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Plurality and Agency: Portraits of Women by Prudence Heward

by

Shirley Kathleen Emeny



A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

in

History of Art and Design

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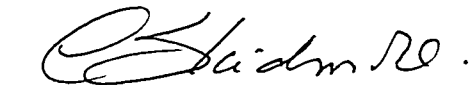
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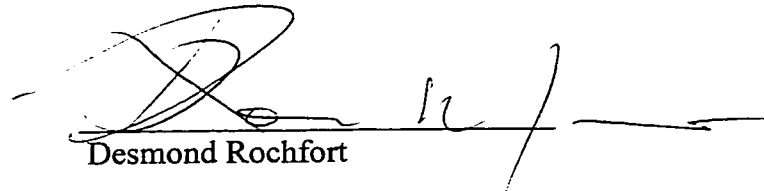
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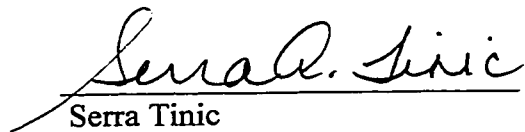
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Colleen Skidmore



Desmond Rochfort



Serra Tinic

March 4, 1999

## **Abstract**

### **Plurality and Agency: Portraits of Women by Prudence Heward**

Shirley Kathleen Emeny

This study focuses on the work of Prudence Heward (1896-1947), a Canadian painter who worked in Montreal during the second quarter of the twentieth century. Her body of work was dominated by portraits of women and influenced by the new ideas and aesthetic methods which established modern ways of thinking and producing art in the early twentieth century. Heward expressed an active strength in her female figures who were dealing with the conflict and ambiguities inherent in the cultural upheaval created by the changing social and political situation of North American women at this time - a transformation that occurred at different rates for women in differing religious, economic and political situations. She did this by painting the figures as subjects of their own lives rather than objects of a male-centered outlook, and as individuals who engaged with their diverse and often difficult circumstances in distinctive ways.



## Acknowledgments

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## **Abbreviations**

**NGC** National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, Ontario



## **Introduction: Alternative Models of Femininity and Modernity**

Prudence Heward (1896-1947) was a Canadian painter who worked in Montreal during the second quarter of the twentieth century. Although her body of work contains landscape and still life painting, it is dominated by portraits of women. Charles Hill remarks that there is an underlying “tension” in Heward’s paintings, which portray “strong, independent women, women with individual lives and personalities.”<sup>1</sup> Other late-twentieth century critics such as Natalie Luckyj and Joyce Millar have been more pointed and maintain that the portraits appear to challenge the racial and gender stereotypes of Heward’s age and make a disturbing political statement about the subjects’ relationships to their society.<sup>2</sup>

Heward was trained in the French academic style of painting, but she was also profoundly influenced by modernism. In her essay “Feminism and Modernism,” Janet Wolff argues that the new ways of writing and painting which emerged in the

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Hill, Canadian Painting in the Thirties (Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1975), 42.

<sup>2</sup> Natalie Luckyj, Expressions of the Will: The Art of Prudence Heward (Kingston: Agnes Etherington Art Center, 1986), 59; Joyce Millar, “The Beaver Hall Group,” Woman’s Art Journal 13 (Spring/Summer 1992): 5.

latter part of the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century had “critical and radical potential” for women writers and artists who wanted to articulate a view of the world centered on their own experience and not stifled by rigid codes of patriarchal aesthetic convention.<sup>3</sup> While she points out that until recently women have been omitted from the canon of modernism because of delimiting themes that excluded them, she maintains that women pursued the expression of their own experiences and “were as much involved in the revolution in literary and visual languages as men.”<sup>4</sup> Some of the major themes that defined modernism and excluded women were the conflation of male sexuality with male creativity, the lifestyle of the flâneur in the public and anonymous urban domain, and the experiences of men in the trenches of the First World War.<sup>5</sup>

In the nineteenth century with the emergence of an urban middle class, there arose a “cult of domesticity” which glorified the home and family as a refuge from the competitive outside world and separated the permissible activities and spaces for men and women into different spheres. The ideal woman was conceived of as gentle and nurturing, suited only to the private sphere of the home where she was completely dependent on men to provide for her and protect her from the harsh realities of public

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<sup>3</sup> Janet Wolff, “Feminism and Modernism,” Feminine Sentences (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1990), 51-65.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

<sup>5</sup> The analysis of these themes and the different relationship of women writers and painters to the modernist movements are taken up in depth by Griselda Pollock, “Modernity and the Spaces of Femininity,” Vision and Difference (London: Routledge, 1988), 50-90; Carol Duncan, “Virility and Domination in Early Twentieth-Century Vanguard Painting,” N. Broud and M.D. Garrard, eds. Feminism and Art History: Questioning the Litany (New York: Harper & Row, 1982), 293-313; Shari Benstock, Women of the Left Bank (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986), 26.

life.<sup>6</sup> Respectable, middle-class women were therefore restricted to work within the home and cut off from civic responsibility and the freedom to move about the city. Wolff states that “although by no means uniform or complete, this separation was to set the terms of existence for men and women of all classes into the twentieth century.”<sup>7</sup> The effect of these restrictions on women artists (who were mostly members of the middle class) was to disallow them access to those very experiences that came to define the modern. This exclusion created a gap in knowledge about “the private manifestations” of the modern as well as the “very different nature of the experience of those women who did appear in the public arena.”<sup>8</sup>

Considering this problem in her essay “Modernity and the Spaces of Femininity,” Griselda Pollock insists that “the historical recovery of data about women producers of art ...is only critically possible through a concomitant deconstruction of the discourses and practices of art history itself.”<sup>9</sup> Whereas the male artist’s representation of modernity, particularly after the First World War, had to do with the deconstruction of traditional ideas of mankind, heroism and civilization, the female artist was not fundamentally affected by these concerns because she had never defined herself as a participant in the establishment of such ideas.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, the changes wrought on women’s lives by a changing world

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<sup>6</sup> Deborah Gorham examines these concepts in The Victorian Girl and the Feminine Ideal (London: Croom Helm, 1982), 3-4.

<sup>7</sup> Janet Wolff, “The Culture of Separate Spheres,” Feminine Sentences (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1990), 28.

<sup>8</sup> Janet Wolff, “The Invisible Flâneuse,” Feminine Sentences (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1990), 47.

<sup>9</sup> Pollock, “The Spaces of Femininity,” 55.

<sup>10</sup> An analysis of the effect of World War I on men’s and women’s expressions of their experiences of the modern is given in Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, No Man’s Land Volume 2: Sex Changes (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 258-323.

were quite different from those undergone by men. Women did not experience the trenches of World War I, however they did experience broader employment opportunities in factories, hospitals and various public services that the absence of men offered them. They did experience the necessity and opportunity to act without the customary male guidance (or dominance) during the war years.<sup>11</sup> The impact of technology was not felt in the devastating effects of modern weapons, but in the time-saving devices of the kitchen and the possibility of birth control. Almost immediately after the war, in Britain, Canada and the United States, women were granted the right to vote. Thus, for women, modernity had more to do with negotiating their way through a maze of disintegrating, but not extinct, social restrictions plus the development and achievement of broader aspirations in an era of greater freedom. The problem of how to move out of the home and gain a foothold in the broader world, how to fulfill professional desires that had been previously repressed, and how to take up the task of defining themselves in new ways, was uniquely theirs.

This thesis will demonstrate that Prudence Heward took advantage of modernist techniques to depict women as active subjects in relationship to specific locations that suggested their individual dilemmas in a pluralistic society that was undergoing radical change in terms of gender relations.<sup>12</sup> In Canada during the early part of the twentieth century, the new rights and privileges that permitted women to explore their own agency and authority were unevenly distributed across categories

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 263.

<sup>12</sup> Pollock, "The Spaces of Femininity," 87. She characterizes the work of Berthe Morisot and Mary Cassatt as depicting women who "function as subjects of their own looking or their activity, within highly specified locations of which the viewer becomes a part."

such as race, class, and religious affiliation. Her portraits depict women of various ages, races and classes, set against backgrounds which limit them and which they endure painfully or struggle against. She marked her figures as individuals who must negotiate their society's demands and definitions, restrictions and opportunities.

It seems likely that Heward was exposed to modernist concerns in art from an early age. In 1914, she traveled with her mother to England to be closer to her brothers who were at the front. Luckyj points out that she was living in London between 1914 and 1918 when Roger Fry was operating his Omega workshops and promoting the new modernist aesthetic. Because the work of the artists involved in the Omega workshops - primarily Roger Fry, Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant - stressed interior design to such an extent, Luckyj suggests that Heward may have been introduced to this work by her cousin Mary Harvey who was an interior decorator.<sup>13</sup> Heward's personal library contained writings by Roger Fry and there is evidence of the influence of these artists in the formal properties of her paintings.<sup>14</sup> Many of her later themes that I take up in the thesis, such as the cultural basis of gender identity and women's burgeoning opportunity to fully participate in the larger cultural order, may also have been influenced by the writings of Virginia Woolf who was associated with these artists through the Bloomsbury group.

Back in Montreal in 1918, Heward began her formal art studies under William Brymner and Randolph Hewton at the Art Association of Montreal School. During

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<sup>13</sup> Luckyj, *Expressions*, 29-31. For an general outlook on Roger Fry's contribution to the introduction of modernism into British art see Francis Spalding, "Roger Fry and his critics in a post-modernist age," *The Burlington Magazine* 128 (July 1986):489-92.

<sup>14</sup> Luckyj, *Expressions*, 23.

that time she also took summer sketching classes with Maurice Cullen. Through her training at the Art Association she met a number of young artists and in 1920 joined with them in forming the Beaver Hall Group. The Group, mostly women who shared studio space on Beaver Hall Hill in Montreal, was formed at the same time as the Group of Seven in Toronto but the Montrealers were quite different. They allowed a wide scope for subject matter, including figure studies and portraits as well as landscape painting, and made no claims about expressing a national identity. Nor did they ever take up the northern wilderness as a theme, painting instead the land that was close around them along the St. Lawrence River. The predominance of women in the membership in the Beaver Hall Group also differed from the Group of Seven's all male brotherhood. The Montreal group included Prudence Heward, Mabel May, Kathleen Morris, Ethel Seath, Nora Collyer, Emily Coonan, Liliias Torrance Newton, Sarah Robertson, Anne Savage, Mabel Lockerby, Adrien Herbert, Robert Pilot, Randolph Hewton, Edwin Holgate, and A.Y. Jackson.<sup>15</sup> Heward's friendships with many of these people would last throughout her life and continue to influence her artistically.<sup>16</sup> The Beaver Hall Group was interested in modern art and Heward's style demonstrates that interest, although underlying her interest in modernist practices was a thorough grounding in the French academic style which she learned under Brymner.

In 1925 and 1929, Heward made trips to Paris where she would have been exposed first hand to the works of artists such as Gauguin, Cezanne and Picasso.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Millar, "Beaver Hall Group," 3.

<sup>16</sup> Luckyj, *Expressions*, 31.

<sup>17</sup> For a brief sketch of how the work of these artists influenced Heward's style see Luckyj, *Expressions*, 57.

Moreover, there were two events which occurred there in 1925 that may have deeply influenced her. The first one was the presence of Josephine Baker and the nightly performances of the *Revue Negre*.<sup>18</sup> A *Vogue* writer described Josephine Baker as “a savage intoxicated with tom-toms...at one moment she is the fashion artist’s model, at the next Picasso’s.”<sup>19</sup> Baker did pose for Picasso and a number of other well-known artists in Paris.<sup>20</sup> Heward, present in Paris during the excitement, a faithful reader of *Vogue Magazine* and an artist herself was undoubtedly aware of the impact Baker was making.<sup>21</sup>

In addition, from April to October the Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs Industriels et Modernes was held in that city. This exposition was said to “set the course for the rest of the century” in terms of the “art of living in the modern world.”<sup>22</sup> Furniture, architecture, products of mass production, and the latest fashions from the Paris couturiers were the principal kinds of objects on display. The exposition was based on the desire to present a modern way of living for the new century - the century of the machine.<sup>23</sup> It cannot be known for certain that Heward attended the exposition, but anyone staying in Paris that year could not have helped but be aware of it. Her friends and family recall that years later her bedroom was decorated in an Art Deco style unusual in Montreal.<sup>24</sup> Heward also loved to dress in

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<sup>18</sup> Phyllis Rose describes the electrifying effect of Baker and the *Revue Negre* on 1925 Paris in *Jazz Cleopatra* (New York: Doubleday, 1989), 23-46.

<sup>19</sup> Georgina Howell, *In Vogue: 75 Years of Style* (London: Conde Nast Books, 1991), 35.

<sup>20</sup> Lynn Haney, *Naked at the Feast* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1981), 67.

<sup>21</sup> Heward’s niece, Ann Johanson, remembers that Heward always read *Vogue Magazine*. Ann Johanson, interview by author, 19 March 1998.

<sup>22</sup> Dan Klein, Nancy A. McClelland and Malcolm Haslam, *In The Deco Style* (New York: Rizzoli, 1986), 6.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 10-16.

<sup>24</sup> Heward Grafftey, *Portraits from a Life* (Montreal: Vehicule Press, 1996), 69.

the latest fashion. Her niece remembers that she sometimes looked quite peculiar because she was two or three years ahead of the fashion standard in Montreal.<sup>25</sup> These particulars indicate a desire to be as modern as possible which points to an affinity with the ideals of the exposition, if not actual attendance.

Heward may have first been exposed to the work of André Lhôte during the 1925 trip.<sup>26</sup> When she returned to Paris in 1929 it was with the intention of studying with Lhôte although at the urging of Isabel McLaughlin, who she met there and who was subsequently to become a life-long friend, she changed her mind.<sup>27</sup> McLaughlin and Heward studied instead at the Scandinavian Academy which also emphasized modernist concerns but allowed more freedom of expression. Heward continued in her commitment to modern art all through her life. On her return to Montreal she joined the Atelier, an art school established by John Lyman who had studied in Europe under Matisse and was dedicated to promoting a modern, European style of art in Montreal. In 1933, she became vice-president of the Canadian Group of Painters, an outgrowth of the Group of Seven with Lawren Harris as President which was formed to ensure the continued practice of modern art in Canada among a second generation of twentieth century artists. In 1938, she helped to found the Contemporary Arts Society which likewise had as its aim the promotion of awareness of modern art in the conservative atmosphere of the Montreal arts community.

Heward did not need to earn a living with her painting and therefore had a

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<sup>25</sup> Anne Johanson, interview by author, 19 March 1998.

<sup>26</sup> Victor Arwas, *Art Deco* (London: Academy editions, 1980), 185-190. Lhôte is characterized as doing work which was "particularly suited to fit into the Art Deco movement."

<sup>27</sup> Luckyj, *Expressions*, 35, note 23.



certain kind of freedom which allowed her to engage in the artistic dialogue without concern for the commercial viability of her art. She lived at home with her mother in a well-to-do household where all her basic financial and practical needs were taken care of.<sup>28</sup> Her freedom, however, was not absolute because the support of the artist's family was given within the framework of a middle-class lifestyle with all its attendant restrictions. Luckyj relates a memory of André Biéler's about Heward's isolation on the respectable Right Bank during her earlier trip to Paris.<sup>29</sup> Effa Heward, Prudence's mother, is remembered as being devoted to her home and children and deeply involved in the church.<sup>30</sup> Heward's nephew describes her circumstances as a "protected sort of gentle, genteel almost social sort of environment," where the logical place for a single woman to be was with her mother.<sup>31</sup> Heward also suffered seriously from asthma and was often ill. This would have confined her to painting expeditions which were not too physically demanding and may have limited her output. She died from asthma at the age of fifty-one.

Heward and her fellow painters and critics were a part of the intellectual and artistic elite of Canada in the nineteen twenties. Mary Vipond points out that the people in this group were "of the same class and background as the business, political and professional leaders across the country. Family, marriage, war service, university, clubs, outlook - all tied them together."<sup>32</sup> Thus they were not radical social critics, as

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<sup>28</sup> Heward's nephew, Heward Graffey, discusses the social and financial standing of Prudence Heward's mother. Graffey, Portraits, 14-21.

<sup>29</sup> Lucky, Expressions,. 31.

<sup>30</sup> Anne Johanson, Interview by Pepita Ferrari, 14Oct.1993, sound roll 32, p.1.

<sup>31</sup> John Heward, Interview by Pepita Ferrari, 24 Aug.1993, sound roll 17, p.3-7.

<sup>32</sup> Mary Vipond, "The Nationalist Network: English Canada's Intellectuals and Artists in the 1920's," Interpreting Canada's Past Vol. II, ed. J.M. Bumstead (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1986), 262.

a rule, but were connected to the established institutions that ran the country and more likely to be concerned with the development of Canadian culture and a national consciousness than questioning ingrained custom. During the three decades in which Heward painted, art in Canada was dominated by the ideas of the Group of Seven whose agenda included the interpretation of a Canadian identity whole and unmarred by any irregularities. Heward's work was often characterized as representing "Canadian native traditions, Canadian environment, a distinct Canadian temperament and turn of mind."<sup>33</sup> Edwin Holgate was clearly interpreting her work according to this understanding when he wrote her obituary for Canadian Art in 1947. He claimed that "her works had no political implications of any kind," describing her oeuvre as "rich, a very personal and important contribution to Canadian culture."<sup>34</sup>

Montreal was a pluralistic cultural environment, however. There were not only the two primary Euro-Canadian cultures, French and English, living together but a number of other racial, ethnic and religious groups including Jewish, black, and Irish people. Moreover, although generally as conservative as Vipond says, the Montreal intellectual community did include more radical thinkers as well, such as Norman Bethune, Fritz Brandtner, Paraskeva Clark, and Francis and Marion Scott.<sup>35</sup> My research has led me to believe that in her portraits of women Heward was responding to the pluralistic society in which she lived and particularly to the social and political issues around the changing roles of women in Quebec. Heward did not

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<sup>33</sup> Toronto Telegram Jan. 24, 1930.

<sup>34</sup> Edwin Holgate, "Prudence Heward," Canadian Art 4 (1947): 161.

<sup>35</sup> Although Clark lived in Toronto, she was involved with the Montreal community of artists and intellectuals. See Joan Murray, ed., Daffodils in Winter (Moonbeam Ontario: Penumbra Press, 1984).

depict a “distinct Canadian temperament and turn of mind,” but a variety of figures whose diversity in race, religion and class worked against the uniform sense of Canadianness which the Group of Seven promulgated, and whose response to their societal locations, though individual and personal, was fraught with larger meaning. The poses and facial expressions of her female subjects in connection to the setting and props that surround them almost always communicate an ambiguity. Nothing is certain, solid or trite. They are “personal” in the sense that they deal with an individual’s response to her societal location. But, contrary to Holgate’s judgement of them, they are political as well, following the maxim “the personal is political.”

Although Heward’s works are generally compelling and unusual, three portraits stand out as excellent examples of the uneasy way in which her production rested among paintings that were meant to define either an essential Canadian or an essential woman, and are exemplary of the troubling currents that seem to flow just under the surface of most of her portraits. These are Rollande, painted in 1929, The Bather, painted in 1930, and Hester, painted in 1936 (figures 1 - 3). Rollande cannot easily be read according to the conventions which governed the representation of French-Canadian habitant women and with her pensive frown and encompassing pink apron is an enigmatic figure. I endeavor to unravel the enigma by examining the production of Rollande in an environment where traditional ideas about women’s roles were undergoing radical change in an atmosphere of debate and conflict. The subject of my second chapter, The Bather, examines Heward’s idiosyncratic response to the treatment of the female body in traditional art practices, and explores this exceptional figure’s representation of female agency and authority. Finally, I

examine the 1937 painting Hester. This painting was one of a series of black nudes that Heward executed during the late nineteen-thirties and early nineteen-forties. How Heward has accomplished the portrayal of difference by means of the female nude without falling into the use of old and brutal formulas, and how this contravention of custom was so provocative, is the subject of this final chapter.

French-Canadian women, women with powerful, athletic bodies, poor black women: the critics often protested their inability to understand such subject matter or, as in the case of Rollande, they crammed the figures into categories that could not hold them for long. But Heward's figures assert an individuality and an agency that refuses any sort of comfortable containment. They push out of their boundaries and demand to be understood on their own terms.

## Chapter One: Rollande

In 1929, Prudence Heward painted a portrait of a Quebec farm girl titled Rollande (Fig. 1). During the nineteen-thirties and forties, the painting was exhibited in Canada, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa where critical attention was consistently favorable. Many of these critics considered the painting a representation of the Canadian character which was perceived as sharing its essence with the nation's harsh northern climate and rugged terrain. An article appearing in the Minneapolis Tribune in 1930 is typical of the kind of interpretation Rollande received.

