Styles Of Authorship In New France: Pierre Boucher, Settler And Pierre-Esprit Radisson, Explorer[†]

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This essay is a comparative case-study of the careers of two authors of New France, of the ways in which they envisioned themselves as authors, and of how they exploited (or failed to exploit) the options available to them for publication. Both men represent an important aspect of the earliest phase of Canada's book history, since for reasons made clear below, though they wrote in or about the new land, their writings were first circulated (if that is the right word) abroad. The two, who had almost certainly been acquainted with each other in Trois-Rivières, form a sharp contrast. Pierre Boucher (1622–1717) is the archetypal settler figure: soldier, judge, governor of Trois-Rivières, Sieur de Boucherville and founder of the town of that name. Pierre-Esprit Radisson (ca. 1640–1710) is the archetypal *coureur-de-bois*. His name, an icon of the adventurous spirit, today provides the toponym for one of Quebec's most remote areas, 'La Radissonie,' as well as the familiar American hotels². As this comparison suggests, at every point the lives of Boucher and Radisson provide instructive counter-examples to each other, and this is no less true of their lives as authors. In Boucher's case, that began in 1664; in Radisson's, not until 1885, and the reasons why provide useful insight into at least one historical situation they shared: the life of a writer at the intersection between two media of communication, a scribal one slowly dying out, its print successor already in thriving youth. What were their concepts of authorship? Within what 'field' of book culture (to invoke Bourdieu³) did they consciously or unconsciously operate? And within this field, what were their chosen (I use the word cautiously) modes of publication?

An unusual aspect of the book culture of Canada which is their setting is the belated inception of printing in the early colonies of Canada and Acadia. It was not until 1751 that Bartholomew Green, a printer trained in Boston, set up a press in Halifax, Nova Scotia,⁴ and

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in Quebec the first printing shop was established in 1764 by two printers from Philadelphia, William Brown and Thomas Gilmore. H. Pearson Gundy has attributed the absence of a printing-press under the pre-conquest French regime to bureaucratic parsimony in Paris,⁵ but the actual situation may have been more complex, as the travelling Swedish-Finnish botanist Pehr Kalm recognized in the early 1750s:

There is no printing press in Canada [he wrote], nor has there formerly been any: but all books are brought from France and all the orders made in the country are written, which . . . extends even to the paper currency. They pretend that the press is not yet introduced here because it might be the means of propagating libels against the government and religion. But the true reason seems to lie in the poverty of the country, as no printer would make a sufficient number of books for his subsistence; and another reason may be that France now has the profit arising from the exportation of books hither.⁶

Whatever the reasons for this long delay, there nevertheless existed an established, if small-scale, culture of the book in Canada and Acadia.⁷ Printed books were indeed imported from abroad; even though we have none of the writings of the seventeenth-century explorer Jean Nicolet, we know what books he had access to.⁸ Books written in or about Canada began to circulate in Europe; as Luca Codignola observes, missionaries

acquired their information about their North American destinations from printed material available to the prospective missionaries and the devout public alike. Jesuit Pierre Biard's 1616 report was soon published, and there was immediate need for a new edition, though in the event it was never printed. In fact, the major difference between the first (1611–29) and the second phase (1632–58) of the Jesuit mission in North America was the new acquaintance of the French confrères with the daily experiences of their fellow missionaries labouring in Canada. . . . made possible by the printing and circulating of the so-called Jesuit relations.⁹

The early beginnings of ecclesiastical and private libraries have

been described by Antonio Drolet, John Dickinson, and others.¹⁰ And François Melançon, for whom 'la ville de Québec se présente . . . comme un vaste livre ouvert où des textes multiformes se donnent immédiatement accessibles à l'oeil,'¹¹ has studied the ways in which reading was taught at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

In addition, as is suggested by Kalm's report that 'all the orders made in the country are written,' New France developed a functioning scribal culture, one in which personal writings, ephemera, letters, draft relations, and texts such as grammars of the Native languages all played a role. The scribal culture of New France remains one of the least-studied aspects of book history in Canada; for example, without intensive further research we have no idea where to situate the dividing line between private and public circulation of text. Though their works (albeit in very different ways) reached a public abroad, both Boucher and Radisson represent very clearly the kinds of question we will need to ask to conduct such research. For both men the spheres of manuscript and print culture still overlapped to a considerable degree, whether in New France, in Old France, or (as we shall see with Radisson) in England, and it is with the nature of that overlap that we are concerned here.

Pierre Boucher's career as an author resembles in outline that of any number of North American settlers, or indeed minor political, literary, or administrative personalities in Europe from the sixteenth to the early nineteenth centuries.¹² He published only one volume; otherwise his writing consists of administrative records and a brief memoir — the expected documentation surrounding a provincial notable of the period — today reposing in archives in Paris, Montreal, Trois Rivières, Quebec City, Chicago and Boucherville. The book was a small duodecimo, the *Histoire Véritable et Naturelle Des Moeurs et Productions du Pays de la Nouvelle France, vulgairement dit Le Canada*. It was issued in 1664 by the printer Florentin Lambert in Paris, with Boucher's epistle dedicating it to Jean-Baptiste Colbert, Chief Minister to the King of France. As Michel Bideaux has observed, this dedication marks a shift from the ornate addresses to the hereditary nobility customary in an earlier period.¹³ Though as an administrator he would have been counted among the *noblesse de robe*, Colbert was not of noble blood. Yet as Norbert Elias writes 'A minister like Colbert, whose bourgeois origins no one, even himself, ever forgot, had at times incomparably greater power at his disposal than most members of the high court aristocracy.'¹⁴ To this man at the very centre of affairs in France Boucher addressed a text which is

one of the earliest attempts at a comprehensive description of Canada exclusively from the settler's point of view, from the gulf of St. Lawrence to the known fringes of the colony — its geography, natural endowments and material resources. He did so from a position half-way between textual worlds: though he refers to himself as an 'author' in Chapter XIII, and states in his 'Avant-propos' that he wrote the work specifically to be printed, he concludes the latter with the humble request 'que vous me . . . pardonneriez bien volontiers, quand vous considerez que ce n'est pas mon mestier de composer.'¹⁵

