LOCATING AMBIVALENCE

"NEW LIGHT" ON THE IMPERIAL ALLEGORY OF ALEXANDER HENRY THE YOUNGER IN CANADA'S FUR TRADE

by

ORION VICTOR ATKINSON
B.A., Lakehead University, 1999

Thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the Degree of Master of Arts (English)

Acadia University
Fall Convocation 2000

Table of Contents

Abstract

This thesis approaches the imperialist narrative of Alexander Henry the Younger from two perspectives: first, it views the journal from a theoretical distance within a temporal network of related texts, each reflecting and mediating his imperial meanings; second, it sees Henry's work as an isolated text bearing its own imperial inscriptions. With the theoretical guidance of certain post-structuralist and post-colonial works, this thesis will first enter an intertextual field of traditional, popular history, in order to recognize the "central" role that historical narratives such as Henry's continue to play in present historical discourse; then it will attempt a resistant reading of Henry's journal in order to problematize traditional readings and to suggest future approaches. This study is intended to have broader implications for the historical genre of travel writing in Canada.

Allegorical theory is used in this thesis to expose the fictionality of both Henry's journal and the scholarly discourse that surrounds it. Henry's discourse is imperialism: his ideologically driven, narrative associations are as much the product of Eurocentric mercantilism as realistic observation; and the traditional, academic climate of his reading has tended to perpetuate that system. In this "light," the meanings of Henry's narrative are seen as fundamentally imposed on the landscape and peoples of his accounts: rather than historic truths of natural history or native culture, they tell more about the ideologies of European imperialism and of the problematic nature of the allegorical "great" man of Western history. This thesis is concerned with the power of representation – particularly the discursive power of certain problematic texts to pose as authentic historical reflection; it seeks to identify such oppressive illusions and dispel them.

Acknowledgments, Dedications, Preface, etc.

Special thanks to John Eustace, whose advice and encouragement were "essential" to the success of this endeavour. Though we rarely took the easiest route, every step seemed to lead to a stronger product.

Thanks also to friends, family, and associates (especially my examining committee) who put up with the ambiguities and ambivalences of my own narrated discourse.

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Kerrie and Peter. Without their continued support this project could never have become a "reality." Truly, without them this thesis would have no origin.

For those who may read this thesis, I hope it is as enjoyable as it is informative. I can think of no reason why ideologically driven narratives, no matter how serious or theoretical, cannot be written and/or read with a certain amount of playfulness.

Chapter 1: Introducing the Empire

1.1. PROBLEMS OF CONTEXT

This thesis will "centre" itself on the travel narrative of Alexander Henry the Younger, a New Jersey born, English fur trader of the London and Montreal based Northwest Company. During the first decade of the nineteenth century, Henry was a directing bourgeois in the company's Lower Red River district, a region stretching from present day Northwestern Ontario to southern Manitoba, northern Minnesota and North Dakota. From 1800 to 1808, Henry spent fall, winter, and spring in his trade zone, establishing forts and trade networks, managing Canadian labourers, and trading with the local natives. All this time he kept a lengthy, and apparently thorough record of his thoughts and observations.

While it seems easy to identify Henry within an historical context, a closer look at the evidence for such a location reveals vast indeterminacies. For instance, the historical territories he and his literary subjects inhabit are subject to plural claims, and/or descriptions. The historical explanations for the behaviours of peoples in such a region are also problematic. While imperialists such as Henry monopolize accounts of historical trade regions, marginal voices (eg. native scholars) are now beginning to raise a plurality of interpretations. Furthermore, the very texts of men such as Henry tend to be theoretically flawed and ambivalent – particularly with regard to their native "subjects." Not only are such narratives fundamentally indeterminate, but readings of them have been traditionally characterized by imperial complicity – mediated by a dominant, external discourse on European expansion.

Amid this confusion rests lingering questions of authorial context: who was

Henry? To what extent was he/did he become English, American, Canadian, or even Native? What sort of people did he associate with and/or write about? According to what precepts did they think and behave? What "truths" may be determined from his words? How much of his narrative, in fact, can we believe? For what reasons did Henry write, and what impressions did he hope to make? Somewhere in a labyrinth of indeterminacies is the figure of Alexander Henry the Younger. To isolate his "character" is infinitely problematic. To locate him – to determine any degree of the "truth" concerning his "nature" and/or identity – one must first locate a point of "origin."

The origins of this study are inextricably contaminated. Historically and academically, they are enmeshed in "territorial" conflicts – clashes of ideologies mediated by linguistic discourse(s) between diverse peoples in diverse times and places. With some difficulty, perhaps, one might develop an historical context for Henry's literary production. The emphasis of this thesis, however, is not on historical "fact." Instead, it focusses more on the discursive, literary nature of its textual objects. Unavoidably, it must deal with certain texts that cross interdisciplinary lines. The genre of imperial travel writing is historical; yet this project concerns itself more directly with the ideological underpinnings of its meanings – its arbitrariness and its artificiality.[1] This thesis locates Henry's text more centrally within the theoretical context of "imperial discourse" – an ideologically driven system of oppressive representation that rearranges "reality" according to hierarchical, binary identities for the purpose of rationalizing and/or justifying the exploitation and possession of lands and peoples. The "presence" of this powerful ideological pattern will be revealed as a secondary, allegorical (ie. subtextual) level of meaning, operating in conjunction with a wealth of realistic, literal detail. This

critical process will be assisted by intertextual references to a variety of theoretical, historical, and literary sources.

Henry's narrative was not produced in a vacuum, nor should it be studied so. To place his text in a viable literary context, and to unravel the layers of its ideological fabric, numerous other texts of variable form and content must also be introduced (from works of critical theory and history, to works of literature and other fur-trade narratives). Henry's narrative exists in an expansive discursive context – connected to a vast story-telling tradition with an ancient lineage of transferences, repetitions, and hybridizations – a weblike, textual trajectory spanning centuries. Understandably, such a theoretical "location" is not easily determined. As the potential contexts and intertextualities available to this study seem so boundless, the work that follows has been derived from critical selection. Out of necessity, the critical discourse this thesis will enter must be no less selective than the narrative discourse it hopes to unravel.

