing Neo-Gothic château-type hotels *(Figs. 2 and 3),* the Manitoba Legislative Building by Francis L. Worthington Simon *(Fig.4),* the Langevin Block in Ottawa by Thomas Fuller (*Fig. 5),* the Supreme Court of Canada in Ottawa by Ernest Cormier *(Fig. 6),* the Neo-Romanesque Windsor Station in Montreal by Bruce Price *(Fig. 7),* the Kingston City Hall *(Fig. 8)*, and the Canadian Parliamentary complex in Ottawa *(Figs. 9, 10 and 11)*. Although these buildings are noticeably different from one another, they all exhibit a same vision for historical antecedents and correct application of traditional compositional design canons. The architects of these buildings saw themselves as participants or heirs to a movement that was concerned with the restoration of literacy to architecture.

It is often said that the Eclectic Movement ended in the early 1930s, but the longing for historical vindication never fully vanished from the culture of modern architecture. Both in Canada and in

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[2] The Architecture of Choice: Eclecticism in America, 1880-1930

the United States, a fair number of architects kept on searching for their inspiration in models from past times or distant lands. Even after World War II, the eclectic instinct lingered on and felt pray to some of the best architects in the land, albeit now in a more "modern" or "rational" way. The difference between 19th century Eclecticism and that of the post World War II period (Neo-Eclecticism) being that it no longer aspired to be a conscious (and even arbitrary) exercise of borrowing styles, but it became a more elusive and intuitive manner of looking at precedents deemed to be significant. The war had brought about major social, political, and technological changes. The economics of construction became radically altered, and the influx of literate Modernist European architects contributed to making this Neo-Eclecticism more acceptable. Some critics have posited that many of the finest 20th century buildings of Canada owe an allegiance of sort to past or imported architectural forms. For a brief period, the Post-Modern phenomenon reintroduced a return to historicism, albeit in a contrived way. Eventually Post-Modernism proved to be the Eclecticism Movement's ultimate gasp for air before it died a natural dead. Amongst the latter-day Eclectic project is Ron Thom's Massey College at the University of Toronto *(Figs.12),* Peter Rose's Canadian Centre for Architecture in Montreal (*Fig 13*.), Moshe Safdie's Vancouver Public Library (*Fig. 14*) and his National Gallery in Ottawa *(Fig. 15)*, Ron Thom's Champlain College at Trent University in Peterborough *(Fig.16,)* and Kuwabara Payne McKenna Blumberg's Stauffer Library at Queens University in Kingston *(Fig. 17).* Each of these buildings displays an unabashed and conscious historicist streak[3]. One could say that together these buildings constitute the Movement's last hurrah.

TWO MYTHOLOGIES, TWO CIRCUMSTANCES

One of the most effective ways to understand the dissimilarity between Canada and the United States is to appreciate their respective origins and examine how each nation was founded. Though both countries share one continent and many fundamental values, they have over the years matured in fairly different ways and defined distinctive visions for themselves. It is precisely on account of this historical and ideological divergence that their public architecture differs to the extent it does.

The United States was born in 1776 out of a revolution against its colonization by a foreign country. The act of sudden independence gave the nation a clear *raison d'être*, provided it with strong social and political ideals, granted it a sense of purpose and a strong image of itself. Canada, on the other hand, never encountered a revolution, never broke away abruptly from its mother country, never knew the triumph of becoming instantaneously a new nation on the world map. Instead, it took Canada nearly a century to wean itself from its mother country and to define itself as a society and a nation.

The early colonisation of Canada can be ascribed to three founding groups: the French, the British, and the United Empire Loyalists. The French, the first European Canadians, were defeated by the British at the battle of the Plain of Abraham in Quebec City in 1759. In one fell swoop, their position changed from one of governance to one of subservience to the British

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[3] Some attribute Neo-Eclecticism to the advent of the Post Modernist movement. However, Massey College was built in 1960-1963, well before the Post Modernist Movement came into being, and the Stauffer Library was built in 1990, years after the Movement was declared dead.

crown who took over the running of New France. The United Empire Loyalists were Americans who rejected the revolutionary ideals, forsook the United States for Canada, and settled in relatively large numbers in Lower and Upper Canada. Because of their common language, religion, and loyalty to the British crown, the British and the Loyalists fused quickly into a single social and political unit. In other words, two of the three founding people, the French, and the Loyalists, were marked by a sense of defeat which stood in direct opposition the condition of their southern neighbours who saw themselves as heroic revolutionaries. Unavoidably, Canada's emotional and cultural allegiance at the turn of the 19th century was with Britain and the Empire, not with their American neighbours, and certainly not with France. This difference in the emergence of the two nations defined the very basis of their respective value systems, of their culture, and of their institutions. Inevitably, the distinction became manifest in the public architecture of the two nations.

