

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

Iterations of Identity:

Representations of George Simpson and the Nineteenth-Century Fur Trade

by

William Mark Giles

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

CALGARY, ALBERTA

APRIL, 2005

© William Mark Giles 2005

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Iterations of Identity: Representations of George Simpson and the Nineteenth-Century Fur Trade" submitted by William Mark Giles in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Arts.



Supervisor, Dr. Richard C. Davis, Department of English



Dr. H. Vandervlist, Department of English



Dr. D. Smith, Department of History

28. IV 05
Date



Frontispiece. Marianne Corless, *Fur Flag*, collection of the artist.

Abstract

“Iterations of Identity: Representations of George Simpson and the Nineteenth-Century Fur Trade” examines how representations of the fur trade in general and Sir George Simpson in particular have changed over time. These changes have corresponded to changing constructions of individual, communal, or national identities that are rooted in a conception of place. By tracing the way in which the fur trade and George Simpson have been represented, this thesis examines the contingent and ever-shifting relationships between individual identities, collective identities, place, and narrative. Furthermore, by using non-fictional and fictional narratives as examples, this thesis explores how the fur trade became a founding myth for Canada. Even when re-cast in the guise of academic inquiry, postcolonial resistance, or fictional representations that imagine outside of history, narratives about the HBC and George Simpson now belong to this place, this nation, this community.

Preface

This thesis examines how the representation of the fur trade in Canada has changed over time to serve changing ideas of enterprise, empire, and nationalism. It focuses on the nineteenth-century fur trade, and in particular on the representations of Sir George Simpson, Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company from 1821-60.

Chapter 1, "Imagining the Past: Lunch at Lachine," is a piece of imaginative non-fiction that describes the canoe pageant arranged by Simpson for The Prince of Wales on 29 August 1860. By creating my own representations of the fur trade and George Simpson, I show by example how narrative texts engage issues of history, place, and identity. Sources for this chapter are included in the Appendix, "A Note on Sources for Chapter One."

Chapter 2, "Imagining Identity: Place, Narrative, and the Fur Trade," sets forth the theoretical bases for discussing issues of identity, narrative, and place in relation to the fur trade in Canada. It explores the contingencies of identity and place, and the role that narratives and texts play in creating identity and place. Building on the ideas formulated by Nicholas Entrikin, David Harvey, and other geographers, I propose four points with which to consider the operation of texts and narratives in constructing place-based identities. First, self and place are contingent. Second, a multitude of communities may exist in a place, but they tend to be arrogated by overarching communities of national identity. Third, narrative texts are a primary way in which identities and representations are shared. And fourth, the more these texts support larger constructions of identity, the more they tend to sentimentality. Further, I explore the notion of the imagined community as developed by Benedict Anderson, in particular the idea that the

community of a nation needs to claim all of its historical narratives to sustain itself in imagination, even if the claiming is in order to forget them. This claiming and forgetting amalgamates the different communities of place into a national community. And so fur-trade narratives become Canadian ones; even when re-cast in the guise of academic inquiry, postcolonial resistance, or fictional representations that imagine outside of history, these stories now belong to this place, this nation, this community.

Chapter Three, “Imagining the Voyageur: Representing the Fur Trade,” examines early nineteenth-century representations of the fur trade and the figure of the voyageur. The chapter discusses the role of the writer in creating text as an act of self-fashioning, and how these texts in turn influence ideas of place and representation. I discuss the difference between writers from the metropole who employ the fur trade as an exotic subject matter to inspire their art, and the colonial-born, for whom the fur trade can act as a marker of identity.

Chapter Four, “Imagining Authority: Fur-Trade Performance,” examines Simpson’s performance of authority in constructing identity. Using Eric Hobsbawm’s idea of invented traditions, I examine how Simpson created a practice through travel and authority that asserted his dominance over place. This performance contributed to the construction of a sense of place that others shared as his invented traditions were adopted or acknowledged. The chapter further examines how this performance and identity were incorporated into narratives and texts of the nineteenth century by Simpson and others to define place and identity.

Chapter Five, “Imagining History: Writing George Simpson,” reviews various representations of George Simpson in the historiography of the fur trade in Canada. Since

the turn of the twentieth century, historians and writers of popular histories have used these representations to support differing views of Canadian history. In particular, I focus on the representation of Simpson's authority and relationships with mixed-race women. The chapter examines the how scholarly historians and writers of popular history deploy the same information to appeal to different communities within the imagined community of Canada.

Chapter Six, "Imagining the Imaginary: Representing the Fur Trade and George Simpson in Fiction," traces the representation of the fur trade and Simpson in fiction. The chapter examines how these representations illustrate the differences and similarities between fictional and non-fictional discourses. Early fur-trade fiction often focussed on themes that supported the British imperial ideal, and relied on sentimental appeal. Recent historical fiction, in particular Fred Stenson's *The Trade*, incorporates issues from scholarly research. By dramatizing these issues, a fiction writer is able to invite new responses. The chapter discusses the role that fiction can play in negotiating multiple and even conflicting versions of history by dramatizing the narrative. Yet I also acknowledge that such fiction is still complicit in acts of claiming and forgetting.

Chapter Seven, "Imagining History: Unpacking the Royal Visit of 1860," returns to the canoe pageant of 1860. Touching on the ideas raised throughout the thesis, this chapter interrogates the representations of the imagined community, and the role of performance and narrative in creating a sense of place.

Acknowledgements

I am indebted to the guidance and support of Dr. Richard Davis of the Department of English at the University of Calgary. His encouragement and guidance helped direct my research interests into this text.

I am also indebted to Dr. Barbara Belyea of the Department of English at the University of Calgary. In particular, I am grateful for her encouragement to examine the lunch at Lachine.

I would like to acknowledge the support of the faculty and staff of the Department of English at the University of Calgary, in particular Department Heads Dr. Murray McGillivray and Dr. Susan Rudy, Associate Head (Graduate) Dr. David Oakleaf, and Graduate Program Administrator Barb Howe.

The image of the multimedia *Fur Flag* by Marianne Corless is courtesy of Marianne Corless. Used by permission. The image *Canoe Manned by Voyageurs Passing a Waterfall* by Frances Hopkins is courtesy of the National Archives of Canada. Used by permission. The reproduction of the photograph *Voyageurs at Fort William, 1860* is courtesy of the Wisconsin Historical Society. Used by permission.

Dedication

For Lucy Piper Giles Sharpe.

Table of Contents

Approval Page.....	ii
Abstract.....	iii
Preface.....	iv
Acknowledgements.....	vii
Dedication.....	viii
Table of Contents.....	ix
List of Figures and Illustrations	x
List of Symbols, Abbreviations and Nomenclature.....	xi
Epigraph.....	xii
CHAPTER ONE Imagining the Past: Lunch at Lachine.....	1
CHAPTER TWO Imagining Identity: Place, Narrative, and the Fur Trade.....	21
CHAPTER THREE Imagining the Voyageur: Representing the Fur Trade	42
CHAPTER FOUR Imagining Authority: Fur-trade Performance	50
CHAPTER FIVE Imagining History: Writing George Simpson.....	66
CHAPTER SIX Imagining the Imaginary: Representing the Fur Trade and George Simpson in Fiction	89
CHAPTER SEVEN Imagining History: Unpacking the Royal Visit of 1860.....	111
Works Cited	124
APPENDIX A Note on Sources for chapter one	138

List of Figures and Illustrations

Frontispiece. Marianne Corless, *Fur Flag*, collection of the artist.

- Fig. 1. Grand Canoe Reception Given to The Prince of Wales on the St. Lawrence,
Illustrated London News, 13 Oct. 1860. 117
- Fig. 2. Frances Anne Hopkins, *Canoe Manned by Voyageurs Passing a Waterfall*, 1869.
National Archives of Canada. 120
- Fig. 3. *Voyageurs at Fort William, 1860*. Wisconsin Historical Society..... 121

List of Symbols, Abbreviations, and Nomenclature

HBC Hudson's Bay Company

HBCA Hudson's Bay Company Archives

HRH His Royal Highness [The Prince of Wales, the future King Edward VII]

Epigraph

The need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the entire surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere.

The bourgeoisie has through its exploitation of the world market given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country. To the great chagrin of Reactionists, it has drawn from under the feet of industry the national ground on which it stood. All old-established national industries have been destroyed or are daily being destroyed. They are dislodged by new industries, whose introduction becomes a life and death question for all civilized nations, by industries that no longer work up indigenous raw material, but raw material drawn from the remotest zones; industries whose products are consumed, not only at home, but in every quarter of the globe. In place of the old wants, satisfied by the production of the country, we find new wants, requiring for their satisfaction the products of distant lands and climes. In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal inter-dependence of nations.

– Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (83-4)

CHAPTER ONE

IMAGINING THE PAST: LUNCH AT LACHINE

Sir George Simpson knew he would die soon. He had no idea it would be nine days hence, that in two days he would suffer the stroke that would kill him. But his body signalled that the end was near. He had nearly succumbed in February, when he fell like a dropped bale of furs in his office. He was unconscious for nearly a week that time, but recovered in the months following until he felt fit enough travel. But in May he had cut short his trip to Red River, turning back at the railhead in St. Paul. He had made the inland journey by canoe, horseback, dog sled, and foot, every year but three he had been in North America. Now, a simple rail journey tired him to the point of exhaustion; at the hotel in St. Paul he had to pause and rest at each step as he climbed the staircase to his room. On the morning of 29 August 1860, as his manservant James Murray helped him into his grey breeches, he steadied himself with both hands against the bedpost. He could feel the tremor in his right hand, the hand that had dipped quills without number into bottomless inkwells over the four decades since he had come to North America. No amount of medicinal brandy quelled the palsy in that hand. It was the hand with which he had signed thousands of memoranda that had shipped boatloads of furs to London, that had requisitioned boatloads of trade goods in return, that had dispatched good men to glean riches from the outer reaches of the Hudson's Bay Company territory, and that had sent rivals to starve out winters in the bitter outposts of the north. A flourish of this hand marking ink to paper had sent men home to England and Scotland, to Red River, to

Lower Canada to live out their lives in squalor or to eke out an existence on fur-trade pensions. This was the hand that had fondled fourscore of the prettiest bits of brown-skinned Indian and half-breed maidens from the Ottawa River to the Columbia. This hand had held the pale white hand of his beloved Frances as she picked her way across the muck of muskeg portages. He had trailed this hand from the gunwale of an express canoe to gage its speed. When this hand was raised, and matched with his voice, it could command the attention of the most hostile Indian chiefs. This hand slapped the backs of his trusted men, boxed the ears of incompetents. This hand that dipped into the buffalo-hide pemmican bags while in the bush also held the silver spoons at the finest tables in Lower Canada and London. Today it would raise a toast in his own house to His Royal Highness, The Prince of Wales. The hand's grip was still firm, but no matter how tightly he clenched it, he could still feel its tremor.

His eyes too were failing, had been the first part of his body to betray him nearly thirty years before. As his man helped him with his shirt, the cufflinks were but golden blots, the detail of their monogrammed engraving lost. The studs that attached his stiff collar and traced his shirtfront had no lustre, but were lost in a dim blur. He knew his cold blue gaze could still wither lesser men, but knew it now not by their countenance, but by their shift in posture, by the shuffle of feet, the hitch in a breath.

His sight was failing, but by god his hearing was still acute. In truth, he had never been any good at reading a man's face the way some do, as one might read a book. He judged a voyageur by how he handled a paddle, or carried his bundles. He judged a trader by the size of his returns and the accuracy of his predictions. He judged a chief trader or

factor by the trim of his fort and the balance of his ledger. Very few of his acquaintances knew the extent of his declining vision – the London council, Hopkins, Murray, his physicians. Sir George noticed it most in his inability to keep his own correspondence – indeed, it was after his harrowing trip overland in 1829 that he first had trouble writing and reading his reports. But his inward eye was still clear, and it was this inward sight that had always been his strength. The post journals, the factors' reports, the maps, surveys, ledgers, requisitions, ships' logs, bills of lading – these were but pieces of the puzzle that he used to create the immense picture of the trade that he carried always in his head. Earlier that morning his secretary Edward Hopkins had digested the daily correspondence from the Sandwich Islands while Sir George sat propped in his bed, smoking a cheroot. From Victoria, from Sault Ste. Marie, and from London, he could trace with his mind's eye the web of goods and capital that stretched across the globe, snaking up rivers, across oceans, over mountains, through the cities and towns great and small in the Old World and the New. He had travelled every inch of territory that the correspondence had traversed, had perhaps ridden in some of the same canoes that transported these letters, on the same ships that had delivered them. It was all his, and he had it always in his imagination. He had been saying for years that he never felt so alive as when he was travelling, but in truth he did not miss the three-in-the-morning calls to *Levez! Levez!* nor the backbreaking and ballbusting horse rides across prairie and mountain nor the slogging through mud nor the long ocean passages. This year the trade to Red River had gone by rail and steamer, and he could see the future: more rails, more people. The nature of the business would change, and the Company would change with it.

When he lifted his chin so that Murray could tie his paisley cravat, his neck felt loose in the collar, as his flesh seemed to shrink in on itself. He stood while Murray slipped the pocket watch whose face he could no longer read into the pocket of his waistband, and attached the fob to his waistcoat. His secretary's wife, Frances Hopkins, and her sister Miss Beechey had selected the clothes he should wear and laid them out the night before. He had protested that the Chinese silk waistcoat with embroidered dragons was too garish, but they had insisted: he was lunching with The Prince of Wales! Gratefully, he moved to the chair by his dressing table where Murray fitted his boots. There he rested for a minute, taking a pinch from the snuffbox he had carried with him around the world. When they were ready to go, by habit, he glanced at the shoulders and front of his black frock coat, but he could not distinguish whether any wayward cigar ash or dust had accumulated.

"Brush it well, Murray," he said to his servant.

"I will, Sir George," responded Murray, and he briskly groomed his master's black English wool.

The thunderstorms that had hovered over Montreal since The Prince of Wales' arrival a few days past, and that had lashed the previous night, finally abated at mid-morning, and Sir George rode out with Hopkins in the top-down landau to inspect the preparations for the arrival of His Royal Highness and entourage. Decorative arches made from flowers and ribbons crowned the road. The Prince would pass beneath them as he rode to lunch. Hopkins assured Sir George that the arches of the Hudson's Bay Company were impeccable. Sir George had decreed that the principal arch bear the

Company coat of arms constructed entirely from roses, but the task had proved impossible. Painted silk had been used instead. It was easily the grandest arch in Lachine. As they passed beneath it, Sir George craned his neck, then called "Halt!" to the coachman. "It's crooked," he said to Hopkins. Even with failing eyes, he could see that it was askew against the lowering sky. Hopkins called to two Company clerks who loitered nearby, and gave instructions to straighten the arch. They were holding up traffic, and the driver of the wagon behind called out a curse. Sir George hove to his feet and turned his slim frame to face the man behind. He did not say a word, and the cursing stopped. They did not wait until the work was finished, but stayed only long enough to satisfy Sir George that his clerks were sufficiently busy. He called to the coachman to carry them to their destination at Dorval.

They rattled off the cobbles of the Lachine streets. The harness creaked and the wheels of the landau sucked at the mud as the coachman clucked at the team to press forward in the traces. The late summer air was hot and heavy with the moisture of the past week, and the smells of horses and wet hay hovered over the mired road. The lakeshore road bisected the long tongues of farmland and the occasional orchard that marked the seigneurial plots of land. Here, above the rapids of Lachine, the St. Lawrence widened into the outlet end of Lac St. Louis. To their left, the water was screened by pine and the occasional copse of poplar or scrub oak that had colonized the river bank where the old-growth hardwood forests had been cut down generations ago. Across the water, more lush pine forest surrounded the Kahnawake Iroquois village, and rose in a dark blush up the bluff on the far bank. Sir George did not need to rely on his dim vision to

know when the road angled to the river. He could feel its cooling effects. As they neared Dorval, some of the farms gave way to recently-constructed stone and iron fences, and behind, at water's edge, the first of the summer homes of the Montreal elite rose up. Near the intersection with Dorval Avenue, the cobbles again paved the road, and a bustle of activity slowed progress. More arches and banners lined the road and the avenue leading up to the railway station. The coachman slowed to a walk to negotiate the left turn toward the water, and then picked the way down to the dock.

Before they boarded the dinghy that would take them over the short passage to Dorval Island, they received word that the Prince and his party were expected to arrive shortly before one o'clock. That left nearly two hours. Sir George was disappointed to find that he and Hopkins would have to share the ride across to his island home with an early-arriving guest: Mr. Blackwell, the General Manager of the Grand Trunk Railway. Sir George allowed himself a small smile at Blackwell's attire – he was wearing a silk hat. The man was an oaf: surely one should have the sense to wear a felt hat when attending a luncheon at the country residence of the Overseas Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company. Such nuance was beyond the ken of the London engineer. It was no wonder the Grand Trunk continued to steam its way toward financial ruin. Though not one of the brethren himself, Sir George suffered the Masonic clutch that Blackwell pressed upon him when they shook hands. "You missed a capital party last night," Blackwell said. "First rate." The Blackwells had hosted a party after the previous evening's concert in Montreal. Sir George had sent his regrets the week previous. "The

Prince enjoy himself, then?” Sir George asked. He had already heard the morning news that His Royal Highness had passed on the after-concert soirée.

“Well, I suppose he did,” Blackwell replied, and for an instant Sir George thought the man was going to try to bluff his way through. “But he chose not to grace our humble domicile with his august presence.” Sir George could imagine those same words delivered by a Montreal trader, or a Hudson’s Bay man, loaded with Scots irony – yea, even sarcasm. But Blackwell’s demeanour was as earnest as a hound’s before you shot it.

Sir George needed a little more: “And this morning, I see you haven’t ridden out with the Prince?”

“Quite so. Thought I’d get here early and avoid the crowds. At any rate, I needed, to attend to a little business. Mr. Rose sent me a note,” Blackwell said, “to ask if I could have a coach and locomotive made ready at the Lachine docks for His Highness’s return to the city. I gather they haven’t decided whether to shoot the rapids in the *Kingston* or take the rail.” Blackwell explained how such a detail commanded his personal attention. Sir George suddenly felt a connection to this man: this was an attitude that he could understand. On the short ride over the water, Blackwell droned on, listing the important visitors the night before, their dress, their behaviours. Sir George ruminated on how he and Blackwell were from different generations. Blackwell had been in the Canadas about three years, Sir George surmised. He appeared to be more or less the age that Sir George had been when he had arrived in 1820. Like Sir George, he criss-crossed his territory incessantly. The two men had hundreds, if not thousands of workers under their command. Yet their enterprises were at cross-purposes, and here the characters of the

men diverged. Sir George would begin and end his career in a canoe at Lachine; it was likely that the ride this afternoon would be the first time Blackwell had been in one. Sir George had spent a career dominating his workers and his territory with the singular purpose of wringing every opportunity of trade from the vastness of the Company's holdings. Blackwell did not dominate, but insinuated. And Sir George knew that railway capitalists, if not Blackwell himself, would love nothing better than to insinuate themselves through the very heart of the fur territory.

Hopkins and Sir George took their leave of Blackwell, directing him to the house, while they turned their attention to their own details. A dozen *canots de maîtres* were rafted to the dock, and ten dozen men lounged or stood on the verge nearby. "*Levez! Levez!*" Sir George called out as he approached them. A few of the older hands laughed, but made no motion to hurry. Some of the younger men jumped to their feet. His Company clerk Hector Mackenzie marshalled the group in a semblance of order. It was a large group, and Sir George realized he did not have the voice to carry to such a crowd. He turned to Mackenzie. "Tell them to pay heed to their steersman. Tell the steersman to pay heed to me. Tell them anyone who errs will face my wrath and the wrath of the Company and the wrath of the Queen. Tell them if any harm comes to my guests, harm will come to all." Mackenzie repeated these commands in English, and again in French, and the steersmen again translated into their own language. Sir George turned to Mackenzie and said, "Remind them of what we are doing." Mackenzie called the steersmen together, and with Sir George listening in, they reviewed the manoeuvres they had rehearsed yesterday and the day before in the rain.

As the crews assembled and made their way to the canoes, Sir George stood on the dock to inspect their ranks. They were all Iroquois, most from Kahnawake across the river, some from Kanesatake at the Lake of Two Mountains. He exchanged quips with Ignace and Louis, two men who had served in his personal service during trips west for a dozen years or more. In the not too distant past, perhaps as recently as a half-dozen years ago, he would have had scores of experienced Canadian voyageurs to choose from as well, and a fleet of canoes at his disposal. But the overland railways and the river and lake steamers had quickly changed the shape of his transportation network and the nature of the available labour pool. Nonetheless, Sir George was not disappointed to recruit the men for the event today from among the Iroquois. For decades Sir George had used Iroquois as his personal paddlers in his famous express canoes. They were not necessarily any better canoeists than he could find among the Canadians of Lower Canada, among the Indians of the Great Lakes or those of the Assiniboine or Saskatchewan, or among the mixed bloods of the Red River. Indeed, he had met many an Orkneyman who had learned to manoeuvre the craft with considerable expertise. Rather, he had discovered almost by chance on his first voyages inland that when the Iroquois are far from home, they have a loyalty to each other and to him. Though they often were amiable to other Indians they encountered, they maintained a certain aloofness, which suited Sir George well. And for today's spectacle, he was sure too that the Iroquois would appeal to the royal party with a touch of wildness – a touch of wildness tamed. He was rueful that a couple of his most loyal followers were not on hand. He had sent Young Baptiste and Toma to care for the Earl of Southesk on his buffalo-hunting expedition to the Saskatchewan basin. Old

Baptiste had retired and moved far away to the Athabasca District, where he'd started a family with a Chipewyan woman many seasons ago.

Each paddler wore a new red shirt from the Company store. Many sported Assumption sashes. Some had feathers in their hair. A few of the old and a couple of the younger men had the sides of their head shaved. Sir George had encouraged them to wear face-paint, and many had daubed themselves. A few sported the pointed touque familiar to the Canadians. Others were bare-headed. Sir George had promised that they could keep the shirts, and that each would receive a double-ration of rum at day's end, and the steersmen would receive £5 each to share among the crew.

He had had to send as far as Sault Ste. Marie and up into the Ottawa District to procure the canoes, and the last of them had arrived only a few days ago. Only with reluctance did the posts relinquish the manpower needed to deliver them to Lachine – the experienced men who could handle the large craft were precisely those who were most useful in the country. Over the preceding fortnight, many hours were spent putting them into shape worthy of the passengers they would carry today. Each had been patched with bark, the seams sealed with a mixture of pine pitch and buffalo grease, and the gunwales re-laced with split spruce roots. The canoes smelled strongly of the fires that had dried them from the previous rains. This too would add to the authentic experience he was trying to create. Thank god the rains had stopped. Few things in life are as exhilarating as a ride on the water on a late summer day; few things are as miserable as the same journey in the wet.

Broad wide stripes were painted end-to-end at the waterline, and above the stripes, ochre had been rubbed into the bark to render it an earthy red that complemented the shirts. Ochre decorated each crewmember's paddle too. White disks blazoned with the HBC crest decorated the bow points. Small stays affixed to the sterns carried the HBC pennant. Before The Prince of Wales embarked in his canoe, the Royal Ensign would replace the pennant. With his hazy eyes, Sir George could not make out the details of how the flotilla looked, but he was confident that Hopkins and Mackenzie had seen to it that everything was as he specified. If he had been stone blind, he knew how they should look.

Sir George and Hopkins made their way up the gentle slope towards the main house. In all the years he had been in North America, he had always lived in residences supplied by the Company: Hudson's Bay House at Lachine, a flat on Sherbrooke Street in Montreal, the stone house in Fort Garry. He had kept a flat in London when Frances lived there. But this house was the first he built for himself, on land that he purchased in his own name. It was modest – meant as a summer residence, not a mansion. Despite its location right in the river that had meant so much to his business and the fur trade, Sir George was never comfortable there. It was for Frances really, although she had not lived to see it. When he came to the island, he felt too isolated, separated from the goings on of the Company. He liked to be able to look out his window in Lachine and see the Company warehouse. Here he had established an apple orchard and commissioned extensive English gardens. A broad lawn swept from the house to the water's edge on both sides of the island. But whenever he came here, he was restless and could barely

contain himself, as if the island could barely contain him. When the commander of the British forces in North America, General William Fenwick Williams, had asked to rent the place the year previous, he had accepted at once. So now he experienced the strange experience of being a guest in his own house. The matter had been a delicate one to resolve – although the Company possessed a Royal Charter, it was less than expedient to have HRH as a guest at this time. The 1857 Royal Commission of the affairs of the Company had barely come out in the HBC's favour, and as the Americans opened up the frontier for development, many in the Canadas and at the Colonial Office were setting their sights on the West. When the planning for the royal visit began in earnest, the attitude towards the Hudson's Bay Company was cool. Governor Sir Edmund Head had expressed interest in the idea of a canoe regatta to entertain HRH, but was reluctant to gather at Hudson's Bay House. Former Prime Minister and now aide-de-camp for The Prince of Wales on his visit, Sir Étienne-Paschal Taché, and Commissioner of Public Works, John Rose, were in charge of arranging the agenda: a compromise was reached. Since General Williams was living in Sir George's house, it would be a suitable spot for the canoe pageant. The location had the advantage of not belonging to the Company. The luncheon host was General Williams. Sir George, Hopkins, and Mackenzie were the only HBC representatives invited. Murray was there to help with the service, as were Hopkins's wife Frances and her sister. They insisted on helping out – it would be the only way they could see HRH this intimately.