In the nineteenth century Benjamin Sulte surveyed what he thought to be the limited number of extant copies of Boucher's book and concluded — without offering any evidence — that the edition of 1664 had been burned by the Jesuits, who in his view were opposed to any development of the new colony which did not place religion at the centre of the project¹⁶. More recently Boucher has been recognized as one of those writers of New France who between the inception of Royal government in 1663 and the cessation of the War of the Spanish Succession with the Peace of Utrecht (1713) began to produce a literature with a new spirit, one written by those born — or like Boucher raised — in the colony rather than in Europe.¹⁷ Boucher tells us in his *avant-propos* that his book resulted from conversations which he had with Louis XIV and Colbert during a trip to France in 1661–2, when he was chosen by the new Governor Dubois Dauvagour to make representations to the king on behalf of the colony. As a literary work it retains the topical organization that might be expected from such an origin; indeed Chapter XIII is entitled simply 'Réponses aux questions qui ont esté faites à l'Autheur lors qu'il estoit en France' (HVN, 135). Boucher wrote the book in the months after his return to New France, and it shows signs of rapid composition. His last chapter begins 'Pvisqu'il me reste encore vn peu de temps' (HVN, 163), and contains remarks on matters overlooked in the previous chapters; the work must have been completed in haste, as his dedicatory letter is dated 8 October 1663, not long before the winter cessation of communications between New France and the mother country.

The *Histoire véritable et naturelle* has two clearly defined audiences. The first is Colbert, to whom the book is dedicated in recognition of his interest in New France, an attitude very different from the dismissiveness of his predecessor, Cardinal Mazarin. The second is the 'cher lecteur' Boucher addresses in his *Avant-propos*, whom he imagines as one of the many people he had talked with in

France who might emigrate to New France. His style is simple and plain, he observes; 'ie me suis contenté de vous d'écrire simplement les choses, sans y rechercher le beau langage; mais bien de vous dire la verité avec le plus de naïveté qu'il m'est possible, & le plus brièvement que faire se peut' (*HVN*, [a vi^{r-v}]). He is, of course, employing the contrast between the rhetorical excesses of court life and the practicalities of colonial existence which was already becoming a rhetorical *topos* of voyage narratives and settlers' memoirs. Marie Thérèse Jacquet has sharply analyzed how evocative the book is, nevertheless, of its author's mental world.¹⁸

Boucher's practicality extends even to the sources of his book: 'Ie ne vous diray quasi rien', he writes,

qui n'aye déjà esté dit par cy-deuant, & que vous ne puissiez trouuer dans les Relations des RR. PP. Iesuites, [he means the famed *Relations* of the Jesuits, then in course of publication] ou dans les Voyages du Sieur de Champlain: mais comme cela n'est pas ramassé dans vn seul Liure, & qu'il faudroit lire toutes les Relations, pour trouuer ce que j'ay mis ici; ce vous sera vne facilité, sur tout pour ceux qui n'ont autre dessein que de connoistre ce que c'est du pays de la Nouvelle France, & qui ne se mettent pas en peine de ce qui s'y est passé, ny de ce qui s'y passe (*HVN*, [a vii^r–viii^r]).

Indeed, he won't even bother to relate the biggest event of the year, the great earthquake of 1663, because as he says, the Jesuits have told the story much better than he could. Two interesting points in this self-abnegating preface serve to illustrate the practicalities of Boucher's existence in a world in which manuscript and print constantly overlapped. The first is that Boucher, despite his distance from the centre of affairs, is well acquainted with printed books, both with Champlain's *Voyages* (perhaps in the edition of 1632) and with the publication project of the Jesuits. The second reflects the fluid and interactive world which Margaret Ezell argues is typical of scribal culture; Boucher must have been able to read the 1663 *Relation* of Fr. François Rageneau, with its account of the earthquake (*JR*, 48, 183–223), before it was despatched to France for printing.¹⁹

It is evident why Governor Dauvagour chose Boucher to represent the colonists before the King of France; he was literate, well-informed, and capable of behaving at court as it was expected a seventeenth-century Frenchman ought to. Nothing in his

subsequent career belies this impression; once his book was written and sent to France for printing, he returned to his colonial responsibilities as soldier, judge, and seigneur. He married twice (the first time to a Native woman), and died at the great age of 95, leaving behind him among other papers a brief *Memoire* in which the writing and publication of his little book plays no part.²⁰

The innocence of Boucher's text — its incremental organization and conversational tone — would suggest that his manuscript, once it reached France, can have been little altered by Colbert or his associates. Boucher clearly intended the book to be published; he says that his questioners had been so many that 'ie me suis resolu de faire imprimer la presente Description, & les prier d'y auoir recours' (HVN a vi^{re}). From distant New France, however, he would have had no control over *how* it was published. The Jesuits to whom Boucher was close (from 15 to 17 he had served as an assistant to the missionaries in Huronia) could have functioned as his agents; in fact Raymond Douville (citing Léon Pouliot) argues that 'Father [Paul] Le Jeune's *Épître au Roi*, which introduces the Relation of 1661, and which received the *imprimatur* on 20 Jan. 1662, was inspired by Pierre Boucher's presence in Paris, and was intended to support the arguments of the young delegate' (DCB 2:85). Though their *Relations* were chiefly published by Sébastien Cramoisy, the Jesuits seem to have had contacts with Florentin Lambert, and could have arranged printing on Boucher's behalf; in 1664 Lambert was printing 'au cloître des Jesuites, devant St. Paul, a l'Image St. Paul' in the rue Saint Jacques.