THE AMERICAN POSITION

Although the American colonies declared their independence from Britain at the end of the 18th century, it was not until the early 19th century that the nation became seriously concerned with its architectural aspirations. In rejecting England, the mother country, it also rejected its images and its symbols. America saw itself as a nation founded on the democratic ideals emanating from Ancient Greece and, to some extent, from Republican Rome. The correlation between Greece and democracy led to the inevitable adoption by America of the Classical idiom which came to be seen as the architecture of democracy.

No person influenced architectural thinking in the early days of the Republic more than Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson, aside from being one of the giants in the modern political arena, was also an exceptionally literate person and an articulate scholar of architecture. He was thoroughly familiar with the architecture of Antiquity and of the Renaissance and was one of the first to make the link between Classical architecture and democracy. Above all, he was a practising architect and author of some of the most significant and influential buildings in America[4]. Jefferson was a staunch democrat, a rationalist, and he remained a committed classicist all his life. Classical architecture, he believed, was based on rationalism, balance, intelligent and intelligible rules of composition, and it symbolized order and equilibrium. As President, he was the first, and possibly the only, one to be seriously preoccupied by the image and the symbolic value of public buildings. Aesthetic standards, he felt, had to take on a political dimension for the new Republic. Understandably, his commitment to Classicism and his own realized buildings had a major bearing on generations of architects who were to follow him. So much so that Neo-Classicism became the most prevalent style of public buildings in Washington and in the United States. Nearly every State Capitol in America was built in the Neo-Classical manner[5] following the model of W. Thornton's Capitol in Washington, built between 1793 and 1867 *(Fig.18)*. The city of Washington is possibly the largest and most successful instance of Neo-Classical town planning and of Neo-Classical (or Classical Eclectic) architecture to be found anywhere.

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[4] Monticello and the University of Virginia, both in Charlottesville, are Jefferson's best known and most significant buildings. Monticello, built between 1769 and 1809, was his private estate and monument to himself. The University of Virginia was both founded and designed by him.

[5] One of the great exceptions is Upjohn's State Capitol in Hartford, Connecticut which was finished in 1878

The reason for its success is attributable primarily to the coherent compositional principles which guided the design of both the public buildings and that of the city plan by Major Pierre L'Enfant. The plan *(Fig. 19)* of the city is based on a Classical and rationalist principle of juxtaposition of two grids, one (primary) diagonal and one (secondary) orthogonal. Where the two converge are the *rond-points,* which is also the site for many of the major public buildings. This planning concept is diametrical opposite to the picturesque (and British) tradition of urban spatial organization. L'Enfant's plan for the new capital city was concomitant with Jefferson's views on architecture for order and rationalism as important ingredients of good design[6]. Ada Louise Huxtable, one of the most perceptive and intelligent critics of American architecture, referred to Washington as "a sybaritic city in correct academic dress"[7], in reference to the capital's refined but somewhat wearisome Neo-Classical architectural and planning tradition. Nonetheless, the city is endowed with a plethora of superb examples of Neo-Classical buildings. Amongst them are Cass Gilbert's United States Supreme Court *(Fig.20),* Daniel Burnham's Union Station (1908), John Russel Pope's National Archives (1935), the Jefferson Memorial *(Fig. 21)* and the National Gallery *(Fig. 22)*, James Hoban's White House (1792-1800), Paul Cret's Pan American Union (1910), and possibly the best and most powerful of all Washington's Neo-Classical building's, Henry Bacon's Lincoln Memorial *(Fig. 23)* which stands as a testimonial to supremacy and beauty of Neo-Classical architecture and which attains a nobility which transcends any style of architecture.

ECLECTICISM AND AMBIGUITY IN FRENCH CANADA
Canada, being a bilingual and bicultural nation, traces back its roots to France and Britain, and to a limited extent, to the United States. Quebec as the most bicultural province in Canada[8] is also the most unique in terms of diversity of its architectural sources. The French institutions have generally looked towards France for their models, while the English have sought their inspiration in either England or the United States. In other words, the choice of architectural style in Quebec was primarily determined by the culture of the specific institution. The French genealogy explains why many of the province's 19th century public buildings are clearly derivative of the French Beaux-Arts tradition and are often designed in a Neo-Classical manner consistent with the Beaux Arts' fascination with that style. The City Hall of Montreal, by Henri-Maurice Perrault (1872-1878) *(Fig. 24)* and the Bibliothèque de Saint-Sulpice (now the Bibliothèque nationale du Québec) by Eugène Payette *(Fig. 25)* are both unadulterated French transplants. Despite Quebec's natural propensity for all things French, the linkage with the Beaux-Arts tells only part of the story of the Eclectic Movement in the province. Since architects belonged to either the French or the English cultural community (or in some cases they came from the United States), examples of the whole panoply of stylistic tastes, from Classical, to Gothic, to Moorish, to Romanesque, to Elizabethan are found.