One fact comes immediately to the mind of the visitor, as he looks around the gallery at the institute now devoted to paintings by contemporary Canadian artists. There is a distinctly native flavor in these paintings. They are not nationalistic, in that they flaunt the superiority of the Dominion, or wave artistic flags, but they reflect the native life of a country where winter is vigorous, where it is difficult to wrest a living from the earth, and the robustness of a people who are nearer their pioneering days than the Europeans from which they sprang, or than we, who are their neighbors... There is a freshness of spirit and a youthful exuberance in the expression of the outdoor life,

of forest and field, or sleigh and snowbound winter, and in the depiction of native types and workers...As one enters the gallery, one sees the portrait of Rollande, a buxom girl, in a vivid pink apron, accentuating the swarthy skin and black hair of a typical native to Canada, that suggest the mixture of French and Indian blood flowing in the veins.<sup>1</sup>

Donald Buchanan, writing for The Canadian Forum in 1935, suggested that the use of themes and compositions like Rollande was the superlative route to getting figure paintings accepted by the Canadian art establishment, which had a marked preference for landscapes and an overly prudish reaction to depictions of the body.

If you must be a figure painter, and even the high priests of the nature dogma are willing to admit that taste and talent may incline some that way, then you had best, they advise, go paint French-Canadian farm girls standing in hay fields with the St. Lawrence as a background.<sup>2</sup>

But there is more to Rollande than a conventional image of a “native type.” Fifty years later, in 1986, Natalie Luckyj noted that there are striking elements in Rollande which disturb a comfortable notion of the figure’s oneness with her environment. She stated that “at the heart of Rollande is a different realization which suggests that the complex interdependency between the individual and society can be both supportive and restrictive.”<sup>3</sup> Whereas to Buchanan Rollande is a conventional image, pandering to the insipid tastes of an unsophisticated artistic community, to

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<sup>1</sup> “Canadian Artist’s Work Reflects Dominion Life,” Minneapolis Tribune, 13 July 1930. Also see “Canadian Exhibit at Art Museum,” St. Louis Post-Dispatch, 1 Aug., 1930, and Carlyle Burrows, “Canadians Express Spirit of the North” New York Herald Tribune, 8 June, 1930.

<sup>2</sup> Donald W. Buchanan, “Naked Ladies,” The Canadian Forum 15 (April 1935): 273-4.

<sup>3</sup> Natalie Luckyj, Expressions of the Will: The Art of Prudence Heward (Kingston: Agnes Etherington Art Center, 1986), 59. Also see Joyce Millar, “The Beaver Hall Group,” Woman’s Art Journal 13 (Spring/Summer 1992): 5.

Luckyj it is a provocative work that unsettles established expectations with layers of meaning. In this chapter I will argue that through the use of a visual vocabulary learned in her academic training, Heward composed a painting that appeared conventional at first glance, but by the uncommon demeanor of the figure, the unusual juxtaposition of figure and background and the judicious use of certain modernist techniques, she subverted that very reading . In this way Heward produced a powerful work that challenged the socially-constructed gender roles bequeathed to women, specifically to French-Canadian women, in the early part of the century.

Paintings make sense when they use visual codes understood by both the painter and the viewer. Norman Bryson writes that recognition lies “in the coincidence between a representation and that which a particular society proposes and assumes as its reality; a reality involving the complex formation of codes of behavior, law, psychology, social manners, dress, gesture, posture.”<sup>4</sup> Heward was painting at a time when the image of a woman in the landscape signified the idea of woman’s affinity with nature and certain other beliefs about the nature of woman.<sup>5</sup> In Canada, the image of a French-Canadian farm woman, a habitant, had an even more pointed significance, which this essay will consider later.

In the early twentieth century, Canada was undergoing a significant alteration in the structure of its society. There was a population shift from rural to urban

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<sup>4</sup> Norman Bryson, Vision and Painting The Logic of the Gaze (London: Macmillan Press Ltd., 1983), 13.

<sup>5</sup> The conflation of woman with nature in art has been discussed in a large number of publications. Two excellent sources on this subject are: Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock, Old Mistresses (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), 69-70, 119-23; and, Carol Duncan, “Virility and Domination in Early Twentieth-Century Vanguard Painting,” in Feminism and Art History: Questioning the Litany, N. Broud and M.D. Garrard, ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1982), 293-313.

communities that had started in the nineteenth century and gained momentum in the twentieth; there were rapid technological advances; there were extreme social and political transformations including suffrage for women. If, as Bryson states, artistic representation is related to social reality, then in a time of social change when there is discord between old and new ways of living, there will necessarily be discord between old and new ways of seeing.

In 1930, Russian writer Valentin Voloshinov published Marxism and the Philosophy of Language in which he theorized about the correlation between language and social change. He stated that:

Every sign, as we know, is a construct between socially organized persons in the process of their interaction. Therefore, *the forms of signs are conditioned above all by the social organization of the participants involved and also by the immediate conditions of their interaction.* When these forms change, so does sign.<sup>6</sup>

He included in his meaning of the terms language and sign all systems of communication whether verbal, visual or auditory.<sup>7</sup> Further on, he added that “existence reflected in sign is not merely reflected, but refracted...by an intersecting of differently oriented social interests within one and the same sign community” and therefore “sign becomes an arena of the class struggle.”<sup>8</sup> In a society fraught with problems of broad social change, the tendency of the sign to mean different things to different interest groups (to be “accented”) is intensified, and artistic representation

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<sup>6</sup> V.N. Voloshinov, Marxism and the Philosophy of Language, trans. Ladislave Matejka and I.R. Titunik (New York: Seminar Press, 1973). Originally published in Russian under the title *Marksizm i Filosofija Jazyka*, Leningrad, 1930. (Emphasis is Voloshinov's.)

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 90.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.



can become a terrain where conflicting ideas meet, clash and are sometimes resolved. Heward painted Rollande in just such a time, when not only social custom but artistic tradition was undergoing a radical transformation. Responding to the upheaval, she utilized the traditional visual codes of her society, but astutely shifted their meaning.

The painting contains three basic elements - figure, land and house.<sup>9</sup> In the foreground in front of a wooden fence stands a life-sized, dark-haired, young woman, with hands on hips, her body visible down to her knees. Rollande is a French-Canadian woman as her name, her traditional convent dress and the setting of the Île d'Orléans attest. Rollande's right knee is raised, as if the right foot is resting on something higher than ground level. She is wearing a black dress covered by a bright pink apron and she faces forward, looking down and away from the viewer. Her expression is serious, verging on a frown, suggesting determination and deep thought. In the background are fields, farmhouse, river and hills. Heward paints simplified forms, slightly abstracted in their lack of visual detail. The fields, river and hills are flat expanses of color, but the figure and the farmhouse are strongly modeled to suggest a monumental three-dimensionality. The colors are bright and acidic.

A journalist for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch who singled out Rollande for special mention, stated that "the modernism of this collection is modernism with one foot on the ground. Only two of the 60 works ...adhere to old traditions. Each of the 58 shows some departure, but none strays far enough to lose any viewer."<sup>10</sup> At a time

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<sup>9</sup>Some reviewers of the painting called the structure behind the young woman's head a barn, or more generally a farm building, but on comparing it with photographs of farmhouses on the Île d'Orléans, I have concluded that the image is a house. See P.G. Roy, L'Île d'Orléans (Quebec City: Historic Monuments Commission of the Province of Quebec, 1928), 285.

<sup>10</sup>St. Louis Post, 1 Aug.1930.

when some artists had ceased making images which were representational in any way, one would suppose that this critic was referring to a recognizable reference to nature when he spoke of the “one foot on the ground.” If so, Heward’s practice certainly fell into this category. Although the use of unnatural color, simplified form, and flattened space - consistent and signature elements of her work - were learned from the modernists, she had not given up a fundamental reference to an outer reality nor to her grounding in a carefully-drawn academic style that she had learned from William Brymner.<sup>11</sup>

The French academic tradition of painting in which Brymner was trained was based on the principle that a work of art should be a window on the world, reproducing reality as closely as possible. J. Russell Harper relates that while studying in France, Brymner “was ecstatic with the paintings in the Universal Exposition by Bonheur and Meissonier where each vein in the horse’s legs and each wrinkle in the rider’s boot were carefully painted.”<sup>12</sup> To this end certain skills were employed, such as invisible brushwork, tricks of perspective, modeling in light and shadow, and close attention to visual detail. According to Bryson, the thinking behind this sort of execution rested on the idea of a “universal visual experience” shared by all people which was an absolute reality, transcending time and culture.<sup>13</sup> How individual viewers perceive reality, however, depends on their social and cultural background, and Bryson argues that “the real ought to be understood not as a

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<sup>11</sup> J. Russell Harper, Painting in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966), 221.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 217.

<sup>13</sup> Norman Bryson offers an in depth analysis of the idea of “universal visual experience” in Vision in Painting, 1-12.

transcendent and immutable given, but as a production brought about by human activity working within specific cultural constraints.”<sup>14</sup>

The academic system presupposed a western European, middle-class, male-centered understanding of the world, and women’s place in it. According to the wisdom of the times, women were gentler by nature and purer than men.<sup>15</sup> Such character traits made them ideal nurturers of husbands and children, but in need of protection from the harsh, public world of work and competition. An ideology of this kind posited that women were happiest when given the protection of a life within the kindly confines of the home. Yet the necessities of life demanded that most adult women take up household duties and be sexually active; therefore, it was often daughters who were the superlative symbol of this sort of innocent, angelic femininity.<sup>16</sup>

A comparison of Rollande with Brymner’s 1910 painting of The Vaughan Sisters makes clear how profoundly Heward’s vision had shifted away from the traditional academic world view in which she had been schooled (fig. 4). The youthful, unlined faces and the slender but developing frame of the figure on the right, indicate that like Rollande, the Vaughan Sisters are females just arrived at or verging on young womanhood. They sit indoors on a cushioned bench; there is a vase of

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>15</sup> Many people have written about nineteenth century attitudes towards women and the separate spheres of public and private life. For more on this topic see Deborah Gorham, The Victorian Girl and the Feminine Ideal (London: Croom Helm, 1982); Griselda Pollock, “Modernity and the Spaces of Femininity,” Vision and Difference (London: Routledge, 1988), 50-90; Nancy F. Cott., The Bonds of Womanhood: Woman’s Sphere in New England, 1780-1835 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977). Bina Freiwald, “Of Selfsame Desire: Patmore’s The Angel In the House,” Texas Studies in Literature and Language 30 (Winter 1988): 539-61; Deborah Cherry, “Difference and Domesticity,” Painting Women, (London: Routledge, 1993), 120-140.

<sup>16</sup> Gorham, Victorian Girl, 5-6.

flowers near them, and a book lies open on the floor at their feet. They peer timidly out at the viewer. The general mood of the image is one of softness, delicacy and peace, and nothing in the pose or demeanor of the girls disrupts the mood. The light coloring throughout, the diaphanous material of the dresses, the softly-highlighted hair, the lithesome poses, the benign expressions, are all harmonious with the theme of peaceful, feminine activity within a protected space.

While Heward chose to paint a young French-Canadian farm woman rather than well to do, British-Canadian ones, the differences in these two works can be only partially attributed to the difference in the social standing of the women. As a rural woman, Rollande would be required to do more physical labour than the Vaughan sisters, and therefore might be portrayed with a sturdier physique, but the very act of choosing such subject matter indicates Heward's desire to express a different reality in regard to the female gender. The twenty years separation in the time of the production of the two paintings has only a limited significance as well, for in Canada the attitudes toward women's relationship to the home changed very little during the early decades of the twentieth century.<sup>17</sup> It is true that in the nineteen-twenties there were many more women being educated than there had been before the First World War, and many more women were in the work force, but they tended to hold traditional female jobs and marriage was still considered their primary pursuit with its concomitant duties to husband, home and children.

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<sup>17</sup> Mary Vipond examines the attitudes toward women during the nineteen-twenties in "The Image of Women in Mass Circulation Magazines in the 1920s," *The Neglected Majority: Essays in Canadian Women's History*, eds. Susan Mann Trofimenkoff and Alison Prentice (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977), 116-124.

For French-Canadian, Catholic women in Quebec, attitudes had changed very little. The entrenched powers of French-Canadian culture had firm ideas about what women were, and what they were not. These ideas were based on an understanding of the world which saw a particular, cultural model of womanhood as a universal reality based on nature, and ultimately created by God. Henri Bourassa, Member of Parliament and editor of Le Devoir, had written in response to the 1918 women's suffrage debate in the Canadian parliament that "sexual differences imply differences in sexual function, and differences in sexual function create differences in social function."<sup>18</sup> Such beliefs had far-reaching repercussions in the everyday lives of women. Women had gained the right to vote in federal elections in 1918 and in all the other provinces except Quebec suffrage was granted by 1922. In Quebec, women were not only delayed in obtaining the right to vote provincially until 1940, but they also had limited access to education, and were not permitted to practice in professions such as medicine, accounting, and law until 1930.<sup>19</sup> Early in the century, the archbishop of Montreal had admonished a Catholic feminist organization to limit itself to "the zealous pursuit...of all the noble causes in the sphere that Providence had assigned," and had warned against "talk in your meetings of the emancipation of woman, of the neglect of her rights, of her having been relegated to the shadows, of the responsibilities, public offices and professions to which she should be admitted on an equal basis with man."<sup>20</sup> In spite of all the opposition, progressive organizations

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<sup>18</sup> Cited in Paul-André Linteau, René Durocher, Jean-Claude Robert, Quebec: A History 1867-1929, trans. Robert Chodos (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1983), 448. Source not noted.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 443.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 446-47. Citing Archbishop Mgr. Bruchesi. The authors do not mention their source. The first francophone feminist association was established in 1907 - the *Fédération Nationale Saint*

of both francophone and anglophone women in Quebec continued to urge reform. In 1929, the Dorian Commission was set up as a provincial commission of inquiry into the rights of women as laid down in the Civil Code of 1866.<sup>21</sup> The conservative outlook of the four francophone male jurists who made up the commission, however, was stated in the first volume: "The theory of equal rights is absurd because women play a special role which is different from that of men. Women have to sacrifice themselves for the general good of the family."<sup>22</sup>

It was within such a milieu of strong traditional forces pressing down on the burgeoning ideas of the new women's movement that Heward painted her image of the grave, young, habitant woman. The strongly corporeal figure contradicts the ideal of femininity proposed in Brymner's work. She possess a weighty physical presence within the flattened, simplified space while the Vaughan sisters rest airily within the illusionary space of their sitting room, tiny waisted and narrow shouldered, rendered with such a delicate hand that they barely seem to weigh down the cushions on which they sit. The placement of the house over and surrounding Rollande's head takes on a certain significance, as well, when understood in the context of Quebec culture and

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Jean Baptiste. This group worked for many reforms such as better hospitals for children, separate courts for children, child-care help and education for mothers, the prevention of forced prostitution, and the placement of police women in police stations. Most of these reforms, however, were focused on women's traditional role as care-giver of children, a focus which had been carefully advanced by the leadership in order not to provoke the opposition of the clergy.

<sup>21</sup> John A. Dickinson and Brian Young, *A Short History of Quebec* (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman Ltd., 1993), 258. A number of cautious reforms were recommended by the commission, including the right for women to control income they had earned themselves, the right for equality with their husbands in the control of communal property, and the right to act as legal guardians for children in their own family.

<sup>22</sup> Micheline Dumont, et al. *Quebec Women: A History*, trans. Roger Gannon and Rosalind Gill (Toronto: The Women's Press, 1987), 257. Citing "Premier rapport de la Commission des droits civils de la femme," op. cit., pp. 234-235

coming on the heels of a visual language which placed so much importance on women's relationship to the home. Although Rollande is outside, she still seems to be encased within the house, and it is her head - her consciousness - which is enclosed. Judging from the woman's sober expression, this is not an untroubled situation. Moreover, she does not rest easily within the scene. The very strength of the figure declared in the bold and assertive quality of her stance and the somber self-containment of her expression implies the possibility of resistance while behind her the fence is a jagged reminder of the boundaries of her world.

Another painting in which the figure of Rollande appears bears out this interpretation of restraint and resistance. In 1930, Heward produced a work called Sisters of Rural Quebec which takes up a similar theme to Brymner's Vaughan Sisters - daughters within the confines of the house (Fig 5). The image portrays Rollande with her younger sister. They sit outdoors, yet within the walls of some sort of interior space, possibly a veranda or a courtyard. In this painting, too, there is a vase of flowers in the lower left. The pose of the younger girl is limp; her eyes are turned to the side; she receives the viewer's gaze passively. Rollande, on the other hand, sits stiffly and looks directly into the viewer's eyes with a measuring, possibly even a challenging, stare. The sunflowers at the bottom of the image repeat the girls' demeanor: the smaller one is limp and wilted so that it turns away from the viewer, while the larger one is upright and faces directly outward.<sup>23</sup>

As in Rollande, the expressions on the faces of Heward's sisters work against

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<sup>23</sup> Luckyj, Expressions, 61.

the ideology of women being happy within the protective walls of the home. Neither of these figures looks happy. The younger sisters in both Heward's and Brymner's paintings wear similar expressions, but in Heward's work the meaning of that expression has changed. It no longer implies the contentment of a child with a mild temperament: the parallel with the sunflowers has disallowed that reading. The younger, softer, more pliant girl appears to wither in such a setting. But the confrontational, determined temperament of Rollande is as powerful and unsettling as it is in Heward's earlier work. The conviction that women are connected to the home by bonds that are wholly consistent with their nature - their physical, mental and emotional essence - is challenged strongly by both of these paintings of Rollande. They present the image of a young woman who bears her burdens and endures her restrictions with at least some expression of insubordination.

Furthermore, Rollande challenges a second set of traditions which are harmonious with the Victorian ideal of womanhood but not precisely the same. These are the traditions surrounding rustic landscape painting. Rustic landscapes portray country people on the land and represent deeply imbedded social meanings about the countryside. According to Ann Bermingham, the genre became popular in England toward the end of the eighteenth century when the rapid enclosure of land increased its economic value and, as a consequence, its social and political significance.<sup>24</sup> In these sorts of images the operations of culture were often naturalized - that is, made to appear as a part of the natural order of things. For instance, Bermingham points out

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<sup>24</sup> Ann Bermingham, Landscape and Ideology (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 1.



that in Thomas Gainsborough's Mr. And Mrs. Robert Andrews (1749) the field beside which the couple sits reveals their economic base and their social position as producers of wealth in the form of food (fig 6). The harvest is underway, but what the painting hides is the labour that brings it about.

The painting shows nature virtually organizing itself according to the will of its owners. The field, paddock, and park, evacuated of laborers, yield directly to the Andrewses themselves. The painting presents the myth of the independent producer, whose productivity, like Robinson Crusoe's, depends solely on his own wit, labor and capital and not on the productivity of others.<sup>25</sup>

The depiction of the French-Canadian habitant often furnished Canadians with an ideal image of rural life that camouflaged a whole range of economic, social and political realities under the guise of nature. The social codes operating in Western society which defined women as natural care-givers and restricted them to the home in French-Canadian society likewise prescribed the farm woman's relationship to the land, the Church and the state. Consequently, representations of the habitant woman on her land took on very specific meanings.

The landscapes that make up the backgrounds of many of Heward's portraits are never irrelevant. Always vividly painted, they place the figure within a comprehensible environment.<sup>26</sup> Most of Heward's backgrounds are Canadian and meant to be understood that way. The artist once stated that in Canada "there is more interest shown in figure painting than previously and I hope we shall develop

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>26</sup> Janet Braide, Prudence Heward (1896-1947): An Introduction to Her Life and Work, (Montreal: Walter Klinkhoff Gallery), 1980, 12. "The studio landscapes and stylized vegetation inform us about the sitter."

something interesting and Canadian in feeling.”<sup>27</sup> Rollande was painted during a 1929 summer trip to the Île d’Orléans, a island occupied since the seventeenth century by habitants and a popular tourist spot in the St. Lawrence River opposite Quebec City. There is a sketch, however, that suggests that the landscape and the woman were initially painted at different moments.<sup>28</sup> The curatorial files in the National Gallery of Canada contain a photograph of a painting that was identified by the artist’s brother-in-law, Basil Nares, as the sketch for the background of Rollande (fig. 7).<sup>29</sup> The image of the woman was likely worked up from a smaller sketch as well, for the final canvas, at 139.9 x 101.7 cm., would have been too large to have been painted on the trip. This indicates that the background was not necessarily where Rollande stood but where Heward wanted to place her when she worked out the final composition. Placing the figure of Rollande in front of those fields and that farm house was a significant and very deliberate act on the part of the artist because the setting clearly marks the figure’s identity as a habitant from the Île d’Orléans and places her within an established genre with precedents set in earlier paintings.

The Île d’Orléans is one of the oldest settled areas in North America and was the focus of a great deal of attention by Canadian artists for over a century. One of the most popular painters of this region was Horatio Walker, whose works in oil portray the island’s early-twentieth century habitant population in a picturesque

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<sup>27</sup> Aspects of Contemporary Painting in Canada, (Andover Mass: Addison Gallery), 1942.

<sup>28</sup> Heward was in the habit of doing landscape sketches while she traveled in the summer or autumn, then using the sketches as backgrounds for the models who came to her studio and were painted at another time. A. Y. Jackson, “Prudence Heward 1896-1947,” speech given at the Memorial Exhibition, the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, 1948 (NGC archives, Heward File).