Situated as it was in the Jesuits' precincts, Lambert's shop was also in the old centre of printing and manuscript production on the Isle Notre-Dame, where Lamberts had printed in the previous century — though it is unknown whether Florentin was related to them. Lambert, apprenticed in 1633 and a journeyman from 1645, was active until at least 1679 and probably later.²¹ In the spring of 1658 he bought property in Quebec, but the same property was sold by the Jesuits in January 1659; Lambert may have rolled his investment over to make a profit.²² I have been able to trace seventeen books which he printed between at least 1651 and 1671, all works of learning or piety and almost all in small formats: 8^{vo} or even smaller.²³

Colbert, on the other hand, was ideally positioned to arrange for printing Boucher's book, functioning as he did as the chief administrator of a governmental system which was beginning to exercise, as Henri-Jean Martin has reminded us, careful control over

the operations of print culture within its orbit.²⁴ And there is an undeniably secular character to Boucher's enterprise; in whatever way contact with the printer was initiated, it was to Colbert, his associates, and his objectives the work was addressed; Boucher has little to say of religion in the colony. Rather, he reflects an attitude implicitly in opposition both to the orthodoxy of the sixteenth century, which was that France's future lay in Brazil or perhaps Florida, and to the lassitude and confusion with which the mother country had dealt with New France in the preceding decades of the seventeenth century.²⁵ The *Histoire véritable et naturelle* argued that Canada was an abundant land, that its only enemies were the Iroquois, and that 'le Pays est bon, capable de produire toutes sortes de choses comme en France, qu'on s'y porte bien, qu'il ne manque que du monde, que les Pays est extrêmement grand, & qu'inailliblement il y a de grandes richesses que nous n'auons pas peu découurir. . . .' (HVN, 143). The public expression of such views following on a dedicatory epistle to Colbert would, by the time the book was actually in print, no longer have been surprising; they gave substance to precisely the reasons for a re-organization of the colony which Colbert had drafted for the King in Louis's letter of May, 1663 officially uniting New France to the crown.²⁶

In the end, the circumstances in which Boucher's book were printed remain unclear; the known examples exhibit a number of variant title pages, in some of which he is mentioned as author, in others not, and in some of which Colbert's office is differently described. As Marie Baboyant showed in her survey for the tercentenary facsimile of the book (*pace* Benjamin Sulte) there are no less than twenty-three extant copies in libraries from Paris to San Marino, and I have so far failed to locate any others.²⁷ Until a detailed bibliographical analysis is made of the variations between copies, their implications for the printing history of the work, as well as for Boucher's patronage situation, will remain obscure. Nevertheless the essentially European audience interested in a work on New France is evident from the distribution of known copies: the facsimile of 1964 was drawn from a copy once in the Bibliotheca Colbertina itself and now in the National Library of Canada, (FC 305 B68 Reserve), and other copies are recorded from dispersed ecclesiastical libraries, as well as from the collections of such later figures interested in exploration as the natural historian and book collector Sir Joseph Banks, RA, (1743–1820) and the first hydrographer to the Admiralty, Alexander Dalrymple (1737–1808).

There is absolutely nothing remarkable about Pierre Boucher's

story; he emerged from his primarily scribal culture, wrote a book when it was required of him, was published modestly but under impeccable patronage, and retired to cultivate — quite literally in this case — his garden. His mode of authorship, his book's mode of production, and its eventual circulation exhibit precisely the features we would expect of a provincial notable whose views on his colony were thought to be of interest to administrators and intellectuals in France. One of the collectors who acquired a copy of his book was just such a person, Nicolas-Joseph Foucault (1643–1721) the French administrator and manuscript collector, whose copy of the *Histoire véritable et naturelle* is at Yale today (HVN, 176). Besides being a friend of Colbert, Foucault — like Banks and Dalrymple in England — was deeply interested in exploration. It is he who provides the link which brings us back to Radisson, and Canada in the seventeenth century, for he also owned a scribal manuscript (British Library, Sloane 3527) containing one of the *Voyages* in which Radisson describes the conflict between French and English over the right to trade in Hudson Bay set off by his adventures there in the mid-1680s. Though there are other and better manuscripts of this narrative, the existence of Foucault's copy testifies to the much more complex life in authorship of Boucher's younger contemporary, throwing into doubt any easy assumptions which might lead Canadian book historians to take Boucher's example as the norm.