1.2. CANADA AS POST-COLONIAL

> *Any blow against imperialism, no matter the ethnic and regional origins of the blow, is a victory for all anti-imperialistic elements in all the nationalities. The sum total of all these blows no matter what their weight, size, scale, location in time and space makes the national heritage.* – Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (*Decolonizing the Mind* 2)

The power of representation is a central concern of this thesis. Any study of Canada's colonial and "post-colonial" subjects must inevitably face powerful works of "fact" or fiction concerning their past and present conditions. Such textual monuments, however, are often theoretically flawed and/or ideologically oppressive. To free their subjects from representational tyranny, these "great" works often need to be broken down.

Post-colonial theory can be of great assistance in such a process. When such a global, theoretical system is used, however, one must be careful to note the differences between its various points of "origin" and the object(s) of one's study. As Linda Hutcheon states, "one can certainly talk of post-colonialism in Canada, but only if the differences between its particular version and that of, especially, Third World nations is kept in mind" ("Circling the Downspout of Empire" 172).

Canada's economic, political and cultural makeup contrasts greatly with the post-colonial nation states of Africa, Asia, and the 'Spanish' Americas. As a country largely derived from the powerful historical influences of European colonialism, however, Canada's heritage bears some fundamental, post-colonial similarities to such countries. It may be that in Canada, along with such countries as Australia and New Zealand, native peoples have become a minority presence; yet, on a fundamental level, the present state of uncertain cultural and political identity among Canada's native population is comparable to that of many other post-colonial nations. While much could be said of the material parallels between Canada's colonial history and that of many South American, African, or Asian countries,[2] the most productive parallels seem to exist in theoretical critiques of imperial discourse – the means by which imperial rhetoric has dominated the cultural representation of both indigenous peoples and colonial settlers.

Post-colonial theorists generally recognize two types of colonial or post-colonial subjects: native inhabitants and European settlers. In Canada these groups may represent either its "First Nations" peoples and their "non-native" neighbors. Some ambivalence exists within theoretical circles concerning the critical emphasis of one group or the other. Hutcheon states that "when Canadian culture is called post-colonial today the reference is

very rarely to the Native . . . . The culture referred to most frequently is the English-language one of the descendants of the whole colonial settlers" ("Downspout" 172). In the same article, she declares: "Native and Métis writers are today demanding a voice . . . and perhaps, given their articulations of the damage to Indian culture and people done by the colonizers (French and British) and the process of colonization, theirs should be considered the resisting, post-colonial voice of Canada" ("Downspout" 172). Stephen Slemon argues, however, that such an attitude "seems to be setting in train a concept of the 'post-colonial' which is remarkably purist and absolutist in tenor" ("Unsettling the Empire" 33), and that due to the post-colonial tendency to reproduce the

> simple binarism . . . of West and the Rest . . . . [t]he Second World of writing [eg. of white settler descendants] within the ambit of colonialism is in danger of disappearing: because it is not sufficiently pure in its anti-colonialism, because it does not offer up an experiential grounding in a common 'Third World aesthetics, because its modalities of *post*-coloniality are too ambivalent ("Unsettling" 34-5).[3]

Slemon goes on to argue that "the *illusion* of a stable self/other, here/there binary division has *never* been available to Second World writers, . . . [as they] have always been complicit in colonialism's territorial appropriation of land, and voice, and agency" ("Unsettling" 38).

This thesis does not take sides in such a problematic argument (to do so, it seems, would be a further reproduction of the traditional colonizer/colonized binary). Slemon's notions of ambivalent subjectivity, however, will be the most useful in reading Henry's narrative. While this thesis does not deal directly with any native voices or issues of agency, its "goal" is to open a theoretical space for the discursive reappropriation of such things – that is, to "break down" the traditional, discursive "space" such "subjects" have

appeared to occupy in Canadian history. The recognition of imperially complicit

ambivalence in literary representation will be a valuable tool in such a process; for like

Slemon's "Second World" writer, whose "*ambivalence* of literary resistance itself is the

'always already' condition of Second-World settler and post-colonial literary writing"

("Unsettling" 38), Henry's imperialist narrative of self-righteous appropriation "always

already" contains the seeds of its own resistance. As Slemon states of Foucault's

discourse theory in *Archaeology of Knowledge*, "power *itself* inscribes its resistances and

so, in the process, seeks to contain them" ("Unsettling" 36). After all, on an allegorical

level, the so-called "Second" world is merely the descendant of the "First"; it retains

many of its contradictions and much of its oppressiveness. The power of the "First"

world remains in that of the "Second," and with it remains the means of its own

destruction (a contradiction this thesis itself cannot escape). Ambivalence is the

trademark of the imperialist: when his voice is "present"/presents itself in narrative, it is

necessarily divided; it cannot deny its imperial appropriation, yet seeks to justify and/or

suppress its damaging "effects." The ambivalence of imperial writing, in short, is too

great to be taken as anything beyond fiction. This thesis intends to dispel any illusions of

transparency associated with one such text of Canadian "history."

1.3. THE CHAPTER "BREAKDOWN"

This project is primarily concerned with textual representations of history (ie.

historicity itself); it "aims" to problematize historical, imperialist texts such as Henry's

and the discursive trajectory of their traditional representations/reproductions. Before

"(re)locating" Henry's journal within an ambiguous and ambivalent discourse of

historical tradition (Chapter 3), and before the ambiguities and ambivalences of Henry's

own text may be revealed (Chapter 4), however, the ambiguous and ambivalent "nature"

of imperial discourse must be theorized. In Chapter 2, various "post-colonial" theorists

will be introduced to this study in order to assemble a critical apparatus for the

dismantling of the imperially complicit texts to be read in the third and fourth chapters;

selected works from Gayatri Spivak, James Clifford, Mary Louis Pratt, Abdul

JanMohamed, and Homi Bhabha will be incorporated into a theoretical methodology that

will inform the critical readings that constitute the body of this thesis.

