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Découvrir la revue

Citer ce compte rendu
Iversen notes that the photograph "endowed with a punctum has a 'blind field'" (120); this blind field exposes the viewer as an object, rather than subject, of the gaze. Thus for Iversen "the real value of Camera Lucida lies not in its excavating the essential nature of photography," but rather in its success at conveying to a large audience "a particular idea of our fascination with the image that was formulated by Lacan in The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis," and elaborating a theory of the visual beyond pleasure (132–33).

Iversen's lucid prose and cogent interpretations help to make Beyond Pleasure, a deeply theoretical text, surprisingly accessible. Nonetheless, the book will likely appeal most to readers familiar with psychoanalysis and already engaged with one or more of the titular theorists. Indeed, Iversen's treatment of Lacan and Lacanian concepts is particularly illuminating, especially when one considers the relative opacity of Lacan's own writings. Although Iversen surveys a vast array of material, Beyond Pleasure seems most at home amongst a rather specific group of theoretical writings on trauma, death, and the real—texts by October associates Rosalind Krauss, Hal Foster, and Mignon Nixon; Slavoj Zizek and his interlocutors; and Parveen Adams and Briony Fer, amongst others.

Some readers might ask for a more thorough treatment of Melanie Klein, for example her theory of the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions. Iversen characterizes not only the former but also the latter in terms of retributory fears (109), which could obscure somewhat the essential transformation of the persecutory fears of the paranoid-schizoid position into the empathetic guilt and concern for the other of the depressive position. Nonetheless, Beyond Pleasure constitutes a tour-de-force of original research, visual analysis, and theory that will engross anyone interested in aesthetics beyond pleasure. My one quibble would be with the index, which is not as deep, broad, or accurate as merited by such a sophisticated text. In section five of "Beyond the Pleasure Principle," Freud mentions in passing that it would be difficult to convince an adult to reread a text they had recently finished. I can think of no more appropriate recommendation of Margaret Iversen's book than to disagree with Freud here, demurring that in the case of Beyond Pleasure one can finish the book and want nothing more than to immediately begin rereading it.

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The publisher announces that this book is "the first definitive guide to more than 250 of the most beautiful and significant churches across the country." Definitive or not, there can be little doubt that this lavishly produced volume with its fine colour photographs will serve to raise interest in Canada's rich and diverse, yet little-explored, heritage of religious architecture. The Richarsons tell us that "Canadian Churches is for anyone interested in architecture and how buildings respond to society's needs." They hope "to make the confusing variety of churches understandable to persons with little knowledge of churches or theology" (26). To cover all denominations of all dates across the entire country must have been a daunting task. They "made deliberate efforts to include famous churches alongside less well-known buildings" (15). "The challenge was always to limit the number of churches. Lists grew and shrank, grew and shrank again and eventually stabilized. Decisions were rethought. Yet many churches we hoped to include had to be left out because of lack of space, not lack of enthusiasm" (15). While there is always likely to be debate about the inclusion of certain buildings and the exclusion of others, the overall balance—temporally, geographically, and by denomination—is a satisfactory one.

The division of the book is straightforward. There is an introduction entitled "Churches," in which the sections on Style and Design are succinct and informative; the latter provides a particularly useful list of questions that aid our interpretation of a church and the way it functioned. There follows Atlantic Canada, Quebec, Ontario, and the West and North, plus "Changes," an overview of church buildings from the third-century house-church at Dura Europos, Syria, to the present day. Within the chapters material is organized chronologically, thematically, or geographically. Throughout the book extended captions to the illustrations provide much useful information.

Atlantic Canada opens in the seventeenth century; the historical context is clearly presented and there is a well-conceived overview down to the present. The chapter on "British and American Colonial Traditions" opens with St. Paul's, Halifax, 1750, the earliest surviving Anglican church in Canada. There is an excellent historical contextualization, an exemplary discussion of the English and American design sources, and a clear account of the subsequent additions to the original fabric. For other churches the reader is likewise informed of the essential history and a clear interpretation of the building and its use. Particular fine are the entries on St. George's Round Church,
Halifax, 1800–01, Barrington Meeting House, 1765, and Grand Pre, Covenanters’ Church, 1804–11.