As his American renown would suggest, Pierre-Esprit Radisson is a much better-known historical figure than Pierre Boucher.²⁸ The significance of the explorations Radisson engaged in with his brother-in-law Médard Chouart des Groseilliers has long been understood; by helping persuade the English crown to charter the Hudson's Bay Company in 1670 they changed, as J. B. Brebner would later phrase it, 'the course of history for half the North American continent.'²⁹ Besides the six *Voyages* we know of today, there is direct or indirect documentation of Radisson's activities in the *Jesuit Relations*, the letters of Marie de l'Incarnation, in archival repositories in Quebec, the archives of the Hudson's Bay Company, the British Library, the Bibliothèque Nationale, the Public Record Office, the Vatican Archives, and even a possible contact account from the Native point of view.³⁰ But in his own time no one considered him an author, though among the Hudson's Bay Company's records there were two documents in French reporting his sojourns on Hudson Bay in 1682–4 which may have hinted at his possible talents. Indeed, Sir James Hayes, secretary of the Company,

told Viscount Preston in a 1684 letter that Radisson had returned from his 1682 sojourn on the Bay with 'materialls for a very Romantique Nouvelle entertaining enough.'³¹ However, neither at that time nor for the next two centuries was any notice taken of the four narratives in English Radisson had produced of his experiences in Canada before he and Groseilliers left New France in 1663 to seek support for their fur trade enterprise among the British, first in New England and then in London.

In the early 1880s, however, an American gentleman scholar, Gideon Scull, working in the Bodleian Library on unrelated documents in the Pepys manuscripts located there recognized that a lengthy text included among them (Rawlinson A 329) was actually by Radisson. The manuscript was not in Radisson's hand but in that of three unknown scribes, and consisted of four narratives or 'Voyages' which related the events of the 1650s.³² *Voyage* I describes the youthful Radisson's capture, torture and adoption by Mohawks in 1652; *Voyage* II covers events on the Jesuit mission to the Onondaga in 1657–8, in which Radisson participated; *Voyage* III deals with Groseilliers' 1654–56 journey (possibly as far as the headwaters of the Mississippi) in which Radisson did not participate — though he implies that he did — and *Voyage* IV is the magnificent account of the two explorers' journey to Lake Superior in 1659–60. In it Radisson gives us the first written report of the area, recounts the events of a winter of terrible famine, describes a great ceremonial meeting with the Sioux, and asserts (mendaciously it has been argued) that the two explorers used the connecting river systems to get as far north as James or Hudson Bay. All four were written in vivid Francophone English.

In 1885 Voyages I–IV were issued in a limited edition with a simple introduction and notes by Scull; they were re-edited (not very satisfactorily) in 1961 by Arthur T. Adams.³³ Americans have generally been in the forefront of Radisson scholarship; in Quebec from the seventeenth century until very recently he has been treated as a man of very unreliable allegiance because he switched loyalties from the French King to the English somewhat too frequently. An additional problem was the language of the text. The four Bodleian narratives were not even translated completely into French until very recently,³⁴ and their status in English was thrown into question by Grace Lee Nute in her respected biography of Radisson and Groseilliers. She was persuaded that the four narratives in English were a very inept translation of what Radisson must surely have written originally in

French.³⁵ Historians and geographers in their turn were impatient with Radisson's picaresque narrative mode; even if the manuscript did not represent a translation, its author appeared to be a linguistic primitive, and his writings differed disconcertingly from the more orderly scientific and descriptive accounts of eighteenth and nineteenth century explorers.

The four narratives in the Bodleian manuscript almost certainly were, as I have argued elsewhere, written in English: a jaunty, colloquial, frequently ungrammatical English laden with Francophone terms, just about the same amount of English that Radisson, with his documented verbal gifts, might have learned during his lengthy sojourns in the British colonies in America from 1662 to 1665, and on the fringes of the English court from 1665–1669. Radisson's writing, unlike Boucher's more descriptive mode, has both ready humour and a rough-hewn, evocative power. Of the famine winter endured by explorers and Natives in 1659–60 he writes,

Every one cryes out for hungar; the women become baren, and drie like wood. You men must eate the cord, being you have no more strength to make use of the bow. Children, you must die. French, you called yourselves Gods of the earth, that you should be feared, for your interest; notwithstanding, you shall taste of the bitterness, and too happy if you escape. Where is the time past? Where is the plentynesse that yee had in all times and countreys? Here comes a new family of these poore people dayly to us, halfe dead, for they have but the skin and boans. How shall we have strength to make a hold in the snowe to lay us downe? . . . (Scull 203–4.)

His magnificent description of the Feast of the Dead later the same winter presents that event as if it were one of the Renaissance court festivals to which he twice makes reference in this part of the narrative.

In a forthcoming article I argue, using the evidence of its paper, that the Bodleian manuscript is a scribal copy made in 1686 from Radisson's original, which from internal evidence at the end of the fourth voyage seems to have been written in the late 1660s.³⁶ And it is in a study of the crucial period of the 1680s and its significance that our sense of Radisson's career as an author needs to be grounded. For though scholars have argued, and people like myself were taught in school, that Radisson's narratives helped to persuade Charles II to

found the Hudson's Bay Company, in fact there is no evidence, either direct or indirect, that the narratives of the Bodleian manuscript, completed by Radisson in the late 1660s, were known to anybody but himself until 1686. And unlike Boucher's straightforward address to his 'cher lecteur,' the narratives themselves yield very little evidence as to who Radisson thought was his audience; in the first two his skills as a writer are still being tested, and the third (the so-called 'Mississippi voyage') is notoriously ambiguous. In the fourth or 'Lake Superior voyage' Radisson is at his narrative best, but here the born story-teller senses his mastery, and any awareness of a historically identifiable audience is swept away in that confidence in his narrative powers which we see demonstrated in the episode of famine quoted above.