NEO-GOTHIC AND PICTURESQUE TRENDS IN ENGLISH CANADA

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[6] Thomas Jefferson despised Williamsburg, Virginia's first capital city, because of its British association with colonial exploitation.

[7] *Architecture*, Essay by A. L. Huxtable, published in THE NEW YORK TIMES GUIDE TO THE NATION'S CAPITAL, Ed. Alvin Shuster, Bantam Books, 1968

[8] The present proportion of Francophone to Anglophone people in the province is approximately 80 to 20

The rest of Canada, i.e., the nine other provinces, are primarily English speaking and looked more naturally towards England (and sometimes to the United States) for its archetypes. 19th century England was a country spellbound by the Gothic Revival architecture. Gothic was linked with social reforms, patriotic nationalism, romanticism, political liberalism, and nostalgia for a past which was imagined to be better than the present.

The Neo-Gothic Movement in Canada was a direct import of an English architectural fashion and became more prevalent in Canada (especially in English Canada) than in the rest of North America for varied reasons. First, Canadian architects tended to equate the Gothic style with Britain and Northern Europe whose cultures were more in tune with the Canadian psyche than those emanating from Mediterranean Antiquity, or from the Italian Renaissance, or from Baroque Europe. Secondly, there was little interest and limited knowledge in Canada at the time for the ancient civilizations of Greece and Rome. Thirdly, while America was busy searching for an architecture which was the embodiment of the democratic ideals, Canada seemed more interested in the pictorial and (presumed) moralistic aspects of British architecture. Finally, the constructional and structural ideas expounded by Viollet-le-Duc, the pre-eminent theoretician of the times, appealed to the pragmatic and rational Canadian mind. Viollet-le-Duc had formulated a rational critique of Gothic architecture in which demonstrated the link between form, function, and structure. Gothic architecture, he advocated, was the very embodiment of structural and constructional rationality.

As was the case in England, the 19th century was a period of religious devotion in Canada. Gothic architecture was deemed to be a true expression of Christian values of truth, sincerity, and beauty[9]. Architects, by and large, regarded Gothic as a style which communicated power, Christian values, and Romance. Canada embraced Victorian tastes with definite gusto. In architectural terms, this enthusiasm translated itself in a love for the picturesque, the quaint, the romantic. It afforded architects greater possibilities for personal expression, inventiveness, compositional freedom, and permissive designs solutions.

It was also a time when England's most reputed architectural practioners and theoreticians were exerting an influence on Canadian architects which far surpassed that of their American colleagues. Amongst those 19th century British architects were George Gilbert Scott, William Butterfield, John Ruskin[10] and Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin who was the most doctrinaire proselytizer of the era. All were committed Gothicist, Romantics, and architectural moralists. Their ideology made the Neo-Gothic style a natural choice for religious and educational buildings, and it helped set the tone for public architecture. The most influential journals for church builders, but whose influence went well beyond the design of religious buildings was *The Ecclesiologist* which reviewed many of newly built religious buildings and acted as a voice for the widespread Evangelical movement in Canada.

While English attitudes played a leading role in shaping a Canadian architectural culture, the

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[9] Pugin's well-known quote "There is nothing worth living for but Christian architecture and a boat" aptly expressed the spirit of the times.

[10] John Ruskin's *Seven Lamps of Architecture* and *The Stones of Venice* were amongst the most influential books on architecture in Canada at the time

influence of numerous important American architects such as Louis Sullivan, Daniel Burnham, Bruce Price, Stanford White, and Henry Hobson Richardson cannot be denied. Richardson, for instance, despite his brief career, contributed more than anyone in making the Neo-Romanesque tradition popular in both Canada and the United States.

THE GREAT BRITISH MODELS
Because of its emotional and cultural ties, many of the seminal models for Canadian public architecture came directly from the mother country. These models reflected a British taste, British values, and British feelings about symbols and monuments. The greatest icon of all was the English Houses of Parliament at Westminster *(Fig. 26)* (1836-1868) designed by Charles Barry in collaboration with Pugin who played an important role in the development of certain design details. Westminster was at once the incarnation of British (and thus Canadian) parliamentary traditions, and it was suitably un-American in its architectural expression to be acceptable and accessible to all Canadians. One must remember that the Neo-Gothic movement, in both England and Canada, was infused with certain nationalistic elements which also happen to coincide with the rise of nationalism in Europe.