Of the early churches in New Brunswick, Grecnock Church, St. Andrews, 1824, and the contemporary “Old Stone Church” in Saint John take pride of place. The discussion of John Medley, Bishop of Fredericton, 1845–92, and his role in the construction of Christ Church Cathedral, Fredericton, 1845–53, and St. Anne’s, Fredericton, 1846–47, is fundamental. We learn of the architect Frank Will’s careful reference to original Gothic exemplars as advocated by the Cambridge Camden (later Ecclesiastical) Society, as well as the impact of “Ecclesiology” on the stained glass, floor tiles, furnishings, vessels, and vestments in Anglican churches. For St. Anne’s we are given an especially interesting reference to St. Bode’s, Masborough, near Rotherham, 1841–42, Matthew E. Hadfield architect, which was illustrated in Augustus Welby Pugin’s influential book The Present State of Ecclesiastical Architecture in England (London, 1843).

In Newfoundland, the inclusion of the little-known Roman Catholic Church of the Most Holy Trinity, Trinity, 1833, is most welcome. The Basilica Cathedral of St. John the Baptist, St. John’s, 1841–55, is seen as “freely treated Romanesque Revival” (81), with the design drawn “mainly on early Christian and Romanesque churches in Italy and Germany” (82); Sant’Ambrogio, Milan, is specifically cited with reference to Thomas Hope’s Historical Essays on Architecture (1835). However, the Basilica is Romanesque only in so far as it uses round-headed arches. The Richardson’s point out that the architect, Ole Jürgen Schmidt (1793–1848), was “a versatile Danish Lutheran and architect to the Danish government in Altona on the Elbe.” Now a suburb of Hamburg, Altona was then the second-largest city in Denmark and traded actively with Newfoundland (81). Schmidt knew the architecture of Rome and Berlin, and the contemporary Rundbogenstil (round-arched style). Here we should refer to Heinrich Hübisch and his 1828 book entitled In welchem Style vollen wir bauen? (In what style should we build?). His answer was the Rundbogenstil. His unexecuted project for the Church of St. Stephen in Pforzheim, ca. 1827–28, has a triple entrance and windows above twin towers close to the Basilica; this was exhibited in the first Rundbogenstil exhibition in Munich in 1829 (Kathleen Curran, The Romanesque Revival: Religion, Politics, and Transnational Exchange [University Park, PA, 2003], 10, fig. 1). Details like emphasized quoins, alternating symmetrical ashlers for window jambs, and the arch mouldings of the façade windows all belong to a classical Roman tradition rather than the Romanesque. And, with Rome in mind, is it possible that Schmidt’s use of the colossal order in the transepts and first bay of the nave of the Basilica was inspired by the nave of St. John in Lateran, Rome? No such stylistic ambiguities are evident in the thoroughly English Gothic of the Anglican Cathedral in St. John’s, 1847–1905, for which Peter Coffman, “St. John’s Anglican Cathedral and the Beginnings of Ecclesiological Gothic in Newfoundland,” Journal of the Society for the Study of Architecture in Canada 31, no. 1 (2006), 3–22, should be added to the references.

The “Rational Gothic” of Edward Medley’s New Brunswick churches is represented by St. Mary the Virgin, New Maryland, 1863–64, and Christ Church, St. Stephens, 1863–64, the latter complete with Clayton and Bell stained glass. “Cradle of the Waves” introduces the diverse churches of Prince Edward Island, including William Crichtlow Harris’s magnificent St. Mary’s, Indian River, 1900–02. Even greater diversity is experienced in the churches of Québec, not least in the edifices of the 1950s and 60s. As ever, the Richardson’s presentation is clear and concise. “L’ancien régime” introduces the churches of Neuville and Île d’Îléans, while “Anglicanism triumphant” considers the English background to the Anglican cathedral in Québec City. In the same city, Saint-Jean Baptiste, 1881–84, is “closely identified” with La Trinité, Paris. It is true that there are similarities but the colossal columns of the interior surely belong to the tradition established in the province in the Montréal churches of Notre-Dame, 1823–29, and St. Patrick, 1843–47. For the choice of the Gothic style for Notre-Dame, Montréal, we should add Alan Gowans, “Sainte-Croix d’Îléans: A Major Monument Too Long Neglected,” Gazette des Beaux-Arts, ser. 6, no. 112 (1988), 69–76. In St. Patrick’s, Montréal, the Richardson’s see “mixed Irish and French architectural features, some Romanesque and some Gothic” (150). This is difficult to comprehend; instead the interior elevation seems to recall Santa Maria sopra Minerva in Rome. Sainte-Brigitte de Kildare, Montréal, 1877–80, is characterized as Romanesque, “the great Irish national style” (154). Yet the church looks nothing like the Hiberno-Romanesque that was so popular in Ireland at that time.