It is primarily to the 1680s that we must turn then, to assess Radisson in the context of the book culture of his time. In 1669 when his first four narratives were completed, he and his brother-in-law had been colourful and persuasive colonial personalities on the fringes of the Caroline court and the merchant world of Samuel Pepys. But in 1686 when the manuscript was re-copied, Radisson was a central figure in a major political conflict between English and French over the right to trade in Hudson Bay, and his testimony mattered. The two narratives he wrote, this time in French, about the years 1682–4 exist in several copies besides the one owned by Foucault.³⁷ In contrast to the oblivion which befell the Bodleian narratives, they were rapidly circulated in France and were soon translated in England. One of these copies, very recently discovered by a Belgian Radisson who is the family genealogist, is at Windsor Castle. Beautifully copied in a writing master's 'romaine letter,' it was presented in May 1685 to the new king, James II — as Duke of York an early patron of the Hudson's Bay Company — and is prefaced by a dedicatory letter, part of which reads as follows:

Le voyage que j'entrepris estant au service de la France en l'année 1682, pour la traite du castor en la riviere et port de Nelson, et les choses qui se sont passées entre les officiers de la compagnie royale de la baye de Hudson et moy pendant le sejour que j'y ay fait jusque'en l'année 1683, ayant esté raportées fort desavantageusement pour moy, j'ay creu Sire qu'il estoit de mon devoir de donner une relation veritable de ce voyage et d'y ajouter celle, de celluy que j'ay fait l'année derniere pour la compagnie de la baye de Hudson,

afin de desabuser tous ceux que mes ennemis on pû prevenir de méchantes impressions de ma conduite pour la rendre suspecte à vôtre Majesté, par les soubçons et des calomnies contre mon honneur et ma reputation, je prends la liberté, Sire, de presenter à vôtre Majesté ces deux relations, comme mon premier homage de bon et fidelle subject, par lesquelles vôtre Majesté verra la justice de mon procedé. . . .³⁸

James II was shortly parted from his crown, and though on his departure from England he left Radisson to the protection of others, the old explorer — three-times married and, as Martin Fournier has suggested, a man who deliberately *chose* England — died according to his burial record ‘a decay’d gentleman’ in Clare Court, Westminster, in 1710.³⁹

Boucher and Radisson, as authors of New France, are linked by not only by casual associations — Trois-Rivières, Nicolas-Joseph Foucault, and the term ‘véritable relation’ — but by the very contrasts between them. The writings of both men were the result of their experiences in early Canada, and both had important relationships with the royal courts of their day. But at the same time, a tracing of their careers demonstrates that publication within a court setting could produce very different results. Pierre Boucher would seem to fulfil the most obvious definition of an ‘author’ — he even termed himself one — but he wrote a modest book to order, sent it to France for printing, and went back to his duties. The documents Boucher the administrator left show that he wrote constantly though perhaps not profusely during his lifetime. Clearly, however, his youthful appearance in print was of little importance when in his *Mémoire* he surveyed the significant events of his life — his military service, the careers of his fifteen children — at the age of seventy-three. Though others took an interest in the *Histoire véritable et naturelle*, Boucher seems to have forgotten its existence. Pierre-Esprit Radisson was by no means the half-tamed semi-literate he used to be termed; the one document we have in his own hand (a letter in the Bibliothèque Nationale), though hasty and casual in its wording, exhibits an ease with script which testifies to long practice. He too thought of himself as an author, or so his self-conscious exploitation of the literary genre of the *voyage* would suggest. In all their copies his narratives are clearly divided into separate ‘voyages,’ and the term is specifically used in the dedicatory letter to King James of a copy which variants show he personally supervised. But

though the title page of the Windsor manuscript is formally laid out in the fashion of a printed book, as an author Radisson operated entirely within the sphere of scribal culture. His four early narratives are brilliant and self-aggrandizing pieces of life-writing but he seems to have kept them to himself for more than a decade; the date of their writing can only be surmised from internal evidence, and they are otherwise undocumented between 1669 and 1686. Thus we have to rely on their quixotic and often shifting mode of address to the reader to guess their intended audience.⁴⁰

In the 1680s, however, when Radisson's actions on the Bay were questioned, he returned to the genre of the voyage and used it to defend himself publicly. But his sense of what constituted the public remained that of a frequenter of late-Renaissance courts, more at ease with scribes than printers. Never at any time during what must have been the hectic months after his return from Hudson Bay in October 1684 did Radisson do what an Englishman might have done, and turn to the resources of print culture, and to the richly controversial genre of the contemporary pamphlet. Instead, he had a beautiful manuscript made, and presented it to the King.⁴¹ More significantly, for this was an event outside the realm of court culture, he did not exploit print during the 1690s, when he engaged in a long battle over his pension with the London Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company, now packed with Whig merchants no longer interested in the old courtier. In the closely-controlled print culture of mid-seventeenth century France, Boucher's book was printed, we must surmise, because it had appropriate patronage either at court or closely associated with it. The court on whose fringes Radisson moved, however, was situated in a book culture which was extremely entrepreneurial, and after the lifting of censorship in 1695, even more so; the English Short-Title Catalogue is filled with pamphlets recounting grievances far less spectacular than Radisson's. Yet Englishman though he chose to be, he remained entirely within the options offered by a scribal culture, and as a result, whatever his own view of his status, remained unknown as an author for two hundred years.

Both Boucher and Radisson are examples of the instability in this period not only of the concept of authorship but of its practice, which Mark Rose has remarked on in tracing the evolution of laws concerning literary property in France and England in the seventeenth century,⁴² and which is widely evident in many para-literary writings — meditative writings, diaries, travel narratives,

womens' writing — of the late Renaissance and the early Enlightenment. It is such writings which are by far the most prevalent in a colonial culture. At the same time, the institutions of colonial culture are profoundly different from those — administrative, technical, and cultural — which were becoming dominant when first Bartholomew Green, and then John Bushell, William Brown, and Thomas Gilmore brought printing to Canada half a century after Boucher and Radisson died.