Two sentries stood at attention on either side of the doorway. The General's adjutant, Captain DeWinton, greeted the two men and made a show of checking their

names against a fair copy of the guest list. Inside, George was pleased to see that his collection of curiosities was on display. After the General had taken up residence, he had begun to stow away Sir George's treasures. Murray had objected on his master's behalf, and had had a fair strip torn off him by the General himself. But his intercession had been to effect; after an exchange of letters wherein the General had liberally insulted Murray for his cheek, and Sir George asserted the importance of the collection, Williams agreed to restore them. In the foyer was one of Mr. Kane's canvases, of a buffalo hunt near Fort Edmonton. Other scenes of Mr. Kane's were hung throughout the house. He had many gifts that he received from Indian tribes – several decorated pipes, a headdress from the Gros Ventres, a hat from the Bella Coola. Chief Factor Donald Smith had sent many interesting items from the Ungava, including a crude child's top carved from reindeer antlers, and a harpoon. As well, there were gifts that had been given to him by friends that reflected his interests. On the sideboard were a large silver-plate punch bowl with six candelabra and finely-wrought silver figures of northern animals. A pair of miniature sterling silver canoes with small paddles for spoons served as salt and pepper cellars. He took a pinch from the snuffbox in his pocket. This snuffbox too was a curiosity of sorts, for it was a music box also. He had carried it with him since his journey to the Columbia in 1828. It was along the Peace River that he had tied the snuffbox to the collar of a mutt and convinced the Indians he possessed a singing dog.

Sir George conferred with Murray to ensure all was well. Mrs. Hopkins came in from the summer kitchen to confirm that the preparations for the meal were satisfactory. The royal party arrived on the opposite shore. Sir George could not see how big the

crowd was, though he knew a special train from Montreal was scheduled to bring the well-wishers to Dorval station. Though the Prince and his entourage were travelling by coach, crowds thronged at his every stopping point. The lunch on the island was a private affair, but well-wishers followed the Prince wherever he went. The canoe regatta was intended to be a surprise, but Sir George had instructed Hopkins to get the word out that there would be quite a performance this afternoon. He could hear the cheers, and surmised the loudest was reserved for the instant HRH stepped from his carriage. A Royal Navy barge had steamed up from Lachine to serve as a ferry, and presently the whistle blew and the scow chugged into the channel.

The canoes made their entrance. They were in two fleets of six, each appearing from the backside of Dorval Island as the steamer got underway. They met the ferry as it reached the half-way point in its journey, and wheeled to escort it as it approached the island dock. Without Sir George asking, Hopkins reassured him: "All is as planned, Sir George." The paddlers were singing "*À la claire fontaine*." Sir George had insisted that they sing the Canadian voyageur songs, even though the Iroquois were predominantly English speakers. The old hands knew the songs by heart, but many of the younger recruits, who had never been inland for furs, had to be taught. To Sir George's ear, they lacked the combination of sweetness and vigour that the Canadians unfailingly brought to the songs; these paddlers had the enthusiasm if not the melody. As the steamer made ready to land, the canoes arched away from its beams and fanned in two wide circles until they had taken up position behind. The Prince took a position at the stern and waved to them, and in unison they lifted their paddles in salute. As they had rehearsed, they cut

short their song and gave a chorus of whoops. Then as suddenly as they had appeared, they dipped their paddles back into the water and separated into the two fleets. In a flash they had disappeared again behind the island. The cheers from aboard the ferry gave Sir George the assurance he sought, and from across the water, the crowd on the shore of the landing at Dorval roared their approval.

Before lunch began, the guests mingled under a pavilion that had been set up on the lawn. This was not a formal party with a receiving line – almost everyone here knew one another. Many were colonial administrators from London: the colonial secretary, the Duke of Newcastle; his assistant Gardner Engleheart; Lord Lyons; General Williams – who was born in Halifax, but whose career had taken him to Gibraltar, Ceylon, and most famously, Turkey, where he had distinguished himself in the Crimea; the Earl of Mulgrave. The Bishop Metropolitan of Montreal was also there. Two former prime ministers were in attendance: Taché, and Sir Allan Napier MacNab. Sir George had not attended any of the various events in Montreal held in The Prince of Wales' honour in the days previous, as he had preferred to remain in Lachine to attend to the business of the Company, and to oversee preparations for today. General Williams introduced The Prince of Wales, who expressed his keen enjoyment of the canoe brigade. "More lies in store, Your Highness," Sir George replied.

Sir George circulated easily among the guests, exchanging quips with old friends and foes alike. Many of the North Americans were business colleagues. He sat on the boards of banks with Rose and MacNab, and had invested in railways, steamships, and property with them and with others in attendance. Had he been a man given to reflection,

he might have compared this gathering to one of a similar size he had hosted nearly thirty nine years previously. Whereas now he was a man of capital whose interests bridged the old tradition of mercantilism and the new opportunities of industrialism, a corporate administrator whose authority overlapped the administration of one of England's greatest colonial territories, in 1822 he was but a perceptive and ambitious young clerk in whose path fortune had thrust opportunity.

Today, his St. Lawrence island was the picture of an English garden fit for royalty; then, the rough-hewn fur fort of Norway House was in the mosquito muskeg above the northern edge of Lake Winnipeg. Today's menu included English beef brought over on the hoof for the Prince's pleasure, watercress soup, fresh greens and vegetables in cream sauces, French cheeses, wines from Bordeaux, aged port, sponge cake and strawberries. At Norway House, they had feasted on salt beef and fresh game, nubbly potatoes grown in the scrub garden, and bread, all washed down with bitter claret and drafts of Jamaican rum. Yet the two meetings were not unlike: in each case his object was to position the Hudson's Bay Company for success during a time of transition. As he worked his way around the green garden of Dorval Island, mingling affably with the highest level of politicians, financiers, and decision-makers from both sides of the ocean, he used his wit and charm to put all at their ease: A touch of the elbow, a bon mot, a smile matched with the intense gaze of his blue eyes to show his attention. He knew, as the directors in London knew, that the advance of colonization westward was inevitable. The key was to see that all the advantages the Company had accumulated in its 190 years of operation were not lost, and that perhaps room be made for even more. Likewise, when

he made the rounds of the dark and smoky room in Norway House in 1822, he showered similar attention on the rough-and-tumble wintering partners of the North West Company, for the same purpose. He was calculating, to be sure, and knew one attracted more flies with honey than with vinegar. Yet Sir George did not adopt this manner as affectation, but rather as an innate practice bound up tightly with his own enthusiasm and determination. Trust me, his demeanour said; place your trust in me and together we can accomplish great successes.

When they were seated for lunch, Sir George occupied a place of honour to the left of host General Williams, while The Prince of Wales took the position to the general's right. Because of the size of the house, three tables had been arranged in the dining room and drawing room to accommodate the forty guests. The group raised many toasts; by an earlier arrangement, the Duke of Newcastle raised his glass to pay tribute to Sir George and the Hudson's Bay Company. Newcastle had not been in office for the gruelling 1857 Parliamentary inquiry into the affairs of the Company. He was neither a particular friend nor a foe to the Company's fortunes, but a pragmatist. Sir George had little doubt that he supported the notion to open the west; on the other hand, he was unlikely to underwrite the venture with government capital to any great extent. Newcastle thanked Sir George and the Hudson's Bay Company for its stewardship and diligence in preserving the territory profitably and peacefully, and wished for continued prosperity, health, and growth for the colony of Rupert's Land, the Hudson's Bay Company, and Sir George Simpson. At one point, Lord Lyons polled the rooms and declared that nearly every type of title and rank was in attendance. Royalty, baronetcies, lords, military

offices, knights, bishops, lawyers – only a medical man was missing. Some might have wondered if Lord Lyons would wish to count the bastards too – it was no secret that Sir George was born out of marriage, and General Williams had done little in his life to dissuade the whispers that his true father was the Duke of Kent.

The table conversation was bright if without consequence. The Prince asked whether there were any beaver on Dorval Island; Sir George regretted to inform him that beaver had been largely absent from the entire island of Montreal and along the St. Lawrence for many decades; for that matter even deer and moose were scarce. Sir George listened with interest as the Prince described a canoe adventure he had already undertaken. His Royal Highness had gone fishing with an Indian guide on the Saugenay, in a small canoe. And a canoe flotilla of loggers was to greet them as they steamed up the Ottawa. None would be as impressive as Sir George's *canots de maîtres*.

After the meal, the group eventually made its way back to the dock. One by one, the birch-bark craft approached and the guests were distributed in them. The Prince, Newcastle, and General Williams rode in the lead canoe, the spot usually reserved for Sir George. But on this day he was happy to give up his position to his royal patron and take a seat in another boat. He drew a handkerchief from his waistcoat; this was to be the semaphore with which to signal the manoeuvres. Years ago, Sir George had written his friend MacTavish that he never felt as alive as when he was travelling, and never so healthy as when he was in a canoe. Even such a summer paddle as this one invigorated him. His vision seemed to clear. If his hand suffered tremors, he did not notice. For an hour or more the Iroquois paddlers propelled the canoes to the rhythm of their songs.

They charged toward the landing site at Dorval, thrilling the crowd there as they executed a sudden about-face in unison. They raced around the small of isle of Dorval. With each stroke, the canoes surged forward. Sir George could see that His Royal Highness was enjoying himself, talking with great animation. Of course, the Prince's canoe led the others. On a signal from Sir George, they formed up again abreast, no more than a paddle's length apart, and set across the wide St. Lawrence. General Williams called over, "Where are you taking us now, Sir George?" His voice was good-natured, but Sir George knew the curiosity was genuine. This was a part of the pageant he had planned, but not disclosed to Williams or Rose. The river was swollen with the recent rains, and flowed swiftly, but here above the rapids at Lachine it presented no challenge for the big canoes. They again dropped into single file and approached the far shore. Here almost the whole of the population of the town of Kahnawake had come to the river bank, and they waved and cheered as The Prince of Wales zoomed by. The assembled crowd had cost the promise of a draught of rum or a ration of rice for each village family, but Sir George had calculated that it was necessary to include the Indians as part of the spectacle. The relationship the Hudson's Bay Company had to the original inhabitants of British North America was one of the great strengths the Company could marshal in its favour.

Again the canoes wheeled away from the bank, and ran with the current downriver to the head of the Lachine Rapids, where they turned for the north bank and the railway wharf at Lachine. Sir George flashed his signal, and again they formed a line abreast. With the Iroquois singing a fast rondelle, they dashed toward the wharf at speed. The knot of people who were waiting for the Prince's arrival was smaller than the

afternoon crowd at Dorval, and as the canoes approached nearer and nearer, their looks turned from joy to wonder to concern. Sir George noticed the companions in his canoe had abandoned their disinterested demeanours. They gripped the gunwales and braced themselves against the thwarts. At what seemed a distance that was far too late to save them from being dashed to pieces against the breakwater, the crews gave a triumphant whoop to finish their song, and with a few deft strokes of the paddle had the canoes stopped dead in the water. The crowd on shore cheered, and the Prince himself called out loudly, "Bravo! Well done." The Prince of Wales implored Newcastle to allow the Iroquois to "shoot the rapids" and return him to Montreal by canoe.

In the end the royal party boarded the *Kingston* and the Prince had to content himself with a ride across *les saults Lachine* in the steamer. As the Royal Navy sailors cast off, The Prince of Wales stood at the taffrail. He looked down on Sir George, leaning on his walking stick, and gave a slight nod of appreciation. Sir George was suddenly exhausted, and the weakness of limb and lightness of head came on suddenly. Although it was but a short stroll back to the Hudson's Bay House, Hopkins was able to find a carriage he could share. Before Sir George turned in for the night, he dictated notes to Hopkins. The performance cost the Company a small fortune, but it was an investment in good will toward the future. He would correspond with Berens in London immediately to have him see about donating the canoe that the Prince was in to the Queen, in the name of Hudson's Bay Company. He could imagine the possibilities. He could imagine how it would be imagined.

CHAPTER TWO

IMAGINING IDENTITY: PLACE, NARRATIVE, AND THE FUR TRADE

When The Prince of Wales travelled down the St. Lawrence River during his visit to British North America in 1860, Iroquois paddlers sang French voyageur songs as they escorted him in a fleet of decorated birch-bark canoes. The occasion: a luncheon near Lachine, Quebec, attended by the Lower Canadian Anglo elite and British Colonial Office dignitaries at the home of Sir George Simpson, Overseas Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company. This event can be seen as a nexus, a performative spectacle wherein many strands of the pre- and post-Confederation narratives of Canada converge: resource exploitation, mercantile capitalism, British imperialism, New World industrial capitalism, aboriginal-white relationships, French-English social dynamics, adventurism, Victorian masculinity, nature-as-spectacle. The fur trade was an entrenched, centuries-old cultural practice, but the event of 1860 celebrated it in a performance of imperialist ascendancy, and then mythologized it as part of the narrative of nation-building. How can we glean meanings from the event itself and from contemporary and later texts that represented (or perhaps deployed representations of) these strands? Newspapers, popular and scholarly histories, and fictional texts have by turns valorized, trivialized, ignored, and parodied the fur trade. These changing representations reflect changing social relationships and community identities. They become part of the historiography claimed as history by the imagined community of the post-Confederation Dominion of Canada. They serve in the creation of a "Canadian" identity defined by a relation to landscape

(whether Frye's garrison mentality or Atwood's death by nature or Innis's staples economy).

In an effort to claim part of this story for myself by claiming an experience with the place of its occurrence, I have visited the site of the luncheon and the canoe pageant. Driving a rented Toyota along Lakeshore Drive, I traced the route that Simpson's carriage would have travelled between Hudson's Bay House at Lachine and Dorval. I piled into a turbo-powered river raft with thirty other tourists to ride over the Lachine Rapids. I stood at the ferry wharf in Dorval and contemplated the tiny Île Dorval as a cool breeze blew off the river. But place in itself is not memory: I know the history only through the narratives I read in texts, see in displayed in visual media, or encounter as displays in museums.

As I create a narrative of my own life to construct a sense of self, a self existing in a place and in a nation, I inherit and use the stories of others, which in turn grow from earlier inherited stories about the place where I live. In the first chapter of this text I re-tell the story of the lunch at Lachine and participate in an exercise of imagining a nation. By imagining it, I belong to it. And I share in an exercise that others have done before. Yet by writing the story in my own words, I also imagine myself: my story becomes part of the narrative of community. The stories we tell about ourselves define us as individuals, yet the stories we share – whether through history, or fiction, whether a memory of lived experience or imagined – define us as community. These stories are passed on and written down. Transmitted as text, they become a code of place, and begin to resonate with the collective hum of a nation imagining itself. And still the shared

narratives connect to personal narratives: my mother and father both worked in the fur trade. My brother spent three years re-living it in a kind of hyper-real simulation.

In the mid-1970s, returning to the workforce after decades of raising a family, my mother worked for a couple of years at the Eaton's fur warehouse in Edmonton. While we tend to think of the fur trade as an historical past, it continued and still continues. When we think of furs, we think of the Hudson's Bay Company; however, T.E. Eaton did not miss an opportunity for commerce. In the Eaton's warehouse, workers sorted bundles of northern furs, then shipped them to furriers across Canada. As I remember it (or perhaps, more accurately, as I imagine it now), my mother's job included moving carts of prime furs through the streets of Edmonton to one of the warehouse's clients, Hurtig Furs on Jasper Avenue. Later in her career, she worked for Mel Hurtig as a copyright clearance officer on *The Canadian Encyclopedia* publishing project. The matrix of identity, history, place, memory, and text becomes complicated.

My father's involvement in the trade dates to the 1930s and 1940s. He helped put himself through the University of Alberta by working on the barges for Northern Transportation. Each spring he travelled by train to Waterways, and there boarded the tugs and barges that went north down the Athabasca and Slave rivers, across Great Slave Lake, then down the Mackenzie to the Arctic Ocean. In his annual journeys he traversed the routes mapped by Pond and Mackenzie, and the freight included furs along with drums of oil from Norman Wells and radium and uranium from the Eldorado mines at Radium and Uranium cities.

My brother attended St. John's School for Boys in the late 1960s. Aside from drilling the boys in Latin grammar, inculcating them in Canadian history (ironically, the American Francis Parkman was core curriculum), and operating a chicken- and pork-packing plant with student labour, the school marshalled the boys each year-end to embark on lengthy canoe trips that traced the routes of the fur trade. They paddled from sun-up to sundown, in fibreglass replicas of voyageur canoes with twelve paddlers each. My brother followed the Nor'westers' transcontinental route through the Lake-of-the-Woods and the Grand Portage, went down the Red River from the Missouri Basin, and downriver from Rocky Mountain House to Norway House. These were not interpretive tours with lecture stops and nightly discussion groups: they were gruelling endurance journeys, wrought by boys with callused hands and backsides stroking to the cadence of voyageur songs learned by rote and urged on by the imprecations of the teacher-steersmen.

In my own imagination, I can connect these anecdotes of personal mythology to the grander narrative of Sir George Simpson and The Prince of Wales at Lachine. Indeed, in my imagination, my first edition of *The Canadian Encyclopedia* is a totem that links my mother to Mel Hurtig to fur to the grand narrative of Canadian history. These stories illustrate what lies at the heart of my research: the contingent relationships of narrative, place, and identity. These narratives become part of the story I tell about myself, and forge a connection to family, and to the histories of the places that I (imagine I) inhabit. They are not my narratives – that is, they do not recount my lived experience – but nonetheless I claim them as part of my autobiographical construction, as any storyteller

claims the story he or she tells. They allow me to incorporate other, older narratives about place – wilderness narratives, exploration narratives, commercial narratives, historiographic narratives – into my personal ones. In doing so I can connect my sense of self with a shared sense of community, history, and place.

In *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson writes of “the reassurance of fratricide.” He uses the phrase to describe how events that predate the nation-state are “inscribed as ‘family history’ ” in order to satisfy the nation’s need to remember (or imagine) its origins (201). He states that “the nation’s biography can not be written evangelically, ‘down time,’ through a long procreative chain of begettings. The only alternative is to fashion it ‘up time’ – towards Peking Man, Java Man, King Arthur, wherever the lamp of archaeology casts its fitful gleam. This fashioning, however, is marked by deaths [T]o serve the narrative purpose, these violent deaths must be remembered/forgotten as ‘our own’ ” (205-6). Like surrealist artist Meret Oppenheim’s *Dejeuner en fourrure* – a cup, saucer, and spoon covered in fur – the fur-covered history of Canada intrigues us and repels us. We can argue over it, we can disagree as to its interpretations, we can rally around its symbols, but nobody can take it away. It is our cup. However fraught with greed, cultural hegemony, racism, violence, adventurism, imperialism, and ecological upheaval, however many different and conflicting meanings it may have to different Canadians, as sure as the beaver is on the nickel, the fur trade is nonetheless claimed by Canadian history and as part of the Canadian identity.

I am interested in how personal and shared narratives, grounded in the idea of place, create the shared identities that define community or communities within that

place, and further how these narratives and communal identities change the ideas of place. An analysis of the narratives of the fur trade, and specifically the representations of George Simpson in these narratives, offers an opportunity to interrogate the processes of narrative, place, and community in Canada. Characterizing the dynamic of the communal perception of identity, the geographer Nicholas Entrikin offers insights into the relationship of the cultural productions of place, narrative, and identity: “Place, territory, and landscape mix the material and the affective in often highly sentimentalized narratives of collective identity. Such attachments create ancestral territories, memorial landscapes, and communal places” (“Democratic Place-Making” 19). Places are social constructions of human geography, and can exist in plurality. Many geographic spaces, places, and social relationships conspire with, conflict with, overlap, inhabit, and contradict each other. How do the narratives of the fur trade arise and contribute to individual and communal identities? How do they change as social geographies and social relations change in the place once known as Rupert’s Land and now called Canada? Do non-fictional narratives – historical or (auto)biographical texts – differ from fictional ones in their contributions to place and identity? In order to respond to these questions, I propose first to explore the relationship of place to identity, and of identity to community. The representation of the fur trade as a defining element of place influences the representation of the human geography of Canada. In turn, these representations connect the operation of narratives to the identities of nation, community, and self.

Echoing Anderson’s ideas from his *Imagined Communities*, the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada notes in a recent document that “Canada is a

will against geography” (10). An examination of how texts, images, museums, and other cultural expressions represent the nineteenth-century fur trade and its history provides insight into this shifting and often contradictory will to imagine a Canadian identity. The beaver adorns the coats of arms of the city of Montreal and the provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. It adorns postage (Canada’s first stamp featured a beaver), the five-cent coin, and major corporate logos (The Hudson’s Bay Company, Canadian Pacific Railways, and Roots, to name three). Fur-trade museums such as the ones at Lachine, Fort Garry, and Fort Edmonton pander to an appetite for consumable history. Popular and widely consumed histories such as Peter C. Newman’s *Company of Adventurers* and the CBC’s *Canada: A People’s History* continue a longstanding trend to uphold the fur-trade narrative as a foundational myth of the imaginary nation. At the same time, scholarly researchers mine the considerable archival resources for historical interpretations that often counter the popularized views. In addition to recent visual artists such as Marianne Corless (who uses reclaimed fur coats, Hudson’s Bay blankets, and human hair as her media), earlier painters such as Paul Kane and Frances Hopkins rendered images of the trade that linger in the collective imagination. Since R.M. Ballantyne and before, writers of non-fiction and fiction have employed the story of the fur trade. Beneath the heroic, romanticized, and often sentimental versions of the white and Eurocentric stories of the fur trade that have predominated for many years lurk other versions of the story that also resonate. First Nations peoples contributed as partners, supplying and consuming goods in the trading enterprise. But the historical representation of the relationships between Europeans and First Nations is fraught with issues of under-

representation, misrepresentation, exploitation, and conflict. This multiplicity of representations serves not so much to create a single and totalizing fur-trade component of the Canadian identity, as it does to create a kind of iconic touchstone.

Edward Casey, Nicholas Entrikin, and others have written widely on the role of mutually-constituted notions of self and place in the construction of individual identity. In the article “Between Geography and Philosophy: What Does It Mean to be in the Place-World?” Casey relates self and place as a function of the body inhabiting space and being inhabited by it:

Places come into us lastingly; once having been in a particular place for any considerable time – or even briefly, if our experience there has been intense – we are forever marked by that place, which lingers in us indefinitely in a thousand ways, many too subtle for us to name. . . .

In contrast with Kant’s view that we construct a space by a formal transcendental activity, we are not the masters of space, but prey to it; we are subjects of place or, more exactly, *subject to place*. . . . In every case, we are still, even many years later, *in the places to which we are subject* because (and to the exact extent that) *they are in us*. (emphasis in original 688)

Although some critics contest this view of self, it serves as a useful starting point, and at least captures an imaginary conception of place and self.¹ In his essay, “Place and Region 2,” Entrikin connects some of Casey’s notions to community, noting that “[s]eparating this self-identity from collective identity or community is a difficult, if not impossible, task” (217). In the follow-up essay “Place and Region 3,” Entrikin further explores the relationship of subjectivity to community, arguing “that the identities that connect people to particular communities and local solidarities are a persistent quality of social relations” (263). He posits “the role of place as the repository of collective memory,” and elaborates that “[t]he conflation of places and memories is consistent with the communitarian particularity The general and the particular, or the universal and the particular, form

¹ Casey’s article is the opening article in a series of five essays that appear as a Forum in the *Annals of the Assoc. of American Geographers* 91 (2001). The series provides an overview of some of the current thinking about self and space in the construction of subjectivity. Entrikin responds to Casey cautiously, questioning Casey’s reliance on Bourdieu’s notion of *habitus*, which subjugates space to materiality: “*habitus* appears to make place redundant as a theoretical concept. The implicit reductionism of place . . . to the role of material cipher for the social offers a theoretical dead end for the geographer” (“Hiding Places” 695). Theodore Schatzki interrogates Casey’s philosophy of phenomenology (some of which is apparent in the passage quoted above), and suggests that Casey’s Luddite reading of globalization and postmodernism fails to agree with the social and material constructedness inherent in *habitus* (698-702). Barbara Hooper deconstructs Casey’s argument, and specifically the phenomenology of the self, space, and subjectivity; she argues that “Casey’s desire for place as a presence existing beyond the conflicts of difference and ambivalence, beyond the mediations of signs and representations – a meta-place where signs do not play without permission, a place that is fully my own – has been impossible from the start” (711). Hooper argues for a poststructuralist discourse of not place but space, a discourse that includes the imperatives of power, social relations, the physical, gender, and language. Casey responds by noting the room for further research into the “social and political determinants of place” (“On Habitus” 722) in the discussion of self, space, and subjectivity.

a core semantic axis that helps define a geographer's sense of place" (264). The cultural accumulation of subjectivity into communal identity in geographic place is a social process of accumulating knowledge and memories. I prefer to recast Entrikin's ideas of the universal and the particular in a metaphor other than that of the axis with two opposing ends. Rather, I see the interaction of the two as process. The familiar – if clichéd – metaphor of the mosaic is more useful. The smaller pieces of the particular, community identities become set in the larger design of the universal, national identity. In the process of what Entrikin calls "conflation," the differences between pieces can be lost or forgotten. But people, communities, and nations are *not* pieces of a puzzle: they have memories connected to place, as Entrikin notes. Tensions arise when the particular communities are unwilling to lose their collective memories to those of the grander design, especially if the forgetting of these memories denies them a sense of identity.

While problematized by Entrikin and others, the dialectic of the particular and the universal provides a framework to begin to understand the narrative and textual iterations of place and community.² Self and space converge, so that (for example) George Simpson in effect *becomes* the HBC territory. The individual and the community merge.

² In interrogating the dialectic of the particular and the universal, Entrikin summarizes Jürgen Habermas's and Veit Bader's positions that privilege universalist and inclusionist ideals of constitutional democracy over communitarian particularism. He notes William Connelly's misgivings that both universalism and communitarianism practise an "intolerance of difference." He discusses Lani Guinier's call to reject place in favour of interest groups. He reviews Richard Sennett's interesting argument that exclusionary limits of community derive from incomplete ideas of community rather than inherent limits to place and space ("Place and Region 3" 264). See also David Harvey for his insightful reading of militant particularism and the representation of regional identity in Raymond Williams' novels ("Militant Particularism").

Subjectivities merge into collective memory as more people share a place, and as they share their narratives. As an example of how narratives change as this merging evolves, texts that describe exploration are superseded by texts of history and nation-making. The potential of the presence (or absence) of sentimentality informs the narratives and imaginative writing of the collective identity. So juvenile fiction and popular histories have marked fur trade representation by appealing to emotion, which in turn supports conflation. But then, community particularism can compete with the universal discourses of nationalism and globalization as individuals or particular communities resist conflation. Thus, the grand national histories that invoke the fur trade in the first half of the twentieth century give way to historical interpretations of region, gender, race, and class. From this matrix of influences, I have generated four points of consideration. One can then use these points to consider the roles of place and community in the cultural production of narratives about the fur trade.