<sup>29</sup> NGC. curatorial files for the painting Rollande.

manner consonant with the naturalization of the rustic landscape. Walker was an anglophone from Ontario who adopted the Île d'Orléans as his home base during a long and successful career that spanned the decades from the latter part of the nineteenth century until about 1930.<sup>30</sup> In 1928, the year before Heward painted Rollande, the Historic Monuments Commission of the Province of Quebec published a book by P.G. Roy called L'Île d'Orléans.<sup>31</sup> It related the history and customs of the island and was intended, at least in part, as an attractive enticement for the tourist. It is a large book containing a number of colour and black and white reproductions, the majority of which are from the works of Horatio Walker. In the introduction, the author pays tribute to both the island and the artist in the following words:

No part of the Province Of Quebec is more picturesque than the Island of Orleans. Authors have written its history, poets have sung its charm, painters have reproduced its lovely landscapes...A tour round the Island enchants the eyes and the heart. It is there one meets the people who are most faithful to the traditions of the past. One sees many houses with pointed roofs which have almost disappeared elsewhere... We feel particularly grateful to Mr. Horatio Walker, the powerful painter of the Island of Orleans - His Island. For over forty years, the creative brush of the Master has ceaselessly manifested his love of the Canadian soil. His renowned artistic life has become identified with the healthy and prolific race of our farmers. He has noted all their activities and immortalized their attitudes. His work will remain as a stirring and living testimony of a skilful observer, firmly attached by all the fibres of his being to the simple beauty and cheerful poetry of our countryside.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> J. Russell Harper states that Walker became one of the highest paid artists of his time in Painting in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966), 211.

<sup>31</sup> P.G. Roy, L'Île d'Orléans (Quebec City: Historic Monuments Commission of the Province of Quebec, 1928).

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, VI.

Many of Walker's paintings and drawings are representations of habitant women (fig. 8-17). The images portray robust figures who harvest potatoes, take care of animals, bake bread, and pray. Their poses are relaxed and most are either turned away from the viewer or have faces so shrouded in shadow that specific physical traits are invisible. The three figures with any discernible facial features at all look very much alike, sharing a blandly cheerful expression (fig. 13, 15, 17). These women are not individuals but types. What they represent is the happy farmwife, hardworking, healthy and spiritually content. At a deeper level they summon up the mental picture of woman as gentle but strong nurturer at one with the land and the animals - nature itself.<sup>33</sup> The author of the *Historic Monuments* book believed that these depictions were a "living testimony" to a skillfully observed reality, but what these images really portray is a set of ideological notions often referred to as the agrarian myth.<sup>34</sup>

In North America, the agrarian myth posits the farmer and his family as exemplar human beings, living close to nature and therefore to God. They are idealized as more honest, hard-working, healthy and happy than city dwellers, and contented with fewer material possessions. In Quebec, the habitant came to be seen as the epitome of these values by both English and French Canadians. There were significant differences, however, in just what the ideal meant to the two cultures. The

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<sup>33</sup> For a concise account of the history of images on this theme, see Londa Schiebinger, "Why Mammals are Called Mammals," *Nature's Body* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993), 40-74.

<sup>34</sup> Richard Hofstadter explores the meaning and origin of the agrarian myth in "The Myth of the Happy Yeoman," *Myth and the American Experience*, eds. Nicholas Cords and Patrick Gerster (New York: Glencoe Press, 1973), 276-284. An interesting analysis of an image that treats the subject of the differences between a modern urbanite and a traditional farm woman is given in Wanda M. Corn, *Grant Wood The Regionalist Vision* (London: Yale University Press, 1983), 80-81.

English-Canadian version was based on a romantic nostalgia for what was imagined as an older, slower, more stable way of existence than the competitive hustle of commercial, urban life, whereas the French-Canadian version was based on the notion of *la survivance* - that the survival of the French language and Catholic religion was intimately bound up with the continuation of the traditional, rural way of life.<sup>35</sup> In the French-Canadian version, women had a singular significance for it was generally accepted that, as guardians of the home, they were the cornerstones in upholding the language and the faith.<sup>36</sup>

In 1913, Louis Hémon wrote the novel *Maria Chapdelaine* in which a young habitant woman chooses a Quebec farmer as a husband over a man living in an urban center in the United States. Her choice is connected to the sacred duty of preserving French-Catholic tradition through remaining on the land.<sup>37</sup> In the nineteen twenties, the novel became extremely popular in Quebec, selling three quarters of a million copies.<sup>38</sup> Beatrice Guenther argues that Hémon draws on the ideology of “sacred identity” to fuse the image of the land of Quebec with the body of the French-Canadian woman. She defines “sacred identity” as “the Catholic Church’s equation of French Catholic identity with the ‘glorious’ task of carving out and working more

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<sup>35</sup> Carl Berger offers an account of the idealization of the habitant, with many literary references, in *The Sense of Power* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), 141-145.

<sup>36</sup> Berger discusses the importance placed by French Canadians on guarding the French culture in North America in *Ibid.*, 230-32. This selection explains the connection between a religious, evangelizing mindset and the justification of imperialist expansion, pointing out both the English and French Canadian use of such a justification. Susan Mann Trofimenkoff analyzes the importance of French Canadian women to this enterprise in “Henri Bourassa and the Woman Question,” *The Neglected Majority*, eds. Susan Mann Trofimenkoff and Alison Prentice (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977), 105.

<sup>37</sup> Louis Hémon, *Maria Chapdelaine*, First Modern Library Edition, trans. W.H. Blake with an introduction by Hugh Eayrs (New York: The Modern Library, 1934).

<sup>38</sup>*Ibid.*, ix.

land.” Such a fusion validated both the subjugation into farmland of a wilderness territory once occupied by native peoples and the subjugation of women’s minds and bodies.<sup>39</sup> The ideology underscored the more general beliefs about women’s essential connection to home and family, and added to them the strength and intensity of religion and patriotism. In 1922, Premier Louis-Alexandre Taschereau denied women the right to vote in provincial elections on the grounds that such a right would undermine the French “race” in North America, and appealed to them to “remain faithful to their ancestral conditions, with their status as queen of the household, to their works of charity and philanthropy, to their labours of love and denial.”<sup>40</sup> In Walker’s images, true to the rustic landscape tradition, the power of patriarchal law can be seen to take on the disguise of nature for it is women’s natural place to guard home, religion and land. Women carrying out such tasks, therefore, are satisfied, healthy and contented.

The figure of Rollande resembles Walker’s figures in the strong body and its placement on the farm, but there the resemblance ends. The expression is neither bland nor cheerful, but grave and possibly menacing. As Rollande stands in front of the fence that marks the boundary of her territory, her pose is not relaxed but alert, even contentious. Rollande is far from a sentimental depiction of a serene, old-fashioned way of life. Joyce Millar states:

Heward’s resolution of the problematic integration of figure and landscape was recognized as equally progressive...Most of her work

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<sup>39</sup> Beatrice Guenther, “The Roman du Terroir au Féminin in Quebec: Guèvremont’s and Blais’ Re-visioning of a Rural Tradition,” Knowing Your Place, eds. Barbara Ching and Gerald W. Creed (New York: Routledge, 1997), 171-194.

<sup>40</sup> Dickinson, Short History, 259, citing Jean Hamelin and Nicole Gagnon Histoire de catholicisme québécois: le XXe siècle. Tome 1, 1898-1940 (Montreal: Boréal Express, 1984), 327.

centers on the female form, revealing her vision of women as strong, confident, and often heroic figures who draw their strength from the land, a far cry from the derisive 'woman as nature' syndrome.<sup>41</sup>

Rollande's elbows and knee jut out giving her command of the picture space and implying an analogous command of her pictorial setting. Heward does not draw a parallel between the woman and nature, but depicts her in a way that suggests struggle and mastery over what surrounds her. She accentuates the young woman's station as sacred guardian of language and religion. The house over the figure's head can now be understood from the words in Roy's introduction as a sign of the traditional way of life in Quebec that is fast disappearing, but which she upholds. Her accord with this conception is hardly perfect, however, for she has the flinty and resistant look of someone who might be difficult for Church, state and husband to rule. The seamless, invisible link between the ideology and the woman that is hidden in Walker's work is thus rendered visible in Heward's, where Rollande's strength and discontent insinuates that such an ideology may not be in a woman's best interests.

It is not only the pictorial elements of Rollande that give it a very different look and feeling from Walker's works. The formal elements as well are strikingly different. Walker was influenced by the French and American Barbizon Schools of painting which stressed the accurate recording of the natural world.<sup>42</sup> In a painting such as Milking Early Morn (fig. 15) the somber, natural, brown colors of the earth predominate over the few bright yellow, green and red highlights. The figure is modeled in light and shade with the same colors, which gives her a weighty, three-

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<sup>41</sup> Millar, "Beaver Hall Group," 5.

<sup>42</sup> Dorothy Farr, Horatio Walker, 1858-1938 (Kingston: Agnes Etherington Art Center, 1977),

dimensional look and unifies her with her background. The horizon is low and its hazy brightness draws the eye back, creating a sense that the land recedes a long way behind the figure. The foreground separates the figure from the viewer by a few feet of muddy earth and some milking cans. Walker's milk maid stands within her own world, entirely united to it by color and composition while the viewer stands outside and looks in.

Rollande is rendered according to a very different set of principles. In the first place, the colors are bright and highly unnatural. An Australian critic described the pink of the apron as "shrill" and said that "the grass is so tartly green that it is inclined to come forward too much."<sup>43</sup> Along with the tart colors, the horizon in Rollande is high and the combination of the two elements tends to push the whole composition forward and flatten it. Rollande is strongly modeled but not with the soft, round curves of Walker's figure, rather she has a stiff, imposing solidity. Moreover, the viewer is very close to her. She is cut off at the knees and there is no ground between audience and figure, which adds to her imposing quality. The Australian critic suggested that the striking colors and a face "full of character and directness...makes the sweet young thing next to her look like something carved out of scented soap."<sup>44</sup> I don't know what painting he was referring to, but placed next to Walker's habitant woman, Rollande looks the antithesis of sentiment and nostalgia.

With a teacher like Brymner and visual precedents like the paintings of Horatio Walker, what could have prompted Heward to move in such a different

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<sup>43</sup> "Canadian Art in New Zealand An Unacademic Reaction," Auckland Star, undated, NGC Archives (Southern Dominions Clipping File).

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.



direction and produce such an unusual image of a habitant woman? One possible answer could be her trip to Paris in 1925 to study painting. There she would have been exposed to the latest trends in modern art and have had the opportunity to study first hand the works of artists such as Gauguin, Cézanne and Picasso.<sup>45</sup> There she may also have first been exposed to the work of André Lhôte.<sup>46</sup> One of Lhôte's students was the painter Tamara Lempicka. Luckyj points out that Lempicka's painting La Duchesse de LaSalle (1926) bears a notable resemblance to Rollande "in pose and conception" (fig. 18).<sup>47</sup> Lempicka produced simplified, female figures with robust, strongly modeled bodies and direct gazes similar to the style Heward would adopt when she returned from Paris. But La Duchesse de LaSalle is also posed in a way that bears a striking resemblance to that of Rollande, with one knee raised, the hands at waist level, and the same serious gaze. Although the painting is dated 1926, Lempicka had arrived in Paris in 1923 and studied there over the next few years.<sup>48</sup>

Another woman artist in Paris at that time, Romaine Brooks, was also painting simplified images of bold, serious, female figures. At the Galerie Jean Charpentier in March and April of 1925, Brooks showed a number of such images.<sup>49</sup> The artist received widespread favorable attention in the press for these works which portrayed the women who frequented the Paris lesbian circle to which she belonged (fig. 19-

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<sup>45</sup> Luckyj gives a brief sketch of how these artists influenced Heward's work, Expressions, 57.

<sup>46</sup> She returned to Paris in 1929 with the intention of studying with Lhôte although she later changed her mind. Luckyj, *Ibid.*, 35, note 23.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

<sup>48</sup> Arwas, Art Deco, 190.

<sup>49</sup> Adelyn D. Breeskin, Romaine Brooks (Washington D.C: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1986), 75-81.

21).<sup>50</sup> Brooks' figures are stiff and serious women often dressed in masculine-looking clothing. For example, her self-portrait portrays a rigidly-posed woman in a riding habit who bears a look of intense introspection and strain (fig. 19). The figure is set against an indistinct, ruinous background and the work is painted in such cold colors that both the figure and the setting take on an icy, lonely ambiance. The figure faces the viewer adamantly, however, and maintains an imposing presence.

The portraits of Brooks and Lempicka express the strength of their female models through various means - masculine clothing, insolent poses, angular bodies without breasts and intense expressions. The influence of representations of this kind may have altered Heward's approach to the figure, since paintings such as Girl on a Hill (1928) and The Immigrants (1928) (fig. 22 - 23), which Heward did after her return from Paris, are quite different from the ones she was doing before the trip. Earlier figures like Eleanor (1924) and Miss Lockerby (1924) (fig. 24-25), are softly modeled forms with contrived poses and eyes that gaze into the picture space. The later ones are modeled in ways which accent the planes of their bodies and they are posed more naturally, yet with greater authority, gazing resolutely either at the viewer or past, into the space beyond the frame.

Just as Lempicka's and Brooks' figures, the figure in Rollande displays a striking fusion of masculine and feminine characteristics. Her strong jaw, square shoulders, understated breasts, forthright carriage and frowning countenance are tokens normally reserved for portrayal of the masculine figure. The feminine figure is customarily more rounded and smooth, with full breasts, delicate features and a less

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<sup>50</sup> Bridget Elliott and Jo-Ann Wallace, Women Artists and Writers (London: Routledge,

assertive pose and expression. Examples of the classic masculine and feminine figures are portrayed in the such canonical works as Ingres' Jupiter and Thetis (1811) and David's Mars Disarmed by Venus and the Three Graces (1824) (fig. 26-27).

Rollande's signs of masculinity, however, are enveloped in other unambiguous signs of femininity: the bright pink apron, convent-black dress with its demure white collar and the large halo surrounding the figure's head. All work together to make Rollande a figure which represents a paradoxical and unconventional image of womanhood.

Susan Gruber and Sandra Gilbert claim that through cross-dressing and its representation in art, artists such as Brooks "sought to disengage anatomy from destiny, postulating an identity whose transcendence of biological sexuality either explicitly or implicitly questions the gender roles prescribed by the conventional sexual ideologies they sought to deconstruct."<sup>51</sup> In 1928, Virginia Woolf published Orlando, a fantasy/biography based on the life and ancestors of Vita Sackville-West in which the protagonist changes sexes in the middle of his/her life. The change of sex, however, is portrayed more as a change of costume than a physical change. "This is not because sexually defining costumes are false and selves are true," write Gruber and Gilbert, "but because costumes are selves and thus easily, fluidly, interchangeable."<sup>52</sup> In Orlando, Woolf states that "different though the sexes are, they inter-mix. In every human being a vacillation from one sex to the other takes place,

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1994), 22.

<sup>51</sup> Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gruber, No Man's Land Vol.2, Sex Changes (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 326-27.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 344.

and often it is only the clothes that keep the male or female likeness, while underneath the sex is very opposite of what it is above.”<sup>53</sup> The fact that Orlando was published one year before Heward produced Rollande makes it clear that the meaning of gender roles was a matter of interest at that time to intellectuals and artists with whom Heward was probably familiar. Rollande’s clothing might be feminine, but through the juxtaposition of so many strong masculine traits Heward created an image that entered into the current artistic experiment with gender.

A contemporary New Zealand critic tempered his praise of the painting by suggesting that “opinion on Prudence Heward’s ‘Rollande’ is likely to be divided. Almost startling in its effect, the boldly-limned figure of a girl set against an angular background is instantly compelling, but it is possible that the immediate reaction of many will be an antipathy that will prejudice really reasoned criticism.”<sup>54</sup> This critic was astute in his recognition of work’s sabotage of orthodoxy and threat to viewer complacency. Rollande is a challenging figure. On one level her stance and her look challenge the intruder into her space; on a deeper level she challenges fundamental norms of gender identity. What sort of strengths lie underneath her feminine clothing; what sort of desires for freedom, for self-definition and for self-assertion? These are the perilous questions that Rollande summons forth, for the painting steadfastly refuses to fit within the artistic and social categories that customarily circumscribe images of women in nature. Heward did not paint the long-sanctioned icon of a natural woman who felt safe and satisfied within the confines of her home

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<sup>53</sup> Virginia Woolf, Orlando: A Biography (London: Hogarth Press, 1970), 171-72.

<sup>54</sup> “Vitality in Art: Canadian Paintings,” Daily Times (Dunedin) 22 Dec., 1938. (Found in the NCG archives Southern Dominions Clipping File.)

and family. She did not paint a guileless farm woman fulfilling her biological destiny in the bucolic countryside. Instead, she painted a female citizen of a complex society that had been in existence for centuries and that gave benefits and placed demands on its people - in this case specifically its women. In Rollande's troubled face, in her guarded stance, in the house that frames her head, in her visible "masculine" strength, Heward has painted the possibility that individual women might not always suffer the constraints of such a society with ease. She used the conventional languages of Canadian and European art to do this, but she accented them differently and made them say more complex things than they had ever said before.

## Chapter Two: The Bather

In 1930, Prudence Heward painted the image of a white woman in a bathing suit seated in the midst of a rocky landscape with her back to a dark sea. She titled it The Bather (fig. 2). The work is not technically a nude because the figure wears a bathing suit, yet as a study of the female form it is more detailed and explicit than any of Heward's previous works. The clinging suit reveals the figure's shape and a great deal of her flesh; the pose opens up the primary sexual region and leads the eye unwaveringly to it. This is a painting candidly about the female body.

In 1968, Edwin Ardener produced a paper in which he postulated that certain aspects of women's experience are inaccessible to patriarchal consciousness because they are outside the male dominated structures of language and power. Women are a muted group, "rendered inarticulate by the male structure." He characterized this realm of female experience as the "wild."<sup>1</sup> Since that time feminist scholars such as Elaine Showalter have taken up the term and used it to clarify the problem of how

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<sup>1</sup>Edwin Ardener, "Belief and the Problem of Women," and "The Problem Revisited," Perceiving Women, ed. Shirley Ardener (London: Malaby Press, 1975), 1-29.

women writers are forced to speak through androcentric languages and power structures.<sup>2</sup> The same clarification can be applied to women's work within the visual arts. In this chapter I will argue that through the use of skillfully altered classical motifs in combination with the social and historical specificity of the figure, Heward has produced a painting of a woman's experience of herself in this 'wild zone' just beyond the border of cultural legitimacy and outside the controlling, objectifying, male gaze.

The sitter for the work is rumored to be Heward's good friend Mabel Lockerby, one of the painters from the Beaver Hall Group whom Heward had used as a model at least two other times. Natalie Luckyj believes that The Bather bears a remarkable resemblance to the figure in At the Café (undated), who is identified as Lockerby in the files of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (fig 28).<sup>3</sup> The resemblance is striking and convincing: both images depict a woman with dark hair, dark eyes, heavy eyebrows, prominent nose and pursed mouth. Heward also painted an earlier image entitled Miss Lockerby (1924) which has comparable features (fig. 25). Although the identification is not indisputable, it seems reasonable to assume that Heward has portrayed in The Bather a woman of the same general social class, age, race and profession as herself, which underscores the painting's connection to the exploration of woman as self and subject rather than other and object.

There are many well-known paintings of bathers in European art and until the early part of the nineteenth century these are nearly always nudes. Scenes of nude

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<sup>2</sup> Elaine Showalter, "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness," Writing and Sexual Difference, ed. Elizabeth Abel (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 1-35.

<sup>3</sup> Letter to author from Natalie Luckyj, 12 Aug. 1998.

male bathers usually portrayed stories from classical antiquity.<sup>4</sup> More prosaic images of bathing men, often in bathing suits, became common with the impressionist and post-impressionist painters, who were influenced by the republican ideals of the naturalist writers and their interest in portraying the ordinary activities of the middle and lower classes (Fig. 29 - 31).<sup>5</sup> One important canonical work in this genre is Seurat's 1884 Bathers at Asnieres (fig. 32). He does not depict a classical story of heroic action, but modern, working-class men engaged in a familiar leisure activity. The title informs the viewer that the figures are located in a Paris suburb, and the background contains the signs of a modern, industrial city. All the figures wear bathing suits or some other form of clothing. To render the pale, pudgy, commonplace men in the nude would have been ridiculous. The bathing suit is necessary because these unheroic, modern people are participating in a cultural activity - swimming - in an historically specific time and place.