Using the narrative, discursive, and/or textual theories (with an awareness of their

interconnectedness) outlined in Chapter 2, the imperial ambivalences in and around

Henry's historical narrative will be "deconstructed." Chapters 3 and 4 will reverse or

suggest the reversal of the contradictory, binary significations/identifications his texts (ie.

his journal and those imperially complicit works through which its meanings have been

reproduced) pose for his own identity and those of the landscapes and peoples of "his"

(by imperialistic assumptions of ownership) Red River "empire." The agenda of this

thesis is not to pose any absolute reversal of Henry's ideologically mediated "vision," or

to prove any counter-"truths" to his positive assertions; instead, this thesis intends to

allow Henry's own ambiguities and ambivalences to undermine his imperial agenda – to

allow his veils of historical authenticity to part just enough for his narrative "empire" to

be revealed for what it is, significantly a work of allegorical fiction.

Chapter 3 is concerned with Henry's context, or rather the problematic nature of

his *traditional* context; it deals with his "history" only in so much as it recognizes it to be

the product of narrated discourse(s). Chapter 3 is aimed at the "breaking down" of certain

monumental "narratives" concerning Henry's *discursive* context, locating his text within

a network of imperially complicit texts – texts which tend to assimilate Henry's

problematic discourse as their own, absorbing both its textual "gaps" and its

contradictions. Rather than attempt an explanation (or "apology") for the imperial

complicity of certain scholars, their careless references to/interpretations of Henry's text

will be "viewed" as examples of naive reading.

Chapter 3 is intended to undermine certain problematic assumptions concerning

Henry and his world, assumptions which have traditionally served to perpetuate the

imperial mythology of the "great" bourgeois on the imperial frontier, assimilating the

"savage" regions into "superior" Eurocentric cultural/ideological systems. Chapter 3

intends to suggest that Henry's meanings have no determinate origin, but rather that they

"originate" the binary ideologies of imperial presence in his zone of inter-cultural

"contact." Ultimately there is no man "Henry" that one may know; his physical location

in the Red River valley is as problematic as his "presence" in the annals of history:

Henry's ambivalent (though traditional) identity as the original bringer of "profitable"

trade and "productive" modes of behavior is "always already" overshadowed by his

inextricable ties to the British Empire – by his discursive identification with the

colonial/imperial invasion of Canada's historical interior, with its material and

ideological exploit(ation)s.

Chapter 4 will employ the sophisticated reading methods suggested by Chapter 2

in problematizing Henry's text itself. Henry will be read as the allegorical figure of

British imperialism: bearing the ambivalences of imperial discourse and projecting them

on the lands and peoples he "sees" through his "imperial eyes." Henry's primary

ambivalence will be exposed in his fallacious attempts at objective observation. Though

certain scholars have traditionally valued Henry's commentary as an authentic source of

natural history and historical ethnography, it is impossible to ignore the biased nature of

his perspective. Henry's involvement in the "realities" of his contact zone was

undeniably self-serving, and, undeniably, his ideologically driven, subjective "view" must

have tainted not only his interpretations, but his observations themselves. His apparently

thorough and unadorned accounts of native behaviour, for instance, often tell less about

the "lazy" and "treacherous" nature of Ojibway culture, than of the ambivalent discourse

and the self-serving agenda of the expansive, exploitive bourgeois of early nineteenth-

century British imperialism. Instead of attempting to determine a "truer" identity of either

the native "subject" or the imperial narrator, such a reversal is intended to dispel certain

fallacious assumptions that problematic texts like Henry's have spawned concerning both.

Chapter 2: Theorizing the Empire

2.1. THE "NATURE" OF NARRATION

> *[P]honetic writing, the medium of the great metaphysical, scientific, technical,*
> *and economic adventure of the West, is limited in space and time and limits itself*
> *even as it is in the process of imposing its laws upon the cultural areas that had*
> *escaped it.* – Jacques Derrida (*Of Grammatology* 10)

Narration, on a fundamental level, is derived from self-interest; no "tale" is told, it

seems, without some transference of personal ideals. Narrative agendas are often veiled,

however, under strong narrative voices bearing the conviction of realistic details. To

examine the secondary, ideological agendas of such narratives, one must employ

sophisticated reading strategies. Post-structuralist theory, with its emphasis on the

discursive margins of the "metanarratives" of Western tradition, has demonstrated that

narrative agendas often dwell in close proximity to their own limitations. As Gayatri

Spivak has noted, the post-structuralists seem to be "asking over and over again, What is

it that is left out? Can we know what is left out?" (*Post-Colonial Critic* 19). Spivak goes

on to state: "[w]e must know the limits of the narratives, rather than establish the

narratives as solutions for the future" (*Post-Colonial Critic* 19). When things are "left

out" of narratives, they tend to leave "gaps," which may serve as entry points for critical

readers. Narrative margins, derived invariably from selective, ideological agendas, may

tell readers not only of the agendas themselves, but of their discursive limits. One need

only look at what has been included in comparison to what has been left out, and

questions of narrative motivation naturally follow, along with appraisals of the "effects"

they tend to generate. From such a perspective, that which is included in the narrative

becomes suspect.

Narrative motivation, or "authorial intention," is a problematic concept to be sure. The critical desire to know what a narrator is, or was, thinking generally leads down a path of precarious reasoning. While twentieth-century critical theory has all but eliminated the authority of authors (ie. transferring interpretive powers from writers to readers), the meanings of texts ascribed to writers remain the fundamental objects of literary epistemology; and whether they are attainable as those of particular literary subjects or not, "traces" of their subjectivity abound. To identify the ideological *limits* of a narrative, for instance, implies some recognition of authorial motivation (barriers are directional, if only metaphorically). This is not to say that ideological agendas are the same as authorial intentions, which traditionally rest upon studies of authorial context. Discursive interpretation generally operates at a safer distance from problematic studies of individual authors and their texts. Both approaches, however, run into the theoretical problem of balancing texts and contexts (eg. of preventing the imposition of context on text, and vice versa), which may reflect differing agendas.

The advantage of a discursive approach in the present study is that it tends to question all texts, within or without their traditional contexts. Texts that have been predominantly produced and read within a particular discourse generally reinforce each other's meanings, no matter how problematic those meanings may be. An authorial study of Alexander Henry the Younger, for instance, would almost certainly come to rest on text that is complicit with Henry's own forceful, ideological agenda. In the case of Henry, his narrative tends to exist symbiotically with its historical context: many traditional historic texts depend on his historical "evidence," while his position or identity within history depends on their reproduction of his meanings. This thesis will

problematize such a discourse by questioning both what Henry says of history and what is said about him *in* history.