The first point considers how ideas of self and place connect. Self and place are contingent. In addition to lived experience, an individual constructs a notion of self from objective and external definitions of place. He or she has both a personal history and a shared community history in place. Lived experiences with the socially constituted dynamics of dominance and power in a place (such as gender, race, class, religion, ethnicity, and regionality) influence identity. In terms of Canadian identity, the fur trade has become a defining element of Canadianness. As Jennifer Brown comments, the fur trade “is safely entrenched in our historical consciousness” (“Fur Trade History” 81).

Notwithstanding that Brown expresses “a few misgivings about that entrenchment” (81), the fur trade provides a persistent narrative that ties history to people to place.

The second position considers that a multitude of communities can exist in a place, but that an over-arching place-centred identity tends to conflate differences over time. The multitudes can co-exist in a place depending on collective subject identities. In the fur trade, communities of First Nations, colonists, traders, missionaries, workers, and women (to name a few) can be understood to form distinct, self-identified communities. An individual may belong to more than one community, and these may conflict with and complement each other. However, a tension develops between conceptions of particular community identities and that of a universal one. So First Nations, gender-based, regional, or immigrant identities co-exist uneasily with national identity.

Pierre Bourdieu notes that inhabitants of a place deploy often “implicit, confused, and more or less contradictory” strategies variously to solidify their representation by others (and the contingent dominance vested in that representation) or to oppose that representation (227). These representations derive (at least partly) from the mutually-constituted notions of self and place that inform subjectivity and place, and the communal will of those subjects who form themselves (or are formed) into communities. Further, the cultural productions, including texts, generate representations that articulate and exploit individual subjectivities, the social relations of community, and shared places. However, at the level of a nation considered as place, the multitude of communities – even those resisting the imagined community of nation – merges into a mass identity. The fur-trade narrative has always negotiated its way through often-conflicting communities,

most notably European and First Nations. At least since Harold Innis's *The Fur Trade in Canada*, Eurocentric, mercantile, imperial, or national triumphalism has dominated the representation of place in the fur trade.

The third point considers the production and operation of text in the making of place and identity. The production of narrative texts (both fiction and non-fiction) engages a place at the level of subject and community. Yi-Fi Tuan writes that “deeply loved places are not necessarily visible, either to ourselves or to others. . . . Human places become vividly real through dramatization. Identity of place is achieved by dramatizing the aspirations, needs, and functional rhythms of personal and group life” (178).³ Narrative dramatizes the relationships of places and communities. In the transformation of place and identity into cultural material, narrative texts make and unmake collective conceptions of individual and community identity. Texts may resist or comply with received notions of place and social relations, or ignore the geographical discourse altogether. The texts about a place – whether they are created in that place or outside of it – become part of the lived-in, constructed social place that in turn informs notions of subjectivity and community. These texts accumulate, and their narratives build community identity by accretion. They are produced over time, for different reasons. This

³ By his own definition, Tuan's work “attempts to systematize humanistic insights” (7). Derek Gregory suggests that Tuan's writings be considered as a “philosophical anthropology” that is “contemplative and speculative,” but which is “studiously indifferent to the wider conversations that might be made possible *through the theoretical*” (emphasis in original 79-80). Indeed, the affective and sentimental qualities of texts about place and community to which I allude in my discussion are apparent in the quotation I have cited and elsewhere in Tuan's work; nonetheless, a careful reading of Tuan yields some valuable insights.

process can be seen in the way in which fur-trade texts have served different purposes over time, and have accumulated into a national imagined identity. Paul Kane's memoir is a self-serving prop to his career, and his images and the stories he recounts persevere. The 1872 edition of Archibald McDonald's *Peace River* promotes pioneer settlement, and the text has become one from which historians often quote. Innis writes *The Fur Trade in Canada* to support a macro-economic interpretation of national history, and his representation of the fur trade as a founding economic practice persists. Jennifer Brown and Sylvia van Kirk attempt to redress issues of gender and race, but still within an established narrative and textual framework. These few illustrations demonstrate that the sheer volume and diversity of texts about the fur trade in Canada create a deep unstructured resource of image, representation, and narrative that resonates in the imagined community.

The fourth point considers the operation of sentimentality in narratives of place and identity. These narrative texts often appeal to emotion over intellect as an essential element of the discourse of place and community. Some are more prone to sentimentality than others, or prone to it in ways that are obvious, unwilling to interrogate the dominant discourse. I do not mean to imply that all narratives of place and community only appeal to emotion, or that sentimentality in a text precludes a resistance to marginalization; rather, I am suggesting that the tendency to appeal to emotion increases as a narrative text conforms (whether consciously or unconsciously) to dominant representations of community identity. Many fur-trade texts and narratives are rife with sentimentality. Juvenile and romance narratives have been a staple of fur-trade fiction. Imperialist and

sentimental appeals to the glory of the British Empire abound. Even serious histories are not without the odd instance of affect.⁴

The foundation text for the fur trade in what we now call Canada is the 1670 Hudson's Bay Company charter.⁵ While not a narrative text in and of itself, this text establishes the narrative of exploitation by capital of a large tract of British North America for at least the following two hundred years. The geographer David Harvey offers an avowedly Marxist yet nonetheless compelling critique of the development of human geography:

Certainly from 1492 onwards, and even before, the internationalization of trade and commerce was well under way. Capitalism cannot do without its 'spatial fixes' (cf. Chapter 2 [of Harvey's *Spaces of Hope*]). Time and time again it has turned to geographical reorganization (both expansion and intensification) as a partial solution to its crises and impasses.

Capitalism thereby builds and rebuilds a geography in its own image. It

⁴ The second volume of E.E. Rich's comprehensive history of the HBC (1959) includes three illustrations: a portrait of John Churchill, First Duke of Marlborough; a portrait of Winston Churchill; and a portrait of George Simpson. Marlborough appears on the frontispiece. Winston Churchill's photo appears at the beginning of Book 5: Company Rule 1821-1870, the section that discusses Simpson at length. Rich refers to neither of the Churchills in the volume. Presumably the inclusion of the images serves to connect Simpson and the HBC to a tradition tracing back to an early military commander, through time to a modern one, and to thereby appeal to the vestiges of British imperial patriotism.

⁵ Of course, the trade in furs pre-dated the HBC, and the HBC was not the only enterprise active in it. But the charter ultimately helped the HBC to prevail upon its rivals, and contributed to the hegemony of the Company in the nineteenth century.

constructs a distinctive geographical landscape, a produced space of transport and communications, of infrastructures and territorial organizations, that facilitates capital accumulation during one phase of its history only to have to be torn down and reconfigured to make way for further accumulation at a later stage. (*Spaces* 54)

The charter of 1670 sets out the embedded narrative of capital and geography. The principals of the Company invest capital to seek reward in geographic exploitation; the charter states that they have “at their own great Cost and Charge undertaken an Expedition for Hudson’s Bay in the North west part of America . . . by means whereof there may probably arise very great Advantage to Us and our Kingdom” (2). The charter anticipates the need to build and rebuild its geographic exploitation (to paraphrase Harvey) as opportunities arise: the charter grants the right to the “Governor and Company, and their Successors, from time to time, and at all Times from henceforth, to erect and build such Castles, Fortifications, Forts, Garrisons, Colonies, Plantations, Towns or Villages, in any Parts or Places within the Limits and Bounds granted before in these Presents unto the said Governor and Company as they in their Discretions shall think fit and requisite . . .” (17). The charter reads as a manual for the colonial enterprise.

On the impact of the New World on the evolution of capitalism, Marx and Engels write in *The Communist Manifesto*: “Modern industry has established the world market, for which the discovery of America paved the way. This market has given an immense development to commerce, to navigation, to communication by land” (81). The hunger

for new opportunities can be seen in the evolution of the fur trade and its systematic exploration and exploitation of its economic land base.

Harvey draws attention to Marx's discussion of the operation of colonization in capitalism. In *Capital*, Marx contends that even though in the short term there is opportunity for an individual in a colony to accumulate property, the colonizing power or the growing "vilest financial aristocracy" intervene to undermine such accumulation, and lead to a rapid "centralization of capital" (Ch. 33). Such centralization replicates the Old-World capitalist system in the new. The historical development of the fur trade offers a good example of this idea: the amalgamation of the North West Company and the HBC in 1821 can be seen as a maturation of the New World economy, and a centralization of capital.

In a technical analysis of colonization in *Theories of Surplus Value*, Marx defines two types of colonial enterprise:

Firstly: There are the colonies proper, such as in the United States, Australia, etc. Here the mass of the farming colonists, although they bring with them a larger or smaller amount of capital from the motherland, are not *capitalists*, nor do they carry on *capitalist* production. They are more or less peasants who work themselves and whose main object, in the first place, is to produce *their own livelihood*, their means of subsistence. . . . [C]apitalist production is not yet dominant in agriculture

In the second type of colonies—plantations—where commercial speculations figure from the start and production is intended for the world

market, the capitalist mode of production exists (emphasis in original 301-3)

The value of this digression through Marx can be understood when his observations are related back to the fur trade and Canada, and to notions of narrative, self, and place. Pre-Confederation Canada included both of these models of colonization. The first type prevailed in the East, in Upper and Lower Canada, and in the Atlantic colonies (excepting Newfoundland).⁶ The second type prevailed in the West, where the fur trade exploited the resources of fur for a global market.

This difference between the two colonial cultures became less distinct as Canada developed as a nation-state. The shift to agricultural intensification and subsequent immigration in Western Canada eclipsed the fur trade. Interestingly, the Canadian agricultural settlement of Western Canada counters Marx's analysis that capitalist production was not dominant in agriculture. From the outset, the prairie agricultural market was a global one, and comprises an element of Innis's staples economy defined in *The Fur Trade in Canada* (381-402). If the individual homesteader has the ability to accumulate property, the controllers of the transportation networks, marketing combines, and centralized government institutions command significant influence.

The postcolonial culture in Canada needs to forget this difference between the two types of colonialism defined by Marx. Under the chapter subheading "The Biography of Nations" in his book *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson notes that "[a]ll

⁶ I think it is appropriate to describe Newfoundland as an example of the second type; the exploitable resource there was fish rather than fur, but it served a global market.

profound changes in consciousness, by their very nature, bring with them characteristic amnesias. Out of such oblivions, in specific historical circumstances, spring narratives” (204). Initially, the narrative representations of the fur trade and George Simpson serve to buttress the imagined British Empire, or (in the case of his around-the-world narrative) allow Simpson to create his own sense of self, or (in the case of intra-Company documents) function as the records of commercial achievement or failure. Later these representations are claimed as something inherently “Canadian.” Jennifer Brown argues the story of the fur trade has been “neatly packaged” and “co-opted, in a sense, into the national history of Canada” (“Fur Trade History” 81). To paraphrase Anderson, no history is too awful, as long as it is “ours”: French-English antagonisms, the fur-trade wars, the brutality of labour in the fur trade, the exploitation of women, the rampant profiteering, the genocide of First Nations peoples, the treatment of the Métis, the hanging of Louis Riel, the rebellions of 1837 and 1885. Anderson argues that the prevailing social relations in history are subject to “amnesia” and made new by their attachment to a nationalist (or community) sense of identity. With these acts of amnesia, the colonial differences are unified by a postcolonial imagined national community. “[I]t is imagined as a *community*,” Anderson writes, “because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship” (emphasis in original 7). What he calls “the reassurance of fratricide” can only be accomplished by assuming a fraternity: “Yet the imaginings of that fraternity, without which the reassurance of fratricide can not be born, shows up remarkably early, and not without a curious authentic popularity” (202). Anderson notes

that these imaginings need not be programmed: “But it is surely too easy to attribute these reassuring ancient fratricides simply to the icy calculations of state functionaries. At another level they reflect a deep reshaping of the imagination of which the state was barely conscious, and over which it had, and still has, only exiguous control” (201).

Harvey offers a geographical recasting of one of Marx’s most well-known concepts, the fetishism of commodities: “He sought to capture by that term the way in which markets conceal social (and we should add) geographical information and relations. . . . [W]e have to get behind the veil, the fetishism of the market and commodity, in order to tell the full story of social reproduction” (“Between Space and Time” 422-3). Commodification of place and identity develops as individuals and communities suffer from a sense of placelessness or unconnectedness. Harvey describes how and why place becomes commodified as a marker of individual and community identity: “The more global interrelations become, the more internationalized our dinner ingredients and our money flows, and the more spatial boundaries disintegrate, so more rather than less of the world’s population clings to place and neighbourhood, or to nation, region, ethnic grouping, or religious belief as specific marks of identity. . . . The capitalist response has been to invent tradition as yet another item of commodity production and consumption (the re-enactment of ancient rites and spectacles, the excesses of a rampant heritage culture) . . .” (“Between Space and Time” 427). In intellectual and cultural marketplaces, regionalism and expressions of identity politics of race, gender, class, or ethnicity become incorporated into the mainstream; limited identities are contained by their limits, and trumped by national identity.

In the consumer marketplace, popular iterations of the fur trade such as dioramas in museums and miniature birch-bark canoes in dollar stores indulge in sentimentalism. Place and identity are processed through history and packaged as a commodity. An example of such a process can be seen in the television series and subsequent book (and web-site) *Canada: A People's History*: the history of the fur trade is scattered over a few episodes in the series or a chapter in the book, the character of Simpson is condensed to a few scenes or paragraphs. Issues of gender, race, and class are acknowledged, but ultimately included as part of the package. Derek Gregory in *Geographical Imaginations* expounds at length on Harvey's analysis of commodity fetishism (214-56). He notes that Harvey's dogmatism "can too readily marginalize material culture, pushing its 'surface forms' to one side," and he urges a deliberate "opening of the text to multiple ways of knowing" (226). Do the narratives of the fur trade, particularly as they exist as material culture in books and texts, serve merely as commodities of identity and place?

The imagining of national identity and its attendant amnesias operate unconsciously. The community of a nation needs to claim all of its historical narratives to sustain itself in imagination, even if the claiming is in order to forget them. This claiming amalgamates its different communities into a national community. And so Simpson's texts become Canadian ones; even when re-cast in the guise of academic inquiry that chases evidence, or postcolonial resistance that writes gender and colour into history, or fictional representations such as Fred Stenson's *The Trade* that imagine outside of history, these stories now belong to this place, this nation, this community.

CHAPTER THREE

IMAGINING THE VOYAGEUR: REPRESENTING THE FUR TRADE

By the turn of the nineteenth century, narratives such as those by Samuel Hearne and Alexander Mackenzie documented the exploration of the northern and western frontiers of British North American geography, and also recorded some of the trade and cultural practices of the fur trade at the frontiers of mercantile commerce and First Nations communities.⁷ The texts by Hearne and Mackenzie served to buttress commercial and scientific interests in the far reaches of the colony. These travel and exploration narratives helped to generate a conception of the place of the Northwest. But other texts also appeared that portrayed the performance of identity in the fur trade. Before George Simpson claimed rapid canoe travel as a signature of his identity, the Irish poet Thomas

⁷ In this thesis, I will attempt to follow the example of Adele Perry, and use the names of First Nations (5). When that is not possible, I will use the term “First Nations.” Unlike Perry, I will use the term Métis to refer to those who share white and First Nations ancestry and live more-or-less in a self-identified community of such people, more-or-less on the prairies. I will use the term “mixed race” to refer to those who share white and First Nations ancestry and live more-or-less in the white community, but in usually subordinate roles (such as the children of traders). Both Perry and Sylvia Van Kirk avoid the term Métis. Van Kirk uses the term “mixed blood.” Perry acknowledges the problematical nature of such terms as having “the air of biological determinism” (6), and I share her discomfort. She prefers to identify such people as First Nations, but acknowledges the need at times to use the term “mixed race” or “mixed blood” for the lack of an alternative. See: Perry 5-6, 203 n.4; Van Kirk 255 n.8. See also: John Foster’s “The Métis: The People and the Term”; and Jennifer Brown’s and Jacqueline Peterson’s Introduction to *The New People: Being and Becoming Métis in North America*, especially pages 3-9.

Moore created “A Canadian Boat Song” to use the canoe to appeal to the popular imagination.

According to Konrad Gross, Moore’s work “became so popular that it is safe to say it started a spate of nineteenth-century works on the voyageurs and determined some of the most persistent literary conventions in which voyageurs were enshrined” (77). Gross notes that “[t]he ‘Canadian Boat Song’ was the product of the Romantic Age with its predilection for folk traditions and the beneficial effects of a life close to nature” (78). Moore set his eighteen-line poem to music, and the poem and song were widely published. The published poem includes two lengthy footnotes. The first describes his trip down the St. Lawrence from Kingston to Montreal. The second is a passage he quotes from Alexander Mackenzie’s *General History of the Fur Trade*. In a Preface included in his *Collected Works*, he further comments on the creative process of the poem. The poem, taken together with his footnotes and comments, offers insight into how Moore deploys representations of the fur trade and the place of the British North American wilderness to fashion his own identity.

With its appeal to the “tutelar saint of voyagers” (as Moore quotes Mackenzie in a footnote) to “hear our prayers” (line 15), its evocation of the urban “evening chime” to describe the song and labour of the paddlers (1), and its call to community in the phrase “row, brothers, row” (5), the text of the poem attempts to unite human endeavour to natural occurrence. The chorus, “The Rapids are near and the daylight’s past” (6, 12, 18), moves from the suggestion of menace in the first stanza, to one of comforting harmony in the last. Moore represents the voyageurs’ labour as a canoe pastoral, a synthesis of song,

water, wind, and prayer. Gross perhaps over-states the poem's deterministic influence in literary history when he argues that over time, the "ingredients of the voyageur's existence were toned down or wholly sacrificed to an idealized image for which Moore's 'Canadian Boat Song' was responsible" (79). Moore's idyll contrasts with the voyageurs' labour as described by Mackenzie in his unadorned prose. Mackenzie describes the work to carry goods over the nine-mile Grande Portage as "a labour which cattle cannot conveniently perform" (xliv). Elsewhere, Mackenzie describes Portage Pin de Musique as a place "where many men have been crushed to death by the canoes, and others have received irrecoverable injuries" (xxxv). Moore articulates a Romantic idea of life in the woods that concurs with contemporary sensibilities, while Mackenzie documents the brutal realities of fur-trade work. Both the "soft" and "hard" representations of the voyageur and fur-trade life, typified by Moore and Mackenzie respectively, persisted for several decades, even up to the present day.

Gross cites a number of texts that can trace Moore as a direct influence on the representation of voyageur identity, canoe culture, and fur-trade motifs. But he fails to draw attention to Moore's own footnotes to the poem. These contain the clues that point to the creation of voyageur representations as performances to be consumed. In the first footnote, Moore alleges that he "wrote these words to an air which *our* boatmen sung to *us* frequently" (emphasis added 124). In contrast to Mackenzie's text, which documents the life of the voyageur from the perspective of a participant (albeit, as a dominant one), Moore's text presents the voyageurs as performers from the perspective of a privileged spectator. As a consumer, the spectator assumes ownership of the performers and of the

performance's interpretation. In the first footnote, Moore writes of the song that "now there is not a note of it which does not recall to my memory the dip of our oars in the St. Lawrence, the flight of our boat down the Rapids, and all those new and fanciful impressions to which my heart was alive during the whole of the very interesting voyage." The voyageurs' canoeing expertise and their "good voices . . . perfectly in tune together" matter only to contribute to the impressions made upon him, and to move him to compose verse (124). Indeed their language is "a long incoherent story"; by implication, *his* text, the enlightened spectator's response, is the valid one.

The second footnote to the poem further emphasizes Moore's aesthetic scrim: the reference to Mackenzie appears to lend the poem the credibility of a primary source. Yet as I have already noted, Mackenzie harbours no Romantic illusions about the voyageur; not once in his *General History* or the complete text of the *Voyages* does he mention any singing. Finally, in his Preface to his *Collected Edition*, Moore reveals a scrim behind the scrim, when he relates that not only has he created the text, but the music too, resulting in an imagined performance of voyageur culture: "From all this it will be perceived, that, in my own setting of the air, I departed in almost every respect but the time [i.e., the measure of the musical rhythm] from the strain our voyageurs had sung to us, leaving the music of the glee nearly as much my own as the words. Yet, how strongly *impressed* I had become with the *notion* that this was the identical air sung by the boatmen – how closely it linked itself in my *imagination* with the *scenes* and *sounds* amidst which it had occurred to me" (emphasis added). He makes no claim to authenticity because his purpose is aesthetic originality. Indeed, his European vocabulary marks him as interloper.

He calls the canoe a boat, uses the terms voyageurs and “boat-men” interchangeably, and substitutes paddles with “oars.” I perhaps belabour this point only because Moore’s poem seems a prototype of much-mimicked performative representation, of self-conscious spectatorship, and of textual self-fashioning. In this instance, these three things appear distinct – the representation is of the voyageur’s performance, the spectatorship is by the interested but enlightened spectator, and the self-fashioning is by the self-aware poet. But as the century progressed, and as the fur trade matured as an enterprise and as a social dynamic, representation, spectatorship, and performance combined and re-combined in different cultural manifestations. How these Romantic notions became predominant and how George Simpson adopted them as his own acts of self-fashioning are further discussed in Chapter Four of this thesis, “Imagining Authority: Fur-trade Performance.”

In her book *Winter Studies and Summer Rambles*, Anna Bromwell Jameson similarly turns canoe travel into performance. The complete work itself is a kind of meditation on the relationship of identity to place. In Jameson’s case, she records her inability to find an identity for herself in a place where she cannot connect to the narratives. In the world of early colonial Toronto, she lacks the social space in which to act out the performance of herself that she desires. The writing of the text becomes a resistance to these constraints. She chafes within the confines of Toronto and she seems most at ease in her rambles. As a traveller, she takes on the role of informed observer and needs not to participate. When Jameson turns her pen to record her canoe trip on Lake Huron, she describes an aesthetic repose that parallels that of Moore: “I reclined in the bottom of the canoe, as in a litter, very much at my ease . . . I had near me my cloak,

umbrella, and parasol; my note-books and sketch-books, and a little compact basket always by my side, containing eau de Cologne, and all those necessary luxuries which might be wanted in a moment, for I was well resolved that I would occasion no trouble but what was inevitable” (522). Thus settled, the voyageur crew of her canoe becomes like a private entertainment: “The men sang their gay French songs, the other canoe joining in the chorus. . . . One always led, but in these there was a diversity of taste and skill. If I wished to hear ‘En roulant ma boule, roulette,’ I applied to Le Duc. Jacques excelled in ‘La belle rose blanche,’ and Louis was great in ‘Trois canards s’en vont baignant’ ” (525). Apparently, they took requests. She further describes the paddling itself as an act done for her consumption: “They often amused me by a specimen of dexterity They would paddle up towards the shore with such extreme velocity, that I expected to be dashed on the rock, and then in a moment, by a simultaneous back-stroke of the paddle, stop with a jerk, which made me breathless” (525). She assumes that they do this procedure for her amusement, in order to leave her breathless.

As visitors from the metropole, writers like Moore and Jameson experience British North America as a place that defines the self only insofar as it can illuminate the dominant metropolitan attitudes. The colony is subject matter for the self-fashioning performance of their prose and poetry. Moore and Jameson perhaps exoticise the place of the colony for aesthetic motives; but the effect of the writing does not draw attention to the place, but rather to the text. Moore’s experience with the voyageurs may have been splendid, indeed inspiring, but the textual production of the inspiration is even greater. Curiously, though unsurprisingly, similar attitudes become adopted by those whose lives

and identities are very much tied to the place of colony. Mimicry of the metropole characterizes the colonial experience, particularly among the emigrants from the metropole. In the case of British North America, the English-speaking immigrants, and the colonial-born who self-identified with Great Britain, mimicked the behaviours of the homeland.

However, a colonial-born writer – even one of European heritage – can subtly shift the aesthetic point of view to affirm the connection of self to the place of the New World. In *Songs of the Wilderness, Being a Collection of Poems Written on the Route to the Territory of the Hudson's Bay Co. in 1844 with Notes*, the Anglican Bishop of Quebec, George Mountain, creates a text that connects himself with an emotional attachment to place as part of identity. Gross asserts that Mountain employs those “most persistent literary conventions in which voyageurs were enshrined” (Gross 77). But for Mountain, these conventions do not serve self-fashioning textual performances. He celebrates the landscape itself, and attempts to write himself as part of it. In the Preface he comments: “I entered the Hudson's Bay without one thought of writing verses. . . . [T]he poems were all composed upon the journey; now lounging in the canoe; now lying awake, for some portion of the night, under my tent; now sitting upon a stone or fallen tree while the people were carrying their loads across a *portage*; and first drawing, perhaps, my veil around my neck, to protect my face and ears from mosquitoes, – in such a situation specially apt to be annoying” (xvii-xviii). Whereas Jameson reflects on landscape to describe her displacement from it, and with the text she affirms herself as English and European, and whereas Moore uses place as material for the creation of self-

fashioning text, Mountain adopts the English conventions of poetry to describe his connection to place. His text negotiates the identity of one who is English but also of the New World.

Mountain's book also appears to be the first to invoke George Simpson as patron. Mountain reports that his guide is the "Iroquois, Jacques Kariwagairon, of Kaughnawaugha, who was picked for me in pursuance of the kind directions given by Sir George Simpson" (53-4). Mountain can undertake his journey only with Simpson's assistance. Simpson is the authority of the place – an authority both in the sense that he has mastered it, and that he is master over it. By the time of Mountain's travels, the name George Simpson had become synonymous with the Hudson's Bay Company and its territory. Mountain invokes Simpson's name and blessing in order to show that he belongs in this place.

CHAPTER FOUR

IMAGINING AUTHORITY: FUR-TRADE PERFORMANCE

George Simpson's legacy as a dominant actor in the history of the fur trade and pre-Confederation Canada owes as much to his own construction of his identity as it does to his position as the Overseas Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company. Before he helped to produce the spectacle for and with The Prince of Wales in 1860 for an admiring public, he spent decades performing for private fur-trade audiences. With many frenetic transcontinental crossings and his global circumnavigation, he established a reputation as a tireless, driven, and details-oriented manager. His travelling style appealed to the employees in the field, the Hudson's Bay Company Governing Committee in London, and the public. His attention to the details of arrivals and departures showed a flair for self-conscious and self-fashioning performance of authority.