Similar images of women in swim-wear, however, are rare indeed. When an artist portrayed women bathing, the allusion was to nature, not culture, and a bathing suit would have seemed just as incongruous in such a scene as its absence would be in one like Seurat's. The link between women and nature in opposition to the one between men and culture has a long history in European tradition. In the fourth century BC, Aristotle wrote that in sexual reproduction "while the body is from the female, it is the soul that is from the male," and this concept has influenced western

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<sup>4</sup> John Leighton and Richard Thomson, "Representing the Modern," Seurat and the Bathers (London: The National Gallery, 1997), 96-105.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 97.



thought ever since.<sup>6</sup> Images in which nature, or the earth itself, is depicted as a fecund, nurturing woman are common in European visual culture (fig. 33 - 34). In female bathing images the figures are rendered in a way that underscores their oneness with nature in her positive, nurturing aspect. They are therefore beautiful, nude, and full of either exuberant joy or languid serenity. There are numerous well known and respected examples to chose from to illustrate the point (Fig. 35 - 37). The nymphs cavorting in Fragonard's Bathers of 1765 are transformed into an intrinsic part of the landscape through composition and brush work that matches in texture and line the foliage around the edge of the painting.<sup>7</sup> Renoir's smooth-skinned, plump-breasted Bathers of 1884 are clearly all about flesh, tactility and materiality. Collin's Summer, also painted in 1884, conflates the languid bodies with the soft landscape: like the grass and the flowers the nudes are part of the display of summer's gentle warmth, fertility and beauty.<sup>8</sup>

Although up to this time in her career Heward had not painted any nudes, one year later, in 1931, she would paint Girl Under a Tree (fig. 38), believed to be a self-portrait, and a few years after that go on to paint a series of black nudes which I will discuss in the next chapter. Why then, in 1930, did she chose to portray The Bather in a bathing suit? One possibility might be that as a member in good standing of polite society and an artist who habitually painted her friends and family, Heward may have

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<sup>6</sup> Rosemary Agonito, History of Ideas on Woman: A Source Book (New York: Capricorn Books, 1977), 47.

<sup>7</sup> Mary D. Sheriff, Fragonard: Art and Eroticism (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 96.

<sup>8</sup> Woman as nature, man as culture is a widespread conception in western thought that is represented over and over again in art. Much feminist analysis has recently been done on the subject. One of the more recent and in-depth studies is Londa Schiebinger's Nature's Body: Gender in the Making of Modern Science (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993).

had trouble finding models for nude images. The Bather, however, is a large, fully realized painting which indicates Heward's interest in the figure precisely as she has represented her, and not as a default nude. Another and more pertinent possibility is that Heward did not conceive of bathing women in the same idealized terms as the earlier artists had. Swimming was a common leisure activity that she engaged in with her friends when they came to visit at her summer home in Fernbank, on the shore of the St. Lawrence River.<sup>9</sup> Painting her model in a 1930s style bathing suit forces the image away from an ideal representation by stressing the commonplace nature of the pastime and allowing the figure a clear social specificity. She is not a timeless nymph but a mature, healthy, twentieth-century Canadian woman with a sense of public propriety, who has been, or is about to go, swimming. Yet, in spite of its specific social-historical location, the image is still about the body and an effective analysis must treat it that way.

The naked body is never a straightforward presentation of a visual reality. Liam Hudson states in Bodies of Knowledge (1982) that "images of the body...constitute carefully wrought systems of meaning that play on the intelligence as well as on the sensibilities of the people who stand in front of them."<sup>10</sup> The nude is a cultural phenomenon and resonates with the relationships of power inherent in a patriarchal society. Ardener characterizes the relationship between the muted female and dominant male groups under patriarchy as two partially overlapping circles (fig.

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<sup>9</sup> A.Y. Jackson's letter, Toronto, to Prudence Heward, Fernbank, 12 Sept. 1942, transcript in the hand of A.Y. Jackson, National Gallery of Canada Library, Ottawa. "Dear Prue, Jump in the river for me. I am going to stick to town for awhile."

<sup>10</sup> Liam Hudson, Bodies of Knowledge (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1982), 49.

39). The Y zone of the diagram is the realm of women's experience that is completely closed to men. Because women are the muted group, he argues, they have no opportunity to express what lies in this zone. Therefore, because it is outside language, it has no existence within the cultural order and is designated "wild." The X zone on the other hand, though closed to women as personal experience, can be apprehended by them because it has been spoken about through the dominant culture. It is civilized. Showalter explains that when women do write, paint, or engage in some other form of cultural exchange they are bound within male forms of expression, for there are no solely female forms.

Both muted and dominant groups generate beliefs or ordering ideas of social reality at the unconscious level, but dominant groups control the forms or structures in which consciousness can be articulated. Thus muted groups must mediate their beliefs through the allowable forms of dominant structures.<sup>11</sup>

Women artists find themselves in a conundrum when they wish to bring to consciousness those experiences that they do not share with men. According to Voloshinov, consciousness comes into being only in signs: "It is not experience that organizes expression...but expression organizes experience. Expression is what first gives experience its form."<sup>12</sup> The first-hand experience by women of their own bodies surely falls within the Y, the wild zone. The Bather exemplifies the problem of the female artist depicting the body of a woman within a patriarchal artistic structure. Heward must speak through the existing structures, but she must subvert

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<sup>11</sup>Showalter, Wilderness, 30.

<sup>12</sup>V.N. Voloshinov, Marxism and the Philosophy of Language, trans. Ladislave Matejka and I.R. Titunik (New York: Seminar Press, 1973). Originally published in Russian under the title Marksizm i Filosofija Jazyka, Leningrad, 1930.

them if she wants to be true to her own experience and give it conscious expression.

By 1930, the nature of women was being studied and discussed in ways that it never had been before. Serious attempts were being made to gather objective data from which to draw conclusions that investigators believed would be based on fact rather than supposition and myth. Researchers such as Robert and Helen Lynd and Katharine Bement Davis had published large studies on American women, their sexuality and its significance in terms of the broader American culture.<sup>13</sup> The writings of Havelock Ellis and Freud had been well-known in North America for decades and were gaining acceptance in popular as well as academic circles.<sup>14</sup> In 1923, Margaret Sanger set up the Clinical Research Bureau to provide women with contraceptives as well as to gather scientific data on fertility control.<sup>15</sup> John D'Emilio and Estelle Freedman stress the significance of the birth control movement.

It signaled a profound shift in the sexual norms that had reigned supreme among the middle classes for half a century. To advocate fertility control for women through access to contraceptive devices rather than through abstinence implied an unequivocal acceptance of female sexual expression.<sup>16</sup>

Moreover, it was not only conventional sexual norms that were being questioned. The problem of woman's creativity and the freedom to fully participate in the larger cultural order were also beginning to be addressed. In A Room of One's

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<sup>13</sup>Katherine Bement Davis, Factors in the Sex Lives of Twenty-Two Hundred Women (New York: Harper and Row, 1929); Robert and Helen Lynd, Middletown: A Study in Contemporary American Culture (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1929).

<sup>14</sup> Nathan G. Hale, Freud and the Americans (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971).

<sup>15</sup>John D'Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman, Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), 243.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 233.

Own, published in 1929, Virginia Woolf lectures a female audience on the subject of women and fiction. “[Woman] pervades poetry from cover to cover; she is all but absent from history,” writes Woolf.<sup>17</sup> This, too, is how Ardener characterizes the “problem of women.”

Here is a human group that forms about half of any population and is even in a majority at certain ages...Yet however apparently competently the female population has been studied in any particular society, the results in understanding are surprisingly slight, and even tedious...For the truth is that women rarely speak in social anthropology in any but that male sense so well exemplified by Levi-Strauss’s own remark: in the sense of merely uttering or giving tongue. It is the very inarticulateness of women that is the technical part of the problem they present.<sup>18</sup>

Woolf concludes her book by claiming that, contrary to popular ideas about women’s relationship to members of their own gender, she likes women. She urges women to write for the sake of their creative freedom.<sup>19</sup> The gaze has shifted from the male viewpoint to women looking at and discussing their own agency, and Heward’s preoccupation with her own gender was surely part of the same climate of interest in which the works of Lynd, Davis and Woolf arose.

It is no surprise then that the initial critical response to The Bather was antagonistic, for as an expression of a woman’s contemplation upon herself and her agency, it was a fairly novel endeavor. The painting was not exhibited until 1933 at the first Canadian showing of the Canadian Group of Painters in Toronto. Out of 118 paintings, The Bather was among the few singled out in a review written for the

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<sup>17</sup> Virginia Woolf, A Room of One’s Own (London: Hogarth Press, 1929), 66.

<sup>18</sup> Ardener, Problem, 1-2.

<sup>19</sup> Woolf, Room, 168-172.

Toronto Star by critic Augustus Bridle, who evidently perceived the discrepancy between this work and the more conventional images of women bathers.

Total of 118 pictures, about half of which are cheerful, and scarcely any conventionally beautiful - perish the thought!.. Prudence Heward's Bather is a joyless exposure of stylized rocks and a gloomy flesh figure.<sup>20</sup>

Critic Kenneth Wells also singled out The Bather as exemplary of the CGP show's failings.<sup>21</sup> Writing a review of the show for the Evening Telegram, he equated the look of it to the experience of someone in delirium tremens. He allots The Bather an especially long passage of ridicule in which he interprets the image as a cook waiting for the salad to grow and criticizes its formal style and composition as well as the appearance of the figure.

I looked at the picture. All I could see was a woman of a type planned to exemplify those "larger Canadian rhythms" which Mr. Lismer talks about, a background of cardboard rocks, and a lake that might have been coffee or basalt. Of course, the woman wore a green bathing suit - which might have suggested the title, and in the sand just off the end of her toe was growing a tiny scrap of some green stuff.<sup>22</sup>

Accompanying the article was a set of cartoons entitled "An Artist Draws His Impressions of 'Expressionist' Art." They caricatured a number of the works, including The Bather and wrote a facetious caption under each (fig. 40). Lawren Harris's Mountains in Snow were likened to whipped-cream-topped jelly; the flowers in Sarah Robertson's Decoration were interpreted as women's lacy underwear; and

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<sup>20</sup> Augustus Bridle, "New Democracy Seen in Latest Paintings" Toronto Star, 3 Nov. 1933.

<sup>21</sup> Three early reviews of the Toronto show singled out Heward's work for special mention. Two of the three were frankly hostile, the third by Lucy Van Gogh - the only woman critic - was briefly complimentary. Augustus Bridle, Toronto Star, 3 Nov. 1933; Kenneth Wells, "What You See You Don't See Looking at Modern Art," Toronto Evening Telegram, 25 Nov. 1933; Lucy Van Gogh, "The World of Art: Canadian Group," Saturday Night 14 (2 Dec., 1933): 24.

<sup>22</sup> Wells, Toronto Evening Telegram.

the caption underneath The Bather states: “Even ‘The Bather’ made the artist hungry. He thought it was a cook watching a salad sprout with forks, spoons and all!”<sup>23</sup>

The general thrust of Wells’s criticism, implied in the nonsensical interpretation, is that the painting does not make any sense to him. This is not a female bather image as he has known them. Only the clue of the bathing suit tips him off to why the painting is titled as it is. Nothing about the image strikes him as appropriate to the genre; there is no cultural foundation to support the picture’s meaning. He observes rocks and a sea that do not look like they are supposed to, the odd detail of the green plant that does not seem to fit sensibly into the paired-down design of the painting, and a woman who is larger than she should be. He implies that because she is conceived in what seems to him as the same manner as a vast, boundless landscape (“those larger Canadian rhythms”), she is therefore absurd.

Kenneth Clark’s book, The Nude: A Study in Ideal Art (1956), lays out the established version of the characteristics and meaning of the female body in western art.<sup>24</sup> The Nude is one of the most comprehensive surveys on the subject to date, and Lynda Nead describes it as “a monument to official culture.” As such, it is an excellent provider of the criteria which have shaped the representation of the female

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Kenneth Clark, The Nude: A Study of Ideal Art (London: John Murray, 1956), 3. Originally published in 1956, the book is still in circulation and has undergone a number of reprintings, the latest in September 1996. It is quoted extensively in more recent studies of the nude such as Liam Hudson’s Bodies of Knowledge, 1982; Gill Saunders, The Nude, A New Perspective (London: Herbert Press, 1989); Eileen O’Neill’s “(Re)Presentations of Eros” in Gender/ Body/ Knowledge eds., Alison M. Jaggar and Susan R. Bordo, 68-91 (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1992); and Lynda Nead, The Female Nude: Art, Obscenity and Sexuality (London: Routledge, 1992), 12. Nead points out that Clark held a prominent position in British culture during his lifetime and was a highly popular writer and TV personality through his television series Civilization (1969). Clark’s work can therefore be taken as a guide to established thought on modern culture.

body since antiquity.<sup>25</sup> Clark states that the Greeks developed the nude as an art form in the fifth century BC, but it was the male nude which was developed first; at this early date, female figures were nearly always draped in clothing. As an art form, rather than merely a subject of art, the nude was not copied directly from nature, but idealized, simplified, and perfected according to concepts of harmonious proportion and spiritual transcendence. The male nude represents humanity in the broadest, most ideal terms. It is a sign for the body, mind and soul of the human being in its ultimate physical, mental and spiritual unity and grandeur.<sup>26</sup> As a supreme example of this idealism Clark describes the image of Apollo on the pediment of the Temple of Olympia, 450 BC (fig 41).

With a gesture of sovereign authority, [he] reproves the bestial fury of the centaurs. Nowhere else, perhaps, is the early Greek ideal so perfectly embodied: calm, pitiless, and supremely confident in the power of physical beauty.<sup>27</sup>

Conversely, the later development of the female nude did not represent higher spiritual and cultural ideals, but humanity's relationship to nature. As I have previously indicated, as far back as Aristotle the differences between the sexes were conceived in terms of a system of oppositions: he is soul, she is body; he is active, she is passive; he is naturally suited to authority and therefore rules over her, while her virtue is shown in obedience.<sup>28</sup> These fundamental oppositions have influenced western thinking until the present day and are represented in marble, paint and various

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<sup>25</sup> Nead, Female Nude, 12.

<sup>26</sup> Clark, Nude, 22.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>28</sup> Agonito, Ideas, 43-54,



mediums throughout the history of art. The dichotomy is reaffirmed by Clark. He discusses the male nude under the sphere of Apollo, the god of light and rationality; the female nude is discussed under the sphere of Venus, the goddess of sexual love. His description of the motivations underlying the female nude's production are radically different than those he explains in the previous chapter as underlying the production of the male nude.

Since the earliest times the obsessive, unreasonable nature of physical desire has sought relief in images, and to give these images a form by which Venus may cease to be vulgar and become celestial has been one of the recurring aims of European art. The means employed have been symmetry, measurement and the principle of subordination, all refining upon the personal affections of individual artists.<sup>29</sup>

She is not based on a foundation of "authority" or "calm, pitiless" rationality. Here Clark is unequivocally stating that the female nude is the embodiment of the male artist's (and through him all men's) desire, and is founded upon ideas of "subordination" and mental images arising from "the personal affections" of the artist. It is also a form which sublimates raw, sexual desire through artistic skill so that the nude becomes a contemplative object, removed from bodily functions - celestial rather than vulgar.

Nanette Salomon maintains that with Praxiteles' production of the Knidian Aphrodite in the fourth century, the female nude became a prevalent art form (fig. 42).<sup>30</sup> The work "can be seen as the starting point of a new history in art - a history that privileges the female over the male nude." The Knidian Aphrodite is idealized

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<sup>29</sup> Clark, Nude, 64.

<sup>30</sup> Nanette Salomon, "The Venus Pudica," in Generations & Geographies in the Visual Arts, ed. Griselda Pollock (London: Routledge, 1996), 72.

just as the male nude was. She is smaller but still mathematically proportioned, and the flesh is smoothed out and lacking detail.<sup>31</sup>

However, comparing Praxiteles' Hermes with the Infant Dionysus (300 BC) to his Knidian Aphrodite, it becomes clear that the idealization of male and female, though similar at first glance, is based upon different principles (fig. 43). The amount and type of energy in the figures is not at all the same. The well-developed muscles of Hermes are visible beneath the lean flesh, and the pose, though momentarily still, is latent with powerful movement which is communicated through the twist of the torso, the raised position of the arm and the taut muscles of the legs. The Aphrodite on the other hand has no bulging muscles, she is much smoother, more rounded and soft looking. The pose also indicates potential movement, but movement of a very different sort than the Hermes. The position of the hand covering, or pointing to, the pubis appeared for the first time in this image, but, as pointed out by Salomon, was to become "the most represented artistic configuration in the western world," and "the one classical trope which is maintained without breach throughout the medieval period." (fig. 44-49).<sup>32</sup>

Salomon asserts that the narrative suggested by the pose of the Knidian Aphrodite is a woman startled by the intrusion of an observer during her bath. She is posed with towel and water jug. Her head lifts, her body crouches slightly, her legs press together in a protective way and her hand covers her pubis, hiding it and drawing attention to it at the same time. It signifies woman as an object of male

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<sup>31</sup> Clark, Nude, 68.

<sup>32</sup> Salomon, Pudica, 71.

voyeurism, “exposed and vulnerable.” The term “Venus Pudica” was given to the artistic type originating in the Knidian Aphrodite because of the gesture with the hand which covers her pubic area. The term pudica is associated with pudenda, which means both shame (or modesty) and genitalia.<sup>33</sup>

In 1794, Benjamin West singled out the Venus de Medici, one of the later manifestations of the Knidian Aphrodite type, as exemplary of feminine beauty and character.

Were the young artist...to propose to himself a subject in which he would represent the peculiar excellencies of women, would he not say, that these excellencies consist in a virtuous mind, a modest mien, a tranquil deportment, and a gracefulness in motion? And in embodying the combined beauty of these qualities, would he not bestow on the figure a general, smooth and round fulness of form, to indicate the softness of character; bend the head gently forward in the common attitude of modesty; and awaken our ideas of the slow and graceful movements peculiar to the sex, but limbs free from that masculine and sinewy expression which is the consequence of active exercise? - and such is the Venus de Medici.<sup>34</sup>

So the female nude at its inception becomes synonymous with the ideas of sexuality, modesty and tranquillity.<sup>35</sup> The moment of stillness-latent-with-movement in such an image is the opposite of that moment in the strong, confident Hermes: one is passive, subordinate and sexual, the other active, dominant and exhibiting a wholeness that includes sexuality, but does not single it out as the defining attribute. Here then is the exemplary female nude. Its appearance, meaning and emotional impact was laid out early in the history of western art and adhered to throughout the

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 74.

<sup>34</sup> Benjamin West, Discourse to the Royal Academy Students, 1794, quoted in Saunders, New Perspective, 22.

<sup>35</sup> Saunders, New Perspective, 73-75.

centuries. During those centuries, artists were rarely women. It was the gaze of the male artist that determined the ideal shape and meaning of the female body. When Canadian critics saw The Bather for the first time, they were thinking in the terms Clark explicates. They had behind them the same history of notions about sexual difference, the same history of visual images, and the same set of expectations about how female bodies were supposed to be portrayed. Contemporary images in popular culture also reinforced this ideal of the feminine body. A 1930 fashion photograph of the actress Loretta Young in Vogue Magazine, for example, displays the same proportions, the same surface simplification, the same delicacy of build (fig. 50).<sup>36</sup>

If The Bather is examined in the light of these historical precepts, it becomes immediately clear why it struck the critics as such an odd figure. Robert Ayre, writing for The Canadian Forum in 1934, describes it as “coarse” and “vital,” for reasons which can be discerned if we look closely at the meaning of those adjectives.<sup>37</sup> The word coarse, originally associated with rough cloth, came to take on meanings which included unrefined, uncivil, vulgar and obscene. Vital comes from the Latin *vitalis*, “of or belonging to life.”<sup>38</sup> Although Ayre praised the painting, his choice of adjectives reveals an underlying ideology similar to Clark’s and accurately pinpoints the figure’s novelty. In his eyes, there is something uncivilized about it, it has an unusual amount of life and may be obscene.

Female bathers, as a category of the female nude, were interpreted through the

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<sup>36</sup> Christina Probert, Swimwear in Vogue (London: Thames and Hudson, 1981), 30.

<sup>37</sup> Robert Ayre, “Canadian Group of Painters,” The Canadian Forum 14 (1934), 98-99.

<sup>38</sup> Robert K. Barnhart, ed., The Barnhart Concise Dictionary of Etymology (New York: HarperCollins, 1995).

codes governing the representation of the beautiful, which in Kantian terms depends on the object's form or its limitations. A woman depicted in terms of a vast landscape ("those larger Canadian rhythms" pointed out by Kenneth Wells) would fall into the category of the sublime, which is conceived as something limitless or unformed.<sup>39</sup> According to Nead, there is a parallel between the sublime and the obscene which is based on the feeling that is aroused in the viewer. While the aesthetic object leads the viewer to contemplation, the sublime, the obscene, or the pornographic object creates tension and exhilaration by disturbing the viewer's sense of order in the world and negating boundaries.<sup>40</sup> To enter the aesthetic realm, the female body must be "contained" and "regulated" by "artistic style" and "pictorial form."<sup>41</sup> Venus must cease to be vulgar and become celestial. To Robert Ayre The Bather might be an exciting modern innovation, but she is no modest maiden. He hints at her indecency by his use of adjectives, while Kenneth Wells displays his discomfort with irony and sarcasm.

A combination of three specific characteristics lend The Bather its incompatibility with more traditional images of the female body: it is the size, demeanor and pose of the figure that turns the tables on the Knidian Aphrodite and that ilk. The figure has the same basic proportions as the classic nude, but there the physical resemblance ends. It is much heftier than either its predecessors or its contemporary in Vogue Magazine. It is broader in the waist, and its arms, hips,

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<sup>39</sup> Immanuel Kant, Critique of Aesthetic Judgement, trans. J.C. Meredith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911): 90, quoted in Nead, Female Nude, 26.