For Ontario we find many familiar buildings plus some hidden gems like Edmund Burke’s Baptist Chapel at Walkerton, 1883/89, Madill Wesleyan Methodist Church near Huntsville, 1872–73, and St. Paul’s Presbyterian in Winchester by G.F. Stalker of Ottawa, 1895. St. George’s Anglican Cathedral in Kingston is included but not its Roman Catholic rival in the city—see “Joseph Connolly in the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Kingston, Ontario,” Journal of the Society for the Study of Architecture in Canada 30 (2005), 25–38. Discussion of Ralph Adams Cram’s St. Mary’s, Walkerton, 1903–04, should be sup-
plemented by Cameron Macdonell, “‘If you want to, you can
cure me.’ Duplicity and the Edwardian Tradition,” Journal of
23–36. On matters of style some questions remain unresolved
such as the choice of Romanesque for St. Thomas at Shanty
Bay, 1838–41, or for Frank Darling’s High Anglican Church
of St. Mary Magdalen, Toronto, 1888. “Byzantium in Ontario”
presents St. Anne’s, Toronto, 1907–08, with its famous Group
of Seven paintings, in the context of the anti-elitist views of
the rector, Canon Lawrence Skey. For this we should also rec-
ommend Peter Coffman, “St. Anne’s Anglican Church and
its Patron,” Journal for the Society for the Study of Architecture
in Canada 30, no. 1 (2005), 17–26. For an earlier expression
of Low, as opposed to High Anglican, church design, there is
St. Thomas Anglican Church, St. Catharines, Ontario,” Jour-
nal of the Society for the Study of Architecture in Canada 31,
(2006), 11–22. My only quibble with specific comparisons
concerns Arthur Holmes’s façade of Holy Name, Toronto,
1915, in relation to James Gibbs’s St. Mary-le-Strand, Lon-
don; the façade of Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome, seems to be a
better candidate.

“Fur Post to Pacific Rim” takes us from Manitoba to Brit-
ish Columbia with such treasures as Old St. James, Winnepeg,
1853; St. Nicholas, Lumsden Rural Municipality, Saskatchewan,
1900; and St. Stephen’s, Saanich, British Columbia, 1862. Holy
Cross, Skookumchuck, British Columbia, 1895–1906, is sadly
only illustrated with a drawing of the façade—see http://www3.
telus.net/public/a3a01400/HC.html, which includes a restora-
tion appeal. The Richardssons are keenly aware of problems asso-
ciated with saving our church heritage, as in the discussion of
Vancouver Anglican Cathedral and St. Stephen’s-in-the Fields,
Toronto. Reference should also be made to Lucie K. Motisset,
Luc Noppen, and Thomas Coomans, Quel avenir pour quelles
eglises: What future for which churches (Montreal, 2006).

In “Changes” one wonders about some specific choices
like Bosra Cathedral, 488–512, or the early medieval Galle-
rus Oratory in Ireland. What are their relevance for Canadian
churches? There is an illustration of the interior of St. Peter’s,
Rome, and yet nothing of the Saint Jacques (Mary Queen of
the World), Montreal, which is a copy of St. Peter’s. Moreover
we miss precise medieval references that were so important for
the Gothic Revival of Augustus Welby Pugin (1812–52) and
the Ecclesiologists.

“Notes and Sources” refers mainly to books plus the Journal
of Canadian Art History and the Journal of the Society for
the Study of Architecture in Canada but rarely with reference
to specific articles and websites. Endnotes are not designated with
traditional superscript numbers, yet pages 399 to 409 provide
references to pages and give select sources.

There is a glossary of architectural terms and a four-page
bibliography. References go back to Early Christian and Byzan-
tine. For medieval there is nothing specifically on Gothic; for
the nineteenth century Pugin’s True Principles and Apology are
included but not Contrasts, nor Michael Port’s Six Hundred New
Churches: The Church Building Commission 1818–1865, revised
dition (Reading, 2006).

It would have been helpful to include provincial lists of
significant churches not mentioned in the text along with maps.
With this in mind, reference may be made to some websites: for
Quebec see: http://www.lieuxdeculte.qc.ca/; on Manitoba heri-
hml and http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/hrb/mun/index.html; and
for Saskatchewan see: http://www.sasksettlement.com/display.
php?cat=Religion&subcat=Churches%20and%20Congregations

For Lamont County, Alberta, there is a self-guided driving
tour of churches, which may be downloaded from http://www.
countylamont.ab.ca/.

In spite of these reservations, Canadian Churches is essen-
tial for anyone interested in ecclesiastical architecture in Cana-
ada. It is a pity that the publisher did not allow the authors
the freedom to include more references and a more complete
bibliography, which would have been so useful for teachers and
for stimulating research in church architecture in Canada.

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