In order to create an identity as the master of the place of the fur trade, Simpson relied on a number of invented traditions to reinforce his position of command. In his Introduction to *The Invention of Tradition*, Eric Hobsbawm categorizes three types of invented traditions:

- a) those establishing or symbolizing social cohesions or the membership of groups, real, or artificial communities, b) those establishing or legitimizing institutions, status or relations of authority, and c) those whose main purpose was socialization, the inculcation of beliefs, value systems and conventions of behaviour. (9)

Hobsbawm notes that examples of types b) and c) are practices “symbolizing submission to authority in British India” (9). Examples of some of Simpson’s practices can be seen to serve a similar purpose in the mercantile and colonial administration of Rupert’s Land. Hobsbawm makes a distinction between the customs, conventions, and routines that evolve in order to facilitate continuing social practices, and those that are invented to serve authority symbolically and ritualistically (3-4). He acknowledges that this distinction is not always easy to trace where the traditions mix invention and evolution (4). Simpson’s long voyages continue the necessary overland treks of Mackenzie and the other Nor’Westers, yet for Simpson, they also symbolize his control over the administration of the trade. The celebration of arrivals and departures at posts was a longstanding practice, yet Simpson put his personal stamp on such events.

Alexander Mackenzie characterizes the relationship between the Montreal traders and the brigades as one based at least partly on respect:

[T]hough they are sometimes assembled to the number of twelve hundred men, indulging themselves in the free use of liquor, and quarrelling with each other, they always shew the greatest respect to their employers, who are comparatively but few in number, and beyond the aid of any legal power to enforce due obedience. In short, a degree of subordination can only be maintained by the good opinion these men entertain of their employers, which has been uniformly the case, since the trade has been formed and conducted on a regular system. (xlvi)

In the wild years of the fighting between this time described by Mackenzie and the

merger of the North West and Hudson's Bay companies in 1821, "the regular system" of the trade was irregular. Authority over the fur trade's employees and its First Nations customers was in disarray. The merger and the new organizational model heralded by the Deed Poll of 1821 required a different form of authority. Enter George Simpson. Historian Edith Burley argues that "Simpson exemplified a new type of management, appropriate to modern enterprise and illustrative of a new style of authority, which emphasized uniformity and regularity" (50). Burley's work offers a cogent and detailed analysis of the administrative policies and procedures intended to exercise authority, and the ways in which workers resisted these. Burley cites a number of examples of acts of resistance large and small by which workers acted out their disobedience and discontentment with what she calls "the imperium of George Simpson" and the machinations of the London Committee (248). Burley draws attention to the fact that workers were not as malleable as the HBC management desired them to be, and that although the model of authority was top-down, the solution to problems required negotiations among different social classes to carry out the work (245-6).

Yet Simpson's actions suggested that those at "the top" did not necessarily expect deference or tractability; rather, his performance of authority participated in and acknowledged the need for negotiation of the dominant position in the social relationship. The HBC required the reformed policies and procedures to be implemented in such a way that the Company maintained the appearance of continuity with the former practices in order for the reformed enterprise to be effective. In twenty-first century terms, the HBC was preserving the "intellectual capital" or the "knowledge legacy" of the organization –

in other words, the Company needed to retain the people who did the work and all the stuff they knew about the work. Such experience and knowledge is irreplaceable. Success demanded that the people direct their work to the Company's interests. Post-Deed Poll and post-merger, Simpson established invented traditions to fill what Hobsbawm characterizes as voids of order and authority (8). Simpson deployed the pomp and circumstance to keep the employees believing *enough* in the appearance of authority until that authority could change the organization's behaviour.

If one believes Mackenzie's statement that "subordination can only be maintained by the good opinion these men entertain of their employers," one might first examine the practices of the Nor'Westers before looking at Simpson. As both stakeholders in the North West Company and as participants in the work, the wintering partners had a relationship to the company and the workers that differed from that of the contracted servants of the HBC. The wintering partners in the North West Company could in some respect hold themselves as peers to those whom they employed. Most had passed at least one season if not many in fur-trade country. As a spectacle, perhaps their infamous Beaver Club dinners and summer banquets at Fort William can be seen as performances where they acted out solidarity with the workers. George Bryce writes of the banquets at Fort William that

[a]t times when they had been feasting long into morning, the traders and clerks would sit down upon the feast room floor, when one would take up the tongs, another the shovel, another the poker, and so on. They would arrange themselves in regular order, as in a boat, and vigorously rowing,

sing a song of the voyage; and loud and long till the early streaks of the East were seen would the rout continue. When the merriment reached such a height as this, ceremony was relaxed, and voyageurs, servants, and attendants were admitted to witness the wild carouse of the wine-hearted partners. (*Remarkable History* 157)

If this description that “ceremony was relaxed” is accurate, it represents a performance of authority wherein the traders established a rapport with the “twelve hundred men, indulging themselves in the free use of liquor” (as Mackenzie describes the Fort William camp). Writing some eight or nine decades after the fact, Bryce does not attribute his sources here, and one can question whether the text contains at least some embellishment. Yet even read as mythologizing historiography, the text offers clues to the ways representation and performativity operate. Bryce’s text presents a sharp contrast between representations of the practices of the North West and Hudson’s Bay companies: the anarchic and immoral Nor’Westers (Bryce was a Presbyterian minister) were succeeded by the orderly HBC men. This representation contributes to the thesis developed in Bryce’s book that the basically sound management of the HBC eventually prepared the way for Rupert’s Land to join the Dominion.

Simpson needed the Nor’Westers to make the 1821 merger successful, and he faced the challenge of needing to present an authority that they trusted as genuine. Clearly, the highly capitalized and charter-mandated Hudson’s Bay Company required more structured practices than the North West Company, yet these practices needed to differ from those of the pre-merger HBC. *Peace River*, Archibald McDonald’s account of

the 1828 transcontinental voyage by Simpson, offers opportunities to examine Simpson's presentation of himself. McDonald writes that Simpson travelled in his own canoe, and enjoyed a special diet:

Breakfast at eight, dinner at one, which last stoppage merely occupies from eight to ten minutes, that the men may swallow a mouthful of pemmican, while the servant cuts off a slice of cold something with a glass of wine, to which the Governor invites one of his fellow travellers to partake of, as we move along and spend the remainder of the day on board his own canoe; the other makes a very good shift to eat and drink something of the kind alone. (2)

Simpson travelled with two other "gentlemen," McDonald and Dr. Hamlyn; hence one was always odd man out for lunch. The phrasing is ambiguous: does "makes a very good shift" mean that one would do well if one were able to have such fare? Or that one must put up with one's own company, but has the consolation of a "slice of cold something with a glass of wine"? Later, McDonald notes that they rid themselves of the York factory pemmican, "which was very bad indeed" (3), suggesting that the first reading is appropriate. To parse the meaning so closely may seem to split hairs, but given Simpson's eye for detail and his attention to social dynamics, he was likely attuned to the possible interpretations of his invitation by his travelling companions and by the crews. In the post-1821 HBC, he overlooked not even the smallest opportunity to create a ritual that affirmed the structure of authority.

George Bryce describes Simpson's celebrated arrivals and departures as "his method of appealing to the imagination of the Indians and Company servants alike" (*Remarkable History* 272). Throughout his journal, McDonald offers details of Simpson's employment of the Highland piper Colin Fraser, his use of a musical snuff box to astound First Nations chiefs, the fanfares and processions designed to impress on-lookers, the singing of the voyageur songs, and other performative aspects of the trip. Many texts over the last 130 years have repeated and interpreted these same details.⁸ Simpson did not invent these elements, but refined them into a stylized behaviour that became a signature piece of his identity. Ultimately these performative elements – and by extension, George Simpson's identification with them – were celebrated with The Prince of Wales in 1860.

In a note – the longest interpolation in McDonald's book not appended as an endnote – the journal's editor, Malcolm McLeod, describes Simpson's oratorical style. He claims Simpson possessed "an address which ever combined the *suaviter in modo, et fortiter in imperio*. His was, indeed, on such an occasion, an address to strike awe on his hearers" (27). Note McLeod's rendering of the usual motto *suaviter in modo, et fortiter in re*: the substitution of *imperium* for *res* emphasizes the performativity of authority that Simpson practised.⁹ Simpson's penchant for dramatic entrances and his abilities as a

⁸ See for example: Willson (447); Bryce (*Remarkable History* 272-6; *Mackenzie, Selkirk, Simpson* 232-9); A.S. Morton (150-1); Chalmers (77-85); Galbraith (94-8); Newman (230, 231-2). E. E. Rich (461-2) makes an uncharacteristic slip when he attributes the description of Simpson's canoe to McDonald, which rightly should be noted as the editorial comment of the journal's editor, Malcolm McLeod.

⁹ I translate *suaviter in modo, et fortiter in imperio* "sweet in manner, bold in authority." *Imperium* also has the meaning of the land over which authority is wielded. I translate *suaviter in modo, et fortiter in re* as "sweet in manner, bold in act."

stirring orator were elements of invented traditions that borrowed from various sources. His dining invitations were like invitations to the captain's table at sea. The processions into fort and the firing of guns were reminiscent of military pageantry. The voyageur songs borrowed from the folk traditions of French, Métis, and mixed-race servants. The bagpipes appealed to the Company's Scots. The snuff box and the bagpipes demonstrated the cultural superiority of European technology over that of the First Nations. Hobsbawm notes the paradox inherent in invented traditions: they serve to inculcate values and behaviours and to establish authority (1), yet at the same time they are often vague as to what the values are (10). Despite the vagueness, the behaviours and practices become entrenched (11). Simpson's hodgepodge of performative acts pointed to a particular response: they invited those who witnessed them to acknowledge him as the dominant authority.

To these non-verbal performances, Simpson added documentation. In his journal, McDonald describes the Governor's landing at Norway House as "certainly more imposing than anything hitherto seen in this part of Indian country" (4). McDonald immediately follows this description with the comment that "[t]he Governor was occupied in writing the whole of the evening" (4). Simpson-the-traveller contributed to the visible and kinetic image of his leadership, but Simpson-the-documentation-master

provided the deep reserve of potential authority. Unlike Moore and other writers who mined the fur trade to create multiple copies of singular texts, which then required a wide and anonymous circulation to effect their performative success as writers (that is, books to be bought and sold in the market by the public), Simpson created, and caused to be created by his subordinates, texts that were circulated in their own closed society. This private circulation of correspondence, logs, post journals, reports, account books, and the like were the transformative agents that allowed Simpson to exercise his programs of economy, discipline, financial management, social engineering, politics, and control. He was the undisputed focus of this documentation from the field; in turn, the texts that he created and received, in the form of his correspondence with the London Committee, ensured that his control of information was complete. Burley writes:

Simpson's position in the company together with his regular visits to London beginning in the 1830s entrenched his authority firmly. His enormously detailed annual letters ensured that, even when he was not there in person, it was chiefly his views and recommendations that came before the committee. As a result, he exercised an unprecedented influence in London. (52-3)

Burley overstates the case, and perhaps is influenced by John McLean (whom she quotes a little later in her text), one of the few contemporaries of Simpson to publicly declaim him. McLean writes, "From Labrador to Nootka Sound the unchecked, uncontrolled will of a single individual gives law to the land. . . . Clothed with a power so unlimited, it is not to be wondered at that a man who rose from a humble situation should in the end

forget what he was and play the tyrant. Let others, if they will, submit to be ruled with a rod of iron. I at least shall not” (235-6). E. E. Rich, however, shades the case somewhat, and offers several examples of how policies and actions attributed to Simpson were driven by the London Committee.¹⁰ Certainly, as controller of the flood of documentation inward and outward, Simpson acted the part McLean assigned him. He took the Rupert’s Land stage as imperial master, reading all scripts as his own; by inhabiting the role of the Company in all its guises, he became its success. His act of self-fashioning and self-representation – which seemed to offend McLean – was such a complete integration of corporate and personal identity that the two are nearly impossible to separate.

Simpson’s actions not only integrated the personal and the corporate, but also connected his identity to place, demonstrating the contingency of self and place. His transcontinental journeys claimed Rupert’s Land as *his* territory. Likewise, the territory claimed him. During his lifetime in North America and for decades following his death, few challenged the assumption that the HBC and Simpson dominated all aspects of the

¹⁰ For example, Rich analyses decisions on eliminating posts (432), the administration of the Red River colony (440), reproof for needless risks (457-8), the establishment of beaver quotas (472), and implementation of wage reduction and economy measures (482).

Northwest.¹¹ Unwritten in the public texts of the nineteenth century, but the subject of longstanding gossip, was Simpson's sexual history in HBC territory. While there is no evidence to support Grant MacEwan's claim that Simpson fathered seventy children (53), Simpson's relationships with mixed-race women were another way he claimed the place. And when he brought his white wife Frances into the territory, he invented another tradition. Some though not all of the traders emulated him, going to Great Britain or Montreal to fetch white wives back into the country. The figure of the white woman as the anchor of morality and respectability became particularly a trope of fictional representation of the fur trade. These issues and their treatment in texts are discussed in more detail in Chapter Five, "Imagining History: Writing George Simpson," and Chapter Six, "Imagining the Imaginary: Representing the Fur Trade and George Simpson in Fiction," of this thesis. Even as recent scholarship has opened a space in the historical discourse for research into the roles played by First Nations, women, and working people, the character of Simpson still claims a dominant part of the discussion. Even those who contest his influence cannot ignore him.

The one public text attributed to Simpson that was published during his lifetime is *Narrative of a Journey Round the World*. The production of this text bears examining as

¹¹ There is hardly a narrative or account of exploration and travel in the Northwest that does not identify Simpson with place, usually in a position of authority. Simpson's letters of introduction are the passports to HBC services for travellers in the territory. He is thanked by many for his Iroquois guides and crews. His own canoes and travels are described in detail. He arranges horses, pemmican, and ammunition. See for example: George Mountain (56), J.H. Lefroy (x), Henry Hind (272, 274-5), J.G. Kohl (*Kitchi-gamì* 256-8), John Palliser (20, 32), Earl of Southesk (4-31, 364), George Grant (33); and Sanford Fleming (113-6, 119) among others.

performance of authority. Although the evidence strongly indicates that Simpson did not write the book that bore his name, the *Narrative* nevertheless served to establish him as an authoritative figure in British North America, and to bolster opinion of him in London. Edward Hopkins wrote, or recorded perhaps from dictation, the first part of the narrative, which takes Simpson as far as the Sandwich Islands. The original notes for the rest of the journey are lost, but Hopkins's journal and whatever other sources were available were handed over to Archibald Barclay, the London secretary of the Hudson's Bay Company. His job was to turn it into a book. Apparently it was a daunting task. By 1 June 1843 he complains in a letter of the time constraints Simpson has imposed. G.W. Simpson (no relation) writes in a letter to Sir George Simpson on 18 September 1843 that the manuscript is "not then in a condition to go out of [Barclay's] hands." By 3 January 1844, Barclay tries to reassure Simpson in a letter: "Do not be fidgety about your book – it will be all right and in good time yet." By 23 July 1845, the manuscript has crossed the ocean to Red River, where Recorder Adam Thom puts his hand to it. From the tone of Thom's letter of that date, Barclay's attempts fall short of the mark: "Dr. Barclay has brought your work down to the Sandwich Islands" but Thom has to re-write it: "[O]f what Dr. Barclay has finished might be advantageously enlarged." On 23 December 1845 Thom writes to Simpson again: he has expanded the section up to the Sandwich Islands by "160 pages," and he struggles to "account for the difference in style" presumably between Hopkins, Barclay, and Thom.

Cogent to a discussion of the textual performance of authority is Thom's comment that he "is striving to render the work such as you could yourself have rendered

it with an equal command of leisure and an equal expenditure of application.” By the next summer, Thom appears to have completed his task. On 11 August 1846 he writes to Simpson, “I have resolved to send to Mr. Finlayson a copy of your journal, three chapters of it being my own draft.” Upon receiving a copy of the published book, Peter Skene Ogden writes Simpson an admiring letter dated 12 March 1848 from Fort Washington, commenting that “the style I should say is yours even if I had not known the author.” We can follow therefore the creation of this book through a series of ghostwriters to its reception by Skene, a reader who knows Simpson and his writing style (from his correspondence) well. Skene’s opinion suggests that even though Simpson did not write it, the book can pass for his. It is a credible barometer of identity. Thus the production of *Narrative of a Journey Round the World* becomes an exercise by which Simpson uses his authority to manage others to document his identity for him, to his specifications.

The production of Simpson’s *Narrative* also demonstrates the way in which narratives and texts about a place operate to connect self, place, and community. The narrative positions Simpson as a citizen of the world and the agent of empire. Although London and the metropole are its intended audience, the *Narrative* serves to define Rupert’s Land as a place of importance, and Simpson as a person of importance. He exercises the imperial muscle. Each place and its peoples – Rupert’s Land, Alaska, New Caledonia, the Columbia, Alaska, the Sandwich Islands, Siberia – are different, but aesthetically integrated into a single identity. Simpson’s *Narrative* arrogates the multitude of communities into that of empire, and arrogates himself as the master of these multitudes.

Whereas Simpson commissioned the text of his *Narrative* to establish a representation of self and place in his name, he employed surrogates in others ways too. The artist Paul Kane had his own motivations of self-fashioning and ambition when he ventured into the Northwest, but Simpson did not miss a chance to influence the visual and textual representations of the place he oversaw. In his analysis of the authorship of Paul Kane's *Wanderings of an Artist*, I.S. MacLaren discusses what he calls the "metropolitan imperial aesthetic gaze" which was "a way of commodifying colonial, fur-trade, or Native life," and which resulted in "ethnocentric sentimentalism" (235).¹² MacLaren draws attention to the fact that texts such as those by Kane and Simpson reflected a prevailing ideology, yet he fails to acknowledge that self-fashioning of identity played a role in the text's creation. Kane went wandering to garner the material to establish his reputation as an artist. And Simpson directed Kane to reinforce the representation of HBC territory on Simpson's terms. The matrix of relationships between text, identity, narrative, community, and place is complex (and the sentimentality serves to simplify it). In the case of Kane's text, the journey that comprised the bulk of *Wanderings* is made possible by the intervention of Simpson, as an example where Simpson exercised his authority over place by manoeuvring another to his will. By his commissioning of paintings, by his directions to Kane of what to paint, and by his agreeing to provision Kane, Simpson demonstrated his mastery over the geography. But

¹² MacLaren acknowledges that the source of his term "metropolitan imperial aesthetic gaze" is Peter Whitely's "metropolitan aesthetic gaze." He borrows the term "ethnocentric sentimentalism" from Clifford Geertz (235, 245 n41).

Kane's representation of himself (or, as MacLaren suggests, the representation that was constructed for him by committee) repeatedly calls attention to his ability to outpace Simpson as he wanders (Kane 31, 33). Thus, Kane establishes his credentials as a traveller who deserves to be in the place: he outperforms the master. Kane claims a piece of Simpson's performativity of authority over place. Then such a claim is made material in text.

The publication of McDonald's journal of the 1828 Peace River journey is more material evidence of the performative transforming into the textual. The last lines of the text read: "Here of course ends my Journal of the voyage. The Governor is furnished with a copy of it" (39). The text of Simpson's performance of authority was intended as a private document, but later became a public document. Here the representation of Simpson's authority does not serve to create an identity as an act of self-fashioning; Simpson's authority has been established, and has been widely disseminated. The publication of McDonald's journal, rather, uses that already-received authority to bolster another cause. British Columbia entered Confederation in 1871. The journal was published in 1872, in the seat of federal government, Ottawa. Malcolm McLeod's Preface states the purpose of publication clearly:

The object of the present *brochure*, at this juncture, is to direct attention – by an account of a canoe voyage through the region – to the fact that *beyond* that "*Belt*" of *supposed limited* fertility, which is implied in the term "Fertile Belt," there is, in our North West, an area, continuous in every direction and easily accessible to its utmost limits, containing *over*

three hundred millions of acres of wheat and pasture lands (emphasis in original iii)

Following the Preface, an Addendum details the region's climate, mentions a possible gold field, and remarks on Sanford Fleming's survey (v-viii). McLeod published the text to tout the area for settlement and development.

As presented in McLeod's edition, McDonald's text marks an interesting shift in the use of narratives representing Simpson to define place and community. Through action and texts, Simpson had constructed an identity that aligned him with an imperial version of place, and helped to construct a sense of place that aligned itself to an imperial version of himself. Each construction informed the other. This construction incorporated many communities into one Hudson's Bay Company community controlled by Simpson. His own *Narrative* and texts by others use this representation of Simpson and place to accrue Simpson's authority to the texts' authors, often to indulge in "ethnocentric sentimentalism."¹³ McLeod's use of McDonald's text differs in that it serves not the British Empire, but the newly-imagined community of Canada. As a piece of settler boosterism, *Peace River* uses George Simpson to promote the idea of the Dominion of Canada. Furthermore, the text develops another significance as a piece of historiography itself. *Peace River* is one of the earliest HBC documents to be turned into a public document, and has become a widely-quoted source in the writing of Canadian history and in the continuing representations of Simpson.

¹³ Examples include texts by Kane, Kohl (*Kitchi-gami*), and Southesk.

CHAPTER FIVE

IMAGINING HISTORY: WRITING GEORGE SIMPSON

You will hear men say: ‘What did the Hudson’s Bay Company ever do to earn that land?’ (We still have two million acres of it.) . . . In the case of the Hudson’s Bay Company the answer is that the lean, leathery men of the Fur Trade lived and starved and worked for two hundred years maintaining law and order and British justice in the wilderness. And if they had not, Western Canada would not have been British to this day. . . .

Actually, this Company’s story in the west is one of the most extraordinary incidents of imperial expansion in the world’s history. . . . The Company and the west and Canada owe more than is generally acknowledged to the character of these men.

(MacKay , “They Shall Grow” 32)

As editor of *The Beaver* from 1933 to 1938, Douglas MacKay had a vested interest in promoting the men of the Hudson’s Bay Company as the vanguard of Canadian occupation of Rupert’s Land. Yet the sentiments he raises in the passage quoted above have been current in the writing of the HBC histories in particular, and Canadian history in general, since at least 1899. To be sure, not all writers of histories have agreed with these sentiments, particularly since the mid-1960s, but few, if any, could ignore them. To follow the representations of Simpson and the fur trade in historical non-fiction writing about the fur trade and its role in imagining Canada, we must at least

acknowledge the divide between academic historians and writers of popular histories.

Carl Berger notes in *The Writing of Canadian History* that “the appeal of ‘popular history’ rested on the telling of a gripping story, entertaining narrative, vivid characterization, a sense of drama, or the exposure of human foibles and frailties.

Sometimes it could also serve the purpose of national feeling” (267). Berger continues:

“The expectations of the reading public regarding a work of history and the practice of most academic historians were closer a decade ago [i.e., in the late 1960s] than in the last decade. Historians in general no longer regarded the narrative biography as a model for their work, and they have outgrown – or abdicated – the role of interpreters of the national character. Academic scholars . . . prize analysis over narrative and description; their most original books do not tell a story but answer questions . . .” (268). Indeed, even such a crude binary as popular–academic fails to acknowledge possible categories of how history is writ. Berger again: “Each generation writes the type of history it considers appropriate to its own time, but generations are not homogeneous and do not exist in isolation from each other” (319). The representation of the fur trade has changed since Confederation, as a British and imperial enterprise became represented as a Canadian one. Even the texts that resist the heroic narrative suggested by MacKay often endeavour to render fur-trade history as part of a national history. By examining how history texts since the turn of the twentieth century have characterized Simpson’s practice of authority, his relationships with mixed-race women, and the canoe pageant of 1860, we can see how the representation of the fur trade has evolved to reflect an evolving Canadian identity.

The earliest text that defines itself as a history of the Hudson's Bay Company is Beckles Willson's *The Great Company* (1899). In the Preface, Willson writes of "the reverence and admiration we have for brave souls, or those deeper feelings which repose in the bosoms of so many Canadian men and women" (viii-ix). HBC Governor and last-spike driver Donald Smith supplies an introduction that defines corporate history as a history of place. Smith writes that "the development of the Western parts of Canada has been . . . closely connected" to the "Great Company," and that "its work prepared the way for the incorporation of the 'illimitable wilderness' within the Dominion" (xi). Willson's text straightforwardly chronicles the Company's origins and business. Willson connects Simpson to place, characterizing him as "a potentate in the midst of the wilderness, the virtual ruler of almost one-half of a continent. Governor Simpson was a man of small stature, but he had the 'self-possession of an emperor'." Willson's allusion to Simpson's emperor-like bearing copies a common epithet applied to Simpson even during his lifetime: several texts remark on his admiration for Napoleon. He was determined "to create, at all hazards, harmony and prosperity in the territories" (437). Willson allows that Simpson "had often, indeed persistently, been attacked by the Company's enemies" (473). The phrasing here maintains Simpson as the authority figure. Critics attack Simpson not because of his personality, but because he represents the Company. Willson writes that "almost to the day of his death he was charged with being autocratic and tyrannical, but none could deny him great ability and exceptional fitness for his post" (473). Willson further mentions that Simpson entertained The Prince of Wales, but gives no details. Nor does he delve into Simpson's relationships with mixed-race women. The

absence of analysis of the canoe pageant of 1860 reflects Willson's focus on Company matters rather than elaboration of imperial themes. The absence of the discussion of Simpson's sexual relationships reflects the prevailing morals of the time.