If the Houses of Parliament are without doubt one of the seminal models for Canadian Gothic Revival architecture, it was far from being the only one. The Oxford Museum by Deane and Woodward and Saint Pancras Station (with its adjoining Midland Grand Hotel) in London *(Fig. 27)* (1865-1871) by Sir Gilbert Scott were both as well known and admired building as the Houses of Parliament. In fact, the Midland Grand Hotel became the model for many Chateau-like luxury hotels which were built throughout Canada by the railroad companies. The Chateau Frontenac in Quebec City, the Chateau Laurier in Ottawa*,* and the Banff Springs Hotel, are derivatives of the Midland. The old Viger Station and hotel in Montreal is functionally and conceptually a close Canadian facsimile of Saint Pancras.

THE EMBLEMATIC CANADIAN BUILDING
The emblematic Canadian example of the High Victorian Neo-Gothic architecture is without doubt the national parliamentary complex in Ottawa known as Parliament Hill[11]. It is a simple but powerful ensemble of buildings planned around a grand central lawn which is one of the great public spaces of Canada. Because of its high political and architectural significance, the parliamentary complex immediately became THE symbol of the emergence of the Canadian Nation. The buildings stand on a high promontory overlooking the Ottawa River and the Province of Quebec beyond *(Figs.9, 10 and 11).* Their construction was started in 1867, the year the Canadian Confederation was established. Today, Parliament Hill is seen by all as a national icon comparable in symbolic power and grace to the Capitol in Washington D.C.

Although the design was inspired by the Houses of Parliament at Westminster, none of the constituent buildings are a copy of any specific Canadian or English building. They are original

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[11] The Parliamentary Hill contains four principal buildings, the Centre Block, the East and West Blocks and the Library, which is placed on axis with but at the rear of the Centre Block. The central legislative building and the library was designed by Thomas Fuller and Chilion Jones, while the flanking buildings, initially know as the Departmental Buildings were the works of Thomas Stent and Augustus Laver

buildings done in a particular Gothic style, which goes well beyond the application of certain surface treatments. The Parliament Hill is a convincing essay in picturesque architecture and an evocation of a national ideal. These buildings combine towers of Germanic inspiration, with French mansard roofs, English picturesque compositions, and French Beaux-Arts planning principles. As an architectural statement, Parliament Hill gave prestige and legitimacy to the Neo-Gothic movement and significantly broadened the horizons of the Gothic Revival movement in Canada.

THE POPULARITY OF THE GOTHIC REVIVAL IN CANADA
Since Medieval architecture was perceived as an embodiment of piety, truth and beauty, all values which were congruous with those of the Church and the Schools, most religious buildings (and very many educational buildings) of the 19th and early 20th century were designed in either the Neo-Gothic manner or the Collegiate Gothic style. Churches, schools, and universities were undeniably more comfortable when in a Gothic garb. Although it is not the intent of this paper to extend the discussion on Eclecticism to the realm of religious and educational buildings, it is important to bear in mind that by the 19th century, the Gothic Revival style became an acquired cultural reflex for very many architects designing public buildings as well as churches, schools, and even private residences. One of the obviously appealing aspects of Neo-Gothic architecture was it permissive picturesque and romantic dimension. No building type in Canada so consistently used these attributes than the luxury hotels and rail terminals built by the major railroads between 1880 and the early 20th century. The best known one, and certainly one the most exotic hotel of North America is the Chateau Frontenac in Quebec City (circa 1900) designed by Bruce Price *(Fig. 28)*. From a distance, the building's form and silhouette reads like a natural continuation of the high cliff over which it is perched. It is a modern equivalent of Mont Saint-Michel in France, where site and building, nature and architecture become one. The building is an essay in contextualism and scale manipulation, and a demonstration of the potentials of picturesque Romantic design. In a talk on his design for the Chateau Frontenac, Bruce Price explained the logic of the premise:

> *The site was an inspiration, being directly on the Dufferin Terrace, a newly made promenade on the site of the old ramparts… It was practically at the apex of the old city, and if ever there was a natural reason for a picturesque building it was here; that, and the variations in the site levels that made it perfectly logical to add part to part… (which) led to a picturesque design without direct effort and in a natural way. The motif is, of course, the early French chateau adapted to modern requirements, a style certainly in keeping with the tradition of the old French city, and admirably suited to the picturesque situation…"*