North American fur trade narratives are generally of the "first" person; they are generally told by individuals who existed in certain times and places; often these authors are (or have become) prominent historical figures, and are referred to in various secondary sources; they are often strong in their opinions and arrogant in their beliefs; and they often convey accounts of extraordinary occurrences, and commentaries on socially and politically contentious issues. For all these reasons, such narratives should be read with the greatest care; yet for all these reasons, it seems, they have often been read with the least. Particularly problematic is their tendency to differentiate peoples of diverse cultures, while generalizing about their "natures." Such a gesture may be intended to "subject" those peoples to exploitation; it may be done out of "scientific" curiosity; or it may be a means of intellectual self-preservation in an alien world. Though such narrators "speak" with assurance, a close reading usually reveals inherent self-contradictions: their intentions become overdetermined, their subjectivity becomes fractured, and their authorial presence is divided. Such ambivalence is best understood within a discursive context.

Post-colonial theory, with its post-structuralist influences, will assist this thesis in shedding "new light" on the imperialism of Henry's narrative. In identifying ambiguous "gaps" and ambivalent contradictions in Henry's ideological fabric – particularly in its representation of native peoples and their lands – this study seeks to locate the limits of his meanings. The "narrative agenda" of this thesis is the identification and destabilisation of Henry's historical "effects," which have been traditionally represented

as "truths." The theoretical framework of this chapter will help identify the ideological

operation of such a signifying system, which will then be "located" (or *re*located as the

case may be) in the readings of the next two chapters.

2.2. NARRATING "REALITY"

> *Language, any language, has a dual character: it is both a means of*
> *communication and a carrier of culture.* — Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (*Decolonizing the*
> *mind* 13)

Common to most post-colonial and post-modern theory is a concern for the power

of representation – for the ability to influence others with one's perceptions of the world.

As Spivak notes, this concern has generally focussed on the "grand" narratives of

Western cultural domination, "the rationalist narratives of the knowing subject, full of a

certain sort of benevolence towards others, wanting to welcome those others into his own

. . . understanding of the word, so that they too can be liberated and begin to inhabit a

world that is the best of all possible worlds" (*Post-Colonial Critic* 19). Such narratives

gain their power from naive readers, who accept such ethnocentric "vision" as universal

"truth." What tends to happen, Spivak states, is that, "as you proceed along the narrative,

the narrative takes on its own impetus as it were, so that one begins to see reality as non-

narrated. One begins to say that it's not a narrative, it's the way things are" (*Post-*

Colonial Critic 19). Once such "naturalization" occurs, the reader becomes less inclined

to question the narrative's underlying agendas; "reality" is constructed, and/or mediated

for her or him discursively by a powerful ideological system.

All too often the dominant narratives of cultural history in the West have been

told by those with the most power; the voices of the less powerful are too often silenced;

and far too often, this process is enacted in the guise of benign, humanitarian concern.

Spivak states that, "[i]n the process [of grand, historical narration], what happens is that

such a world is defined, and the norm remains the benevolent originator of rationalist

philosophy. . . . [T]here is a certain sort of understanding that the hero of this scenario, of

this narrative, has been in fact Western man" (*Post-Colonial Critic* 19-20). While this

intangible subject, "Western man," is fundamentally an ideological construct, his global

"presence" remains powerful and pervasive, textually *and* materially.[4] Even where the

physical beings he resembles (ie. white males of European descent) have been an ethnic

minority, the myth of his being has been continually presented and accepted as both the

norm and the ideal. Through the use of certain theoretical approaches, this thesis intends

to reveal the artificial nature of such a "hero," along with the fictional world he has

traditionally inhabited. Allegorical interpretation is one of the most useful methods

currently used for such an agenda. The ideological patterns of imperial discourse, for

instance, by their artificiality, may be read as allegory.

Slemon has noted that the allegorical mode has gained considerable purchase in

recent literary criticism: "a considerable body of post-structural theory now takes allegory

to be the ultimate trope for discourse itself, so that *all* writing is deemed to be allegorical,

and all reading allegorical misreading" ("Post-Colonial Allegory" 157). Whether all

writing and/or reading is allegorical or not, the allegorical "trope" can be very effective in

destabilizing Western imperialist texts. In historically revisionist, post-colonial fiction,

> the common pursuit is to proceed beyond a 'determinist view of history'
> by revising, reappropriating, or reinterpreting history as a concept, and
> doing so to articulate new 'codes of recognition' within which those acts
> of resistance, those unrealized intentions, and those re-orderings of
> consciousness that that 'history' has rendered silent or invisible can be

recognised as shaping forces in a culture's tradition. ("Post-Colonial Allegory" 159)

Such a "mode of representation [ie. the "post-colonial allegory"] foregrounds the fact that fiction, or writing, mediates history; that both fiction and history are discursive practices, subject to questions of authorship; and that history, like fiction, requires an act of reading before it can have meaning" ("Post-Colonial Allegory" 160). As Slemon also states,

> [t]he point for post-colonial allegory is that historical material must be *read*, and read in *adjacency* to a fictional re-enactment of it. Two separate 'lenses of language' require focussing; the reader's gaze must be binocular; and binocular vision enables depth perception. In post-colonial allegory, the field of vision for this depth perception is our inherited concepts of history itself. ("Post-Colonial Allegory" 160)

The point is that history, consisting largely of narratives, must be read allegorically. Post-colonial allegories amount to written acts of reading – of destabilizing the naturalized meanings of imperial, historical texts through the double act of reading/rewriting – or reading and *re*writing.

The dual "vision" that Slemon alludes to is a useful metaphor for understanding the approach this thesis takes in reading "Henry." The examinations of Henry's discursive con-texts (in Chapter 3) and his text (in Chapter 4) are designed to "look" beyond literal surface meanings to narrative subtexts, which will be "viewed" as evidence of an underlying (though loosely unified) imperial allegory – the "original" creation of the colonial imperialist – the expansive, exploitive, English-speaking bourgeois male. The aim of this project is to explore the narrative methods used by the imperialist (or imperially complicit) writer to supplant non-Europeans from their native soil – to rearrange their lands based on the creation of new social identities. Such an "empire" – a fictional microcosm of the English empire proper – generally depicts the white,

"civilized," male as central, with the dark "savage" in the margins. To "deconstruct" such an artificial, hierarchical binary, the allegorical mode of interpretation will be essential.