The Remarkable History of the Hudson's Bay Company, by George Bryce, was published a year later in 1900. As books by Canadians, Willson's and Bryce's texts serve as early post-Confederation narrativizations of place and identity that help to establish the imagined community of Canada. Both are significant in that they make use of the archives of the Hudson's Bay Company. While Willson's text is perhaps unquestioning in its praise for the Company, Bryce's is remarkably even-handed, if not entirely objective. Its descriptions of landscape and travel are infused with Bryce's personal experience. Bryce's biases are evident from the first line of his preface, the simple declarative statement: "The Hudson's Bay Company!" (vi). The exclamation point is a bang of enthusiasm. Bryce's is the first text to quote extensively from minute books and post journals, and from the Hargrave correspondence. He does not shy away from sympathetic discussions of *mariage au façon du pays*. While not overly reflective or analytical – perhaps befitting of his era – Bryce presents a lengthy and somewhat nuanced character portrait of Simpson (268-80). Bryce variously describes Simpson as "strong, vigorous, and observing" (269), "conciliatory and considerate" (269), "diplomatic and shrewd" (270), "energetic" (270), and "considerate" (272). Simpson moved with "imperious and impetuous haste" (270) as "the travelling emperor" (274). Bryce alleges that Simpson listened to the humble and the elite alike with patience and sympathy: "He had many of the arts of the courtier along with his indomitable will"

(271). Offering a summary of Simpson's travels documented in Archibald McDonald's *Peace River*, and Simpson's *Narrative*, Bryce relates many of the passages from these texts which demonstrate how Simpson was "fond of 'show and circumstance' " (276). Bryce also describes Simpson's industrious documentation and thoroughness: "Fond as the Governor was of pomp, when the pageant was passed, then he was a man of iron will and keenest observation. His correspondence at each resting place was great, and he was said to be able to do the work of three men . . ." (274). While generally full of praise for Simpson, Bryce admits that he had his limitations when he comments that "it has always been said that Governor Simpson was dictatorial and overbearing" (269). By using the impersonal and passive voice in this sentence, Bryce softens the critique. The passive removes agency from those who criticize, and expresses negative opinions without endorsing them. Bryce allows that "the personal element entered largely into his administration," that he played favourites, that "he was not above petty revenges," and that he could be "harsh and tyrannical" (276). If Willson mitigates the criticisms of Simpson's reputation by attributing them to others, Bryce is slightly more direct. The mixed reviews foreshadow the representations of Simpson for the following century.

Bryce does not mention Simpson's country wives, but suggests cryptically that Simpson "never escaped the witchery of a pretty face" (280). In 1909, Bryce published a triptych biography, *Mackenzie, Selkirk, Simpson*. Simpson's part of the text is essentially the same character sketch from the earlier book, expanded to include more details of travel, and sentimentalized. Here Bryce delves further into the Hargrave correspondence, and quotes from a letter where Simpson instructs Hargrave to deal with a country wife

abandoned by J.G. McTavish (though Bryce does not name him). Bryce disapproves – not of the country marriage but of the abandonment: “This bad practice was only too common in certain quarters in the fur country” (263). Whether or not Bryce had full access to the Hargrave correspondence is not known. If he did, then his biography of Simpson reflects that he chose not to include the more damning evidence of Simpson’s own abandonment of Margaret Taylor. If he did not, it reflects that the keeper of the archive was preserving Simpson’s reputation.

Bryce ends *Mackenzie, Selkirk, Simpson* with a chapter entitled “Canada’s Debt to the Fur Companies.” Here is an example of what Benedict Anderson calls “the lamp of archaeology cast[ing] its fitful gleam” into the past to create a narrative of the nation’s present (201). Bryce writes, “The infant life of Canada was nourished by the fur traders” (281). The United Empire Loyalists, the Nor’Westers, and especially the Hudson’s Bay Company and its agents “were the means of preserving to the British Crown the greater Canada” (290). Bryce does miss the opportunity to evoke the canoe regatta for The Prince of Wales in 1860, mentioning it only parenthetically (279). If Willson’s and Bryce’s early histories are the first to systematically employ archival material, neither attempts objectivity. Jennifer Brown includes Bryce as one of the authors who “surely helped” to promote the fur trade and fur traders as archaic and quaint, adventurous “like knights of old” (“Fur Trade History” 84). Willson and Bryce focus on personality and character, creating “the highly sentimentalized narratives of collective identity” (Entrikin, “Democratic Place-Making” 19) discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis, “Imagining Identity: Place, Narrative, and the Fur Trade.”

A number of Hudson's Bay Company texts in the 1920s and 1930s continued to adopt similar narrative strategies. They tied fur-trade history to the nascent Canadian identity and linked corporate interests to national ones. Three such texts are William Schooling's *The Governor and Company of Adventurers of England Trading into Hudson's Bay During Two Hundred and Fifty Years, 1670-1920* (1920), the uncredited HBC volume *Hudson's Bay Company: A Brief History* (1934), and Douglas MacKay's *The Honourable Company* (1938). Schooling's text copies great sections of Willson's, and the anonymous 1934 text in turn copies Schooling's. Both texts represent Simpson as the capable and affable Governor who possesses more than just a little resolve. The 1934 text remarks: "The most casual reader into Company history must be conscious of the power and efficiency of Sir George Simpson In him a clear orderly mind and a driving ambition were sustained by a physical vitality which carried him buoyantly through life" (25). MacKay claims his book is "in no sense official" (xi), even though he wrote it while employed as the editor of *The Beaver*.¹⁴ Compared with the 1920 and 1934 texts, MacKay's style belies his training as a journalist. Writing a book intended as popular history, MacKay succeeds in finding a breezy style for his narrative. He begins the first of two chapters on Simpson with the comment that "more than one historian has elaborated on the perfect combination of the man and the moment. Sir George Simpson was such a man" (175). His treatment of Simpson and the Hudson's Bay Company is largely supportive, although he does mention Simpson's promiscuity, which official HBC

¹⁴ For MacKay's journalistic background and his efforts to promote the HBC to the Canadian public in *The Beaver*, see Peter Geller.

history texts ignore. Also, his is one of the first texts to publish excerpts from Simpson's *Character Book*.

MacKay describes the 1860 royal visit of The Prince of Wales and the canoe pageant in some detail. He quotes from the *Montreal Gazette* description of the event, as many others do in the preceding and following decades. The *Gazette* article – reproduced at length in Chapter Seven of this thesis, “Imagining History: Unpacking the Royal Visit of 1860” – indulges in the ethnocentric sentimentalism of celebrating the First Nations and fur-trade cultures as exotic spectacle. MacKay has no need to add his own commentary or analysis to the possible meanings of the pageant. His purpose is to create an appropriate coda to his sketch of Simpson. As many subsequent writers do, MacKay deploys the episode in his narrative of Simpson's life to set up a poignant irony: Simpson entertains royalty, then dies immediately after (216-7). MacKay quotes Dugald MacTavish: “The Little Emperor's light has gone out just as he basked in a final blaze of glory” (218).

MacKay acknowledges Simpson's sexual relationships in fur-trade country: “There will be other children bearing the name of Simpson, but born of swarthy, halfbreed mothers in far off posts. The records are fragmentary, but the legendary tales of these affairs, passed on in fur-trade gossip for more than a century, will become gargantuan. George Simpson may or may not have had the capacity for extramarital relations of the heroic scale attributed by the common talk of his colleagues and successors, but he acknowledged his obligations in these matters . . .” (198). Such language encodes the racist biases inherent in this narrative and others. Furthermore, the

use of modifiers such as “legendary,” “gargantuan,” and “heroic” serve to glorify Simpson’s masculinity and assert his status as authority. MacKay represents Simpson in almost feudal terms: the rumours are “common talk” but Simpson nobly “acknowledge[s] his obligations.” While Willson and Bryce politely avoid the subject, by MacKay’s era, he is able to celebrate Simpson’s exploits. The representation of Simpson’s eroticisation of place becomes as essential a marker of his authority as his performance of travel and his documentation.

In addition to Bryce’s, there are three other biographies of George Simpson, one each by A.S. Morton, John Chalmers, and John Galbraith. A.S. Morton’s *Sir George Simpson, Overseas Governor of the Hudson’s Bay Company: A Pen Picture of a Man of Action* (1944) is a conventional biography. He hopes to reveal the “trained mind, endowed with a singular clarity of vision, with unhesitating will, and well-defined purposes” of the “one who may well have been the greatest administrator which the country which is now the Dominion of Canada has seen.” Morton is also prepared to point out “his shortcomings as may be seen in his character and methods” (x-xi). Morton’s work suffers from what Berger calls “the shortcomings of the stuffy, panegyric, and commemorative life and times written in the Victorian period” (218), a model of biography that persisted well into the twentieth century. When comparing A.S. Morton’s work to the nation-building histories of Lower, Innis, and Creighton, Berger critiques Morton’s Simpson biography and other books of his by noting that they “advanced no generalized interpretations of Canadian history” (241). If not

groundbreaking, Morton's biography sets out a complete chronology of Simpson's life, and builds systematically on the archival documents in the HBCA.

Morton names one of Simpson's country wives, Margaret Taylor, and four of his children. He assumes they are all Margaret's. He portrays the union with Margaret with the facile interpretation that such a liaison was one of the "customs of the traders" (159), and he glosses over Simpson's treatment of her. When he arrives with his white wife Frances, Simpson makes arrangements to rid himself of Margaret. Morton chooses language to suggest Simpson acted with care, writing that Simpson needed to see "his own 'old concern' happily settled" (165), and that her eventual marriage to Amable Hogue "appears to have been . . . happy" (166). The arrival of Simpson's white wife Frances sent a shock through the Red River community and beyond, and Morton concedes the "repercussions of these events continued long" (165). But Morton's tone shows sympathy for Simpson in this situation.

In the 1970s, Sylvia Van Kirk problematizes Simpson's relationships with his mistresses. In *Many Tender Ties*, she allows that Simpson's liaison with Taylor "began to approximate a traditional country marriage" (163). However, she notes that Simpson "showed a flagrant disregard for fur-trade custom and formed a series of liaisons with young mixed-blood women whom he treated in a most callous manner" (161). Simpson called mixed-race women "bits of brown," "commodity," and "Brown Jug," and Van Kirk documents that these terms were harsher than those that had been used previously (201). Van Kirk's article "Women and the Fur Trade" (1972) provides the first evidence that Betsey Sinclair was the first mixed-race woman to give birth to one of Simpson's

children. Previous to her research and publication, “many authors” (Morton included, though Van Kirk does not single him out) had cited Margaret as the country wife of Simpson from the time of his first season in Athabasca (12). Were the subtleties of these multiple relationships lost on Morton, or were they deliberately elided? Margaret Taylor travelled with Simpson on his overland journeys, at least once while pregnant. Morton makes no mention of this. Perhaps he missed these references in the archive: based on the citations in his Notes, it appears that he never accessed the York Factory archive, which contains much of the Simpson-McTavish correspondence that is central to Van Kirk’s evidence. It is impossible to say whether he chose not to use it, or whether the archive was not available.

Despite the sub-title of the biography, *A Pen Picture of a Man of Action*, Morton’s text registers a subtle shift in the characterization of Simpson, from a man of action and agency to an administrator. Much of Morton’s book dwells upon the texts Simpson generated, which form part of the corporate archives. In his Preface, Morton states that he is trying to portray the “Simpson [who is] concealed, so to say, beneath the mass of his correspondence” (x). Morton’s interpretation of the documentation as concealing seems at odds with the historians who followed him, and who mined the HBCA repeatedly in subsequent years to expose the character of Simpson. The nineteenth-century exploration and travel texts, early histories of the HBC by Willson and Bryce, and Bryce’s biography emphasized Simpson’s travel, speed, authority, and ability. Morton does not stint in describing Simpson’s various travels, the pageantry of his arrivals (he too quotes from McDonald’s *Peace River* text), nor his flair for performance. But he also labours to

portray the managerial skills Simpson possessed. Morton shifts the interpretation of Simpson to that of a man who is a capable manager and a founder of the nation: “[H]e was a master-builder. As such, he may be ranked as among the Makers of Canada” (285). Morton quotes at length from the *Montreal Gazette* to describe the 1860 visit by HRH The Prince of Wales, and he follows it with a lengthy description of Simpson’s funeral. By focussing on the memorialization of Simpson, Morton underscores his argument that Simpson occupied a statesman-like position in the history of Canada.

John Chalmers’ biography *Fur Trade Governor* (1960) is a popular history, perhaps intended as school text. Chalmers’ book cites no archival sources and is clearly intended to entertain. The emphasis is on narrative, and Chalmers cribs his details from Simpson’s *Narrative*, Willson, Bryce, MacKay, Morton, *The Beaver*, and other sources (181-2). In his treatment of the 1860 lunch at Lachine, he does not quote the *Montreal Gazette* article, but rather renders it into his own story. The details of his description of the canoe pageant match in every way to those in the *Gazette* which have been repeated before him.

Chalmers offers no fresh analysis of Simpson’s life or the operation of the trade under Simpson’s command, but he does hint at Simpson’s affair with Betsey Sinclair. (He does not name her, but merely describes her as the wife of Robert Miles, and the mother of Maria (165)). Earlier, Bryce alludes to Simpson’s liaisons with mixed-race women obliquely, and with a certain moralistic tone that befits the Presbyterian doctor of divinity. MacKay casts these relationships in heroic language. Morton chooses to sanitize and normalize Simpson’s sexual activity as country marriages with happy outcomes.

Chalmers describes them with paternalistic idioms. He writes, “George Simpson was father to more than Margaret Taylor’s children and Frances Simpson’s family and ‘bits of brown’ – his own phrase – distributed across the West. He was father to the whole Company. . . . He was the patriarch of the tribe, the father-figure, the old man” (162). Chalmer’s patriarchal metaphor connects Simpson to the place of the Northwest and to history. He is father figure to the tribe of Europeans, mixed-race, and First Nations inhabitants, and a whitening agent for the West.

In his discussion of the evolution of Canadian historiography in the 1970s and 1980s, Carl Berger writes: “Like the cathedral, however, the biography seem[s] to belong to another age” (270). He cites John Galbraith’s *The Little Emperor: Governor Simpson of the Hudson’s Bay Company* (1976) as an example of a book that makes “important contributions to our knowledge” but that only seldom is able to “render penetrating and memorable glimpses of human beings” (270). Certainly, Galbraith succeeds in stripping away the prudery of Bryce, the heroic romanticism of MacKay, and the founding-father mythmaking of Morton and Chalmers. As an American scholar, Galbraith is neither caught up in the need to create a patriarch of the Dominion, nor does he succumb to the Canadian pursuit of limited identities.¹⁵ Galbraith is “by no means an unqualified admirer of George Simpson,” and he characterizes Simpson’s ruthlessness, vanity, and

¹⁵ Galbraith was born in Glasgow in 1916 but moved to the United States in 1925. He was educated and spent his career in the U.S. (see Parrish, et al.). The phrase “limited identities” refers to J.M.S. Careless’s influential article “Limited Identities in Canada.” Careless articulated the shift in Canadian historiography away from attempting to define a centralizing national identity for Canada, toward historical writing that looks to limit identities by race, ethnicity, gender, class, or region.

treatment of mixed-race women as “repugnant.” But he hopes not to dwell “upon the negative to the point of obscuring his virtues” (ix-x). Galbraith follows the conventional chronological narrative of biography. His style lacks the journalistic embellishments of MacKay, the yarn-weaving of Chalmers, or the exuberance of Morton, but such lack is more than compensated by his clear and even-handed prose.

Galbraith’s command of archival material is focussed and complete. He goes beyond describing the performative aspects of Simpson’s actions to analyze their effect. He quotes an oft-repeated passage from McDonald’s *Peace River* describing the arrival of the Governor’s canoes at Norway House, then remarks: “McDonald thought that the ceremony was designed to impress the Indians. It almost certainly had that effect, but it also stressed the importance of the dignitary who, though not an emperor . . . was certainly a lofty personage” (96). Galbraith recognizes that the pomp of arrival was at least as much for the sake of Simpson’s Hudson’s Bay Company subordinates as it was for the First Nations.

Galbraith’s description of the amalgamation banquet provides an example of the careful scholarship that marks his book. Simpson brought together the wintering partners of the North West Company and the Hudson’s Bay men at Norway House in 1822. Whereas A.S. Morton in the earlier biography quotes John Tod’s reminiscences of the meal at length – nearly three full pages (58-60) – Galbraith by contrast paraphrases Tod’s text (55-6). Paraphrase allows Galbraith the space to evaluate the way in which Simpson asserts his authority and manoeuvres men to his will. Tod’s memoir on the other hand recounts the details of Simpson’s physical performance, but offers little analysis.

Furthermore, whereas Morton fails even to give a citation for the quotation, Galbraith draws our attention to the problematic nature of Tod's account in an endnote: Tod wrote his recollection nearly sixty years after it occurred, and some of the details are demonstrably incorrect (212 n3).

Galbraith follows a similar strategy of paraphrase in favour of quotation in his description of the canoe pageant of 1860. He digests the contemporary newspaper accounts, and also cites archival sources. By avoiding the direct quotations from the journals of the day, he avoids incorporating the purple prose of nineteenth-century journalism into his text (204-6).

Galbraith treats the issue of Simpson's relationships with mixed-race women sensitively and sensibly. He draws upon close readings of the archival material, and recognizes the influence and importance of Van Kirk's work. Galbraith's opinion of Simpson is blunt. In his letters, Simpson "reveal[s] a lack of humanity that cannot be explained simply in terms of the general attitudes of the fur trade. . . . [H]is references to women of the Indian country were generally devoid of respect for their humanity" (69-70). Citing Van Kirk, Galbraith discusses how the arrival of Frances Simpson changed the attitudes towards race and gender, changing the social and moral patterns of the fur country (112). If Simpson's promiscuity had already upset the customs of fur-trade culture, the presence of Frances stratified the society further on lines of race and class. Galbraith is able to marshal an encompassing range of source materials and consider the extant body of analysis and interpretation of Simpson's life and work.

Other representations of Simpson by scholarly historians have varied, depending upon the particular historical approaches taken. Harold Innis, in his influential *The Fur Trade in Canada* (1930; rev. 1956), analyzes Simpson as but one agent of the economics of the fur trade in Innis's broader project of the staples economy (381-402). In his Introduction to *Minutes of Council 1821-31*, Innis allows that Simpson "adapted himself with skill and tact" (Introduction xix), but argues that Simpson was largely beholden to the London Committee for decisions. Innis's discussions of the mixed-race familial relationships centre on their economic arguments. Frederick Merk's edition of *Fur Trade and Empire* (1931; rev. 1968) was perhaps the first scholarly edition of Hudson's Bay Company archival documents. Merk's text consists of an edited transcription, with a lengthy introduction, of Simpson's 1824-25 journal of his trip to the Columbia District. In his Introduction, Merk admires Simpson as a "typical nineteenth century captain of industry," a "self-made man" who is "imperious, aggressive, self-assured, severe in his judgments, painfully eager for success" (xlv). Compared to Innis, Merk has a distinctly American agenda as he examines the difference between the monopoly of the HBC and the laissez-faire frontierism of the Americans. Yet both see Simpson as an agent who is but one actor in a larger political and economic drama.

The publication of archival material from the HBCA by the Hudson's Bay Record Society, beginning in 1938, has greatly influenced representations of Simpson. Many of his journals, reports, correspondence, and his *Character Book* have become widely available. Simpson wrote a prodigious amount in his own lifetime, yet the only text to be published while he was alive, *Narrative of a Journey Round the World*, was ghostwritten

by others. Ironically, a century later his business and personal correspondence garners attention. In particular, the Hudson's Bay Record Society editors E.E. Rich and Glyndwr Williams have had enormous influence through their selection of which documents to publish and through their own commentary.

More recent scholarly work (since about 1970) has focussed on what Jennifer Brown has termed "innovative and revisionist scholarship in fur-trade social history" ("Newman's *Company*" 565). The work by Van Kirk, Brown, Burley, and many others has made extensive use of the HBCA and other archival material. Michael Payne observes there is a trend away "from a primary focus on elites" in fur-trade historiography to a bottom-up approach that organizes history around gender, ethnicity, class, or region (7). In this chapter, I have already referred to Van Kirk's work exploring Simpson's roles in defining mixed-race sexual and social relationships. Her publications show how the systemic misogyny and racism inherent in the cultural practices of the day were exacerbated by Simpson's unpleasant personality. Exploring the relationship of First Nations and whites as a social history of kinship, Brown's *Strangers in Blood* presents Simpson in a similarly unflattering light. Edith Burley's work (discussed in Chapter Four of this thesis, "Imagining Authority: Fur-Trade Performance") is a labour history in which Simpson is a tyrant. These historians and others have led to an extensive re-evaluation of Simpson's behaviour and personality within the historiographical discourses of social relations, imperialism, gender, and class.

Alongside this work by scholars, whose toil is often lost in obscurity, a widely-read popular history was released to the Canadian public. In the 1980s, Peter Newman's

history of the Hudson's Bay Company sold hundreds of thousands of copies.¹⁶ Newman devotes seven chapters of *Caesars of the Wilderness* (the second of a three volume set), nearly half of the book, to Simpson's years as governor. Although not a biography, the text is centred on character and focussed on action. Newman notes his aim is "to re-create the interplay of feisty characters and remarkable circumstances that shaped the story of the Hudson's Bay Company" by "following the destinies of crucial individuals and by portraying the subtle confluences of men and women with their geographical, political and emotional landscapes" (xiv). He uses the journalist's craft and imbues the "tales that follow with the bounce and bravado they deserve" (xiv). Scholarly historians increasingly problematize the issues of the fur trade and Simpson's role in it, following the trend of recent historical writing to "prize analysis over narrative and description" (Berger 268). Newman's approach emphasises story rather than history.

Newman uses language that telegraphs to the reader just how feisty and crucial the characters he portrays are. He variously describes Simpson as "the uncrowned king" (xxvi), a "grand personage" (xxxi), "wily" (290), with a "style of buccaneering capitalism" (291), ruler of a "magic kingdom" (293), and "fulfilling heaven's command" (361). Using the well-known and well-worn epithet "The Little Emperor," he renders it into a chapter title, "The Birchbark Napoleon." He compares Simpson at the end of his life to Shakespeare's Lear: "Like a latter-day King Lear, raging against his own mortality, Simpson was now dragging himself painfully across the land he had once

¹⁶ In his autobiography, *Here Be Dragons*, Newman reports that the first two volumes of his Hudson's Bay Company trilogy sold "just under 400,000 copies" (600).

ruled” (471). Newman adopts phrases that verge on the cliché when he sets Simpson in motion. Describing Simpson’s arrival in Athabasca in 1820, Newman writes, “Simpson plunged into the fracas” (260). As a ceaseless traveller, Simpson is “surging across the boundless reaches of his domain” (291); he “ranged across the continent in furiously paced forays” (304). Simpson did not merely depart, but “sallied forth on his annual inspection tours” (452). Simpson was “determined to demonstrate his own immunity to human weakness” and loved “to flaunt his own *joie de vivre*” (305). Newman’s descriptions include some of his typically obscure and mangled metaphors.¹⁷ At one point, he writes: “Simpson’s small, darting eyes betrayed the tensions of a setter constantly on point; his hair curled tightly against the back of his neck like fleece” (291). Two pages later, he transforms Simpson from fleecy canine to exotic bird: “Like some red-headed magpie with a quivering beak and glittery eye, he hoarded private grievances against anyone brave enough to question his iron will” (293). These examples of Newman’s overenthusiastic prose betray both the sleight of hand and the slightness of *Caesars of the Wilderness*.¹⁸ The bounce and bravado of his language substitute for substantial analysis. The energy of his narrative and his punchy verbs and adjectives carry the reader along the surface, but without probing any deeper meanings.

¹⁷ Newman is not above acknowledging his own limitations as a stylist, and in particular his reputation for mangled metaphors. In *Here Be Dragons* he admits, “Any style is subject to satire, especially mine, which so often borders on the absurd” (554).

¹⁸ Lyle Dick’s detailed review of the first volume of Newman’s history presents evidence of several examples of Newman’s sleights of hand with the misapplication of archival material and appropriation of others’ work. See Dick, “Renegade in the Archives.”

Newman renders First Nations peoples and their cultures using too-familiar stereotypes. Here are the noble savage, the wild Indian, the meek servant to Europeans, and the (disappearing) anthropological artefact. Newman acknowledges the opinions of others who interpret Simpson's mixed-race relationships as destructive to the social dynamics of Rupert's Land, including Van Kirk (346, 349-50), Irene Spry (347), John Foster (349), and Alan Cooke (297). Despite these nods to the scholarship available to him, Newman describes Simpson's relationships with Betsey Sinclair, Margaret Taylor, and others with a cavalier flippancy, a winking-and-nudging irony that subverts the critical stance of scholars. He repeats the language that MacKay used in 1938, describing Simpson's sexual activity as "legendary" (345). He qualifies Simpson's attitudes: "his derisive references to Indian Country women as 'bits of brown' are only the best known of what are now considered sexist comments" (345). Note the use of "now considered": the implication with this phrasing is that in Simpson's time they were not sexist, and, hence, are excusable. After quoting a particularly odious comment from one of Simpson's letters, he again qualifies the misogyny: "His lechery, not uncommon for the times, was unabashedly rampant" (346). The suggestion here is that sexual appetite excuses behaviour. As an antidote to Simpson's "nasty habit of keeping a 'country wife' " (*Here Be Dragons* 584), Newman prescribes the arrival of Frances Simpson. She is the beautiful maiden, whose vestal purity is Simpson's salvation. Newman writes, "After he had married his eighteen-year-old cousin Frances in 1830, there was no indication that Simpson was anything but a faithful husband" (345). Newman describes her as "the beautiful cousin Frances" (351) who creates "a luminous impression" (357) as

she travels to Red River. Frances is the fair princess whose very whiteness is a beacon of light. Frances's whiteness strains the social relationships in the settlement of Red River, but Newman treats the issue as one of domestic politics. He focuses on Simpson's irascibility in the home and does not delve into the deeper issues of the racial politics in the fledgling colony.

The first volume of Newman's history engendered a contentious debate between Newman and his supporters and many academics. Jennifer Brown's "Newman's *Company of Adventurers* in Two Solitudes: A Look at Reviews and Responses" provides a precise summary of the reviews pro and con. She critiques Newman's work for perpetuating masculine stereotypes, privileging the European narratives, and denigrating aboriginal culture. She writes, "What seems needed is a true mental housecleaning, if popular history is to go forward creatively and constructively upon the task of presenting the richness and complexity of the Canadian past" (571). In "Response by Peter C. Newman to Jennifer Brown," Newman takes academic historians to task for having "a proprietary interest in the available material" (577). Tragically, after first justifying his representation of Simpson by characterizing Simpson's behaviour as belonging to another era, Newman betrays his biases by using Simpson's words not just to refute Brown, but to add a deeply personal and problematic insult to the debate. By writing that "Canadian history should be made up of bits of Newman as well as bits of Brown" (578), Newman imports the misogynistic Simpsonian rhetoric into late twentieth-century discourse.