Three closely-related questions central to early book history in Canada thus emerge from this tracing of the careers — parallel in origin but divergent in history — of two men who wrote no novels, plays or poetry but whose 'authorship' — in the terms of our own age or theirs — has to be assessed by the book historian. How did the writer of a text actually demonstrate his or her sense of authorship? What can we learn about the genesis of texts and their 'publication' from his or her relationship with court or administrative culture? And finally, what was the role of scribal publication not only in a distant colony with no press, but in the lives of authors from that colony who wrote or published abroad? We find instances of equal complexity when we trace the individual patterns of authorship and publication of other writers of New France. An example is Mère Marie de l'Incarnation, whose letters reached their audience in France under the editorship of her son, himself a priest. And what of the case of Louis Nicolas, author of the great *Codex canadiensis*, the *Histoire naturelle des Indes occidentales*, whose work was fated to be divided into two parts, the illustrations in the Gilcrease Institute in Tulsa Oklahoma, the text at the Bibliothèque Nationale, and whose only appearance in the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* is in a passing reference in someone else's biography.⁴³ The paradoxes which emerge when we compare Boucher and Radisson are likely to be far fewer than those we will meet with if we conduct the same kind of research on many of the other authors of the earliest period of Canada's book history.

RÉSUMÉ

Ceci est une étude de cas comparative de la carrière de deux auteurs de la Nouvelle-France, de leur concept d'auteur et de l'exploitation des options de publication qui leur étaient ouvertes. Le colon Pierre Boucher rédigea son *Histoire véritable et naturelle* à la demande de Colbert, principal ministre de Louis XIV. Imprimé à Paris en 1664, avec l'appui officiel des autorités à une époque où l'imprimerie en France était de plus en plus contrôlée par l'État, l'ouvrage soutenait que la Nouvelle-France était un lieu idéal pour la colonisation. D'après les exemplaires recensés, on peut voir que l'ouvrage fut lu surtout par les ecclésiastiques européens, les géographes et les administrateurs. Dans un *Mémoire* écrit vers la fin de sa vie, Boucher ne fait aucune mention de son livre. L'explorateur Pierre-Esprit Radisson rédigea six journaux personnels basés sur ses aventures au Canada. Les quatre récits des années 1650 demeurèrent sous forme manuscrite jusqu'en 1855. Les deux des années 1680 circulèrent plus librement, y compris en un luxueux exemplaire, avec une lettre de dédicace, présenté par l'auteur à Jacques II. Mais ils demeurèrent quand même dans l'univers des publications manuscrites, même si de 1665 à 1674 et de 1686 à sa mort en 1710, Radisson était basé à Londres qui possédait une culture de l'imprimé vigoureuse et bien rodée. Une comparaison des deux auteurs soulève trois questions primordiales en ce qui a trait aux origines de l'histoire du livre au Canada. Comment un auteur démontrait-il (elle) son sens de concept d'auteur? Qu'a-t-on appris sur la genèse des textes et de leur publication à partir de la relation de l'auteur avec la culture de la cour ou de l'administration? Et quel était le rôle de l'édition manuscrite non seulement dans la colonie éloignée et sans presse à imprimer mais dans la vie de leurs auteurs qui écrivaient ou publiaient à l'étranger?

ENDNOTES

- 1 I am grateful to François Melançon, Michel Brisebois, John McClelland and Margaret Ezell for information and assistance at crucial points in the writing of this essay.
- 2 For reasons too complex to enter into here, Radisson is considered one of the founders of settlement in the Wisconsin-Minnesota area, and earlier in this century the first Radisson hotel was named in his honour.
- 3 Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, ed. Randal Johnson (Cambridge, 1993), 181–2.
- 4 Green may have been preceded in the new colony at Halifax in 1749 by the Englishman Herbert Jeffrie, but if he ever executed any printed work, no evidence of it survives. See D. G. Lochhead, 'Herbert Jeffrie: first Canadian printer?' *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of Canada*, 4 (1965), 19–20. Green died only months after his arrival in Halifax and was succeeded immediately by John Bushell, who printed there from 1752 until his death in 1761.
- 5 H. Pearson Gundy, *The Spread of Printing: Western Hemisphere: Canada* (Amsterdam, 1972), 11–12.
- 6 Peter Kalm, *Travels in North America*, ed. Adolph B. Benson (New York, 1966), II, 473.
- 7 See Gilles Proulx, 'Les livres à la forteresse de Louisbourg,' *APLA Bulletin*, 45, 3 (November, 1981), 25–27, 37.
- 8 Antonio Drolet, *Les bibliothèques canadiennes 1604–1960* (Ottawa, 1965), 28.
- 9 Luca Codignola, 'Few, Unco-operative, and Ill-informed? the Roman Catholic Clergy in French and British North America, 1610–58,' in Germaine Warkentin and Carolyn Podruchny, eds., *De-Centring the Renaissance: Canada and Europe in Multi-Disciplinary Perspective 1500–1700* (forthcoming).
- 10 See Drolet, *op. cit.*; [André Beaulieu], *La première bibliothèque canadienne: 1632–1800* (Ottawa, 1972); John Dickinson, 'Un aperçu de la vie culturelle en Nouvelle-France: L'examen de trois bibliothèques privées,' *Revue de l'Université d'Ottawa*, 44, 4 (oct.–déc. 1974), 453–66; Cameron Nish, *François-Étienne Cugnet 1719–1751: Entrepreneur et entreprises en Nouvelle-France* (Montréal, 1975); Yvan Lamonde and Daniel Olivier, *Les bibliothèques personnelles au Québec: inventaire analytique et préliminaire des sources* (Montréal, 1983).
- 11 François Melançon, 'Façonner et surveiller l'intime: lire en Nouvelle-France,' in Manon Brunet and Serge Gagnon, eds., *Discours et pratiques de l'intime* (Québec: I.Q.R.C., 1993), 17–45; see p. 19.
- 12 For basic information about Boucher's life, see Raymond Douville, *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (DCB) 2, 82–7; E. Mitchell, *Messire Pierre Boucher (écuyer) seigneur de Boucherville 1622–1717*, (Montréal, 1967); and the supplementary essays in the tercentenary facsimile of the *Histoire Véritable et Naturelle* (Boucherville, 1964).
- 13 Michel Bideaux, 'Au bon plaisir du narrataire: L'Histoire véritable et naturelle,' *Scritti sulla Nouvelle-France nel seicento* (Bari, 1984), 207–22; see p. 212.
- 14 Norbert Elias, *The Court Society* (1969), trans. Edmund Jephcott (Oxford, 1983), 269–70. On the distinction between the nobility and the *noblesse de robe*, see p. 62.
- 15 Pierre Boucher, *Histoire Véritable et naturelle des moeurs & productions du pays de la Nouvelle France, vulgairement dit Le Canada* (1664; facsimile edition Boucherville, Quebec, 1964), p. [a 11']. Hereafter *HNV*.
- 16 Benjamin Sulte, 'Pierre Boucher et son livre,' in *HVN* 1964, 204 (reprinted in part from *Mémoires et Comptes Rendues de la Société Royale du Canada*, 1896, Seconde Série. Tome II, Section I, VI, p. 110–15). For the responses of Léon Pouliot, S.J. and Leo-Paul Desrosiers (in both cases more concerned with the attack on the Jesuits than with Boucher's book itself) see *HVN* 1964, 212–225 and 226–243.
- 17 Léopold Leblanc, 'Histoire véritable et naturelle . . .,' in *Dictionnaire des oeuvres littéraires*