While the post-colonial allegory may be theoretically helpful, this project is not fictional; it engages in the *exposure of* fictionality. Unlike "creative" writing, scholarly works (though not necessarily more "effective") generally require "disciplined" and/or specialized writing strategies. Often the works of other scholars are useful in generating solid, critical approaches to selected texts. For the present enterprise, two particular scholars will be of great assistance: James Clifford and Mary Louis Pratt – Clifford for his valuable studies of the ethnographic allegory, and Pratt for her related studies of imperial travel writing. Through the use of Clifford and Pratt, along with Abdul JanMohamed's conception of the manichean allegory and the colonial resistance theory of Homi K. Bhabha, this thesis intends to demonstrate that the "reality" of Henry's narrative exists largely on a fictional (ie. allegorical) level; it intends to reveal Henry's margins (eg. suppressed aspects of "his" landscapes and peoples) as the continual possibility of its own deconstruction, "always already" posing the limits of his significations. The arbitrary nature of Henry's narrative identities will be "seen" as not only undermining the "truths" of his "empire," but also as contaminating his own mythical identity. Henry, as the imperialist "hero" of Western history, will be used in this thesis to demonstrate certain failings in the British imperial project in Canada.

2.3. READING CULTURE

[E]thnology — like any science — comes about within the element of discourse. And it is primarily a European science employing traditional concepts, however much it may struggle against them. Consequently, whether he wants to or not — and this does not depend on a decision on his part — the ethnologist accepts into his discourse the premises of ethnocentrism at the very moment when he denounces them. — Jacques Derrida ("Structure, Sign and Play" 1119)

The reading of realistic, non-fictional accounts of culture has been greatly assisted by the interdisciplinary work of critics like James Clifford, who have gone to great lengths to uncover the subtle relationships between language and culture. Clifford introduces *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* by stating that the theoretical essays on ethnography collected within it

> see culture as composed of seriously contested codes and representations; they assume that the poetic and the political are inseparable, that science is in, not above, historical and linguistic processes. They assume that academic and literary genres interpenetrate and that the writing of cultural descriptions is properly experimental and ethical. Their focus on text making and rhetoric serves to highlight the constructed, artificial nature of cultural accounts. (3)

To uncover this rhetorical, artificial quality of written culture, theorists such as Clifford and Pratt have pushed culturally loaded texts beyond their literal levels, to the traditional "literary" levels of symbolism, metaphor, and allegory.

In his essay "On the Ethnographic Allegory," Clifford identifies two levels of meaning in ethnographic writing — one outlining perceptions of cultural differences (eg. between writer and study group), and the other transforming such alien accounts into familiar, ideological notions of human nature: "[e]mbodied in written reports, these stories simultaneously describe real cultural events and make additional, moral, ideological, and even cosmological statements (98). Such a duality demands that readers

first "imagine a different *cultural* norm . . . [and secondly,] recognize a common *human* experience" ("Ethnographic Allegory" 99). Between these two layers of meaning, there can be no definite separation; for "[e]thnographic writing is allegorical at the level both of its content (what it says about cultures and their histories) and of its form (what is implied by its mode of textualization)" ("Ethnographic Allegory" 98). Such textual transcendence is inherent to cultural writing, as its artificial allegory provides ethnography with the very "conditions of its meaningfulness." ("Ethnographic Allegory" 99).

Clifford sees ethnography as related to a basic humanist contradiction contained within what he calls the "redemptive Western allegory" ("Ethnographic Allegory" 99), an ambivalent thought structure implicating reader, writer and subject alike in its powerful discursive drive. In this allegory, "[s]trange behaviour is portrayed as meaningful within a common network of symbols – a common ground of understandable activity for both observer and observed, and by implication for all human groups" ("Ethnographic Allegory" 101). This "common ground," however, is located by Clifford as "an abstract plane of similarity" ("Ethnographic Allegory" 101) – an arbitrary and artificial space, in which real things cannot fully reside. Clifford emphasises the allegorical nature of such texts, rather than the ideological or material evidence they appear to provide, which "draws special attention to the *narrative* character of cultural representations" ("Ethnographic Allegory" 100). Clifford's reasoning seems to lead to this conclusion: "[c]ulturalist and humanist allegories stand behind the controlled fictions of difference and similitude that we call ethnographic accounts" ("Ethnographic Allegory" 101). When reading such text, it is easy to posit "real" people writing about "real" events and peoples; yet it is dangerous to forget that these works inevitably bear the double inscription of the

humanist allegory. Furthermore, to forget that ethnographic writing is narrated, is to fall into complicity with an inescapably ethnocentric system of cultural definition.

Undeniably, Clifford's work will be of great use in this project. The identification of Henry's false assumptions of difference and similarity in his ongoing cultural accounts of his native "subjects" will be essential to the unmasking of his ideological, allegorical operation. Clifford's usefulness, however, is limited to its theoretical import, as his work applies to a field of study fundamentally distinct from that of this thesis. His reading method applies to texts of a different time and space than Henry's, which therefore bear different allegorical associations. Late twentieth-century ethnographers may be found looking for positive "human" connections between alien cultures and their own, for instance, while an early nineteenth-century bourgeois adventurer will be found dwelling on the cultural inferiority of the allegorical "savage" as a justification for his disruptive "civilized" presence. In other words, such narratives may vary in their degrees of humanitarian concern and/or objective detachment. One may argue successfully that the colonizer is merely a precursor to the ethnographer, yet the difference remains.