In his autobiography, Newman notes succinctly that “both approaches to history – mine and Jennifer Brown’s – are equally valid; one is as incomplete as the other” (585).¹⁹ But the issue is not the validity of historical representation. Brown may wish for a mental housecleaning by writers of popular history, but the kind of change she envisions requires a shift not just by writers, but by the culture-consuming public. Along with a mental cleaning, the house requires a complete renovation and redecoration. But first the public must show a willingness to part with the sturdy Victorian furniture inherited from an ancient ancestor and hauled across the water, to strip away the flocked wallpaper, and to throw out the smothering chintz. Newman’s text is what it is: a popular and populist account of the Hudson’s Bay Company that follows in the tradition of Bryce, Willson, MacKay, Morton, Chalmers, and many others. M.B. Payne and C.J. Taylor note that “[f]ur trade sites, events and personalities could be invoked to support virtually all the major approaches to Canadian history in the pre-1950 period” (13 n11); they cite J.M.S. Careless and A.R.M. Lower as examples. They also assert that the fur trade may be “a last refuge for the ‘great man’ explanations of history. The tendency to either blame or credit George Simpson for virtually everything that happened in the fur trade from 1821 to 1860 is perhaps the most extreme manifestation of this tendency” (13 n17). Indeed, Newman refuses to resist the dominant interpretations of fur-trade history, and enthusiastically emphasises character over interpretation. The reception of such an

¹⁹ Having put the case succinctly, Newman in his autobiography does go on to repeat the “bits of brown” insult (586).

essentially conservative narrative approach speaks to the resiliency and appetite of the popular imagination.

The tradition of identifying Simpson with the history of the Northwest of Canada has embedded the idea into the narrative of identity. The early histories and biographies reinforced the identity that Simpson had constructed. These texts consolidated the multitude of participating communities (and even those that were not) under the aegis of the HBC's influence, and installed Simpson as mythic Olympian, the Zeus of Rupert's Land. After Confederation, a nationalist sentimentality infused the historical narrative of the fur trade, and Simpson gained the status of nation-builder. Although the last three decades have seen scholarly histories question that interpretation, Simpson still occupies a key position in the historical discourse. He has shifted from hero to villain, but nonetheless is central to the discussion. And yet if he is vilified in scholarly histories, he still maintains a sentimental and nostalgic reputation as a "maker of Canada" in the popular portrayal of history. Even as recent popular histories, such as the CBC television series *Canada: A People's History* and the book based on it, attempt to incorporate scholarship on gender, class, and race, they do so to reinforce the bigger notion of the imaginary Canada.

CHAPTER SIX

**IMAGINING THE IMAGINARY: REPRESENTING THE FUR TRADE AND
GEORGE SIMPSON IN FICTION**

Scholars subject the fur trade to a kind of historical forensic pathology, illuminating bits of the scattered remains under the microscope to view the DNA-like helixes of social relations, or fluorescing the archives with ideological radiance to make them glow in new and fascinating ways that reveal heretofore hidden networks of commodity exchange. Such approaches yield significant insights. Despite the deep archival and other cultural resources for the nineteenth-century fur trade, the welter of conflicting if not competing interpretations have disrupted the coherency of its historical representation. Sarah Carter has observed that there is “no one history to the fur trade” (42). Its history can be told from aboriginal, Métis, imperialist, post-colonial, and nationalist points of view. Historiographical practice over the last forty or so years has eroded the Rankean ideal “to tell it as it really was.” We now ask, “Who is doing the telling?” at the same time we ask, “What happened?” As Thomas King wryly notes in his novel *Green Grass, Running Water*: “ ‘there are no truths, Coyote,’ I says. ‘Only stories’ ” (391).

Just as late twentieth-century writers of non-fiction history have changed the totalizing representations of the fur trade and Simpson, so too have writers of fiction shifted the representation. But whereas historical texts sometimes contradict and even contend with each other, fictional texts can accommodate (without the need to reconcile)

differing points of view. The American novelist Don DeLillo writes that “[i]t is fiction’s role to imagine deeply, to follow obscure urges into unreliable regions of experience – child-memored, existential and outside of time” (62). According to DeLillo, the writer of fiction can “engineer a swerve from the usual arrangements that bind a figure in history to what has been reported, rumored, confirmed or solemnly chanted” (62). DeLillo echoes Gyorgy Lukács, who in *The Historical Novel* states that historical fiction writers “are sufficiently familiar with popular life to be able to devise situations in which the deepest truths emerge more clearly and luminously than in everyday life itself” (303). What DeLillo defines as a “swerve,” Lukács calls a “necessary anachronism” that allows “characters to express feelings and thoughts about real, historical relationships in a much clearer way than the actual men and women of the time could have done” (63). Such acts of deep imagination can effectively negotiate different versions of history, multiple interpretations, and ellipses in the records. The fictionalization of historical narratives creates a contingency that hinges on the possible and the plausible, rather than the provable and the documented.

The literary tradition of fur-trade fiction has not been as rich or diverse as the non-fictional texts (history, memoir, travel, and exploration narratives). R.M. Ballantyne’s first book, the proto-fictional memoir *Hudson’s Bay, or Every-day Life in the Wilds of North America*, and his first novel, *Snowflakes and Sunbeams; or The Young Fur Traders*, established the fur trade as a staple of juvenile fiction in *The Boy’s Own* tradition. Despite the fact that Ballantyne served as a clerk for a short time at Lachine, where he would have frequent if not daily contact with the Governor, he refrains from

describing him or his behaviour in *Hudson's Bay*. His references to Simpson are oblique: mention of the letter "from the Governor" that summons him to Lachine (209); a perfunctory acknowledgement of the meeting that sends him to Tadoussac (268); a laudatory comment about Simpson's curtailment of the alcohol trade (55).

As a memoir describing recent events, *Hudson's Bay* seems more a text of journalism or reportage than history. But I describe it as "proto-fictional" due to the lack of interest in the text for authority. Lukács asserts that the "world-historical" figure – a person with influence on events and actions – rarely has a central role in fiction; rather the marginal characters respond to the historical forces around them (39). Ballantyne adheres to this narrative strategy, constructing a character of the narrator-self that conforms to Lukács' description. Furthermore, the form of the book is a bildungsroman. Ballantyne arrives as a boy, travels the wilds, and departs as a man. On the other hand, contemporary narratives such as those of John McLean or Archibald McDonald, or even Paul Kane, align their narrators much more closely to Simpson, even when (as in McLean's case) they protest against him.

In *Hudson's Bay*, Ballantyne also establishes the themes of emergent masculinity, frontier mettle, and imperial triumphalism that dominate juvenile fiction with fur-trade settings. He describes the apprentice clerks as "raw lads, who come fresh from school at home, with their mouths agape at the wonders they behold in Hudson's Bay. They generally, for the purpose of appearing manly, acquire all the bad habits of the country as quickly as possible . . ." (33). Indeed, Ballantyne describes some mild hijinks that seem more boyish than manly – a few experiments with alcohol, hunting fowl, fighting with

mosquitoes. In his Introduction, George Woodcock observes the book “is a work of youth” (xii) whose virtue is its immediate energy. Woodcock continues that it

is marked by its period, by attitudes that seem alien in a post-imperial age . . . Ballantyne and his fellow clerks, and even the senior officers in the company, had no doubt at all that they were, in the words of the company’s charter, “True and absolute Lordes and Proprietors” of the land they so thinly occupied. . . . [They] maintained the attitude that goes with suzerainty, a facetious condescension (xvi)

Yet the text portrays some of the themes of the hunt and the macabre that become Ballantyne’s stock-in-trade over the course of the many books of his own writing career and many more by his imitators. There is a seal hunt with clubs, and specious tales of cannibalism by First Nations peoples. The critic John MacKenzie notes that “[t]he Ballantyne tradition . . . never spared any gory detail” (191), and places his work in a Victorian tradition where “[t]here was a conscious effort to sweep up the lower classes into a fascination with the pursuits and moral codes of the elite. The fact that these could be placed in a context of romance and adventure greatly helped the process” (189). His next book and first novel, *Snowflakes and Sunbeams; or The Young Fur Traders*, matched these tastes, and held the key images that MacKenzie ascribes to juvenile imperial novels of the time: the characters play out the saga of “[y]outh and age,” and are “guileless, noble, self-reliant, killing to survive and to spread civilization, illustrating at every turn the mastery that was wrought of technical advance, environmental knowledge, and moral worth” (190). MacKenzie’s list includes the overt virtues promulgated by

Ballantyne's work. But in his first novel there are also issues of whiteness and Britishness: the idealized imperial masculinity in *The Young Fur Traders* can be seen to work on an axis of race and ethnicity around which the fur-trade narrative revolves, and to which Simpson contributes.

The two young heroes of *The Young Fur Traders* are Harry Somerville and Charley Kennedy. Harry is pious, white, Scots, and an absent-minded HBC apprentice in the office. Charley is the son of a mixed-race mother and a retired wintering-partner father. He is almost white, but he is also hot-headed and eager for the trade in the woods. Their voyageur friend Jacques is Canadian – white, but French. Finally, Jacques' friend Redfeather is First Nations, but a god-fearing Protestant convert. The key to masculine and racial identities in the text rests in the image of the Métis voyageurs: the very best of whom were “men whose heads were cool, and eyes sharp, and hands ready and powerful, in the mad whirl of boiling rapids, in the sudden attack of wild beast and hostile man, or in the unexpected approach of danger” (69). But these seasoned hands were few, and most of the men of the voyageur brigades were vain, wild in disposition, with “some of the good, and a not a few of the bad, qualities of both” of their First Nations and white heritage (68). Adventures ensue. The two boys are tempered by their experience in the woods. They pick up all the good (white) traits from the voyageurs, and learn from each other to make themselves complete men: Harry learns to take risks, Charley learns to use his head. Harry marries Charley's sister.

The Hudson's Bay Company authority figures in the text are the local factors. As in *Hudson's Bay*, the authority of Simpson is only represented at a glance in the letters

that dispatch old Kennedy to the Arctic (and against which the trader rails, before he finally decides to retire) (5-7). Later, the winter packet of letters is delivered to a distant post, but the Chief Factor is slow to distribute the letters from home because he pores over “those prosy yarns the governor-in-chief writes to him” (288). These hints of the overarching authority of Simpson are secondary to the adventure and action of the coming-of-age narrative. The real authority figure is Mr. Addison, the minister from the Church of England.

Despite the reductive plot of this juvenile fiction, *The Young Fur Traders* offers a glimpse of the complex social relations in the trade that will become the focus of so much study by historians in the twentieth century. In terms of gender representation, the narrative is unrelentingly and idealistically masculine, and unrelentingly and idealistically heterosocial. The masculine presence serves to reinforce the imperial theme of British supremacy. Manliness is a virtue associated with mastery over nature, over emotion, and over the wilderness and wild peoples of the empire. The heterosocial resolution of the narrative – Harry marries Charley’s sister in a union blessed by the Reverend Addison – represents the civilizing white influence that the trade introduces to the wilderness.

Almost without exception, fictional narratives of the fur trade end with a marriage sanctified by clergy, usually by a white trader to a white woman. Thus fiction re-imagines the hybridized lived experience of Rupert’s Land, wherein the men-only society of the HBC relied on the labour of and companionship of First Nations and mixed-race women. Writing about early settlement in British Columbia, Adele Perry argues that the white homosocial (settler) society, with many mixed-race relationships and substantial

populations of First Nations “was one that substantially departed from Victorian social norms and ideals” (17-8); much the same can be said for all of Rupert’s Land. James Douglas’s mixed-race ancestry was not discussed. Margaret Taylor, George Simpson’s mixed-race companion, was not mentioned in McDonald’s journal of the 1828 voyage. The HBC generated significant documentation on matters of race and mixed-race relationships in correspondence, but these texts remained out of circulation. The lived experience of the cultural practices of race and gender did not match those normalized in imagined narratives. In the performance of social relations in the middle of the nineteenth century, these issues were continually negotiated, but rarely represented. Traders had been marrying First Nations and mixed-race women *au facons du pays* for generations. But as the settlements in the fur trade grew, as communication improved, as the outside world encroached, expectations from those within and without changed. As Jennifer Brown notes in *Strangers in Blood*, “[r]espectability and progress toward a civilized life became important personal goals and aims for society in general” (148). The fur trade could not maintain insularity from this trend, nor could it find a respectable way to represent conditions as they were experienced.

The Young Fur Traders negotiates a small space for the inclusion and celebration of mixed-race marriages, however imperfect and imperialistically determined the representation. Charley’s mixed-race family has a prominent role (although the mother only makes a handful of appearances in 400-plus pages, and is not written into the scene of her daughter’s wedding). Even though they witness an untrustworthy First Nations man murder a white man, and then witness the savage justice upon the murderer by the

murderer's own kin, they are made better citizens in the service of the empire by their journey through the wilderness and their contact with other races. The resolution necessarily brings the boys back to civilization, and the novel closes with a church-sanctioned marriage.

J. MacDonald Oxley's 1893 juvenile novel *Fergus MacTavish, or A Boy's Will* reflects the trend that Brown notes towards respectability and progress. When comparing Oxley's novel to Ballantyne's, one should remember that Ballantyne was English, writing very early in the Victorian period, whereas Oxley was born in Nova Scotia, and by the time he wrote *Fergus MacTavish* in the last decades of the Victorian period, he was working for the federal government in Ottawa. As a colonial-born, Oxley was influenced by the tendency of those in the young Dominion of Canada to be more British than the British, and by the hardening of attitudes characteristic of the later Victorian period.

Fergus MacTavish is an oddly pious adventure. In "The Relevance of Canadian History," W.L. Morton makes the claim that Canadian life is marked by "the puritanical restraint which masks the psychological tensions set up by the contrast of wilderness roughness and home discipline. The line which marks off the frontier from the farmstead, the wilderness from the baseland, the hinterland from the metropolis, runs through every Canadian psyche" (5). This tension lies at the heart of Oxley's narrative, and the exercise of puritanical restraint provides the narrative resolution. The novel records the coming of age of young Fergus, born and raised in the Hudson's Bay Company post at Norway House. Fergus's dilemma is that his father wants him to follow in the fur trade, but young Fergus longs to be a missionary like Mr. Olden. In Oxley's text, there are no mixed

marriages, nor any attempt to negotiate space for them. The patriarch in the book, Dugald MacTavish, possesses a “certain sense of refinement” that will not allow him to take “unto himself as a companion the dusky daughter of some Cree Chieftain, nor as wife the dark-eyed sister of some half-breed voyageur” (14). Dugald is fortunate enough to betroth the only white woman for a thousand miles, the daughter of a Selkirk settler. Fergus’s marriage to Ruth Olden at the book’s end signifies the triumph of civilised behaviour.

If, in Ballantyne’s texts, Simpson is nearly invisible, and reduced to a sender of dispatches, in Oxley’s novel, Simpson is a major character. Oxley represents Simpson as an avuncular figure who dotes on the boy Fergus during his annual inspection tours, and who sends him books from Montreal. There are hints of his performance of authority: Oxley writes that “[h]e held very exalted opinions of both his office and himself, and required at the hands of his subordinates as much deference as if the rude and sometimes squalid Forts were the Court of St. James” (275). Oxley makes detailed descriptions of Simpson’s entourage, his canoes, his arrivals and departures (275-6). (In Oxley’s novel, Simpson travels at a leisurely pace, departing after breakfast (289), and stopping in early afternoon (292).) For all the pomp, Simpson possesses the voice of reasoned authority; Oxley has Simpson tell the adolescent Fergus, “ ‘It’s not doing what you like, but doing what is best that brings real happiness, my lad. . . . [I]t’s only by obeying orders faithfully, that we learn how to give them rightly” (277-8). In what may be an obscure reference to “Canadian Boat Song,” or perhaps just a coincidence, Simpson quotes another poem by Thomas Moore (anonymously) when chiding Fergus on his romance

with Ruth (291). Fergus travels with Simpson on an extended trip to the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, saving the Governor's life by shooting a marauding grizzly bear. His adventure leaves him on the cusp of giving up his missionary work, but a bout of the smallpox convinces him of his true calling. As the central authority figure (aside from a higher calling), Simpson is represented as compassionate, considerate, and competent. He is capable of tears (327). Simpson's courage knows no bounds: caught in a ravine with a wounded bear, there "was nothing to do but draw his hunting knife and defend himself as best he might" (322). He is powerful and an accomplished hunter. Yet Simpson's enterprise and interests belong to the frontier, and Fergus chooses the hearth.

Texts for juvenile and young adult readers have been the dominant fictional representations of the fur trade since Ballantyne's *The Young Fur Traders*. Agnes Laut, Herbert Footner, Gilbert Parker, Harold Bindloss, and others published texts for youth set in the fur trade. Like Oxley, they tend to valorize the Hudson's Bay Company as the agent of imperialism and the harbinger of white civilisation in the West. They emphasise action, wholesomeness, and heroism. Later texts such as Nan Shipley's *Blonde Voyageur* (1971) and Tony German's *A Breed Apart* (1984) attempt to revise some of the unexamined issues of race and gender.

Few serious adult fictions in English Canada deployed the setting of the post-1821 fur trade in any significant way. Audrey Thomas's *Isobel Gunn* (1999) tells the fictionalized story of the eponymous historical figure, a woman who posed as a man in the first decade of the nineteenth century. Howard O'Hagan's *Tay John* (1939) and Robert Harlow's *Scann* (1972) each have as part of their narrative the transition from

trading frontier to industrialized wilderness. Each of these two books narrows its scope to tell localized narratives peopled with characters who negotiate a sense of regional identity contingent on such external influences as the railway, world war, and the parliament in Ottawa. The fur trade is an anachronism in these novels, albeit one with a powerful legacy. Each narrative hinges on mixed-race sexual relationships. Central to each are cultural clashes between white and First Nations peoples. These novels examine the tensions between the individual and the community during the transition from frontier to settlement, and show less interest in the operation of authority by the Hudson's Bay Company.

In Rudy Wiebe's 1998 short story "Watch for Two Coyotes, Crossing," the ghostly voice of Paul Kane narrates the events of Christmas 1847 at Fort Edmonton. The narrative voice establishes Lukács' "necessary anachronism" in the text: this fictional Kane comments as easily on "the advertising nightmare of the 1990s" (52) as he does on "deluded Jacques Cartier" of 1535 (58). In describing the marriage of Margaret Harriott to Young John Rowand, the story encodes the mixed-race relationship politics so prevalent in the scholarly histories. The presence and allure of the very white Frances in Lachine (52, 58, 62) is contrasted to the "dusky beauties" of Fort Edmonton (58). As a character, Simpson operates in the narrative as the agent of authority, embodying "untouchable colonial power" (52). He is described "as the most relentless money-maker in Canada," who "controlled" the land, a "twentieth-century man ahead of his time" for whom "money decided everything" (52). Simpson's control extends to the representations of his domain: the narrator comments that "[w]hatever I saw was overlaid

with his [Simpson's] voice always as it were at my shoulder: 'What a magnificent landscape - it needs development.' For without his permission and his expenditures, I would not have been there to see it" (52). Later, the narrator notes that "[d]espite what I thought of as my omnivorous, insatiable eye, I know now I was always looking for what Sir George had instructed me so carefully in his letter to draw[:] ' . . . buffalo hunts, conjuring matches, dances, warlike exhibitions or any other scenes of savage life with a view to their being coloured and framed, and of equal size so as to match each other. . . .' The European obvious: the picturesque" (60). The picturesque representation of place is Kane's enduring legacy; Wiebe's text traces the origins of that legacy to Simpson, and invites the reader to question the accuracy of these iconic images.

Fred Stenson's 2000 novel *The Trade* is the most comprehensive fictionalization of the post-1821 era of the fur trade to date. Using a variety of intertexts (both archival sources and invented texts) and narrative trajectories, Stenson dramatizes the social history of the fur trade in the Northwest. Nearly every character in *The Trade* is an historical person. In the first of seven fictional letters to a newspaper editor by the Hudson's Bay labourer William Gladstone, Stenson offers a clue to the representation of history in the text:

I saw how you put a line under the Governor's name. I said to myself that's how history gets started. Some young fella putting a line under a name and leaving other people off. I was a working stiff in the trade. What you call history looks upside down to me. (5)

This short passage succinctly introduces the approach the rest of the text will take.

Notably, Simpson is only referred to as “the Governor.” Gladstone offers a critique from within the lived experience of the historical moment to the “you” of the editor who manages the received national progress historical narrative. Likewise, a few sentences later Gladstone attaches a dominant position to the editor by referring to Simpson as “your Governor” (5). The use of the second person operates in another way: while Gladstone is addressing the editor, the address also reaches out to implicate the reader in the complacency to accept the “upside down” hierarchical representation of history without questioning it. The text assumes the reader will have a set of received assumptions of what the fur trade might mean. The concept of trade or exchange as the novel’s focus is announced in the title, invoked by the HBC coat of arms on the title page and frontispiece, and then traced in a chronological order, relying on a basic understanding of the fur-trade narrative in Canadian history. Indeed, from an aesthetic point of view, this reliance on the conventions of the fur-trade history imbeds a structural weakness in the novel’s narrative: as the fur trade begins to wane, so too does some of the narrative drive of the novel.

The character of Simpson plays a major role in the narrative, with many of the conventional narrative sections told from his point of view. Even when he is off-stage, or disappears entirely from the action, his influence lurks. Yet Stenson never calls him by name anywhere in the text. This denial of naming the authority is one way that the dominant discourse of history is subverted, while still offering a mimetic representation of character and events. Gladstone’s first letter also maps the bottom-up perspective that the novel will take. Much of the text describes the labour of those involved, the daily

brutalities, the effort required to do the work of the trade. Yes, Simpson is important, but so too are those who toil.

The letter also draws attention to the fictional and imaginative nature of the text. Linda Hutcheon argues that the “use of paratextuality as a formal mode of overt intertextuality both works within and subverts the apparatus of realism” (89). In the book’s Acknowledgements, Stenson cites Gladstone’s collected letters as a source (343). But in a short essay about Gladstone in *The Beaver*, Stenson admits that the letters in his novel are “seven short *fictional* letters” (emphasis added 51). Katherine Durnin argues that the effect of the “doubling the archive” (that is, adding a fictional archive to an existing archive) in *The Trade* “thematizes the contingent and partial nature of historical knowledge” and draws the reader’s attention “to the lack of transparency in the record” (73). Such a narrative strategy serves as a reminder of the imaginative nature of fiction in general and of the text at hand. By inviting the reader to consider the novel as an act of imagination, the creation of a fictional intertext also invites the reader to consider the constructedness of all historical texts. In *Tropics of Discourse*, Hayden White has called this process “the fiction making operation” of historiography (85). White is not suggesting that this operation diminishes the validity of the attempt to make meaning of history, but rather draws attention to how meaning derives from language and narrative. The “deep density” of narrative conventions in fiction (DeLillo 62) carries the reader into the illusion of history. The existence of the archival sources allows us to believe in the possibility of the fictional ones. The historical record allows us to believe in the plausibility of the narrative.

The narrative tensions of the novel arise from the sexual politics of the relationship between Edward Harriott, Simpson, and Margaret Pruden. Stenson weaves the representation of Simpson into the fabric of the narrative so that even when he disappears, his authority still looms. It is Simpson's decision to explore revenue opportunities that sets in motion the first chapter, "The Bow River Expedition." In a situation "where revenue was trump" (12), Simpson "[d]reams of a castor El Dorado where dams like mirrored staircases rose up every watery defile, and every beaver lodge crawled inside with life-stuffed skins" (23). Such dreams lead to the order for the failed expedition.

In the chapter "The Governor's Mistress," Simpson's sexual desires are made overt: "And the particular type [of woman] he liked best was the tall, slim sort with the doe's eyes and an oval face – which is to say, the spit of Harriott's Margaret. Nor did the Governor exactly stoop to courtship. What he preferred was for the cowardly fathers to pimp their daughters to him" (98). In a scene at the Governor's Ball at Fort Carlton, Stenson wraps the social relations of business and culture in the pursuit of Margaret. He writes, "The longer the Governor stood with Margaret, the more attention flowed their way" (103). The simple fact of Simpson's authority attracts their attention as much as the sexual intrigue; the two themes of eroticism and dominance are inextricably linked. Stenson writes: "The men, young and old, watched because they watched everything the Governor did" (103). The careers of traders hang on the outcome of his pursuits. Margaret's father watched with "great pleasure, also excitement and rekindled ambition. The Governor still had hold of Margaret's hand, and trapped in that connection of flesh,

John Peter, the old Chief Trader, could likely see his elusive second parchment fluttering” (102). Capturing the contingent relationships of desire, authority, and prestige in the touch of a hand, Stenson synthesizes the issues explored by such scholars as Van Kirk and Brown into a single narrative moment.

Simpson’s pursuit of Margaret and her defiant resistance unhinges her, and leads to her erratic behaviour and ultimately her disappearance in the chapter “The Bead Dress.” Stenson adopts an interesting shift in narrative strategy so that when Margaret disappears, so too does the voice of Simpson. Immediately following her disappearance, there is a scene at the beginning of the chapter “Piegan Post” where Harriott confronts Simpson. Simpson turns away from Harriott, “his eyes shifted away, and the whole business snapped closed like a box lid on a spring” (199). This is the last point in the narrative that Stenson uses the Governor’s point of view. Significantly, Simpson is with his white wife Frances when he and Harriott meet. Stenson uses Margaret’s disappearance and Frances’s arrival to mark a change in the way the trade is conducted, and the way in which *The Trade* is narrated. The character John Rowand attributes the problems with Jimmy Jock Bird and the American interlopers to the female presence, as if the European feminine is a negative talisman: “White women in this country make no sense, but the Governor and his toads went ahead and had them. . . . One bad decision begets another” (227).