- du Québec*, I: *Des origines à 1900* (Montréal, 1978), 374. Boucher came to Canada at the age of 13.
- 18 Marie Thérèse Jacquet, 'Véritable et Naturelle, L'Histoire de Pierre Boucher?' *Scritti sulla Nouvelle-France nel seicento* (Bari, 1984), 223–54.
 - 19 We know that on at least one occasion Marie de l'Incarnation had the same kind of access to drafts of Jesuit narratives. Details in her letter of 1645 absent from the printed *Relation* suggest that her description of negotiations with the Mohawk diplomat Kiotsaeton may have been based on a draft version of the same event in the Jesuit *Relation* of that year; she may not in fact have been present at the events she describes. See Letter XCII, Marie to her son, Quebec, 14–27 September, 1645, in Marie de l'Incarnation [Marie Guyart], *Correspondance*, ed. Dom Guy Oury (Solesmes, 1971), 252. Margaret Ezell's description of the interactive nature of scribal culture differs with the concept of 'publication' as it was propounded by Harold Love (*Scribal Publication in Seventeenth-Century England*, Oxford, 1993); her views were argued in 'Eclectic Circulation: the Functional Dynamics of Manuscript and Electronic Literary Cultures,' (MLA 1998) and will appear in a forthcoming book (Margaret Ezell, personal communication).
 - 20 'Memoires de feu Monsieur Boucher seigneur de Boucherville et ancien gouverneur de Trois Rivières (Extraits),' *Bulletin des recherches historiques* 32 (1926), pp. 398–404. The document (whether the original or not) was identified at that time as being part of the Fonds Baby, Université de Montréal; however it was no longer in that collection when it was catalogued by Camille Bertrand beginning in 1942, and currently cannot be traced. The BRH text is described as 'extraits' and runs continuously, without ellipses; however, it seems improbable that had Boucher made a reference to his book or its publication, it would not have been included. Various early versions of the text occur in the fonds Viger-Verreau, Musée de l'Amérique Française, Quebec City; they do not differ in text from the published version (Madeleine Faucher, personal communication).
 - 21 For Lambert's career, see Philippe Renouard, *Répertoire des imprimeurs parisiens au XVII^e siècle* (Nogent-le-roi, 1995), 234–5; on-going research by François Melançon suggests that Lambert was still printing in the early 1690s (personal communication).
 - 22 François Melançon (personal communication).
 - 23 I am relying here on the British Library's catalogue of seventeenth-century French books, in which printers are indexed; there are undoubtedly more Lambert books in existence. To this list should be added the second edition of a posthumous work of the Reverend Paul Lejeune, *Solitude de dix jours, sur les plus solides vérités et sur les plus saintes maximes de l'Évangile* (1665; BN Paris). But Lambert's contacts were not with the Jesuits alone; on 3 October 1664, according to a document in the Anisson collection in the Bibliothèque Nationale, he had two bales of books which had been shipped to him from Flanders confiscated; their origin would suggest that he also had a market for Protestant books, though the reason for the confiscation, if we judge from similar documents in the collection, may simply have been what he had side-stepped the need for official inspection of the goods. Paris: Bibliothèque nationale, Fr.22081, item 34, ff.70r–71v, see Ernest Coyecque, *Inventaire de la collection Anisson sur l'histoire de l'imprimerie et la librairie principalement à Paris du XIII^e au XVIII^e siècle* (Paris, 1899), 228.
 - 24 Henri-Jean Martin, *The History and Power of Writing* (1988), trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Chicago, 1994), 273, 277, 381.
 - 25 See, for example, the account of Colbert's transformation of French policy in general, and towards New France specifically, in W.J. Eccles, *Canada Under Louis XIV. 1663–1701* (Toronto, 1964), 1–10.
 - 26 Louis' letter, with its emphasis on the restoration of trade with overseas colonies and on the threatened state of New France in particular is quoted in part by Eccles, *ibid.*, 9–10.