2.4. THE ETHNO-HISTORIC ALLEGORY

The ethno-historic narrative tends to emerge from volatile zones of cultural contact, in which ideological tensions are generated between imperialist invaders and aboriginal occupants. In such narratives, almost invariably written by literate, bourgeois imperialists, there is commonly a strong differentiation made between his "civility" and the "savagery" of his native "subjects." His interpretation of "savagery," however, usually rests on arbitrary assumptions of European superiority and the assimilating drive

of powerful (though artificial) ideological discourses of Western expansion. Though it is

possible that such an operation may be somewhat intentional, it seems more likely that

the use of Eurocentric codifying systems was either an automatic response to perceptions

of cultural difference, or a relatively unconscious act — evidenced by "gaps" in narrative

self-awareness — of cultural self-preservation in the face of overwhelming ideological

contradiction and/or resistance posed by native peoples. Ultimately such narrated cultural

binaries rest on the problematic textual "presence" of artificial signifying systems that

may be subjected to both critical reversals and theoretical disavowals.

The "historical" context of Henry's ethno-history, in this thesis, rests heavily on

Pratt's use of the term "contact zone" as "social places where disparate cultures meet,

clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination

and subordination" (*Imperial Eyes* 4). Most narratives emerging from these historical

spaces have been penned by literate agents of European imperialism, whom Pratt labels

allegorically as the "seeing-man," "an admittedly unfriendly label for the European male

subject of European landscape discourse — he whose imperial eyes passively look out and

possess" (*Imperial Eyes* 7). Though the seeing-man traditionally dominates accounts of

the contact zone, Pratt recognizes the presence of multiple participants: "'contact zone' is

an attempt to invoke the spatial and temporal copresence of subjects previously separated

by geographic and historical disjunctures, and whose trajectories now intersect" (*Imperial

Eyes* 7). Not only does the seeing-man suppress this heterogeneity by providing only his

own, biased perspective, but he seeks also to rationalize and/or justify his exploitive (and

intensely problematic) presence. Pratt identifies such underhandedness in the term "anti-

conquest," defined as "the strategies of representation whereby European bourgeois

subjects seek to secure their innocence in the same moment as they assert European

hegemony" (*Imperial Eyes* 7). Pratt undermines the "anti-conquest" through close

reading and careful analysis of historical and discursive contexts.

Nowhere is the process of naturalization more dangerous than in imperialist

narratives of cultural encounter. Immersed in colonial "scenes of contact," European

imperialists were frequently engaged in recording their cultural observations and/or

interpretations. As Abdul R. JanMohamed notes, however, the surface meanings of such

texts are of a particularly false and insidious nature:

> Instead of being an exploration of the racial Other, such literature merely
> affirms its own ethnocentric assumptions; instead of actually depicting the
> outer limits of 'civilization,' it simply codifies and preserves the structures
> of its own mentality. While the surface of each colonialist text purports to
> represent specific encounters with specific varieties of the racial Other, the
> subtext valorizes the superiority of European cultures, of the collective
> process that has mediated that representation. Such literature is essentially
> specular: instead of seeing the native as a bridge toward syncretic
> possibility, it uses him as a mirror that reflects the colonialist's self-image.
> ("Manichean Allegory" 84)

In such passages, JanMohamed displays a thorough knowledge of the subtextual (or

allegorical) "anti-conquest," but he generally fails to suggest any productive means of

resistance to imperialism. Instead, he exaggerates the power of imperialism by

emphasizing the conscious intentionality of its "subjugating" effects. Suggesting a sort of

manifest inevitability of the imperial steamroller of Europe, he claims that its discursive

operation "is in fact a product of deliberate, if at times subconscious, imperialist

duplicity, operating very efficiently through the economy of its central trope"

("Manichean Allegory" 80). Focussing on a problematic distinction between colonial

material realities and its discursiveness, JanMohamed states that,

> [w]hile the covert purpose is to exploit the colony's natural resources thoroughly and ruthlessly through the various imperialist material practices, the overt aim, as articulated by colonialist discourse, is to 'civilize' the savage, to introduce him to all the benefits of Western cultures. Yet the fact that this overt aim, embedded as an assumption in all colonialist literature, is accompanied in colonialist texts by a more vociferous insistence, indeed by a fixation upon the savagery and the evilness of the native should alert us to the real function of these texts: to justify imperial occupation and exploitation. ("Manichean Allegory" 81)

JanMohamed does not simply view ethno-historic narratives as containing an underlying humanist allegory artificially imposed upon subjective perceptions of cultural difference; he seems to have raised both discursive drives (ie. cultural difference and human essentialism) closer to the surface in order to extract the material operation of imperialism from their text. His infusion of material history into discourse theory, however, is not only problematic in its speculative nature (eg. where is the physical evidence? and how can we know what historical imperialists had in mind?), but it weakens the possibility of discursive resistance by implying an inaccessible super-order to imperial ethnography. JanMohamed's account of the Manichean Allegory tends almost to repeat the imperial binary (ie. "civilized" over "savage") in its emphasis on the monolithic, historical force of European colonialism.

Pratt's recognition of cultural copresence allows for a more progressive notion of "transculturation"(ie. the spread of culture), which is generally assumed to work in one direction: from "dominant" to "subordinate" social groups. By reversing such imperial assumptions, Pratt avoids "simply reproducing the dynamics of possession and innocence" (*Imperial Eyes* 6). "Transculturation," she states, has traditionally been used

> to describe how subordinated or marginal groups select and invent from materials transmitted to them by a dominant or metropolitan culture. While subjugated peoples cannot readily control what emanates from the

dominant culture, they do determine to varying extents what they absorb into their own (*Imperial Eyes* 6).

Identifying this logical limit of imperial assimilation leads her to question the extent to which the process has actually operated in reverse of Eurocentric expectation:

> Borders and all, the entity called Europe was constructed from the outside in as much as from the inside out. Can this be said of its modes of representation? While the imperial metropolis tends to understand itself as determining the periphery (in the emanating glow of the civilizing mission or the cash flow of development, for example), it habitually blinds itself to the ways in which the periphery determines the metropolis – beginning, perhaps, with the latter's obsessive need to present and re-present its peripheries and its other continually to itself. Travel writing, among other institutions, is heavily organized in the service of that imperative.
> (*Imperial Eyes* 6)

It would require another sort of investigation to determine the extent to which outside influences shaped European culture, yet the fear of such contamination is highly demonstrable in the tendency of imperial narratives to suppress their own "otherness."