Stenson moves away from using Simpson as a point of view, but does not eliminate his presence. His letters and directions still command his will to be done. The thought of revenge on Simpson fuels Harriott’s simmering rage. Indeed, following the

disappearance of Margaret, the fading of Simpson from the narrative voice and the shutting of the whole business in a box are curious narrative choices, and ones that confound expectations of the dramatic arc in literature. The confrontation between Harriott and Simpson ends not with action, but inaction. The absence of Simpson and Margaret in the last third of the novel drains the narrative drive that had sustained its initial two-thirds. Harriott carries a grudge, but is almost somnambular as he goes through the motions to finish his career. He buys a gun, but contrary to Chekov's dictum, it never goes off. In the end, "Harriott clicked the hammer on an empty chamber" (337). This subversion of the dramatic expectations is a kind of imitative fallacy that reflects the course of the nineteenth-century fur trade itself. Similarly, there was no dramatic climax to the fur trade. Indeed, it continued, but altered by the steadily encroaching demands of settlement, colonial administration, capital investment, and national aspirations.

The points of view are widened in the last sections of the novel. The introduction of Rundle and Kane as characters mark a shift away from the internal focalization of characters who have direct experience in the fur trade. Rundle and Kane have something to trade too, but their commodities are cultural. In another of Gladstone's (imagined) letters, he offers a concise summary of the shift:

I guess in this book of yours we're talking about how a place goes from wild to tame. First the Indians have it to themselves. Then the traders come to harvest the animals. After that it's the missionaries trying to tame everybody. Artists, white hunters and such want to paint it or shoot it so they can say they did before anyone else. That's the last thing before the

homesteaders. I bet it doesn't differ much from Rhodesia to Rupert's Land. (291)

The interpolation of Rundle and Kane into the narrative reflects the historical circumstances: the place of the trade is no longer the closed shop of the HBC but must open itself to include other narratives and identities. In Rundle's chapter, "The Missionary," the Governor is not mentioned once. The authority for Rundle's visit comes from a higher power than the Overseas Governor, "all the way from England" (251). In Kane's chapter, "The Artist," the character of Kane acknowledges Simpson as "[t]he HBC Governor who is responsible for my being here" (293). But for Stenson, self-interest motivates Kane, as the artist is keen for career success. Stenson creates a structure for the novel that reflects the shift in the fur trade as it faces the pressures of settlement, railway capitalism, and the strategic positioning of the British Empire against the manifest destiny of the United States.

The text demonstrates an awareness of how representations of the fur trade evolved from the documentary to the sentimental. Early in the narrative, the character of Colin Robertson comments on a book he is reading: "The Company men are shown as noble chaps, vigorous and brave, fighting for England among the blood-thirsty savages" (70). Stenson here draws attention to the formative influence of text on identity. Later, in a second-hand reference to the canoe reception for The Prince of Wales, Stenson introduces the performative aspect of the event: " 'He died as he lived,' said one milk-eyed former adventurer, referring to the fact that, according to the paper, the Governor had been out at Lachine two days before his final apoplexy, showing off Iroquois

paddlers and decorated birchbark canoes to the eighteen-year-old Prince of Wales” (337). Stenson distances the narrative voice from the event described: the Governor’s death is mediated through a newspaper, then again through the reported speech of an anonymous “milk-eyed former adventurer.” This illustrates the distance such a performance had from the lived experiences of those engaged in the trade. For them, the phrase “He died as he lived” recognizes Simpson’s authority was always performance, and that the Governor’s allegiances were always toward the authority in London.

The petering out of the narrative need not necessarily be interpreted as a flaw of imitative fallacy in the text, but rather as a comment on the constructions of narratives and histories. Durnin argues that Stenson succeeds in “creating a world in which the various parts [of fur-trade history] – the mercantile drive of the fur trade and its bosses, the interactions between whites and Natives, the social structures and individuals who make them up – are presented so coherently (often through the entirely convincing internal focalization of major characters) that the fiction appears originary, not derivative” (84). The imaginative scope of fiction-making in a novel allows Stenson to bring together and to animate the themes that have been explored by scholarly historians.

In *The Trade*, Stenson uses descriptions of the daily practices of the fur trade, of place, of weather, of the sights and sounds of imagined experience to create a deep and convincing setting for the narrative. Durnin remarks on the “deeply satisfying nature of Stenson’s fiction” (84), and that it “may offer true and satisfactory interpretations of history” (87). But are conviction and satisfaction substitutes for truth? In her article, Durnin several times asserts that *The Trade* is “true-to-meaning” if not exactly “true-to-

actuality” (74-5, 80, 85, 86-7). Yet DeLillo reminds us that “[f]iction does not obey reality even in the most spare and semidocumentary work. . . . There is a deep density of convention that allows us to accept highly stylized work as true to life. Fiction is true to a thousand things but rarely to clinical lived experience” (62). As a work of fiction, *The Trade* is not “truth.” It includes invented archives. It includes letters from Paul Kane, which, according to I.S. MacLaren’s evidence, Kane was incapable of writing.²⁰ The craven and licentious representation of Simpson is no more true than the benevolent and avuncular one in *Fergus MacTavish*. Stenson does not execute “the deep density of convention” to represent truth, not even truth-as-meaning. Rather, he imagines possible representations that invite the reader to consider possible histories. Fiction by its nature is suggestive. Narrative is the engine that drives the exchange between text and reader. Unlike historiography, which problematizes narrative, fiction celebrates narrative. The novel’s title delivers the central trope of the novel. This is a fiction about the fur trade, but it is also about notions of exchange and negotiation. The text itself raises questions about the trades and exchanges necessary in the discourse of history, narrative, and fiction. When Margaret turns the knife on herself and defies Simpson, she utters: “ ‘This is what I own,’ she said. ‘I can trade it or I can take it because it is mine’ ” (143). The themes of miscegenation, authority, race, imperialism, identity, and place are crystallized in a moment of narrative. Is it true? No. Is it compelling? Yes.

²⁰ MacLaren writes that “Kane was not fluent as a writer; few letters have survived in his hand but there is more than one indication that people despaired of receiving correspondence from him” (233).

When I first began the project of looking at the narrative of the fur trade and fur-trade narratives, I held the opinion that *The Trade* was a fresh departure from the writing of fur-trade history. I took at face value Stenson's comments in the Acknowledgements that the novel "argues with some of history's assessments" (344) and that his intention is to write between the lines of history. My opinion has shifted. *The Trade* does consolidate much of the revisionist history of the last three decades in a way that is fresh and engaging. But it also shares traits with other fur-trade texts, both fiction and non-fiction. Such texts have been contributing factors to creating a Canadian and particularly a Western Canadian identity. The tradition of the adventure novels established the sentimental ideal of the great white heroes, with occasional glimpses of faithful First Nations companions (usually Christian converts), the hot-headed but colourful French Canadians, and the often-troubled mixed-race supporting cast. The HBC was the agent of civilization, and the vanguard of peace, order, and good government. From the Eurocentric and white point of view, these texts reinforced the sense of belonging – if not outright ownership of – to Canada as place. The multitude were made one by the HBC, then incorporated into the nation-state. These texts belong to what Nicholas Entrikin describes as the "highly sentimentalized narratives of collective identity" ("Democratic Place-Making" 19). *The Trade* participates in the resistance to the historical representation, and it succeeds. Yet as it critiques, it is also complicit in the process. *The Trade* is not without sentimentality. Characters such as Harriott, Margaret, and Colin Robertson appeal with their pathos or their pluck. As a villain, Simpson veers toward the conventions made familiar by such villains as Iago. Rowand is a tyrant, but there is more

than a touch of Falstaff to his fictional portrait. And although Stenson interrogates conventional historiography, the narrative is very much a paean to place. In the last lines of the narrative, Stenson writes: "If hellfire burns eternal, earthly fires are never so. They burn to exhaustion, or until the cool rains fall. A pale green rises through the char" (341). *The Trade* is an imaginative record of the burn and its exhaustion, an attempt to cover the char of history with the green of narrative.

CHAPTER SEVEN

IMAGINING HISTORY: UNPACKING THE ROYAL VISIT OF 1860

The canoe pageant that entertained The Prince of Wales in 1860 is not much more than a footnote to the historical record. A perusal of the historiographical and fictional fur-trade texts reveals that although the event is often mentioned, it does not occupy a place of prominence in the discourse of the fur trade or of Canada. During his tour, The Prince of Wales participated in acts fraught with much greater symbolism than the canoe pageant, such as driving the last rivet in the Victoria Bridge spanning the St. Lawrence from Montreal to the south shore, or laying the cornerstone of the Parliament Building in Ottawa. In the arena of practical politics, the Orange Order controversies in Kingston and Toronto created more furor than anything that happened in Lower Canada or the Maritime colonies. However, the events of the afternoon of 29 August 1860 present a convergence of narratives of the social relations of the fur trade, of the impending confederation of Canada, and of the representations of Canada.

The *Montreal Gazette* report of “The Canoe Race” was rendered in language that represented the canoes and paddlers in the familiar nineteenth-century terms:

The scene at this moment was unrivalled in interest, and picturesque effect

. . . .

Their appearance was very beautiful; the light and graceful craft were painted and fitted with great taste, each having flags at the bow and stern; their crew composed of 100 Iroquois Indians, from Caughnawaga and the

Lake of Two Mountains being costumed *en sauvage*, gay with feathers, scarlet cloths and paint; – the crews and craft harmonising admirably. (2)

The Illustrated London News gave a similar account in its article “Grand Canoe Reception,” quoting an unnamed correspondent from the Toronto *Weekly Globe*:

The dark foliage upon the surrounding banks, the glittering white houses peeping out from among the trees, the shining spires of the village churches, all combined, produced a scene of exceeding splendour. . . . The Indians themselves were all dressed in red flannel shirts. Their canoes were also painted of the same colour; in fact with their red faces, red clothes, and red boots, they were one mass of red, varied only by their feathery headdresses of various colours, and by a broad streak of white which ran around their frail crafts. On they came, chanting their boat-song, and occasionally sending up a shriek which resounded far and wide. (344)

As discussed in Chapter Three of this thesis, “Imagining the Voyageur: Representing the Fur Trade,” writers such as Thomas Moore and Anna Jameson represented the voyageurs in their canoes as a kind of ethnographic performance by primitives, which in turn catalyzed the writers to create poetry that displayed their own aesthetic sensibilities. In 1860 on the St. Lawrence, the performance was tacitly understood, and the language of the newspaper rendered the event almost as theatre, or at least spectacle.

The representation points to an understanding of the potential of the fur trade’s symbols, not just to signify the business of the trade, but to perform and transform the social relationships. The canoe brigade in Lachine was not the only time the Prince rode

in a canoe during his tour. In the Saugenay, Henry Morgan reported that he was met with “eleven canoes in a brigade” which then took the Prince fishing for salmon (58). In “The Prince at Ottawa,” the *Gazette* described how “1200 men in 150 birch canoes” met the Prince, and the *Illustrated London News* described their canoe races and the Prince’s participation. In the Saugenay, the canoes served a practical purpose: to transport the Prince on a fishing trip. In Ottawa, the lumber workers’ regatta was organized more like a rustic fair. These receptions differed in their performativity and in the self-conscious acts of representation that marked Simpson’s Lachine reception. Unlike so many of the functions that The Prince of Wales attended, where the colonists attempted to mimic European manners, this performance resonated with the two hundred years of fur-trade practice that had been enacted upon these waters.

This change in the business of the colonies can also be traced in the occasion for the performance. For if in so many ways the HBC, the image of the voyageur, the setting of Lachine, and Sir George Simpson himself represented the success of mercantile monopoly capitalism, the reception for which the spectacle was staged hinted at the burgeoning industrial capitalism of the colony, and even political confederation of the Dominion. Of all the receptions, luncheons, and dinners given on the Prince’s behalf, the lunch at Simpson’s (as opposed to the riverside reception) was one of the most underreported. The visit by Edward was the first royal tour of an overseas colony by any British monarch, and it set the precedent for the rituals of pomp and circumstance that have followed in the century and a half since. The itinerary was carefully planned and closely watched by the press from the New World and the Old. The lunch at Simpson’s

was therefore significant because it was not a public event. The *Times* (of London) reported that “the Prince and his suite had lunch, and amused themselves on the water, and had for once a pleasant and strictly private day, far from the eager ken of Western reporters, though I fear that their knowing nothing of what took place will not fail to give still a wider range to their imaginations . . .” (6). Sir George Simpson arranged a performance that fulfilled the public’s desire for spectacle, but hosted the elite in private.

Before there was Canada the nation-state, there were the Canadas upper and lower, British North America, New France. And before that, there was China. In 1669, de la Salle believed he could reach China from Montreal. He abandoned his land grants, but the derisive nickname stuck: Lachine. By 1860 no one still imagined that the New World was the gateway to the orient – indeed, even by de la Salle’s time that notion was ridiculed. But few if any of the guests at the lunch would identify themselves as “Canadians.” The *Gazette* reported: “Being a private entertainment, a complete list of those present has not been furnished to us.” Robert Cellem discreetly observed, “[t]here was no one allowed who could not meet His Royal Highness’ suite on terms of social equality” (178). But from the names in the *Gazette* and in the *Journal* of the Duke of Newcastle’s private secretary, Gardner Engleheart (45), a partial guest list can be determined. The lunch hosted many of the burgeoning interests of the region: British colonial officials (British Colonial Secretary Newcastle; General Williams; Earl of Mulgrave); Canadian politics (Allan MacNab; Etienne-Paschal Taché; John Rose); banking (Simpson; MacNab; Rose); railways (Simpson; MacNab; Thomas Blackwell); religion (Francis Fulford, metropolitan of Montreal; and either one of or both the bishops

of Huron and Rupert's Land). Only a handful of the forty or so guests were born in Canada. Engleheart writes: "At luncheon it was remarked that our little company comprised all the ranks and orders of British society" (45). His list of names consists of various members of the Prince's entourage; MacNab, Taché, and Williams are the only Canadian-born. (And while General Williams was born in Halifax, he spent most of his career at postings throughout the empire.) The gaze at lunch settled on the Prince, and the guests' loyalties faced across the ocean. Certainly, this was one of the aims of the tour of the Prince; as *The Illustrated London News* reported, "[t]o our North American provinces [the tour] will give an opportunity of recognising limited monarchy as a principle and institution which forms the rallying point and the centre of a free, constitutional government" ("Tour" 168). Of the party, Taché, Newcastle, and John Rose all would play significant roles in the negotiation of Confederation, though neither Taché nor Newcastle lived to see the Dominion. Both Rose and Taché travelled with the Prince's entourage throughout his tour of the province of Canada. I am tempted to imagine that many of the mechanics of Confederation were hashed out during carriage rides, luncheons, receptions, and the like.

The spectacle and the performance worked to generate a continuation of the fur trade as a significant force in the imagination of the colonial Canada and its imperial masters. The *Gazette* saluted them: "[t]he Hudson's Bay Company are entitled to the thanks of the Canadian public, for their liberality and spirit in getting up this unique excursion" Nevertheless, despite the spectacle, and despite the success in the 1857 Select Committee in the House of Commons in London that the HBC "should continue to

enjoy the privileges of exclusive trade which they now enjoy” (Watkin 143), the men in Lachine in 1860 certainly knew that change was inevitable, and they were angling for profit in that change. As Edward Watkin wrote in a personal memorandum in 1863, “it must be conceded, that, while government by a merchant organization has eminently succeeded, up to an obvious point of time and circumstances, in the cases of both of the East India and Hudson’s Bay Companies, . . . it contains within itself the seeds of its own dissolution” (164). Indeed, although Watkin undoubtedly would not share David Harvey’s Marxist interpretation (discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis, “Imagining Identity: Place, Narrative, and the Fur Trade”), his analysis anticipated Harvey’s argument that capitalism requires its “spatial fixes” to cure its crises. The HBC was at that point that Harvey describes as “capital accumulation during one phase of its history” that has “to be torn down and reconfigured to make way for further accumulation at a later stage” (*Spaces of Hope* 54). The canoe brigade was an affective and historical imagery deployed in public performance to signify that the HBC was a legitimate power. The lunch which it accompanied was a private performance that leveraged this affective power toward future possibilities.



Fig. 1. Grand Canoe Reception Given to The Prince of Wales on the St. Lawrence, *Illustrated London News*, 13 Oct. 1860.

The engraving of the event from the *Illustrated London News* suggests a kind of Laurentian pastoral. A lawn worthy of an English country garden slopes up from the landing place on Dorval Island, the site of George Simpson's country house a couple of miles upstream from his headquarters at Lachine. The widely spaced trees are unencumbered by deadfall or undergrowth. A small outbuilding is suitably vernacular with its rough-hewn logs. There is no way to verify the accuracy of the image, or even to know whether the unaccredited artist was witness to the scene. The canoes sit rather higher in the water than they rightly should, and paddles are not in evidence. The setting has been created to appeal to what MacLaren calls the "metropolitan imperial aesthetic gaze" (235). A photograph of the house and an article in *The Beaver* from the 1930s indicate that the lawn and formal gardens were part of Simpson's Dorval Island property, and it is the very Englishness of this landscape set alongside the voyageurs in their canoes flying the union jack that perhaps defines the Canadianness of the scene, at the

least for the English readers of the *London Illustrated News*.²¹ The wild colonial land has been tamed, and so too have the wild (or at least feral) men who did the taming.

Simpson is not named by Engleheart in his list of peerages, commissions, and esquires. He could perhaps be named as a bastard, and joined in that infamy by General Williams. According to the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*, “[i]t was widely believed at the time of his birth and throughout his career that William Fenwick Williams’ father was Edward Augustus, Duke of Kent and Strathearn” and that “Williams himself made no effort to discredit this possibility” (Waite). If true, this meant that he and the Prince shared the same grandfather. Nor does Engleheart name the three women who attended and who undoubtedly served: Frances Beechey Hopkins, wife of Simpson’s secretary Edward Hopkins; her sister; and Simpson’s niece. Indeed, of the three women, only Frances is ever named in any text. In the small world of the colonial elite, she has a tenuous connection to the Prince and Williams: her grandfather William Beechey painted the Duke of York’s portrait (see Gillen).

²¹ A photo of a Dorval Island house is described in C.P. Wilson’s article “The emperor’s last days.” A note inserted into the Simpson reference folders at the HBCA indicates that the house in the photo and described is not the one that George Simpson built; that more modest house burned down in 1879. Many sources, including Galbraith, Newman, and Chalmers, repeat C.P. Wilson’s information that Simpson’s house was a large brick structure.

Nor are any of the voyageurs named in any description of the event. They are anonymous. Yet of all the participants in the canoe pageant, they are the New World citizens. The *Gazette* acknowledges them as Iroquois Indians, from Caughnawaga and the Lake of Two Mountains. Writing of the 1860 lunch, Pierre-Joseph-Olivier Chauveau is one contemporary author who engages the contradictions in the voyageurs' performance: "How strange to hear these descendants of the Mohawks, the allies of England and the foes of France, sing to the heir of the British Empire the old songs of Normandy and Brittany, – for these Indians hardly know any others than those they have learned from the *voyageurs*. What a host of historical recollections must have been called to mind . . ."

(45). Chauveau's comments neatly summarize the hybridized assimilation of the canoe pageant, as aboriginal, French, New World practices and Old World histories were put into the service of valorizing the English monarchy.

The participation of voyageurs in the fur trade was of course essential to its success. Frances Hopkins would later accompany her husband on inland canoe voyages, and her paintings of voyageurs have become widely reproduced and collected in Canadian museums.



Fig. 2. Frances Anne Hopkins, *Canoe Manned by Voyageurs Passing a Waterfall*, 1869. Nat. Arch. of Canada.

Hopkins lived at Lachine, and undoubtedly was witness to the canoe brigades that set off from the HBC warehouse there. Unlike the HBC traders and managers, who looked to England for home, the workers of the fur trade were of the place. But did her attendance at the 1860 lunch give her the notions of the visual and performative possibilities of the voyageur that she later transformed to canvas? Again quoting MacLaren, the imagery she employs is “a way of commodifying colonial, fur-trade, or Native life,” which resulted in “ethnocentric sentimentalism” (235). Her paintings are exquisitely executed; they conform to the romantic and pastoral imagery that had accumulated around the voyageur experience in the nineteenth century, and she influenced future representations.



Fig. 3. *Voyageurs at Fort William, 1860.* Wisconsin Historical Society.

If we compare her painting to an early documentary photograph of voyageurs, the differences between the images are apparent: the stylizations of her work are obvious.²² Hopkins's paddlers appear neater, and though they paddle, they seem relaxed. One smokes a pipe. Another leans out of the canoe in a moment of idyll to scoop up a water lily, and his partner in front glances back as if to appreciate the gesture. The bowsman too looks down, as if he might be admiring his own reflection in the still waters. Two Europeans – presumably representative of the artist and her husband – sit comfortably amidships. By contrast, the men in the photo are working men. Their caps are askew. Their rounded shoulders and gaunt faces bespeak the fatigue of their labours.

²² Jennifer Brown reproduced this photo *Strangers in Blood* as a rare example of a documentary photo of voyageurs.

My re-imagining of this event in Chapter 1 of this thesis is my own attempt to participate in the creation of the imagined community of Canada. As a narrative – or rather as one narrative element in the broader narrative of the fur trade – the story contains the traces of identity, community, and place that have become ingrained in the narrative of Canada. Just as the historical and fictional texts over the last century and a half have claimed and reclaimed George Simpson and the nineteenth-century fur trade in order to support conceptions of the identities of self, community, people, region, nation, region, and place, so too my text claims them. I have tried to reveal the contingencies of these conceptions of identities, that they exist simultaneously and contradictorily in plurality and in totality. The past – history – exists only as an act that can be imagined.

The fur-trade history is not of course an English-only endeavour. Its roots are French. Despite the HBC's two-hundred year endurance (to the point of 1860), it was not the only enterprise operating at the trade. The home-based Montreal traders provided competition for decades, and left an indelible mark on fur-trade practices. Americans competed to the south and the west. The indigenous social relations that had developed over the centuries were unique to the practice of the trade, and varied considerably even by region. First Nations participated as essential contributors, as trading partners, as exploitable consumers, as labourers, or not at all. The Métis and mixed-race communities in the West developed hybrid cultures.

Sarah Carter writes that there is “no one history to the fur trade” (42), and the temptation exists to say the same about Canada. But even if there are multiple histories, there is an urge to imagine a single community. A nation's diverse historical narratives

sustain its imagination, even if they are remembered only to be forgotten. This claiming of histories amalgamates the different communities into a nation. And so Simpson's texts become Canadian ones: even when re-cast in the guise of academic inquiry that chases evidence, or postcolonial resistance that writes gender and colour into history, or fictional representations such as Fred Stenson's *The Trade* that imagine outside of history, these stories now belong to this place, this nation, this community.

But at the 1860 lunch at Lachine, these contributing factors are arrogated to British imperialism. At Lachine, the *Gazette* notes that the canoe "bearing the Prince, the Duke of Newcastle and General Williams tak[es] the lead"; but tellingly records that "[a]bout the centre of the brigade we observed Sir George Simpson . . . directing the movements in person." Simpson relinquishes the spot in the lead canoe – a spot in which he has performed his duties as governor on hundreds, if not thousands, of occasions – but is still *seen* to be in command. The layers of performativity abound: by necessary deference, he must give up his leading spot to the Prince, but by remaining demonstrably in control, his performance is a reminder that for all practical purposes, the spot is his to give up. By joining the fur-trade symbols to the Victorian imperialism, the canoe brigade as well brings up to date the Hudson's Bay Company's royal charter credentials, even if the negotiations to liquidate its monopoly are underway. He creates a visual analogy that gives him a claim to the imperial power – the spot in the lead canoe is proclaimed as a princely position. In the Prince's absence, it belongs to Simpson and the Hudson's Bay Company.

WORKS CITED

- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. Rev. Ed. London: Verso, 1991.
- Ballantyne, Robert M. *Hudson's Bay, or Every-day Life in the Wilds of North America during Six Years' Residence in the Territories of the Honourable Hudson's Bay Company*. 1848. Introduction to The New Edition by George Woodcock. Edmonton: Hurtig, 1972.
- , *Snowflakes and Sunbeams; or The Young Fur Traders: A Tale of the Far North*. London: T. Nelson, 1856.
- Barclay, Archibald. Letter to Sir George Simpson. 1 June 1843. HBCA D5/8. Winnipeg.
- Berens, Henry Hulse. Letter to Edward Hopkins. 20 September 1860. HBCA D5/52. Winnipeg.
- , Letter to A.G. Dallas. 3 Jan 1861. HBCA D5/52. Winnipeg.
- Berger, Carl. *The Writing of Canadian History: Aspects of English-Canadian Historical Writing since 1900*. 2nd ed. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1986.
- Binnema, Theodore, Gerhard J. Ens and R.C. MacLeod, eds. *From Rupert's Land to Canada: Essays in Honour of John E. Foster*. Edmonton: U of Alberta P, 2001.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. "Identity and Representation: Elements for a Critical Reflection on the Idea of Region." *Language and Symbolic Power*. Ed. John B. Thompson. Trans. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson. Cambridge, UK: Polity, 1991. 220-8.
- Brown, Jennifer S. H. "Fur Trade History as Text and Drama." *The Uncovered Past*:

- Roots of Northern Alberta Societies*. Ed. Patricia A. McCormack and R. Geoffrey Ironside. Edmonton: Canadian Circumpolar Institute, 1993. 81-8.
- , "Newman's *Company of Adventurers* in Two Solitudes: A Look at Reviews and Responses." *Canadian Historical Review* 67 (1986): 562-71.
- , *Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Company Families in Indian Country*. Vancouver: UBC P, 1980.
- and Jacqueline Peterson, eds. *The New People: Being and Becoming Métis in North America*. Winnipeg: U of Manitoba P, 1985.
- Bryce, George. *Mackenzie, Selkirk, Simpson*. The Makers of Canada: Parkman Edition 8. Toronto: Morang, 1909.
- , *The Remarkable History of the Hudson's Bay Company, Including that of the French Fur Traders of North-Western Canada and of the North-West, XY, and Astor Fur Companies*. Toronto: William Briggs, 1900.
- "Building a Canoe." *www.squeedunk.com*. 25 Nov. 1999. Squeedunk Kayaks. 15 March 2005 <<http://www.squeedunk.com/building.htm>>.
- Burley, Edith I. *Servants of the Honourable Company: Work, Discipline, and Conflict in the Hudson's Bay Company, 1770-1870*. Toronto: OUP, 1997.
- The Canadian Encyclopedia Online*. 2005. Toronto: Historica Foundation of Canada. <<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com>>.
- Careless, J.M.S. "Limited Identities in Canada." *Canadian Historical Review* 50 (1969): 1-10.
- Carter, Sarah. *Aboriginal People and Colonizers of Western Canada to 1900*. Toronto:

University of Toronto Press, 1999.