- 27 Marie Baboyant, 'L'édition originale de Pierre Boucher,' in *HVN*, 170–83; she describes twenty-three as a small number, but my own experience with seventeenth-century books suggests it is quite substantial. More recent searches by electronic means have so far turned up no new copies.
- 28 For basic information about Pierre-Esprit Radisson, see Grace Lee Nute, *Caesars of the Wilderness: Médard Chouart, Sieur des Groseilliers and Pierre Esprit Radisson, 1618–1710* (New York, 1943) and her biographies of both explorers (*DCB* I and II); these have been partially outdated by Martin Fournier, *Pierre-Esprit Radisson, coureur de bois et homme du monde (1652–1685)* (Quebec: Nuit Blanche, 1996) and Fournier's forthcoming full biography. See also my 'Discovering Radisson: A Renaissance Adventurer Between Two Worlds,' in *Reading Beyond Words: Contexts for Native History*, ed. Jennifer S. H. Brown and Elizabeth Vibert (Peterborough, Ont.: Broadview Press, 1996), 43–70, and "Radisson's Voyages and their Manuscripts," forthcoming in *Archivaria*.
- 29 J. B. Brebner, *The explorers of North America 1492–1806* (London, 1933), 229.
- 30 For details on Radisson's life, see Nute, *op. cit.*, and her biographies of Groseilliers (*DCB* I) and Radisson (*DCB* 2). For the possible Native contact account see William W. Warren, *History of the Ojibways, based upon traditions and oral statements*. Minnesota Historical Collections, vol. 5. St. Paul, 1885. Repr. as *History of the Ojibway Nation* (Minneapolis, 1970), 121–123.
- 31 Sir James Hayes to Viscount Preston, 22 May 1684; cited by Nute, *op. cit.*, 219–20.
- 32 An autograph letter by Radisson to Claude Bernou Ms. Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris, Clairambault 1016, ff. 376–77 was identified by Grace Lee Nute; see *Caesars of the Wilderness*, p. 170n6 and Appendix 4 (303–314). For the three scribes of the Bodleian manuscript, see my forthcoming 'The Dating of Radisson's Narrative Reconsidered.'
- 33 Gideon Scull, ed., *Voyages of Peter Esprit Radisson* (Boston, 1885); Arthur T. Adams, ed., Loren Kallsen, modernizer, *The Explorations of Pierre Esprit Radisson* (Minneapolis, 1961). I am currently preparing a critical edition of all Radisson's writings for the Champlain Society.
- 34 This translation, by Berthe Fourchier, was originally a doctoral thesis under the supervision of Denys Delâge; it is reportedly forthcoming from Nota Bene in Quebec.
- 35 Nute, *op. cit.*, 29–30, 99–100, 121.
- 36 See my "Radisson's Voyages and their Manuscripts," forthcoming in *Archivaria*.
- 37 Besides Foucault's copy, BL Sloane 3527, see Winnipeg: HBCA E1/1 and E1/2; London: British Library Add. 11626; Windsor: The Royal Library, Ms. I.I.B.6a.
- 38 Windsor: The Royal Library, Ms. I.I.B.6a, f. [ii]. I am grateful to Dr. Jean Radisson for introducing me and other Radisson scholars to this manuscript.
- 39 For Radisson's English loyalties, see Fournier, *op. cit.*, 1996, 91–3. Radisson's death is recorded in London: Archives of the City of Westminster. Register of the Parish of St. Clement Danes, June, 1710: 'Peter Radison a decay'd Gentleman bur. 21th.' I am grateful to Dr. Jean Radisson for communicating this document to me.
- 40 As I have argued elsewhere, Nute's view that a 1669 account book entry for the translation of a 'book' of Radisson refers to the Bodleian manuscript is untenable; see my 'Discovering Radisson . . .' (*loc. cit.*, 1996), 43–70, and see my forthcoming article "Radisson's Voyages and their Manuscripts," in *Archivaria*. In Martin Fournier's view Radisson's first four narratives were addressed specifically to the milieu of the fledgling Royal Society; see his *Les Quatre couleurs de Radisson* (Thèse de doctorat en histoire, Université Laval, 1998); however, other alternatives have not yet been sufficiently explored.
- 41 It was at this time that he may have arranged to have the original of his first four voyages copied; the Bodleian manuscript was written out on paper which can be identified with that in the Hudson's Bay company 'fair' minute books in 1685, see my forthcoming "Radisson's Voyages and their Manuscripts."

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- 42 Mark Rose, *Authors and Owners: The Invention of Copyright* (Cambridge, Mass., 1993), especially Chapters 1–3.
- 43 Text in BN Fr. 24225 (Ancien Oratoire 162); the illustrations and text were separated, and the illustrations are now in the Gilcrease Institute in Tulsa, Oklahoma. The authorship of the text and the BN manuscript's relationship to the illustrations in Tulsa were argued by Anne-Marie Sioui, 'Qui est l'auteur du Codex canadiensis?' *Recherches amérindiennes au Québec* 7.4 (1979), 271–79. A complete edition is currently in the planning stages.