<sup>40</sup> Nead, Female Nude, 25-33.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

thighs, and calves are fleshier. The muscles are painted in, and the bones show - collarbone, knees, knuckles and ankles. Although its muscular development is nowhere near that of the male nude, it looks much stiffer, harder and more powerful than the standard, rubbery bodies that came before it. It is not shaded with delicate sfumato, but strongly modeled with sharp contrasts between dark and light, giving it a solid, massive, presence that matches the solid, massive landscape in which the figure sits.

The facial expression cannot fit into any existing categories of feminine facial cast present in the traditional nude. Griselda Pollock and Rozsika Parker state in Old Mistresses that “female figures are frequently asleep, unconscious or unconcerned with mortal things and such devices allow undisturbed and voyeuristic enjoyment of the female form.”<sup>42</sup> The figure’s virtue was protected in this way: she could not be held responsible for the gaze of which she was unaware (fig. 51 - 52). Another way the nude figure’s innocence could be protected was by the establishment of a narrative that allowed it to be understood as chaste in spite of its nakedness. The Venus Pudica figures fall into this category. Surprised in a private moment, the figures cannot be culpable in their display. One late example of the genre particularly exemplifies this trick of narrative building. Hiram Powers’ The Greek Slave (1844) was well received by nineteenth century American audiences that were usually suspicious of works which were erotic in any way (fig 53).<sup>43</sup> It was the narrative

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<sup>42</sup> Griselda Pollock and Rozsika Parker, Old Mistresses (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), 116.

<sup>43</sup> For a detailed analysis of this work see Joy S. Kasson, “Narratives of the Female Body: The Greek Slave,” Marble Queens and Captives (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 46-72.

associated with the image that paved the way to its acceptance. Powers' sculpture was produced during the Greek war of independence, for which there was a great deal of sympathy in America. The image portrays a Greek captive for sale in the market place. Her hands are chained: she is helpless. In her discarded clothes there is a locket and a cross implying Christian faith and lost love. Poems were written about this statue, extolling its chastity.

Naked yet clothed with chastity She stands  
And as a shield throws back the sun's hot rays  
Her modest mien repels each vulgar gaze.<sup>44</sup>

This figure may have been aware of the gaze of her captors, but her helplessness, her modesty and her long-suffering self-containment act as a shield, protecting her from the full impact of it.

The Bather, on the other hand, has a gaze and expression that is neither ingenuous, nor startled, nor innocently sleeping, nor spiritually elevated out of harm's way. The gaze indicates an intense awareness of herself and the viewer. She looks straight at the audience, but her look does not carry any of the challenge or calculation of the prostitute Olympia with which Manet startled the Paris art establishment in 1863 (Fig. 54). T.J. Clark spells out the meaning of Olympia's gaze in contrast to the gaze of such classical figures as Ingres' Venus Anadyomene (1848) or Titian's Venus of Urbino (1538) (fig. 51,55).

That candour, that dreamy offering of self, that looking which was not quite looking: those were the nude's most characteristic forms of address...Olympia, on the other hand, looks out at the viewer in a way which obliges him to imagine a whole fabric of sociality in which this look might make sense and include him - a fabric of offers, places,

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<sup>44</sup> H.S.C., The KnickerBocker Magazine, quoted in Kasson, 61.

payments, particular powers, and status which is still open to negotiation.<sup>45</sup>

The Bather establishes a third category. The figure engages viewers by looking straight at them, as does the figure in Olympia, and in both images the facial expression is serious and analytical with the mouth slightly pursed in thought. But the difference in their contexts changes the meaning of the figures' expressions. In The Bather nothing is negotiated. There is no curtained boudoir, black maid, bed, or flowers to suggest an assignation. Wearing a bathing suit and sitting by the sea, the figure in The Bather is more likely to be calculating her strength for a long swim than sizing up a potential client for a sexual transaction. The figure acknowledges viewers by meeting their eyes, but it does not offer itself: it must be met on its own terms. The gaze that is exchanged between it and the audience is a reciprocal one. An interchange occurs that does not involve "offers, places, payments, particular powers, and (negotiable) status." Instead, a relationship of equals is presented.

Above all, it is The Bather's pose that transgresses the limits of female representation. The figure sits directly facing the viewer with her legs wide apart, her right hand on the ground beneath her knee and her left hand resting across her thigh, pointing at, but not covering, her pubis. In meaning and content, her bearing is the absolute opposite of the Venus Pudica posture. The bent knees and the hand on the ground in combination with the visible muscles and bones suggest an individual possessing the potential for swift, forceful movement. Most striking, however, is that in a body visibly capable of such action, the pubis is displayed and accented without

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<sup>45</sup> T.J. Clark, The Painting of Modern Life (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), 132-133.



any sign of modesty. Although the bathing suit covers the area, as I have argued, this device is more about cultural location than modesty or shame.

In 1863, the Paris critics were upset by the flexed hand of Olympia covering the pubic area in what they considered an inappropriate way. T.J. Clark says “Olympia’s hand demands to be looked at; it cannot be disavowed or brought in line with anyone’s expectations - anyone, that is, brought up on Ingres or Titian.”<sup>46</sup> Heward seems to have gotten away with her placement of the hand. The critics are silent about it; yet it is at least as disconcerting as Olympia’s. Moreover, the pubic area is pointed to by a second indicator. Beside the figure’s feet is a small green plant with a leaf that points directly to the pubis. The presence and position of this plant is unlikely to be incidental. It is the only detail in an extremely pared-down, simplified background, and it resembles a symbolic strategy that we saw in Heward’s Sisters of Rural Quebec where the flowers in the lower left hand corner mirrored the attitude of the figures (Fig. 5). The leaf repeats and amplifies the gesture of the hand, so the pubis is doubly indexed.

The placement of the hand indicates such a novel relationship of the figure to its body and of the artist to the body of her figure that the critics may not have known how to respond to it directly. Instead they could only make veiled allusions to it by citing the figure’s coarseness and vitality or making jokes about a cook watching a salad grow. Showalter claims that in women’s artistic production “ideas about the body are fundamental to understanding how women conceptualize their situation in

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 135.

life.”<sup>47</sup> The gaze that formulated this image is not one of sexual desire: there has never been any evidence to suggest that Heward, Lockerby, or any of their circle were lesbian.<sup>48</sup> This individual’s body is not a display or an offering, but an intrinsic part of her self. The novelty consists in the figure’s sense of her own being: she is active rather than passive and therefore intrudes on the reverie of the voyeuristic gaze. Her wholeness is undeniable. By her straight-forward stare and unmitigated physical power she shares in the potency, authority and rationality of the male figure; she wears the bathing suit as a cultural sign, blocking her unqualified union with nature, yet she is fully, physically a woman: her body and her sex require no apology, there is no need for modesty.

Understood in these terms, the contemporary critics’ sense of coarseness, vulgarity, absurdity and joylessness can be replaced with a comprehension of the figure’s personal freedom and agency. If the sitter was Mabel Lockerby, Heward has portrayed an unmarried woman painter in circumstances similar to her own. Although not as well to do as Heward, Lockerby did enjoy an independent existence with a home and an income inherited from her father.<sup>49</sup> In this way she met Woolf’s basic requirements for artistic freedom: an income and a room of one’s own. A recognition of repressed sexuality in women was well within Ardener’s circle of the

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<sup>47</sup> Showalter, *Wilderness*, 19.

<sup>48</sup> Both Heward and Lockerby were known to have close emotional ties to male cousins whom they chose not to marry. According to family and later researchers, they led conventional lives for unmarried women at that time. Barbara Meadowcroft, *Mabel Lockerby* (Montreal: La Galerie Walter Klinkhoff, 1989), 2. Ann Johanson, Interview by Pepita Ferrari, 14Oct.1993, sound roll 17, p. 6-7.

<sup>49</sup> Meadowcroft, *Lockerby*, 2.

conscious, dominant culture, for Freud had written about it.<sup>50</sup> The strong desire and ability for action and agency communicated by The Bather, however, was a new idea. But Heward's circle of friends included many women painters, married and unmarried, who were committed to their careers and active participants in Canadian culture throughout their lives. These women made up an important part of Heward's audience and no doubt recognized, and were gratified by, a painting which mirrored back to them their own sense of self. Possibly for the same reasons, modern feminist critics respond quite differently to the images than the contemporary critics. Luckyj describes the work as encompassing "heroic scale," and "sheer physicality," and Millar states that "Heward's many likenesses of women encompass a range of attitudes toward female strength and sexuality rarely found in the work of her male contemporaries."<sup>51</sup>

The image disrupts the cultural signs of sexual difference, while pointing to the one sexual difference that is undeniable. This is an expression of female experience in the "wild" zone. In painting The Bather, Heward produced an image that fractured the barrier that had held women's experiences of self outside of the dominant discourses of patriarchy for so long. In doing so, she played a part in bringing the unconscious, unspoken and "wild" into the domain of consciousness, language and civilization.

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<sup>50</sup> For example, see Sigmund Freud, "The Case of Dora," The Case of Dora and Other Papers, trans. Alix and James Strachey (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1952), 12-151. The study was first published in 1905.

<sup>51</sup> Luckyj, Expressions, 63; Millar, Beaver Hall Group, 6.

### Chapter Three: Hester

In 1937, Prudence Heward produced a work that was a total departure from her customary subject matter of the clothed, white, assertive female. The work is titled Hester, and it is a painting of a nude black woman whose passivity is her most striking characteristic (fig 3). The figure sits against the trunk of a tree with an autumn landscape receding into the distance behind it. The leafless forest suggests chilly weather, and the rough, pointy textures of bark, branches and roots speak of an uncomfortable place for bare skin. The face is turned slightly to the side and the gaze looks down and away from the viewer. The pubic area is covered by both of the long, slender hands. The figure appears wrapped in its own silence, closed off and forsaken in the barren landscape.

In an essay entitled “Reinstating Corporeality: Feminism and Body Politics,” Janet Wolff asks if women can paint women’s bodies in ways which undermine the prevailing, patriarchal “modes of representation” so that the female body can actually

be a “site of cultural critique.”<sup>1</sup> She explains the problem of using the female body, especially the naked female body, as a means to subvert established structures of power. It lies in the representation’s propensity to fall back into those very power structures which through long-held and authoritative conventions have defined it as an object of the male gaze. The difficulty of producing such a work is profound, and Wolff points to a number of attempts that ultimately fail in circumventing the dangers of presenting the female body as either an object of desire or as embodying an essential femininity that is monolithic and outside social/historical construction. Yet she argues that such a use of the female body, though difficult, is desirable and possible: desirable because “the body has been systematically repressed in Western culture,” and “what is repressed...may threaten to erupt and challenge the established order;” but possible only if the body is understood as both a material reality and an outcome of “practices, ideologies and discourses.”<sup>2</sup>

In this chapter I will argue that by infusing the painting Hester with the signs of the figure’s material reality as well as the signs of its construction within the discourses of gender and race, Heward accomplishes a cultural critique which probes beyond the superficial and the obvious, depicting Hester in a way that refuses to allow spectators an untroubled location in the social stratum of colonialism from which to view the figure. Instead, the painting mirrors back to spectators the position of power they occupy in relation to the figure, and forces a conscious consideration of that position.

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<sup>1</sup> Janet Wolff, “Reinstating Corporeality: Feminism and Body Politics,” Feminine Sentences (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1990), 128.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 122 and 135.

The portrait was one in a series of black nudes that Heward produced between 1935 and 1941 (figs 56 - 58). Before these works, she had painted only one other nude, Girl Under a Tree (1931), possibly a self portrait, as discussed in Chapter Two (fig 38).<sup>3</sup> Natalie Luckyj suggests that one reason Heward painted white women with their clothes on (except for the one exception) and black women as nudes was an interest in dark skin tones.<sup>4</sup> This explanation begs the question. Marcia Pointon points out that ever since the Renaissance the skillful rendering of the human body has conveyed the artist's creativity and "professional status."<sup>5</sup> To paint the nude well, in other words, is to reach full stature as an artist. Heward may have been motivated to produce such works in order to establish her credentials as a "professional," for she was painting at a time and in a place where female artists were often ranked as gifted amateurs in comparison to the passionately committed and creative male artist. Although the evidence of prestigious awards, exhibitions and extensive critical attention should have marked Heward as a professional, as late as 1966 she and the other female members of the Beaver Hall Group were characterized as "talented gentlefolk" by Norah McCullough, a writer for the National Gallery of Canada.

It so happened that the Beaver Hall Hill Group was largely composed of women in those post-World-War-1 years; hence the limitation of this exhibition. By no means careerists but rather talented gentlefolk, nevertheless they were women of superior intelligence and vigorous

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<sup>3</sup> The belief that Girl Under a Tree is a self-portrait is stated in Pepita Ferrari and Erna Buffie, By Woman's Hand, produced by Merit Jensen Car, Pepita Ferrari and Kent Martin. 57 min. National Film Board of Canada, 1995. Videocassette. Luckyj alludes to such a likelihood when she writes "The only painting of her's to have a place on the bedroom wall, above her bed, it is a work which cannot be easily separated from the personality of the artist," Natalie Luckyj, Expressions of the Will (Kingston: Agnes Etherington Art Center, 1986), 61. The face in the portrait does bear a strong resemblance to photographs of Heward.

<sup>4</sup> Luckyj, Expressions, 65.

<sup>5</sup> Marcia Pointon, Naked Authority (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 11-34.

energy...They painted for pleasure, but not lightly, for they were devotees to a chosen vocation.<sup>6</sup>

In 1973, Dennis Reid reiterated this opinion by quoting McCullough's remark in his text book on Canadian art.<sup>7</sup> The idea has persisted into the 1990's.

Naomi Jackson Groves, niece of A.Y. Jackson, expressed a similar notion to Pepita Ferrari:

But they [women of the Beaver Hall Group] didn't have the same push as the men did. It isn't just because they were women, they just didn't have the, the genius, the, wild enthusiasm. And, stick to it as much. They were more lady-like.<sup>8</sup>

Heward's desire to enhance her reputation through mastery of the nude may have been hampered, however, by her inability to find models. Her studio was in her mother's respectable Peel Street home, and her models were usually drawn from friends and family. It is therefore conceivable that it was difficult for her to find people willing to sit for nude studies. The fact that her only other nude work besides the black figures was probably a self-portrait underlines this likelihood. Although nothing certain is known about the specific black women whom Heward painted, certain possibilities about the women's identities suggest themselves. She may have made sketches of black women in Bermuda where she visited in 1936 with fellow painter Isabel McLaughlin.<sup>9</sup> Her first painting of a black nude, Dark Girl, however,

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<sup>6</sup> Norah McCullough, The Beaver Hall Hill Group (Ottawa: The National Gallery of Canada, 1966).

<sup>7</sup> Dennis Reid, A Concise History of Canadian Painting (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1973), 187.

<sup>8</sup> Naomi Jackson Groves, Interview by Pepita Ferrari, 7Sept.1993, sound roll 24, transcript Pepita Ferrari's files, Montreal.

<sup>9</sup> Isabel McLaughlin, Interview by Pepita Ferrari 8Sept.1993, sound roll 28, p.2, transcript Pepita Ferrari files, Montreal.

predates the trip by a year.<sup>10</sup> It is also possible that some of her models worked in the most common occupation for black women in Montreal during the depression - as a domestic servants.<sup>11</sup> These women may have worked for Heward's aunt Gladys Nares, who employed black domestics, and may have modeled for Heward in order to earn extra money. They also may have come into contact with Heward through St. John's the Evangelist Church where her mother was an influential member of the parish. On occasion the church would send people in need of extra income to the Peel Street House to model.<sup>12</sup>

Knowledge of who the actual woman in the painting was may be lost, but Heward's use of her name, Hester, designates the work as a nude portrait rather than a nude in universal terms, for as Richard Brilliant explains, a name is an essential constituent of an individual's identity.<sup>13</sup> It also establishes the figure's materiality - her actual existence in time and space - and the portrait signifies most powerfully when it is set against the historical background of the complex social and historical realities that made up the bedrock which underlay race relations in the western world and, more specifically, in Canada and Montreal in the first half of the twentieth century.

In the early twentieth century, doctrines of racism were widespread and well accepted within educated, white, North American circles.<sup>14</sup> In 1916, Madison Grant,

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<sup>10</sup> Luckyj, Expressions, 65.

<sup>11</sup> Dorothy Williams, Blacks In Montreal 1628-1986: An Urban Demography (Cowansville Quebec: Yvon Blais Inc., 1989), 40.

<sup>12</sup> Anne Johanson, interview by author, 19 March 1998.

<sup>13</sup> Richard Brilliant, Portraiture (London: Reaktion Books, 1991), 9.

<sup>14</sup> Phyllis Rose discusses the various discourses of race in the early twentieth century in "Savage Dance" Jazz Cleopatra: Josephine Baker in Her Time (New York: Doubleday, 1989), 3-45.



president of the New York Zoological Society and trustee of the American Museum of Natural History, published The Passing of the Great Race, a book which asserted the superiority of the “Nordic” race and the necessity of maintaining racial purity.<sup>15</sup> In 1920, another American, Lothrop Stoddard, produced a second book in the same vein, The Rising Tide of Color, which had a wide reading and was subsequently published in England and France. He claimed that “the basic factor in human affairs is not politics, but race” and “unless man erects and maintains artificial barriers the various races will increasingly mingle, and the inevitable result will be the supplanting or absorption of the higher by the lower types.”<sup>16</sup> This conviction induced him to urge the solidarity of the white race in its containment and domination of the other races.<sup>17</sup>

The presence of two articles in The Canadian Forum in the summer of 1925 affirms that questions about racial differences and the dangers of miscegenation were taken very seriously by Canadians, and by no means was there a consensus of opinion. The first article, by Edward Sapir, takes up the questions of whether or not there are any significant differences between the races, whether the “Nordic” race is superior to all others, and whether there is any danger in racial intermarriage. He concludes that there is no solid scientific evidence to support significant racial differences, that therefore the “Nordic” race cannot be superior, and “moreover, it cannot be shown

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<sup>15</sup> Madison Grant, The Passing of the Great Race (New York: Arno Press, 1970).

<sup>16</sup> Lothrop Stoddard, The Rising Tide of Color (London: Chapman and Hall Ltd., 1923), 5.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 302.

that the offspring of mixed marriages are inferior to the parents in either physical or mental respects.”<sup>18</sup>

The later article by Pestle also asks the question “is miscegenation biologically safe?” But Pestle reaches a very different conclusion.

If the white-colored hybrid is inferior to both parents (and the bulk of the evidence favours this view) then we have perhaps the strongest argument against race amalgamation that can be brought forward...If the governments of white peoples have any justifiable function, that function is to prevent race-deterioration by miscegenation with coloured races.<sup>19</sup>

These controversies and the ideas they propagated had practical repercussions in the time and place that Heward painted. The population of blacks in Montreal in the nineteen-thirties was 1,600 in a overall population of just under a million.<sup>20</sup> The majority of blacks lived in the St. Antoine district, a low income area made up of both black and white people that was south of the high income district where Heward lived. The housing in the St. Antoine district was frequently substandard.<sup>21</sup> The white inhabitants tended to migrate to other parts of the city as soon as their circumstances improved, but the black members of the community ran into trouble when they tried to move into better neighborhoods. Segregation in living quarters and the work place may not have been written into law, but it was an everyday reality in Montreal. Dorothy Williams describes the efforts of one black family to improve its standard of living:

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<sup>18</sup> Edward Sapir, “Are the Nordics a Superior Race?” *The Canadian Forum* 5 (June 1925): 265-266.

<sup>19</sup> Pestle, “The Color Problem,” *The Canadian Forum* 5 (Aug. 1925): 336-337.

<sup>20</sup> Williams, *Blacks*, 40.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 37

Westmount, immediately to the west of St. Antoine, was basically restricted. The few blacks that did get into this city usually were either light-skinned blacks who could 'pass' or those with white spouses. Living in Westmount was considered a privilege because of its fine schools and superior services...In one case one black family paid 300 dollars to obtain the key to an apartment on the north side of St. Antoine Street. The family did not live there but they were allowed to use the address so their children were able to go to school in Westmount.<sup>22</sup>

One of the reasons that black families had originally settled in the St. Antoine district was its proximity to the rail yards. The railways were a major employer of black men and prior to the depression years, ninety percent of the black men living in the St. Antoine area were employed in this way, but once the depression arrived these jobs vanished. By 1933, unemployment in the Union Church congregation, which was the main black congregation in the city, was at eighty percent.<sup>23</sup> The depression years devastated the St. Antoine area, where people were often forced to live on the streets and some even starved to death.<sup>24</sup>

Most of the women living in the district, if they had employment at all, worked in domestic service, the least desirable job for women. In 1936, Chatelaine magazine suggested that a fair wage for domestic workers would be fifteen to twenty dollars a month for a sixty-nine hour work week. At that time, women factory workers were making twelve and a half dollars a week for a forty-eight hour work week.<sup>25</sup> But it was not simply the low pay and the long hours that made the job

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 38

<sup>23</sup> Leo W. Bertley, Montreal's Oldest Black Congregation: Union Church (Montreal: Union Church, 1968), 7.