On a fundamental level, emphatic delineations of "us" and "them" by imperial travel writers may stem more from a need to preserve (and/or demonstrate the preservation of) their own sense of cultural identity,[5] than a need to subjugate those "others" who were highly unlikely to read their work.[6] That such an operation may have been largely unconscious (eg. due to their own subjugation to naturalization, or possibly a lack of narrative self-awareness) could have made their discursive "gaps" all the wider, rendering their artificial allegories all the more "visible." Some interesting studies, which may support such a claim, have already been done on Canadian fur trade narratives. Janet Giltrow, for instance, has claimed that certain fur traders wrote to preserve "the traveller's often precarious sense of geographical and cultural origin" ("Westering Narratives" 28) and that this drive actually seems to have exaggerated their emphases on certain European

doctrines.[7] Giltrow also notes that such a narrative agenda coexisted in fur trade

narratives with the naturalization of alien ideologies: "Western conditions seem first to

repel the traveller . . . . But, with his account of his sally into the unknown, he introduces

foreign ideas to his readers and begins the process of familiarization" ("Westering

Narratives" 40).

Though Giltrow may exaggerate the extent to which white traders retained native

ideologies (personally or narratively), some historical work on Canada's fur trade has

demonstrated the likelihood of traders having been integrated into native and/or hybrid

cultures in the contact zone. Sylvia Van Kirk, for instance, has shown that evidence of

interracial marriages in narratives such as Henry's may reflect the assimilation of British

traders into preexisting codes of behaviour first established during trade contact between

aboriginals and the French:

> Marriage *à la façon du pays* evolved from a complex social interaction
> between traders and the Indians. Although there were variations in marital
> patterns, the custom of the country became a commonly understood social
> practice in the Indian Country. Its acceptance was reinforced by the
> traders themselves who put considerable pressure on a newcomer to adopt
> a code of behaviour which had gained its own legitimacy through long
> usage. (*Tender Ties* 39)

That accounts of such interactions tend to be both marginal and ambiguous in fur trade

narratives – often overshadowed by accounts of native "savagery" or exoticism

(especially in Henry's journal) – suggests a narrative resistance to bourgeois

"contamination":

> One can observe this process of social conditioning working on
> Nor'Westers Alexander Henry, George Nelson and Daniel Harmon.
> Arriving fresh from eastern colonial society which recognized only the
> legitimacy of church marriage, these young men were initially shocked by
> fur-trade marriage practices which seemed only a form of concubinage, 'a

snare laid no doubt by the Devil himself.' They therefore began by refusing all offers of wives made to them, but soon all three men were to conform to the custom of the country. (*Tender Ties* 39-40)

In such a critical "light," rather than an all-out attack on alien peoples, the manichean aesthetic of imperial discourse may be seen more as an act of cultural self-defence – the process of transculturation posing a potential threat to either culture engaged in the ideological "clashes" of the contact zone.[8]

It is also reasonable to suggest that the unconscious quality of the imperial allegory "originates" from a broader, discursive context. Beyond the textual contradictions of "contamination" anxiety, unconscious ideological projection in travel narratives may have been caused by the already naturalized "presence" of powerful, European, global discourses – signifying systems too vast and complex to be the invention of a single imperial narrator. As Pratt demonstrates, well before men like Henry were narrating their "empires," thorough codifying systems were already well established in European intellectual circles – codes for defining and situating (ie. assimilating) any "new" natural resources and/or alien cultures into Eurocentric hierarchical patterns.[9] In the "heroic" age of European "exploration"/appropriation, from the 16th to the 19th centuries, Pratt states that

> [i]n the sphere of culture the many forms of collection that were practiced during this period developed in part as the image of that accumulation, and as its legitimation. The systematizing of nature carries this image of accumulation to a totalized extreme, and at the same time models the extractive, transformative character of industrial capitalism, and the ordering mechanisms that were beginning to shape urban mass society in Europe under bourgeois hegemony. As an ideological construct, it makes a picture of the planet appropriated and redeployed from a unified, European perspective" (*Imperial Eyes* 36).

From Pratt's insightful analysis, it becomes clear that such a massive, totalizing system –

so far-reaching and long-lasting – could never have existed as fully present within the

limits of an individual human consciousness or narrating subject.

While the authorial intentions of historic travel writers are ultimately

indeterminate, the common lack of *narrative* self-consciousness displayed in their texts is

not only identifiable, but very useful in their reading. In ethno-historic narratives, the

simultaneous evidence (ie. coexistence) of imposed, Eurocentric identities and the

possible "contamination" of such identities – a textual, transcultural tension between alien

ideologies – provides much critical "space" for "deconstructive" interpretations. Whether

such internal contradictions are intentional or not (and it is likely they are not), it would

be wrong to assume that the Eurocentric cultural binaries repeated obsessively in most

imperial writing could ever be fully 'present' in narrative form. Not only might such

works be resisted intertextually (ie. counter-discursively), but they ultimately contain the

textual elements of their own unravelling.[10] The textual privileging of allegorical

imperial "heroes" over "savage" lands and peoples, under contemporary discursive

scrutiny (ie. an awareness of the rhetorical nature of human ideologies), should eventually

lead to questions of authenticity and/or "contamination" – to the undermining of assumed

imperial superiority and of the ambivalent nature of the imperial signifying system itself.