"The Canoe Race." *Montreal Gazette*. 1 Sept. 1860: 2.

Casey, Edward H. "Between Geography and Philosophy: What Does It Mean to be in the Place-World?" *Annals of the Assoc. of American Geographers* 91 (2001): 683-93.

-----, "On Habitus and Place: Responding to My Critics." *Annals of the Assoc. of American Geographers* 91 (2001): 716-23.

Cellem, Robert. *Visit of His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales to the British North American Provinces and United States in the Year 1860; Compiled from the Public Journals by Robert Cellem*. Toronto: H. Rowsell, 1861.

Chalmers, John W. *Fur Trade Governor: George Simpson 1820-1860*. Edmonton: Inst. of Applied Art, 1960.

Chauveau, Pierre-Joseph-Olivier. *The Visit of His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales to America: Reprinted from the Lower Canada Journal of Education, with an Appendix Containing Poems, Addresses, Letters, &c.* Montréal: E. Senécal, [1860].

Cook, Ramsay, ed. *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*. 24 Oct. 2003. Nat. Lib. of Canada and Nat. Arch. of Canada, Ottawa; U. of Toronto; U. Laval, Quebec. <<http://www.biographi.ca/EN/>>.

Corless, Marianne. *Fur Flag*. 2001. Collection of the artist. Marianne Corless website. 24 Mar. 2004 <<http://www.corless.ca/new%20pages/galfurflag.htm>>.

DeLillo, Don. "The Power of History." *New York Times Magazine* 7 Sept 1997: 60-3.

Dick, Lyle. "Renegade in the Archives: Peter C. Newman and the Writing of Canadian

- Popular History." *Archivaria* 22 (Summer 1986): 168-81.
- Dining Room*. Sir George-Étienne Cartier National Historic Site of Canada, Montreal.
- Durnin, Katherine. "Archives and Truth in Fred Stenson's *The Trade*." *Canadian Literature* 178 (2003): 73-88.
- Ellice, Edward. Letter to Sir George Simpson. 13 February 1860. HBCA 5/51.
- Engleheart, Gardner D. *Journal of the Progress of H.R.H. The Prince of Wales through British North America: And his Visit to the United States, 10th July to 15th November, 1860*. [London]: n.p, n.d.
- Entrikin, J. Nicholas. "Democratic Place-Making and Multiculturalism." *Geografiska Annaler* 84 B (2002): 19-25.
- , "Hiding Places." *Annals of the Assoc. of American Geographers* 91 (2001): 694-7.
- , "Place and Region 2." *Progress in Human Geography* 20 (1996): 215-21.
- , "Place and Region 3." *Progress in Human Geography* 21 (1997): 263-8.
- Fleming, Sanford. "Expeditions to the Pacific, with Brief References to the Voyages of Discovery in Seas Contiguous with Canada, in Connection with a Western Passage from Europe to Asia." *Presidential Address before the Royal Society of Canada, with Papers from the Transactions*. Montreal: Dawson, 1890. Rpt. Ottawa: Canadian Institute for Historical Microreproductions, 1981. 89-141.
- Foster, John "The Métis: The People and the Term." *Prairie Forum* 3 (1978): 79-90.
- Galbraith, John S. *The Little Emperor: Governor Simpson of the Hudson's Bay Company*. Toronto: Macmillan, 1976.
- Geller, Peter. "Creating Corporate Images of the Fur Trade: The Hudson's Bay Company

and Public Relations in the 1930s.” *The Fur Trade Revisited: Selected Papers of The Sixth North American Fur Trade Conference, Mackinac Island, Michigan, 1991*. Ed. Jennifer S.H. Brown, W.J. Eccles, and Donald P. Heldman, 409-26. East Lansing/Mackinac Island: Michigan State UP, 1994.

German, Tony. *A Breed Apart*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985.

Gillen, Mollie. “Montgenet (Mongenet, Montgenêt), Thérèse Bernardine.” *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*. Ed. Ramsay Cook. 24 Oct. 2003. Nat. Lib. of Canada and Nat. Arch. of Canada, Ottawa; U. of Toronto; U. Laval, Quebec. 12 March 2004 <<http://www.biographi.ca/EN/ShowBio.asp?BioId=37158>>.

Gough, Thomas Bunbury. *Boyish Reminiscences of His Majesty the King's Visit to Canada in 1860*. Toronto: Musson, [1910].

“Grand Canoe Reception Given to The Prince of Wales on the St. Lawrence.” *Illustrated London News* 13 Oct. 1860: 344, 338.

Grant, George. *Ocean to Ocean: Sanford Fleming's Expedition through Canada in 1872: Being a Diary Kept during a Journey from the Atlantic to the Pacific with the Expedition of the Engineer-in-Chief of the Canadian Pacific and Intercolonial Railways*. Toronto: J. Campbell; London: Sampson Low, Marston, Low & Searle, 1873.

Gregory, Derek. *Geographical Imaginations*. Cambridge MA & Oxford: Blackwell, 1994.

Gross, Konrad. “Coureurs-de-bois, Voyageurs & Trappers: The Fur Trade and the Emergence of an Ignored Canadian Literary Tradition.” *Canadian Literature* 127

(1990): 76-91.

Harlow, Robert. *Scann*. 1972. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1977.

Harvey, David. "Between Space and Time: Reflections on Geographical Imagination."

Annals of the Assoc. of American Geographers 80 (1990): 418-34.

-----, "Militant Particularism and Global Ambition: The Conceptual Politics of Place, Space, and Environment in the Work of Raymond Williams." *Social Text* 42 (Spring 1995): 69-98.

-----, *Spaces of Hope*. Berkeley: U of Calif. P, 2000.

Head, [Sir] Edmund. Letter to Sir George Simpson. 4 Feb. 1860. HBCA D5/51.

Winnipeg.

Hind, Henry Youle. *Narrative of the Canadian Red River Exploring Expedition of 1857 and of the Assiniboine and Saskatchewan Exploring Expedition of 1858*.

London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1860.

Hobsbawm, Eric. Introduction. *The Invention of Tradition*. Ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge UP, 1983. 1-14.

Hooper, Barbara. "Desiring the Presence, Romancing the Real." *Annals of the Assoc. of American Geographers* 91 (2001): 703-15.

Hopkins, Frances Anne. *Canoe Manned by Voyageurs Passing a Waterfall*, 1869. Nat.

Arch. of Canada. Living Memory. Proj. Coord. Michael Crawley. Nat. Lib. of

Canada and Nat. Arch. of Canada, Ottawa. Reproduction C-2771. 13 March 2004

<http://www.collectionscanada.ca/05/0509_e.html>.

Hudson's Bay Company: A Brief History. London: Hudson's Bay House, 1934.

Hutcheon, Linda. *The Politics of Postmodernism*. London & New York: Routledge, 1989.

Innis, Harold. *The Fur Trade in Canada*. Rev. Ed. 1956. Foreword revised 1969. With an Introductory Essay to the 1999 edition by Arthur J. Ray. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1999.

-----, Introduction. *Minutes of Council: Northern Department of Rupert Land, 1821-31*.

Ed. R. Harvey Fleming. Hudson's Bay Record Society 3. London: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1940. xi-lxxvii.

Jameson, Anna Brownell. *Winter Studies and Summer Rambles*. 1839. Afterword by Clara Thomas. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1990.

Kane, Paul. *Wanderings of an Artist Among the Indians of North America to Vancouver's Island and Oregon through the Hudson's Bay Company Territory and Back Again*. 1859. Introduction by Lawrence Burpee. Toronto: Radisson Soc. Of Canada, 1925.

King, Thomas. *Green Grass, Running Water*. 1993. Toronto: HarperPerennial, 1999.

Kohl, J. G. *Kitchi-gami: Wanderings around Lake Superior*. London: Chapman and Hall, 1860.

-----, *Travels in Canada, and Through the States of New York and Pennsylvania*. Vol. 1. London: George Manwaring, 1861.

Lukács, György. *The Historical Novel*. Trans. Hannah and Stanley Mitchell. 1962. Introduction by Fredric Jameson. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1983.

MacEwan, Grant. "Ruler of Rupert's Land: George Simpson." *Fifty Mighty Men*. Saskatoon: Modern P, 1958. 53-9.

MacKay, Douglas. *The Honourable Company: A History of the Hudson's Bay Company*.

Toronto: Musson, 1938.

-----, "They Shall Grow Old Not." *The Beaver* (June 1938): 30-2.

Mackenzie, Sir Alexander. "A General History of the Fur Trade from Canada to the North-west." In *Voyages from Montreal: On the River St. Laurence, through the Continent of North America, to the Frozen and Pacific Oceans, in the Years 1789 and 1793: With a Preliminary Account of the Rise, Progress and Present State of the Fur Trade of that Country*. London: Printed for T. Cadell et al., 1802.

MacKenzie, John M. "The Imperial Pioneer and Hunter and the British Masculine Stereotype in Late Victorian England." *Manliness and Morality: Middle-class Masculinity in Britain and America 1800-1940*. Ed. J.A. Mangan and James Walvin. NY: St. Martin's P, 1987. 176-98.

MacLaren, I.S. "Paul Kane and the Authorship of *Wanderings of an Artist*." In Binnema, *From Rupert's Land to Canada*: 225-47.

Marx, Karl. *Capital: Volume 1*. 1867. Ed. Frederich Engels. Trans. Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling, 1887. Marx/Engels Internet Archive (marxists.org), 1997, 1999. Posted at Marxists.org Internet Archive. 4 Oct. 2003
<<http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/index.htm>>.

-----, *Theories of Surplus Value*. Vol. 2 of 3. 1863. Ed. S. Ryzanskaya. Trans. Renate Simpson. Moscow: Progress, 1968. Rpt. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1969.

----- and Friedrich Engels. *The Communist Manifesto*. 1847. Trans. Samuel Moore, 1888. Introduction by A.J.P. Taylor. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967.

- McDonald, Archibald. *Peace River: A Canoe Voyage from Hudson's Bay to Pacific by the Late Sir George Simpson (Governor, Hon. Hudson's Bay Company) in 1828. Journal of the Late Chief Factor, Archibald McDonald*. Ed. Malcolm McLeod. Ottawa: J. Durie & Son, 1872. Edmonton: Hurtig, 1971.
- McLean, John. *Notes of a Twenty-Five Years' Service in the Hudson's Bay Territory*. Volume 2. London: R. Bentley, 1849.
- McLeod, Malcom. Preface to McDonald, *Peace River*: i-iv.
- Merk, Frederick. Introduction to Simpson. *Fur Trade and Empire*: xi-lxii.
- Moore, Thomas. "A Canadian Boat Song." *The Poetical Works of Thomas Moore*. Ed. A.D. Godley. London: Henry Frowde, 1910. 124-5.
- , Preface to Volume 2 of the *Collected Edition of Ten Volumes, The Poetical Works of Thomas Moore*. 1841-2. Qtd. in "A Visit to Niagara by Thomas Moore, Poet." Niagara-on-the-Lake Public Library. *Ars Historica Niagara*. 24 Dec. 2003
<<http://historyniagara.niagara.com/Moore/MoorePreface.htm>>.
- Morgan, Henry J. *The Tour of H.R.H.: The Prince of Wales through British America and the United States; by a British Canadian*. Montreal: John Lovell, 1860.
- Morton, Arthur S. *Sir George Simpson, Overseas Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company: A Pen Picture of a Man of Action*. Toronto: Dent, 1944.
- Morton, W.L. "Presidential Address [The Relevance of Canadian History]." *Canadian Historical Association: Report, 1960 of the Annual Meeting*. Ed. John P. Heisler and Paul Dumas. Toronto: Cndn. Hist. Assoc., 1960.
- Mountain, George. *Songs of the Wilderness: Being a Collection of Poems, Written in*

Some Different Parts of the Territory of the Hudson's Bay Company, and in the Wilds of Canada, on the Route to that Territory, in the Spring and Summer of 1844: Interspersed with some Illustrative Notes. London: F. & J. Rivington, 1846.

Newman, Peter C. *Caesars of the Wilderness. Company of Adventurers 2.* Markham: Viking, 1987.

-----, *Here Be Dragons.* Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2004.

-----, "Response by Peter C. Newman to Jennifer Brown." *Canadian Historical Review* 67 (1986): 572-8.

Ogden, Peter Skene. Letter to Sir George Simpson. 12 Mar 1848. HBCA D5/26. Winnipeg.

O'Hagan, Howard. *Tay John.* 1939. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1974.

Oxley, J. MacDonald. *Fergus MacTavish, or A Boy's Will.* London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1893.

Palliser, John. *Journals, Detailed Reports, and Observations Relative to the Exploration, by Captain Palliser, of that Portion of British North America, which, in Latitude, Lies between the British Boundary Line and the Height of Land or Watershed of the Northern or Frozen Ocean Respectively, and in Longitude, between the Western shore of Lake Superior and the Pacific Ocean during the Years 1857, 1858, 1859, and 1860.* London: G.E. Eyre and W. Spottiswoode, 1863.

Parrish, Michael E., Edward Reynolds, and Michael A. Bernstein. "In Memoriam, John S. Galbraith, Professor Emeritus of History, Chancellor Emeritus, University of California, San Diego, 1916-2003." Academic Senate: San Diego Division, 25

- November 2003. San Diego: UC San Diego. 12 February 2005 <http://www-senate.ucsd.edu/assembly/memorial_resolutions/galbraithjohn.pdf>.
- Payne, Michael "Fur Trade Historiography" In Binnema, *From Rupert's Land to Canada*: 2-22.
- Payne, M[ichael]. B. and C J Taylor. "Western Canadian Fur Trade Sites and the Iconography of Public Memory." *Manitoba History* 46 (2003) 2-14.
- Perry, Adele. *On the Edge of Empire: Gender, Race and the Making of British Columbia 1849-1871*. Toronto: U Toronto P, 2001.
- Pike, Warburton. *The Barren Ground of Northern Canada*. London; New York: Macmillan, 1892.
- "The Prince at Ottawa." *Montreal Gazette*. 1 Sept. 1860: 2.
- "The Prince's Visit to Canada." *Times* [London] 13 Sept. 1860: 6.
- Rich, E.E. *The History of the Hudson's Bay Company 1670-1870. Volume 2: 1763-1870. Hudson's Bay Record Society* 22. Foreword by Winston Churchill. London: Hudson's Bay Record Society, 1959.
- The Royal Charter for Incorporating The Hudson's Bay Company, A.D. 1670*. London: R. Causton & Son, 1816. Facs. Canadian Institute for Historical Microreproductions. Early Canadiana Online. 4 Oct. 2003 <<http://www.canadiana.org/ECO/PageView/21022?id=2166b4fba78e1941>>.
- Schatzki, Theodore. "Subject, Body, Place." *Annals of the Assoc. of American Geographers* 91 (2001): 698-702.
- Schooling, William. *The Governor and Company of Adventurers of England Trading into*

- Hudson's Bay during Two Hundred and Fifty Years 1670-1920*. Intro. Robert Molesworth Kindersley. London: Hudson's Bay Co., 1920.
- Shipley, Nan. *The Blonde Voyageur*. Toronto: Burns & MacEachern, 1971
- Simpson, George. *Fur Trade and Empire: George Simpson's Journal Entitled Remarks Connected with the Fur Trade in the Course of a Voyage from York Factory to Fort George and Back to York Factory 1824-25, with Related Documents*. Ed. Frederick Merk. Rev. Ed. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard U.P., 1968.
- , Letter to Donald Smith. 26 March 1860. HBCA D4/77. Winnipeg.
- , Letter to Edmund Head. 10 July 1860. HBCA D4/80. Winnipeg.
- , Letter to Edmund Head. 24 July 1860. HBCA D4/80. Winnipeg.
- , Letter to James Watt. 11 July 1860. HBCA D4/80. Winnipeg.
- , Letter to James Watt. 19 July 1860. HBCA D4/80. Winnipeg.
- , *Narrative of a Journey Round the World, During the Years 1841 and 1842*. London: H. Colburn, 1847.
- Simpson, G.W. Letter to Sir George Simpson. 18 Sept. 1843. HBCA D5/8. Winnipeg.
- "Sir George Simpson's Case." *Amer. Journal of Insanity* 29 (1863): 249-321
- Smith, Donald [Lord Strahcona]. Introduction. Willson. *The Great Company*. xi-xiv.
- Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. *From Granting Council to Knowledge Council: Renewing the Social Sciences and Humanities in Canada*. Ottawa: SSHRC, 2004.
- Southesk, Earl of [James Carnegie]. *Saskatchewan and the Rocky Mountains: A Diary and Narrative of Travel, Sport, and Adventure during a Journey through the*

Hudson's Bay Company's Territories in 1859 and 1860. Toronto: J. Campbell, 1875.

Stenson, Fred. "Encounter." *The Beaver* (Dec 2003): 51-2.

-----, *The Trade*. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 2000.

Thom, Adam. Letter to Sir George Simpson. 23 July 1845. HBCA D5/14. Winnipeg.

-----, Letter to Sir George Simpson. 23 Dec 1845. HBCA D5/15. Winnipeg.

-----, Letter to Sir George Simpson. 11 Aug 1846. HBCA D5/18. Winnipeg.

Thomas, Audrey. *Isobel Gunn*. 1999. Toronto: Penguin, 2000.

"The Tour of The Prince of Wales." *Illustrated London News* 25 Aug. 1860: 167-8.

Tuan, Yi-Fu. *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*. Minneapolis: U of Minn. P: 1977.

Van Kirk, Sylvia. *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur Trade Society 1670-1870*.

Winnipeg: Watson & Dwyer, 1980.

-----, "Women in the Fur Trade." *The Beaver* (Winter 1972): 4-21.

Voyageurs at Fort William, 1860. Wisconsin Historical Society. Neg. no: (X3)9598. File 52204.

Waite, P.B. "Williams, Sir William Fenwick." *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*

Online. Ed. Ramsay Cook. 24 Oct. 2003. Nat. Lib. of Canada and Nat. Arch. of

Canada, Ottawa; U. of Toronto; U. Laval, Quebec. 12 March 2004

<<http://www.biographi.ca/EN/ShowBio.asp?BioId=40030>>.

Watkin, E. W. *Canada and the States: Recollections 1851 to 1886*. London: Ward, Lock and Co., [1886].

White, Hayden. *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1978.

Wiebe, Rudy. "Watch for Two Coyotes, Crossing." *Saturday Night* (April 1998): 50-9.

Williams, William Fenwick. Letter to Sir George Simpson. 20 August 1860. HBCA D5/52. Winnipeg.

Willson, Beckles. *The Great Company: Being a History of the Honourable Company of Merchants-Adventurers Trading into Hudson's Bay*. Introduction by Lord Strathcona and Mount Royal [Donald Smith]. Toronto: Copp, Clark, 1899.

Wilson, C.P. "The Emperor's Last Days." *The Beaver* (June 1934): 36-9.

Woodcock, George. Introduction to the New Edition. Ballantyne. *Hudson's Bay*. ix-xix.

APPENDIX

A NOTE ON SOURCES FOR CHAPTER ONE

Although Chapter One, “Imaging the Past: Lunch at Lachine” is an example of imaginative writing, a creative non-fiction rendering of 29 August 1860, many of the details derive from a visit to the site, and textual and archival sources.

I visited the site 7-8 June 2004. The North Shore is now highly urbanized, and Dorval Island itself dotted with vacation homes. A private ferry runs to the island for those who have homes there. Hudson Bay House in Lachine, where Simpson lived, has been gone since the late 1890s. A convent now occupies the spot. The HBC warehouse is still on the river. It is a fur-trade museum, which I visited. Its displays include a three-quarter size replica of a *canot du nord*. (There is a full-size replica of a *canot de maîtres* in the Ottawa airport.) The interpreter at Lachine told me that to the best of his knowledge, there are no original canoes that were salvaged from the fur-trade era. The rest of the museum is rather unremarkable. I was surprised by the Lachine warehouse’s rather small size, until I learned from the interpreter that later in the fur-trade era it was a staging facility for the Lachine Canal, and the HBC had a larger warehouse in Montreal proper. The most useful experiential research I did at the site was to take a boat trip on the St. Lawrence. Even though I was on a powerboat with many other tourists, there is something elemental about being on the water, and it certainly gave me an appreciation for the St. Lawrence that I had never had before. The trip on the water allowed me to imagine its possible role in Simpson’s imagination.

Before I cite textual and archival sources, perhaps I should begin by acknowledging those parts of my narrative for which I have no evidence whatsoever and which are therefore my own invention: the palsy in Simpson's hand; his attire; the appearance of and materials used to create the HBC arch in the Lachine roadway; the coach ride; the dinghy; Mr. Blackwell's hat and manner; the wages paid to the voyageurs; the amount of work and time needed to overhaul the canoes; Sir George's leaking of the news of the regatta; Newcastle's toast to Simpson; the gift to Kahnawake residents to encourage their participation; and Simpson's sudden weakness at the end of the narrative.

Several general texts served to provide background information. These included the books describing the 1860 royal tour by Morgan, Engleheart, Cellem, Chauveau, and Gough. Frequently consulted reference sources for general information were *The Canadian Encyclopedia Online* and *Dictionary of Canadian Biography Online*. The biographies of Simpson by Bryce, A.S. Morton, Chalmers, and Galbraith proved invaluable for their biographical background and tracing the travels of Simpson, as were Rich and Newman (*Caesars*).

To prepare Chapter One, I reviewed the microfilm of outward and inward correspondence in the HBCA (HBCA D4/78-81; D5/50-2) from late 1859 to the time of Simpson's death. Many of these letters gave insights into Simpson's health, his travel, his business interests, and the relationships among the colonial elites. I also consulted his will and estate papers (HBCA D6/1-3), which gave some insight into his collection of curiosities. The latter was where I gleaned the name of General Williams' adjutant, Captain DeWinton. Key letters in the correspondence included two letters from Simpson

to Governor General Sir Edmund Head, dated 10 July 1860, and 24 July 1860, which laid out Simpson's plans for the canoe pageant, urged for the location of Dorval over the Ottawa region, and lamented the difficulty in sourcing traditional voyageurs.

Two letters to James Watt (11 and 19 July 1860) at Fort William reported the difficulty in sourcing canoes, and the need to send a crew to fetch the canoes because manpower was scarce and time was running out. Each of the Watt letters also displayed not a little of Simpson's demanding nature.

A letter to Donald Smith dated 26 March 1860 thanked him for "Esquimaux toys" and remarked on Simpson's "museum of Indian affairs." Many different books and his aforementioned estate papers cite Simpson's interest in collecting. If he did own Kane paintings, they are now lost; however, it is known that he commissioned twelve.

A letter from General Williams to Simpson dated 20 August 1860 established the date of the event, and the protocol for Williams to be host. Williams mentioned that security would be tight. There was also a curious if ambiguous passage in the letter where Williams apologized to Simpson, but accused James Murray of overstepping his bounds as a servant. Williams called Murray "a stupid fellow." While it was unclear exactly what the row was about, there was a reference to Murray making sure that everything was "put all in order, *as it was when I came to the Island*" (emphasis in original); I interpreted the letter to mean that Williams had re-arranged or eliminated from view Simpson's curiosities.

A long letter from Edward Ellice to Simpson, dated 13 February 1860, and marked Private, supplied evidence that the HBC was shrewdly positioning itself to

benefit from the inevitable settlement of the West. Ellice's letter is detailed in its strategizing the management of public opinion about HBC territory, speculating about possible scenarios for protecting the trade in the event of settlement, and of pursuing opportunities that might arise from settlement. Following Simpson's death, Henry Hulse Berens sent two letters, one each to Edward Hopkins (20 September 1860) and Governor A.G. Dallas (3 January 1861), arranging for a canoe to be sent to Buckingham Palace. Berens acknowledged the gift was Simpson's idea, communicated in his last letter to Berens before Simpson died. The object of the gift was to curry favour with the Crown.

The exceedingly fascinating article "Sir George Simpson's Case" in the *American Journal of Insanity* provided some surprising insights into more than the cause of death. The testimony of Simpson's aides and descriptions of the physical space of the house helped piece together the domestic arrangements, and the characters of Hopkins, Murray, and Hector MacTavish.

The *Montreal Gazette* in the days leading up to and just following the event provided weather reports, background on the Prince's itinerary, and a partial list of the attendees at the canoe pageant. The *Gazette* reported the concert the night before the canoe pageant, the Blackwells' party, and HRH's absence at the latter. The *Gazette*, the *Illustrated London News*, and the *Times* (of London) provided detailed accounts of the pageant, including descriptions of the canoes, the paddlers, the landscape, and the crowds. The names of the voyageurs were taken from several contemporary texts, including those of Hind, Southesk, Pike, and Mountain. Simpson's use of Iroquois

paddlers was reported widely in such texts as Hind, Southesk, Kohl (*Kitchi-gami*), Grant, and others.

A few details had very specific sources. For information on repairing birch-bark canoes, I consulted the “Building a Canoe” website, and compared the information there to the contemporary textual description by Kohl (*Kitchi-gami*). The silver plate punchbowl was described by Chalmers. The silver canoe was described by Kohl (*Travels in Canada*). The meal I imagined served at Dorval was based on a meal described in the *Dining Room* museum display at the Sir George-Étienne Cartier National Historic Site of Canada in Montreal. The snuff box was mentioned in McDonald’s *Peace River*. A letter from Edmund Head dated 4 February 1860 confirmed that Sir George liked cheroots; the *American Journal of Insanity* confirmed that he smoked cigars in bed.