<sup>24</sup> Williams, Blacks, 43.

<sup>25</sup> Harriet Parsons, "Codes for the Kitchen," Chatelaine (March, 1936), 4, 54, 72-3.

undesirable. There was a social stigma attached to it that had to do with the attitude of employers who devalued the work, devalued the women who did it, and were often completely ignorant of the most basic human needs of the people in their employ. Servants often worked alone, isolated from other workers; they could not organize to bargain for better wages or working conditions; they were frequently the victims of unwanted sexual attention from the men in the households in which they worked; the job was insecure - they could be laid off at a moment's notice while employers took holidays, or when times were hard financially.<sup>26</sup> Yet even these jobs were at a premium during the nineteen-thirties.

In The Bather, Heward painted a woman of the same class and profession as herself. With Hester, she has painted the image of a woman who was most likely at a distant end of the social scale: Hester was black, probably poor, and possibly employed as a domestic by someone in Heward's circle of friends and relatives. Consequently, this is not an image of self, but of other. That does not imply, however, that Hester conforms to the artistic and ideological conventions that governed the representation of women with different colored skin any more than The Bather conformed to the conventions of the white nude. The construction of the "other" of post-colonial theory is characterized not just by the inscription of surface differences of race and gender, but by the presentation of those differences in a way that denies the particularity of the subject and codifies those differences into a

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<sup>26</sup> These issues are discussed in depth by David M. Katzman in Seven Days a Week (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1981). They are given meaning in the Canadian context by Micheline Dumont, et al., Quebec Women: A History, trans. Roger Gannon and Rosalind Gill (Toronto: The Women's Press, 1987), 214. Also see Katherine Kent, "Crisis in the Kitchen," Maclean's Magazine,

stereotype.<sup>27</sup> Hester is every bit as subversive as The Bather, but because it is a painting of a black woman, it contravenes a different set of traditions, for the black woman was constructed antithetically to the white woman in discourse, and represented accordingly.<sup>28</sup>

One of the most glaring clues to the contrariness of the work is the critical reception. In 1938, one critic lamented,

Why, oh why, take the trouble to paint - and paint well - a hideous, fat, naked negress, with thighs like a prize-fighter and a loose-lipped, learing [sic] face? Obesity and ugliness in the nude were even banned from the old time barroom.<sup>29</sup>

His statements are significant for a couple of reasons. First of all, by their heat they reveal the extent of Heward's ability to unsettle an audience and to deny the spectator a complacent mental standpoint from which to view the painting. Secondly, they are vividly racist. The critic grants that the painting is well done; his objection is to the subject matter - a black woman whom he regards as fat and ugly. Embedded within his words is the whole panoply of the ideology of colonialism which for the past two hundred years had imbued observable, physical differences among peoples with tremendous mental, moral and spiritual significance, and had designated black women as fundamentally different from, and inferior to, white women.

The way racial difference is understood today has its roots in a general cultural

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(Oct. 15, 1945), 10, 62; Parsons, "Codes for the Kitchen," 4, 54, 72-3; "Why I have a good mistress," Chatelaine (April, 1933), 61, 66.

<sup>27</sup> Mary Louise Pratt, "Scratches on the Face of the Country: or, What Mr. Barrow Saw in the Land of the Bushmen" in "Race", Writing, and Difference, ed. Henry Louis Gates Jr. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 139-40.

<sup>28</sup> Nancy Caraway, "Gender Tyranny: Coded Bodies, Femininity, and Black Womanhood," Segregated Sisterhood (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991), 75-116.

<sup>29</sup> R.B.F., "Canadian Group of Painters Exhibition at Gallery," Ottawa Journal 15 Feb., 1938.

movement in eighteenth century Europe, where the emergence of the idea that “all men are created equal” coincided with the conquering, enslavement, and destruction of people all over the world by those same Europeans. Some kind of reasoned doctrine was therefore necessary to rationalize these contradictory facts.<sup>30</sup> The study of natural history seemed to offer an objective way to order the staggering variety of plant, animal and human life that presented itself to the western intellect. But the ordering of this information had as much to do with domination as it had to do with knowledge.<sup>31</sup> Foucault’s insistence that power and knowledge are one system applies here:

In short, it is not the activity of the subject of knowledge that produces a corpus of knowledge, useful or resistant to power, but power-knowledge, the processes and struggles that traverse it and of which it is made up, that determines the forms and possible domains of knowledge.<sup>32</sup>

Natural history stressed the observation of physical differences between natural objects, including people, but the inferences that were drawn from these observed differences were not always rational. The separation of scientific and aesthetic understanding was not clearly delineated in the eighteenth century. Both “had to do with observation, judgement, ordering, naming,” and both developed at the same time.<sup>33</sup> Early naturalists consistently equated western notions of beauty with

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<sup>30</sup> Londa Schiebinger discusses the relationship between the classification of human beings along a hierarchical scale based on the observation of physical differences and the political struggles erupting during the eighteenth century in Nature’s Body: Gender in the Making of Modern Science (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993), 143-83.

<sup>31</sup> Paula Findlen, Possessing Nature (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 1-11.

<sup>32</sup> Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison, trans. Allen Sheridan (London: Penguin Books, 1975), 28.

<sup>33</sup> Anne-Marie Link explains the interweaving of aesthetics and natural history in “The Natural History of Woman; or The Beauty of Natural History,” unpublished manuscript, 1996. Link files, Edmonton.

physical and cultural superiority.<sup>34</sup> By 1931, the features that the Canadian art critic complained about in the figure of Hester had been stigmatized for almost two centuries by the western observer.

The critic's first objection is that Heward has painted a 'hideous negress,' a black woman whose skin color alone places her outside the western tradition of female beauty. The philosopher Edmund Burke wrote in 1756 that darkness always inspired terror and therefore could not be associated with the beautiful in art, but only with the opposite category - the sublime.<sup>35</sup> Beauty was reserved for middle and upper-class European women whose privileged position in terms of work allowed them the very white skin, barely tinged with pink that was the standard of a perfect complexion.<sup>36</sup>

Hester's mouth and eyes are a concern for the reviewer as well. He claims that she is "loose-lipped and learing," a criticism with roots that go all the way back to Carl Linnaeus who published the tenth edition of his landmark taxonomic study Systema Naturae in 1758. The work divided human beings into four types according to a number of traits including skin color, physical features and psychological makeup. The African's "black skin, black, curly hair, an apelike nose, and swollen lips" was aligned with a personality that was "phlegmatic, crafty, and careless; ruled by authority."<sup>37</sup> The extremely popular and influential writings of physiognomist

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<sup>34</sup> Schiebinger, Nature's Body, 126-134.

<sup>35</sup> Edmund Burke, A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful (London: A Robertson & Co., 1824), 256-266. Originally published in 1756.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 206-7. Also see Schiebinger, Nature's Body, 117-27, and Havelock Ellis, Studies in the Psychology of Sex Vol. II (New York: Random House, 1936), 136-55. (Originally published in 1910, F.A. Davis Co.)

<sup>37</sup> Hugh Honour, The Image of Blacks in Western Art Vol. IV (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 12.

Johann Caspar Lavater stated similar convictions. The fourth volume of his work included an etching of an African man about which he wrote: “the bowed aspect in the outline of the entire face, the breadth of the eyes; the flatness of the nose; especially the great swollen expansive, tough lips; removed from all fineness and grace”(fig. 59).<sup>38</sup> A hundred years later, a well-known American naturalist, Louis Agassiz, was still obsessing over these differences. Agassiz was a promoter of the theory called polygenesis which posited separate creations for each race. On his first encounter with African-Americans in 1850, he wrote a letter to his mother in which he expressed his less theoretical and more personal reaction to the appearance of black people, stressing the same facial features which so disturbed the twentieth century critic and the eighteenth century observers.

Nonetheless, it is impossible for me to repress the feeling that they are not of the same blood as us. In seeing their black faces with their thick lips and grimacing teeth, the wool on their head, their bent knees, their elongated hands, their large, curved nails, and especially the livid color of their palms, I could not take my eyes off their face in order to tell them to stay far away.<sup>39</sup>

Another of the critic’s complaints is that Hester is “fat,” and more explicitly, “with thighs like a prize fighter.” The twentieth century dawned with the idea well in place that all black women had generously-sized hips and breasts, and that those physical features signaled an enlarged and deviant sexuality. At the beginning of the

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<sup>38</sup> Honour, 16. For a more detailed sketch of Lavater’s ideas and their connection to art practices in the eighteenth century see Jose Lopez-Rey, Goya’s Caprichos: Beauty, Reason & Caricature Vol. 1 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), 57-65. Also see Mary Cowling, The Artist as Anthropologist (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 19.

<sup>39</sup> Agassiz to his mother, Rose Mayor Agassiz, December 1846 (Houghton Library, Harvard University), quoted in Brian Wallis, “Black Bodies, White Science,” American Art (Summer 1995), 42-43.



nineteenth century, with the arrival in England of a Hottentot woman known as the “Hottentot Venus,” the black female body took center stage in the discussion about the physical differences between the races (fig 60).<sup>40</sup> The “Hottentot Venus” was Sara Bartmann, a young black woman from South Africa whose broad hips and large buttocks made her a sensation with the London audiences who first saw her on display in Picadilly Circus in 1810. Large accumulations of fat induce the buttocks of some Hottentot women to protrude, a trait referred to as steatopygia. Bartmann spent the last months of her life in Paris where her general anatomy and particularly her genitalia, parts of which were also very large, were the subject of an intense scientific investigation by naturalists at the Jardin du Roi. After she died in 1815, naturalist Georges Cuvier dissected her body and presented her preserved genitalia to the Museum of Natural History.<sup>41</sup> As the century progressed, images of female Hottentot bodies were to repeatedly appear in medical discourses as anomalous forms of femininity, signifying a primitive, deviant sexuality (fig. 61).<sup>42</sup>

The Hottentot anatomy with all its attendant associations came to represent the look of black women in general in both science and art. In 1901, for instance, Picasso produced a version of Manet’s Olympia in which the prostitute is a black woman whose ample curves were quite different from that of the original Olympia, and call to mind the “Hottentot Venus” (fig. 62). The image underscores how the

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<sup>40</sup> A detailed account of Sara Bartmann and the public and academic interest in her can be found in Anne Fausto-Sterling, “Gender, Race, and Nation,” in Deviant Bodies, eds. Jennifer Terry and Jacqueline Urla (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 19-48.

<sup>41</sup> Stephen Jay Gould, “The Hottentot Venus,” The Flamingo’s Smile: Reflections in Natural History (New York: Norton & Company, 1985), 297.

<sup>42</sup> The nineteenth century mindset concerning the connection between the Hottentot anatomy and sexual deviation is analyzed in Sander Gilman, “Black Bodies, White Bodies,” in “Race.” Writing and Difference, ed. Henry Louis Gates Jr. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 223-261.

black/Hottentot female body became synonymous with deviant sexuality. In 1905, Havelock Ellis demonstrated that the confusion of scientific and aesthetic observing was still operating when he concocted what he believed to be a completely objective scale of female beauty in which the black woman (as represented by the Hottentot) occupied the lowest rung. He claimed that white women had genuinely large pelvises because they needed to give birth to highly evolved children with large heads. (Presumably, Hottentot women gave birth to children with smaller heads.) The Hottentot's steatopygia were fatty imitations of white women's pelvises, nature's way of making her appear beautiful, and were markers of her primitive state.<sup>43</sup>

Another factor which may have influenced the critic's characterization of Hester as fat are the figure's breasts. They are much different than the breasts of classical nudes such as the Venus de Medici, succinctly described by an eighteenth century viewer as "small, distinct and delicate to the highest degree" (fig. 44).<sup>44</sup> In a drawing from a gynecological text published in 1936, just a year prior to the painting of Hester, breast shapes among women are compared (fig. 63). The second breast in the illustration is characterized as beautiful, whereas the fourth is described as "elongated" and equated with "the udder of a goat." This shape is said to be found primarily in Africans.<sup>45</sup> Schiebinger points out that the standards for judging the beauty of the breast had been around for a long time: "Within Europe, sagging breasts

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<sup>43</sup> Ellis, 165.

<sup>44</sup> Joseph Spence, Polymetis (London: 1747). Quoted in Francis Haskell and Nicholas Penny, Taste and the Antique (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 325.

<sup>45</sup> Hermann Ploss, Max Bartels, and Paul Bartels, Woman, An Historical Gynecological and Anthropological Compendium Vol. 1 (St. Louis: C.V. Mosby Company, 1936), 399. Quoted in Schiebinger, Nature's Body, 65.

signified witchcraft, old age, and females fallen from grace; outside Europe, they signified savagery and cannibalism.”<sup>46</sup> Hester’s breasts resemble the fourth illustration, and the hips and buttocks are slightly splayed from sitting. With the stereotypes that were in place, it did not take a great deal to convince the reviewer that Hester was “hideous” and “fat.”

Although in medical and scientific images the black woman signified a primitive and ugly form of femininity, this fact by no means precluded her from being represented in art as an object of sexual desire, as Picasso’s drawing implies. It was the idea of primitiveness that attracted. In Canadian art in the nineteen-thirties, eroticized black female nudes in which these stereotypes were inscribed were not uncommon. But before an understanding of the issues concerning the representation of the black female nude can be reached, a broader understanding of problems of representing the female nude in general in Canada needs to be examined.

The white female nude was a controversial subject in Canadian art circles during the nineteen-thirties and on the very margins of respectability. A number of times white nudes were removed from exhibitions. Among the most well-publicized removals were: Edwin Holgate’s Nude, 1930, removed from the 1930 Group of Seven show; Bertram Brooker’s Figures in a Landscape, 1931, removed from the 1931 Ontario Society of Artists show; and Lilius Torrence Newton’s Nude in the Studio, 1933, removed from the 1933 Canadian Group of Painters show (fig. 64 - 66). Not all nudes were deemed unsuitable, however, and what made the difference is outlined by Donald Buchanan in his 1935 article for The Canadian Forum, “Naked Ladies.”

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<sup>46</sup> Schiebinger, Nature’s Body, 161.

Sentimental figures, ones that seem symbolical or of purely academic study, can be accepted. Naked women are also wholesome if they have the great outdoors as a canopy. But be once disarming and natural and simply paint a model naked in a studio, let the figure be not veiled in a wistful aurora, or let her be not poised alone in a wilderness of rocks and distant forests, but be standing solid and fleshy, like a Renoir maid-servant, and then taboo - you are out and in the basement.<sup>47</sup>

Buchanan is stating that it is the expression of a solid, everyday reality in these paintings that causes them to fall outside the bounds of convention. He goes on to point out that the particular problem with Newton's Nude in the Studio was the figure's wearing of green slippers, which portrayed her as a "naked lady, not a nude."<sup>48</sup> An insistence on the close adherence to classical ways of representing the female body, as I discussed in the previous chapter, by cloaking it in myth and allegorical meaning, declaring innocence through an implied narrative, or drawing a clear parallel between woman and nature, was the Canadian art establishment's means of erecting a bulwark against pornography, upon which these images were felt to encroach. The white female nude had to be contained within certain strict criteria so that art and pornography could remain separate.

The black female nude, on the other hand, was bound by no such restrictions. Charmaine Nelson takes up the question of the representation of the black female body in her essay "Coloured Nude: Fetishization, Disguise, Dichotomy," in which she analyzes the 1932 painting Coloured Nude by Toronto artist Dorothy Stevens (fig. 67).<sup>49</sup> Nelson demonstrates how the painting constructs the black figure as possessing

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<sup>47</sup> Donald W. Buchanan, "Naked Ladies," The Canadian Forum 15 (April 1935): 273-4.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Charmaine Nelson, "Coloured Nude: Fetishization, Disguise, Dichotomy," Racar XXII 1-2 (1995): 97-107.

a powerful sexuality, uncontained by either nature or civilization which is fundamentally different from the traditionally innocent and contained sexuality of the white nude. Understood in Kant's terms, this construction shifts Coloured Nude outside the bounds of the beautiful and situates it in the category of the sublime which is "characterized by the unbound, uncontrolled and limitless nature of the represented subject."<sup>50</sup> Such a categorization permitted the representation in art of what would otherwise be judged obscene.

Accordingly, the represented black female body stands at the border between art and pornography, breaching the arbitrary boundaries of socio-sexual propriety. Within colonial discourse, blackness has afforded artists the license to invest an overdetermined sexuality in the represented body, what is offensive or pornographic for the white body, being deemed natural and essential to the black.<sup>51</sup>

The Stevens' image was completely acceptable to the same audience that removed Brooker's, Holgate's and Newton's nudes from public display. Black women were allowed to be represented with a powerful sexuality, whereas "the paintings of white women were cautiously monitored, [in] a policing of the arbitrary divide between art and pornography to protect idealized white womanhood."<sup>52</sup>

Nelson's analysis of Stevens' Coloured Nude testifies to the figure's consonance with the written and visual discourse concerning black women in the early decades of the century: in other words, the norm. Hester shares some of the pictorial elements that Nelson claims indicate a powerful and sublime sexuality of the figure in Coloured Nude. The primary one is the portrayal of the black body itself,

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 100.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 99.

which, as a “continuation of the western colonial legacy,” signifies a perverse sexuality.<sup>53</sup> Two other similarities are a pose that consciously permits the viewer’s gaze, and the separation of figure from ground. But does this mean that Heward’s image fits within the norm? The critic’s reaction to the work indicates that it does not. Stevens’ painting was hailed as “a brilliant thing, infinitely pleasing in color synthesis and composition.”<sup>54</sup> Heward’s work, however, was denounced. In fact, the figure of Hester is too *ordinary* to be within the norm. The difference between the ordinary and the normal is illuminated by Mary Russo who relates the ordinary to what is encountered in everyday life and the normal to “the standard.” The ordinary, she writes, “would be heterogeneous, strange, polychromatic, ragged, conflictual, incomplete, in motion and at risk.”<sup>55</sup> Steven’s Coloured Nude was a “standard” image of a nude black woman in that it inscribed many of the tropes of racial and gender difference. Heward’s Hester was an “ordinary” image in its insistence on the particularity of this woman.

In Hester, the signs that would allow the viewer a simple, straightforward reading along standard formulations of racial and sexual difference are presented discordantly. If examined carefully, they can be seen to exhibit complex and contradictory information. In the first place, Hester cannot be categorized as either beautiful or ugly. The features with which other artists and theorists have stigmatized black women as ugly are present - the generous lips, the heavy-looking thighs, and the

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 98.

<sup>54</sup> Pearl McCarthy, “Royal Academy Exhibition is Broadly Representative,” Toronto Globe and Mail (4 November 1932), 3. Quoted in Nelson, 99.

<sup>55</sup> Mary Russo, The Female Grotesque (New York: Routledge, 1994), vii.

black skin; but other features like the fine hands with the long, tapering fingers, the glowing skin and the poignant expression unequivocally accent physical and psychological beauty. Neither does the figure have the over-determined sexuality of the Stevens' nude. While slim, the body is not smooth and flexible. Rather, it is a body with pointy shoulders, knobby knees, a narrow chest, and folds in its midriff which are more indicative of slack muscle tone than extra fat. The breasts are not eroticized - nothing about them invites the imaginary touch of the spectator. They rest limply on the ribs, with small, unobtrusive nipples. Hester is not the "balanced, prosperous and confident body" of Kenneth Clark's classical nude.<sup>56</sup> On the other hand, neither does the figure's appearance signal the degenerate black female body of the medical/anthropological texts.

The figure's gaze is equivocal as well. Averted and downcast, Hester does not encounter viewers in the way that The Bather does. Heward allows them to examine the body without challenge or engagement by the figure, but she has painted the expression in a way that denies the complicity implied in Coloured Nude. Facial expression can be an important clue to how viewers should relate to the figure in front of them. Liam Hudson writes that "it is by looking at the other's face that we decide whether we are dealing with someone whom we can subsume to our own needs; or who, at the other extreme, is intent on subsuming us to theirs."<sup>57</sup> Although Hester's face is turned away, giving tacit permission for her body to be looked at, her expression of suffering and resignation acts as a foil to viewers. Recognized as

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<sup>56</sup> Kenneth Clark, The Nude: A Study of Ideal Art (London: John Murray, 1956), 1.

<sup>57</sup> Liam Hudson, Bodies of Knowledge (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1982), 13.

painfully self-consciousness and vulnerable, she cannot be readily consumed. In this way, she both submits to and refuses the gaze, a dissonance that creates a disturbing tension.

The hands laid protectively across the pubic area echo the vulnerability that is expressed in the figure's face. Possibly, the traditional Venus Pudica pose is a strategy employed by Heward to make the figure suitable for exhibition in Canada, where a fully exposed nude like Lilius Torrence Newton's was unacceptable. But the vulnerability in this figure is too raw and disturbing to elicit pleasure. In combination with the facial expression the pose cannot be interpreted as representing the charming modesty of the Venus Pudica figures. It seems to fit well Clark's description of the "huddled and defenceless body" of the naked soul, and in Russo's terms, it suggests the brutal exposure of the "ordinary" body at risk.