The Chateau Frontenac was but one of many. The Chateau Laurier by Ross and MacFarlane in Ottawa *(Fig. 2)* (1908-1912), the Banff Springs Hotel *(Fig.3)* by W. S. Painter and J.W. Orrock, the Empress Hotel in Victoria *(Fig. 29)* and many others [12] extended the tradition of Neo-Gothic/Chateau-Style hotel design well into the first part of the 20th century. The reasons were twofold: the association with French Medieval (or Renaissance) chateau architecture seemed to convey an appropriate image for luxury living, and the Neo-Gothic manner became a quasi-

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[12] These include, amongst others, the Fort Gary Hotel in Winnipeg (1911-1913) and the Macdonald Hotel in Edmonton (1913-1915) by Ford and MacFarlane, the Hotel Vancouver in Vancouver by Archibald and Scofield, the Chateau Lake Louise in Lake Louise (1924-1925) by Barrot and Blackader

official national style which many wanted to follow. Whether these hotels are identified as Neo-Gothic, Gothic Revival, Chateau-Styles, etc., (or a combination thereof) can be debated. What is certain is that these buildings evoke a conspicuous Romantic and nostalgic image.[13] The Chateau-Style hotel may have a definite affinity with the French Renaissance chateau, but the image it was meant to convey was certainly Gothic inspired and owed as much to Mont Saint Michel as to the Chateau de Blois in the Loire valley.

Ottawa, being the national capital, was more attentive that other cities to the notion of a style which projected an appropriate and coherent image of the nation. The concern was not unlike that of Washington. Both cities, albeit by different means and under different influences, sought to express the ideals of the new nation through its architecture. Unlike most European capitals, Washington and Ottawa were artificial creations. Both locations were selected primarily for political reasons: either to be at the junction of the South and the North, or to be at the intersection of French and English Canada. Both cities in fact constitute a politico-socio-cultural hinge in the nation. So, it is natural that the conscious evocation of national ideals is reflected in its architecture. Two other good Ottawa examples of public architecture done following the Neo-Gothic tradition are worth noting: The Confederation Building *(Fig. 30)* (1928-1931) by Thomas Dunlop Rankin and the Connaught Building. These were amongst the last important buildings in the capital which were very consciously continuing a tradition which had become accepted as the national Canadian style.

CONCLUSION
For Vincent Scully, Romantic-Classicism (neo-Classicism) and Romantic-Naturalism (Neo-Gothic) are diametric opposites: the first was the art of the revolutionary, and the second the "reflex of the refuge, the art of the suburbs".[14] Washington and Ottawa's public architecture are embodiments of these two opposite movements. Scully's view begs the question: Is one better than the other? Is one forward looking and "active" and the other simply nostalgic? There was a time when critics described Neo-Classicism as an architecture governed by intellectual rigor and articulate rules, while Neo-Gothic was reduced to an architecture of painterly concerns and whose method was one on optical titillation above all. Upon closer scrutiny and with a better understanding of the period, the two principal Movements had much in common and were motivated by similar idealism. Romantic-Naturalism's desire for picturesque may be more explicit, but the Neo-Classic longing for visual harmony, Baroque sense of drama and movement, and precise monumentality produced equally convincing painterly milieus. In fact, both styles meant more than just a garb for buildings. Ideological concerns were as important as aesthetic and compositional ideas. Over time, these styles became the embodiment of certain ideals and of a new national identity. In Canada, the Neo-Gothic style played a role in the collective consciousness of society which was similar but different than the Americans' relationship to Neo-Classicism. Both countries represented new political and social entities, and both naturally attempted to define a "national" architecture for their public buildings as an appropriate symbol for their nations. It may be ironic that the two nations came to be during a

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[13] A rather succinct but highly useful classification of sub-styles within the Gothic Revival movement in Canada was done by Mathilde Brosseau and published in 1980 in *Gothic Revival in Canadian Architecture*.

[14] See Vincent Scully's Modern Architecture: The Architecture of Democracy

period when literate architects (and other artists) were more focussed on the past than the future, and that they chose to adopt a language of another era and another place. But not unlike an individual who espouses a new language and transforms it in the process, Canada and the United States adopted their respective style, and modified them into their own mature language. The point thus is not to judge which is right or wrong, or which is better. The 19th century was dominated by the Eclectic Movement, which allowed for and encouraged architects to draw on different sources. Eclecticism was an architecture of choice where the use of historic styles to express a specific culture or a national institution was the norm. It is not the choice which matters, but the level of intelligent understanding and application of the language.

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