The separation between figure and background also presents conflicting information. The figure is not portrayed as beyond the natural, but as incongruous with it. Heward's struggle to find the appropriate setting for her black nudes can be ascertained by comparing the four works. The earliest one, Dark Girl (1935), depicts the figure against a backdrop of lush green leaves. These are Canadian sumach, as a coexisting sketch makes clear, but they imply a tropical setting.<sup>58</sup> Her next image, Negress with Sunflowers (1936), again has a background with large flowers and leaves which at first glance suggests the jungle. Closer inspection, however, reveals a field of wheat in the distance, something typically Canadian. It was customary for

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<sup>58</sup> Luckyj, Expressions, 65.



Heward to place her figures in a landscape that was somehow meaningful to their lives or characters, as she did in both Rollande and The Bather. With the ambiguous settings of her black nudes, Heward may have been struggling with the inconsistency of the trope of the primitive woman in nature and the modern reality of black women in Canada.

The notion of the primitive pervaded the early twentieth century modern art movement in which Heward was so involved. Hal Foster states in “The ‘Primitive’ Unconscious of Modern Art” that “historically the primitive is articulated by the West in deprivative or supplemental terms: as a spectacle of savagery or as a state of grace, as a socius without writing or the Word, without history or cultural complexity; or as a site of originary unity, symbolic plenitude, natural vitality.”<sup>59</sup> In the medical/anthropological studies, the black woman exemplifies the uncivilized mind, the degenerate body and the uncontrolled, perverse sexuality of non-western races - the deprivative side of Foster’s dichotomy. These attitudes are reinforced in works such as Picasso’s drawing and Nelson’s painting. There did exist, however, a whole set of artistic output in which the bodies of non-western women were used to express opposing sentiments about the primitive. Prominent artists such as Gauguin and Matisse represented the primitive as the healthy, natural antithesis to an over-civilized, inauthentic and corrupt European way of life. The bodies of black women

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<sup>59</sup> Hal Foster, “The ‘Primitive’ Unconscious of Modern Art,” Art in Modern Culture, ed. Francis Frascina and Jonathan Harris (London: Phaidon Press, 1992), 199-209.

were no less eroticized and no less alien in these works, but they portrayed a longed-for Edenic existence rather than a degenerate state of being.<sup>60</sup>

So far in this essay, we have been examining Hester in comparison with cultural products that stress the deprivative side of the dichotomy. Heward's world, however, was one permeated with both attitudes toward the primitive. She was in Paris in 1925, the same year that Josephine Baker and the Revue Negre were causing tremendous excitement there. According to Phyllis Rose, "Baker's body should be understood as one of many African 'objects' which suddenly seemed beautiful to a Parisian avant-garde whose enthusiasm for African art had been developing for two decades."<sup>61</sup> Baker and her dance were interpreted in the reviews according to both of the articulations that Foster summarizes, depending on the attitude of the reviewer. "In the short pas de deux of the savages, which came as the finale of the Revue Negre, there was a wild splendor and magnificent animality," said André Levinson, well-known writer and dance critic.<sup>62</sup> But Robert de Flers, reviewer for Le Figaro, the most important Paris daily, critiqued it in more negative terms, saying the show was "lamentable transatlantic exhibitionism which makes us revert to the ape in less time than it took us to descend from it."<sup>63</sup>

Moreover, the supplemental side of the dichotomy was perfectly exemplified in a book that Heward had in her personal library, titled The Adventures of a Black

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<sup>60</sup> Gill Perry presents an in depth and detailed consideration of the influence of the idea of the primitive on modern art and its connection to the discourses of colonialism in "Primitivism and the Modern," Primitivism, Cubism, Abstraction: The Early Twentieth Century, eds. Charles Harrison, Francis Frascina and Gill Perry (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 3-85.

<sup>61</sup> Phyllis Rose, Jazz Cleopatra (New York: Doubleday, 1989), 40.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 31 citing André Levinson, "The Negro Dance," 1925.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 32 citing Robert de Flers, 1925.

Girl in Her Search for God. George Bernard Shaw represented the second of Foster's articulations by using his character to explore how a healthy, guileless, intelligence (embodied in the naked, dark-skinned female body) might understand the contradictory images of God which he claimed the Bible presented. The book was illustrated with engravings by John Farleigh showing the naked girl at various stages of her quest. One of the earlier images depicts her reclining in the grass, surrounded by a lion, a gazelle, two rabbits and a snake, all harmoniously occupying the same space: the perfect icon of the pure, healthy and innocent primitive woman at one with benevolent nature (fig 68). Here the naked black woman does not represent perversity, but the very epitome of well-being in mind and body, unsullied by the pollution of western civilization.

As I have demonstrated in the previous chapters, Heward's representations of women, black or white, outdoors or indoors, are never so banal as to fall within either of Foster's articulations. Although she could not have helped but be influenced by the ideas of the primitive that were so prevalent and important in the art world of her time, the lack of harmony between her black subjects and their settings disorders the classification of the black woman as a naturally primitive being in either the sense of degeneracy or the sense of purity.

In the nude that Heward painted after Hester, she grappled with the problem in a different way. Girl in the Window (1941), places the figure squarely in an urban Canadian setting. She is partially clothed and sits at a window which looks out on

Montreal's Ste. Famille Street.<sup>64</sup> The theme of sadness and resignation is present in three of the four works, (Negress with Sunflowers appears to have a more conventional expression), but in this final image the mystery seems to some extent to be solved: poverty in an urban setting is surely one cause of the despondency. The power of Hester as an image resides with Heward's refusal to solve the mystery of the figure's expression in such a glib way. The viewer must come back to the figure itself - her body, her pose and her surroundings - to work out the problem. The background is indubitably Canadian: the colors and the expansive vista are similar to Heward's autumn landscapes (fig 69). The figure leans against the rough, pointy bark of a tree, a harsh setting for bare skin. It is not the season nor the place for woman to be read as an intrinsic part of the natural realm - the naked figure cannot be read as comfortably existing there and the image accentuates the discomfort of exposed flesh in a rough, hostile environment. Nor does the incongruity imply anything about a perverse or unbound sexuality. Hester appears lost, lonely and alien in such a forbidding setting. The body is unsheltered, unprotected, forsaken. The background locates her outside, not just in literal terms but symbolically as well. Aesthetic theories of beauty that set the boundaries of the classical white nude raised her to the status of a cultural object and lent her an aura of self-containment that sheltered her, to some extent, from the harshest impact of the male gaze.<sup>65</sup> In the same European tradition, the black nude needed no protection from the viewer's scrutiny because it was in her nature to be a

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<sup>64</sup> Luckyj, Expressions, 83.

<sup>65</sup> For an exploration of the quality of the White nude's self-containment as both a spiritual innocence in the face of physical violation and a narcissistic preoccupation with the self, see Joy S. Kasson, Marble Queens and Captives (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 61-62.

spectacle.<sup>66</sup> Hester is outside both of those designations. Her body is unsheltered by the combined barriers of perfection and innocence established for the white nude, but she does not cooperate with her display either. The close-up position of spectators in relationship to the figure, which cuts the figure off at the knees, is awkward and intrusive and along with the patently miserable expression on her face prompts viewers to become conscious of themselves as viewers and the position of power they hold.

Foucault states that “the body ...is directly involved in a political field; power relations have an immediate hold upon it; they invest it, mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs.”<sup>67</sup> Heward shared a particular political field with her model. Both lived in Canada where issues of race and class had repercussions in political, economic and cultural life. Heward was a middle-class, white, professional woman looking at a poor, black woman who was most likely either unemployed or working as a domestic servant. But Hester is represented in a way that refuses to allow an unexamined, untroubled consumption of her as either a sublime or a beautiful object. Her personhood is a palpable presence in both its material substance and its ideological construction. Heward’s struggle to communicate the reality of the person before her resulted in an image that stripped away complacency. The power relations in Stevens’ Coloured Nude are disguised, naturalized, made palatable to its audience by offering a position from where the

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<sup>66</sup> Nelson, 105. “Since Black women were positioned within colonial discourse as the source of sexual pathology, it was not improper for the western artist to portray the undisguised Black female body as soliciting the sexual gaze of the male viewer.”

<sup>67</sup> Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish, trans. Allen Sheridan (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1977), 25.

viewer can inspect the dark-skinned woman with the distanced, rational, scientific/aesthetic scrutiny of western domination; the power relations in Hester are starkly undisguised and reflected back to the audience, where they insist on consciousness. No wonder the critic denounced it.

## Conclusion

Prudence Heward was affected by both the modern world and modernism in art. She was born, educated and took up painting within the years that, according to Janet Wolff, encompassed “the major transformations of social and philosophical thought, aesthetic codes and practices, and scientific theory which have constituted our modern consciousness.”<sup>1</sup> Because the experience of the modern world was different for women than it was for men, the expression of that experience for women artists was necessarily different as well. In this thesis I have demonstrated that Prudence Heward employed a combination of modern and traditional techniques to depict a variety of North American women’s experiences of the modern world.

Until recently, women have been absent from the modernist canon, marginalized by the ruling themes of masculine sexuality, the anonymity of the public spaces of the urban domain, and the “psychology of despair” that took hold after the First World War.<sup>2</sup> As Pollock demonstrated in her analysis of the work of Mary Cassatt and Berthe Morisot, however, women artists employed the techniques of

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<sup>1</sup> Janet Wolff places ‘early modernism’ between the years 1890 and 1930 in “Feminism and Modernism,” *Feminine Sentences* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1990), 54.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

modernism just as their male counterparts did to express their own experience of the modern world.<sup>3</sup> The study of the work that women produced in a modernist style therefore requires the incorporation of broader themes into the established definition of modernism, and those themes must include the revolutionary social and political alteration that took place in the lives of most western European and North American women during the early decades of the century, as well as the new trends in artistic production that accompanied the alteration.

One of the most fundamental and encompassing social changes was the process that shifted women from chattels without individual social agency, dependent on their male relatives for all political power, to fully enfranchised citizens who enjoyed, at least in principle, the same rights and freedoms as male citizens. Such a transformation was laden with conflict and ambiguity for old images and attitudes died hard and opportunities changed at different rates for women in differing social, religious, economic and political situations. In her portraits, Heward represented exactly that modern predicament - the struggle of individual women, differently located in the social spectrum, to cope with the conflicting demands and opportunities, new and old, with which the modern world presented them. The realization of themselves as agents was (and is) central to the struggle of women in the twentieth century, and was barely begun when Heward painted Rollande. Parker and Pollock state that “both in fantasy and language, woman as woman is not present,

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<sup>3</sup> Griselda Pollock, “Modernity and the Spaces of Femininity,” Vision and Difference (London: Routledge, 1988), 50-90.



except as the cipher of male dominance, the scene of male fantasy.”<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, Heward did not paint her figures as objects of a masculine-centered outlook. Instead she painted them as subjects of their own lives, as active participants in their societies, and as individuals who engaged with their circumstances in distinctive ways.

In 1929, at the end of her book A Room of One's Own, Virginia Woolf harangues (with tongue in cheek) a room full of arts-club women about their lack of meaningful action in the world.

Young women...you are, in my opinion, disgracefully ignorant. You have never made a discovery of any sort of importance. You have never shaken an empire or led an army into battle. The plays of Shakespeare are not by you, and you have never introduced a barbarous race to the blessings of civilization. What is your excuse? It is all very well for you to say, pointing to the streets and squares and forests of the globe swarming with black and white and coffee-coloured inhabitants, all busily engaged in traffic and enterprise and love-making, we have had other work on our hands...There is truth in what you say - I will not deny it. But at the same time may I remind you that there have been at least two colleges for women in existence in England since the year 1866; that after the year 1880 a married woman was allowed by law to possess her own property; and that in 1919 - which is a whole nine years ago - she was given a vote? May I also remind you that most of the professions have been open to you for close on ten years now? When you reflect upon these immense privileges and the length of time during which they have been enjoyed, and the fact that there must be at this moment some two thousand women capable of earning over five hundred a year in one way or another, you will agree that the excuse of lack of opportunity, training, encouragement, leisure and money no longer holds good.<sup>5</sup>

Woolf's characterization of the threshold where European and North

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<sup>4</sup> Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock, Old Mistresses (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), 132.

<sup>5</sup> Virginia Woolf, A Room of One's Own (London: Hogarth Press, 1929), 168-70.

American women were poised in 1929 is the literary equivalent of the sense of potential energy communicated in Heward's portraits, where the figures exist in a state of tension with the cultural constructions that had previously defined and constrained them. Something is about to give way in these images. Their energy impends. It is that sense of impending change which makes them compelling. It is also what marks them as significant statements about women in the modern world.

Heward's work also speaks to the problem of representing women within a tradition that defended rigid standards for the portrayal of the female body. The early modern art movement in Canada produced images of women that were often a site of social uneasiness. These images were recurrently denied public exhibition, or selected for display and then rejected at the last moment because of concerns for audience sensibilities, receiving a substantial amount of publicity in the process. Heward's paintings, though never removed from exhibition, provoked controversy and antagonism. The consideration of them kindles broader questions about just what the standards governing the depiction of the female body were, how they were interpreted by various individuals and institutions, and the struggle of twentieth century Canadian artists to give expression to incompatible modes of representation.

The three paintings singled out in the previous chapters, Rollande, The Bather and Hester, indicate Heward's key approaches to the problem of representing agency and particularity. She chose the female figure as her primary mode of expression. The figures she painted were from a variety of social classes, races and cultures. She situated those figures in surroundings that had particular social and art-historical meanings. Rollande, for instance, was posed in front of fields and farm house on the

Île d'Orléans, designating her as the well established icon of the habitant woman in Canadian agrarian ideology and painting. The Bather, seated by the waterside as so many bathers in the history of art had been before her, was placed within a clearly defined traditional genre that had extolled female beauty as graceful, modest and passive since antiquity. Hester was situated in the cold, Canadian wilderness familiar to audiences from the hegemonic artistic production of the Group of Seven that posited a uniform Canadian identity symbolized by the wild, rugged northern landscape. But Heward juxtaposed the conventional settings with figures whose gaze, pose, and body-shape were anything but conventional. Finally, she painted these significantly placed, odd-looking figures in a style that blended the academic realism of traditional representation with modernist techniques such as unnatural color, flattened space and strong simplification of form. In this way Heward produced images which were subtly and disturbingly askew. The figures may have been placed in settings that were representative of a type, but the representations as a whole always worked against the incorporation of the figure into the cliché and asserted its particularity against the categories which were presented to contain it. Each figure exhibits its own response to its individual social location. On the whole, the figures express a vision of 'woman' not as a monolithic human category, but as a pluralistic group where the individual members are confronted with a set of distinctive obstacles to overcome and negotiate those obstacles in their own diverse ways.



Figure 1: Prudence Heward, Rollande, 1929, oil on canvas.



Figure 2: Prudence Heward, The Bather, oil on canvas, 1930.



Figure 3: Prudence Heward, Hester, oil on canvas, 1937.



Figure 4: William Brymner, The Vaughan Sisters, oil on canvas, 1910.



Figure 5: Prudence Heward, Sisters of Rural Quebec, oil on canvas, 1930.





Figure 6: Thomas Gainsborough, Mr. And Mrs. Robert Andrews, oil on canvas, 1750.

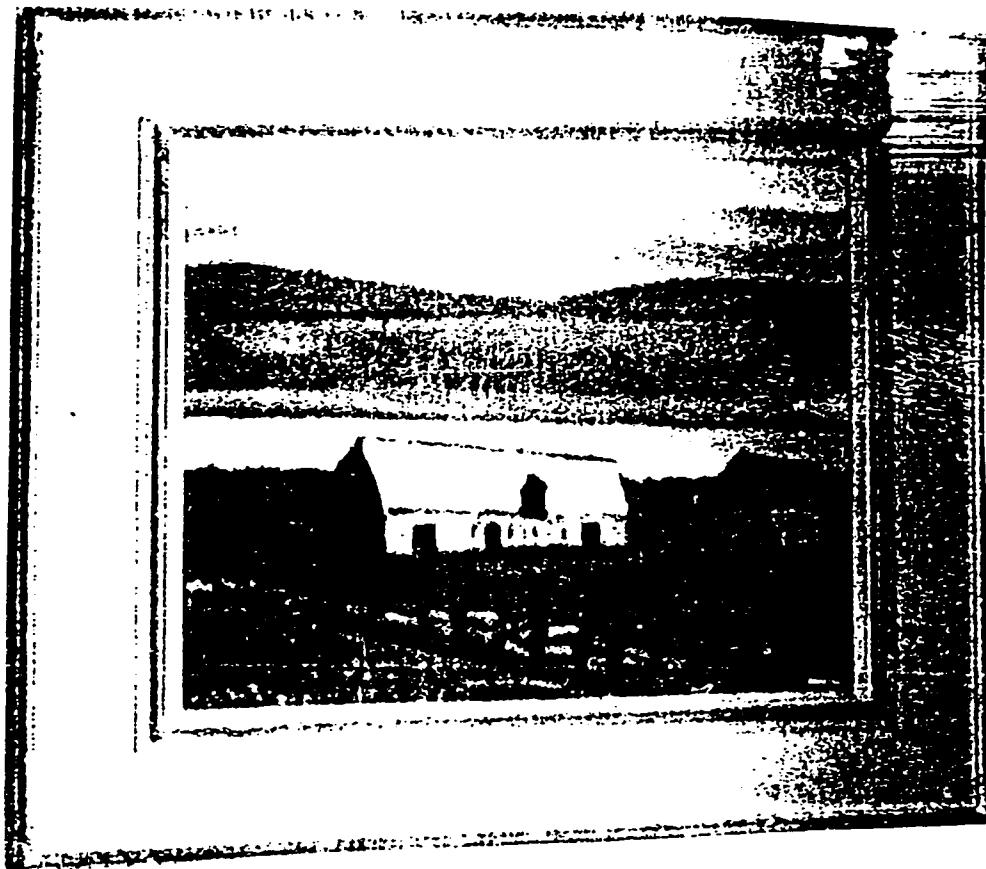


Figure 7: Prudence Heward, Sketch for the Background of Rollande, oil on canvas, 1929.



Figure 8: Horatio Walker, The Farmer's Wife. Reproduced in Roy, 72.



Figure 9: Horatio Walker, Milk-Woman. Reproduced in Roy, 88.



Figure 10: Horatio Walker, Girl with Turkeys. Reproduced in Roy, 134.



Figure 11: Wayside Shrine at Saint-Laurent. Reproduced in Roy, 256.



Figure 12: Horatio Walker, Killing Pigs. Reproduced in Roy, 318.



Figure 13: Horatio Walker, By the Fireside. Reproduced in Roy, 376.





Figure 14: Horatio Walker, The Bake Oven. Reproduced in Roy, 380.



Figure 15: Horatio Walker, Milking Early Morn. Reproduced in Roy, 384.



Figure 16: Horatio Walker, Potato Gatherers. Reproduced in Roy, 392.

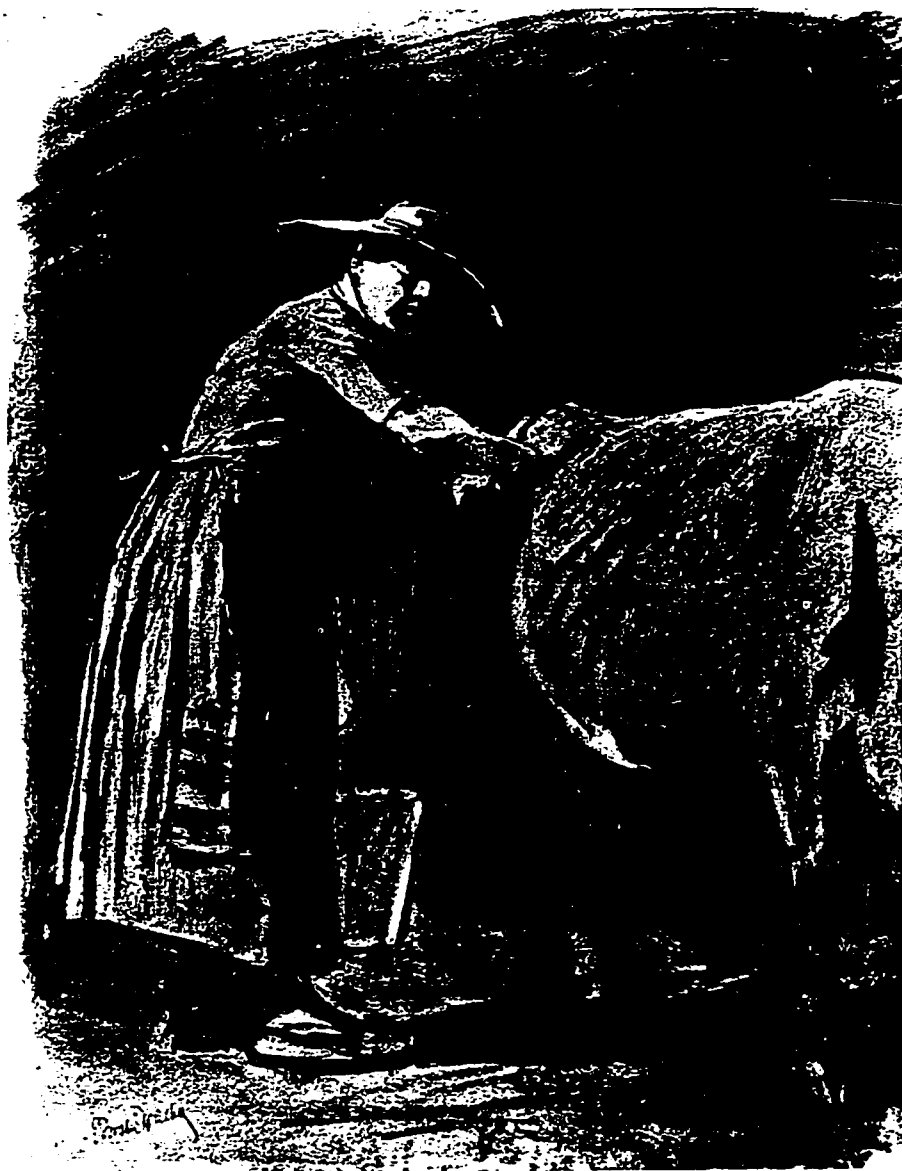


Figure 17: Horatio Walker, Before Milking. Reproduced in Roy, 468.



Figure 18: Tamara de Lempicke, La Duchesse de la Salle, 1926.



Figure 19: Romaine Brooks, Self Portrait, oil on canvas, 1923.



Figure 20: Romaine Brooks, Peter (A Young English Girl), oil on canvas, 1924.



Figure 21: Romaine Brooks, Una, Lady Troubridge, oil on canvas, 1924.





Figure 22: Prudence Heward, Girl on a Hill, oil on canvas, 1928.



Figure 23: Prudence Heward, Emigrants, oil on canvas, 1928.



Figure 24: Prudence Heward, Eleanor, oil on canvas, 1924.



Figure 25: Prudence Heward, Miss Lockerby, oil on canvas, 1924.



Figure 26: Jacques-Louis David, Mars Disarmed by Venus and the Three Graces, oil on canvas, 1824.



Figure 27: Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, Jupiter and Thetis, oil on canvas, 1811.



Figure 28: Prudence Heward, At the Café, oil on canvas, undated.



Figure 29: Honoré-Victorin Daumier, The Bathers, oil on wood, 1848.





Figure 30: Charles Meissonier, Summer: Bathers at Carriè-sous-Poissy, oil on canvas, 1888.



Figure 31: Léon-Augustin Lhermitte, Bathers at Mont-Saint-Pere, 1884.



Figure 32: Georges Seurat, The Bathers at Asnières, oil on canvas, 1884.



Figure 33: Gravelot & Cochin, Nature, 1768. Engraving from Almanach Iconologique, 1774.



Figure 34: His nurse is the earth. From Michael Maier, *Atalanta fugiens*, 1671.



Figure 35: Jean-Honoré Fragonard, Bathers, oil on canvas, 1765.



Figure 36: Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Bathers, oil on canvas, 1887.



Figure 37: Raphaël Collin, Summer, oil on canvas, 1884.





Figure 38: Prudence Heward, Girl Under a Tree, oil on canvas, 1931

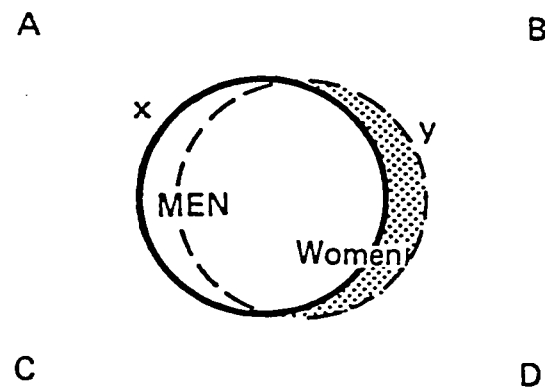


Figure 39: Edwin Ardener, Diagram Illustrating the Concept of the Feminine Wild Zone. From Perceiving Women, p. 23.

## An Artist Draws His Impressions of "Expressionist" Art!



Figure 40: An Artist Draws His Impression of Expressionist Art, Toronto Telegram 25 Nov., 1993.

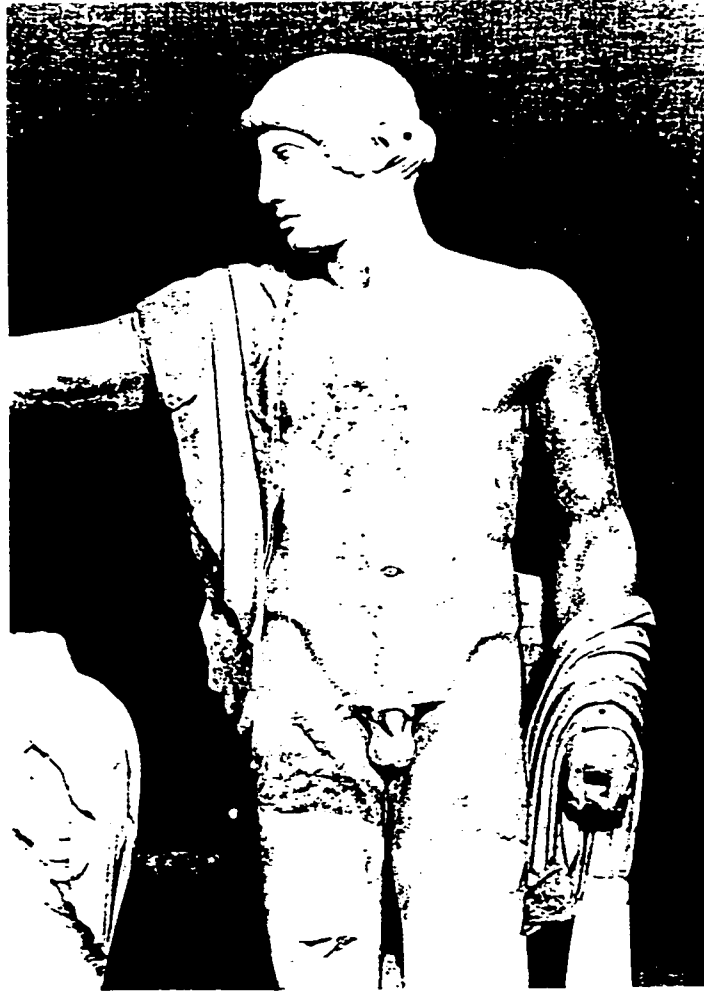


Figure 41: Apollo (portion), from the west pediment of the Temple of Zeus at Olympia, marble, c. 460 BCE



Figure 42: Praxiteles, Knidian Aphrodite, (Roman copy) marble, c. 300 BCE.



Figure 43: Praxiteles, Hermes (Roman copy) marble, c. 300 BCE.



Figure 44: Capitoline Venus (Roman copy) marble, c. 120 BCE.



Figure 45: Venus de' Medici (Roman copy) marble, Hellenistic.





Figure 46: Limbourg Brothers, Fall of Man and Expulsion. From the Tres Riches Heures du Duc de Berry, 1416.



Figure 47: Hieronymus Bosch, Adam and Eve, oil on panel, c. 1500.



Figure 48: Jan and Hubert van Eyck, Adam and Eve, oil on panel, 1432.



Figure 49: Sandro Botticelli, The Birth of Venus, oil on panel, 1480.



Figure 50: Photograph of Loretta Young. From Vogue Magazine (American) 1930.



Figure 51: Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, Venus Anadyomene, oil on canvas, 1848.



Figure 52: Randolph S. Hewton, Sleeping Woman, oil on canvas, 1929.

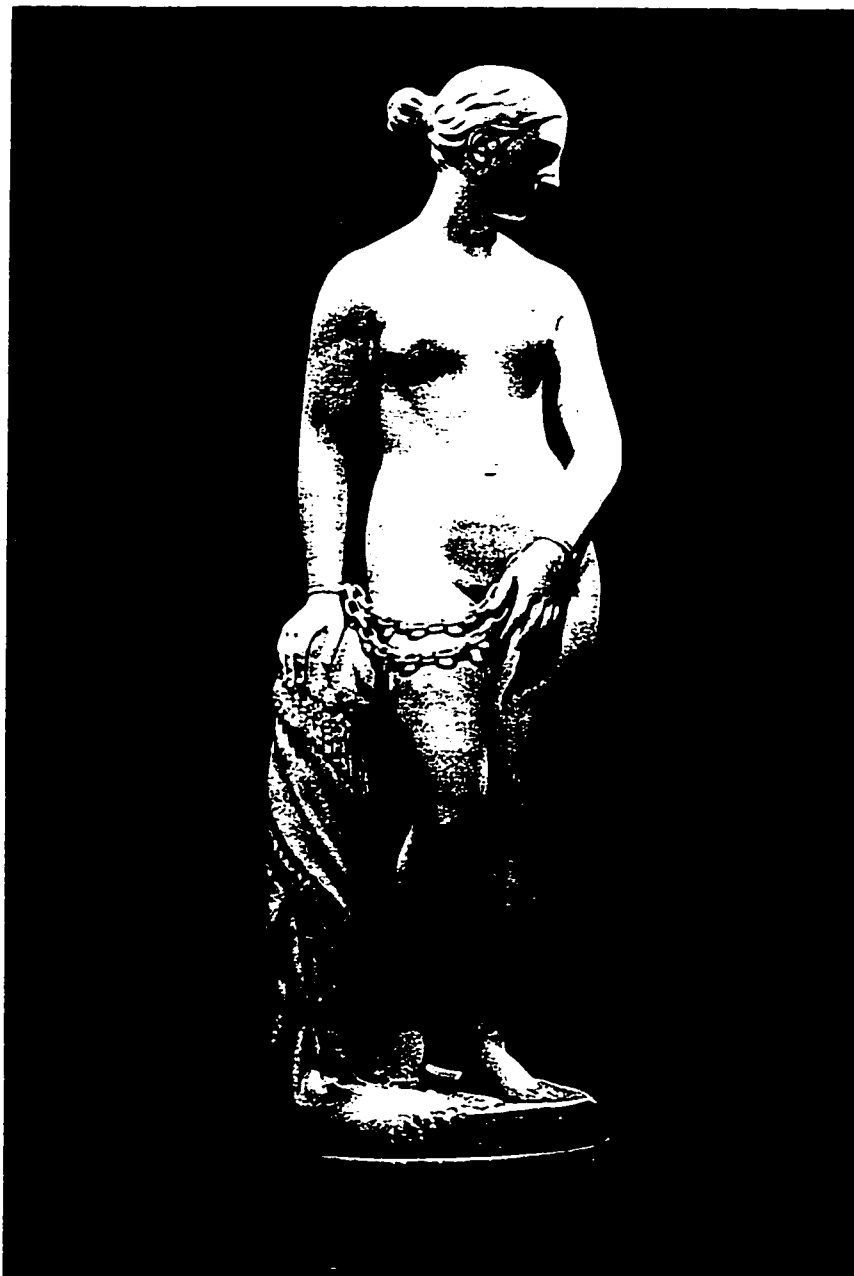


Figure 53 Hiram Powers, The Greek Slave, marble, 1844.





Figure 54: Edouard Manet, Olympia, oil on canvas, 1863.



Figure 55: Titian, Venus of Urbino, oil on panel, 1538.



Figure 56: Prudence Heward, Dark Girl, oil on canvas, 1935.



Figure 57: Prudence Heward, Negress with Sunflowers, oil on canvas, 1936.



Figure 58: Prudence Heward, Girl in the Window, oil on canvas, 1941.



Figure 59: Edwin Holgate, Nude, oil on canvas, 1930.



Figure 60: Lilius Torrance Newton, Nude in a Studio, oil on canvas, undated.



Figure 61: Bertram Brooker, Figures in a Landscape, oil on canvas, 1930.





Figure 62: Heinrich Lips, Illustration for Johann Caspar Lavater, 1775, etching.

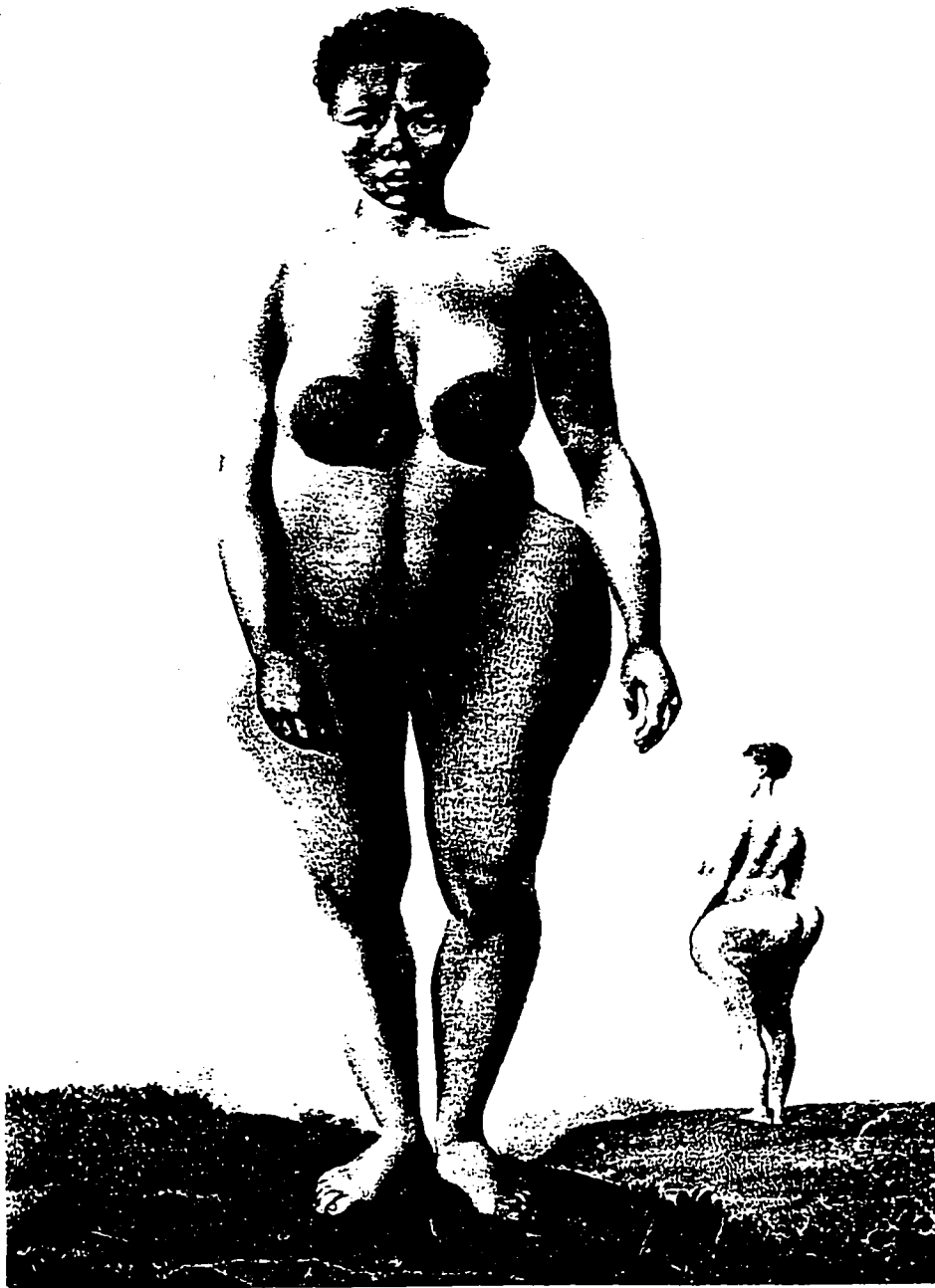


Figure 63: Leon de Wailly, Frontal view of Saartjie Baartman, the “Hottentot Venus,” watercolor on vellum, 1815.



Figure 64: The Hottentot Buttocks (fig. B & C) and An Ethiopian Prostitute (fig. A) from Lombroso and Ferrero La donna delinquente, pl. 2, 1893.

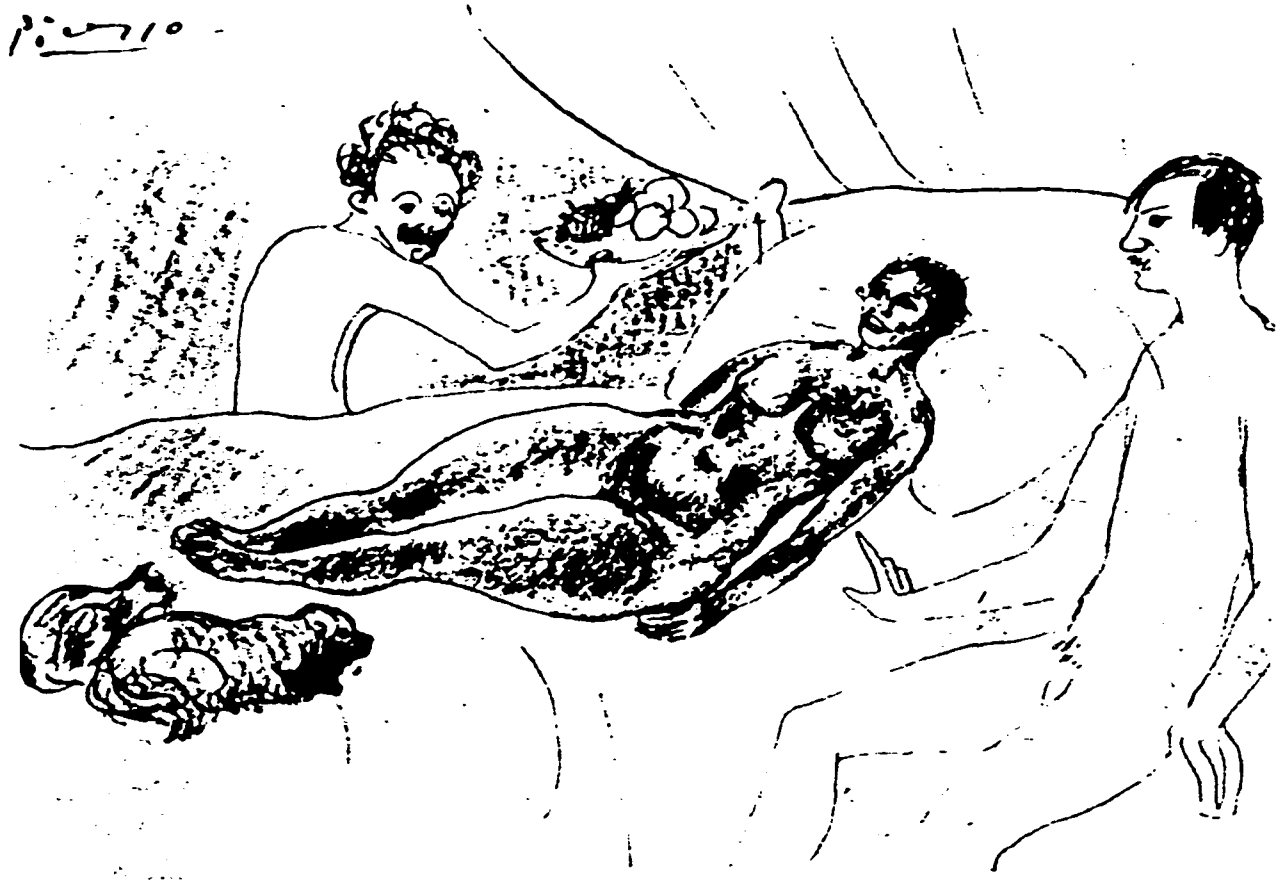


Figure 65: Pablo Picasso, Olympia, drawing, 1901.

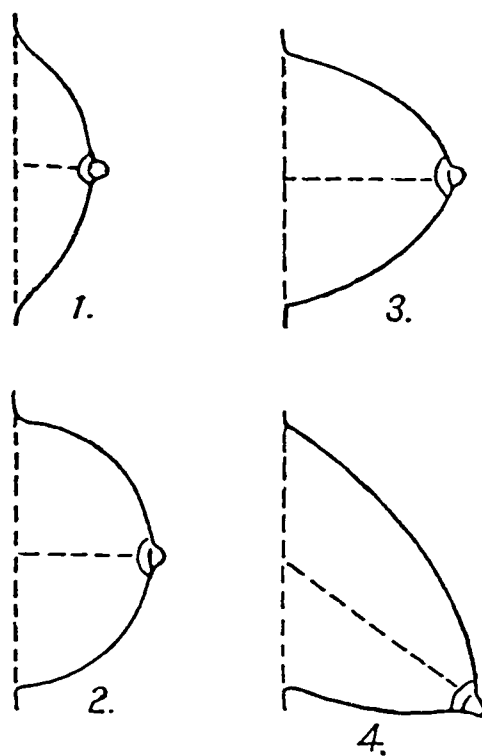


Figure 66: "Breast shapes among humans," from Hermann Ploss, Max Bartels, and Paul Bartels's Woman: An Historical Gynecological and Anthropological compendium, vol. 1, page 399.



Figure 67: Dorothy Stevens, Coloured Nude, oil on canvas, 1932.



Figure 68: John Farleigh, untitled, engraving from George Bernard Shaw's The Adventures of a Black Girl in Her Search for God, p. 18, 1932.



Figure 69: Prudence Heward, The North River, Autumn, oil on canvas, 1935.



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