2.5. DISCOURSE THEORY AND RESISTANCE

> [L]ogocentrism: *the metaphysics of phonetic writing (for example, of the
> alphabet) which was fundamentally – for enigmatic yet essential reasons that are
> inaccessible to a simple historical relativism – nothing but the most original and
> powerful ethnocentrism, in the process of imposing itself upon the world –*
> Jacques Derrida (*Of Grammatology* 3)

> Bhabha's "Signs Taken for wonders" is clearly influenced by the post-structuralist

linguistics of Jacques Derrida – particularly Derrida's critique of the "logocentrism" of

Western writing (alluded to in the epigraph of this section and that of 2.1.). Borrowing

from Derrida's "deconstruction" of authorial "presence" in logocentric writing, Bhabha

focusses on the problematic nature of English colonial "presence" in its allegorical

moments, or "scenes" of colonial "contact." The emblem of English authority in the

colonial/post-colonial world, for Bhabha, is the English book, whose fictional

appearances in "savage" wildernesses have been repeated and mutated obsessively in

colonial and post-colonial writings: "the sudden, fortuitous discovery of the English book

. . . . like all myths of origin . . . is, at once, a moment of originality and authority, as well

as a process of displacement that, paradoxically, makes the presence of the book

wondrous to the extent to which it is repeated, translated, misread, displaced" ("Signs"

163). The "new" world of colonialism that starts with such a "book" is a paradoxical

world of "light" and "dark"; the contradictory moment of its "origin" sets the very limits

of its power – shedding "light," and casting "shadows":

> The discovery of the book installs the sign of appropriate representation:
> the word of God, truth, art creates the conditions for a beginning, a
> practice of history and narrative. But the institution of the Word in the
> wilds is also an *Entstellung*, a process of displacement, distortion,
> dislocation, repetition – the dazzling light of literature sheds only areas of
> darkness. ("Signs"166)

Bhabha's article does well to suggest how the *Entstellung* of the English book may have

"really" operated – its surface motives of "civilized" enlightenment continually

undermined by its heavy-handed, cultural intolerance. The limits of the "divine" English

book, in other words, can be found precisely at its narrative margins – its margins

representing the darkened, silenced "cultures" of its native "subjects."

According to Bhabha, "the colonial presence is always ambivalent, split between its appearance as original and authoritative and its articulation as repetition and difference" ("Signs" 169). It bears no real binary relation to its colonized "other"; rather, it contains the ambivalence of duality within its own sign. In other words, due to the dual nature of the English colonial sign, it can never be fully present within the colonial system as dominant *or* dependent. Resisting the traditional binary dialectics of Western history, Bhabha refers to Derrida's linguistics; he states that the colonial position is

> different from both the Hegelian master/slave dialectic or the phenomenological projection of Otherness. It is a *différance* produced within the act of enunciation as a specifically colonial articulation of those two disproportionate [though non-differential] sites of colonial discourse and power: the colonial scene as the invention of historicity, mastery, mimesis or as the 'other scene' of *Entstellung*, displacement, fantasy, psychic defence, and an 'open' textuality. ("Signs" 169)

Due to the dual nature of the colonial sign, it is not/cannot be present as "master" *or* "slave." "Always already" the sign tells both of its signification and its failure to signify – of both its positive and negative identity: "[t]o recognize the *différance* of the colonial presence is to realize that the colonial text occupies that space of double inscription, hallowed – no, hollowed – by Jacques Derrida" ("Signs" 169).

Like Derrida, Bhabha does not dwell on "open" textuality. Instead, he uses post-structural theory for the selective, political purpose of exposing the fictions of imperialist discourse. After all, to deny the discursive power of the English ideal is to "deny what is obvious, that the representation of colonial authority depends less on a universal symbol of English identity than on its productivity as a sign of difference" ("Signs" 169). In other words, to simply declare that there is no absolute "English civility" because its pure signification is an impossibility would be unproductive. Resistance to English

imperialism depends on the recognition of its ambivalent "presence" in a spatial and temporal zone of cultural/ideological "contact" (ie. on its discursive operation), rather than its "purely" textual indeterminacies. Politically, it is useful to "locate" such an oppressive system of associations, allegorically, as the "visual" projection of the Western "seeing-man": "[w]hen the ocular metaphors of presence refer to the process by which content is fixed as an 'effect of the present,' we encounter not plenitude but the structured gaze of power whose objective is authority, whose 'subjects' are historical" ("Signs" 170). When "viewed" in such a "light," the arbitrary nature of this appropriative, discursive system becomes apparent; then another theoretical "moment" of ideological resistance is possible. According to Bhabha, the critical recognition of the imperial "reality affect . . . produces the moment of discursive transparency – the moment of recognizing that 'under the false appearance of the present,' the semantic seems to prevail over the syntactic, the signified over the signifier" ("Signs" 170). And the monstrous force of *différance* enters just enough to tear the imperial veils, before it vanishes again into its shadowy margins.

Resistance, for Bhabha, seems to rest on discursive mutation – on the unavoidable hybridity of ideological repetition. As human ideologies (in "light" of post-structuralist theory) appear not only rhetorical but contingent, the tradition of imperial "presence" must mutate in its temporally and spatially variant repetitions. Such a view seems to recognize the political nature of imperial reinscriptions. The post-colonial allegory, for instance, could be seen as a hybrid repetition, resisting imperialism by mutating its reflection. But under Bhabha's theory, the repetition of the "English Book" – from any perspective – can never be a "pure" mimetic operation; it can only veil its mutation in

rhetorical claims of authenticity. The hybridity of imperial rhetoric itself (ie. its ability to absorb its resistances into "anti-conquest" *themes*), in fact, gives it much of its power; once this is recognized, however, the power is diminished:

> [h]ybridity is the sign of the productivity of colonial power, its shifting forces and fixities; it is the name for the strategic reversal of the process of domination through disavowal (that is, the production of discriminatory identities that secure the 'pure' and original identity of authority). Hybridity is the revaluation of the assumption of colonial identity through the repetition of discriminatory identity effects. It displays the necessary deformation and displacement of all sites of discrimination and domination. It unsettles the mimetic or narcissistic demands of colonial power but reimplicates its identifications in strategies of subversion that turn the gaze of the discriminated back upon the eye of power. ("Signs" 173)

Hybridity, in other words, is not merely "reflected" in the resistant self-expression of the colonized (eg. fictional, post-colonial allegories); it is an inherent quality of colonial text itself, and the presence/nonpresence of imperial "truth" and/or "origin" is "always already" enough to destabilize its textual fabric from within.

Again, it is not enough for Bhabha to problematize the imperialist's identity alone; on a discursive level (ie. of the *relations* of ideologically loaded signs), the colonizer's "presence" is most ambiguous when opposed to its colonized "subjects" – its hybridity "marking" its mimetic failures most strongly in its attempts to signify its native "other":

> the colonial hybrid is the articulation of the ambivalent space where the rite of power is enacted on the site of desire, making its objects at once disciplinary and disseminatory – or, in my mixed metaphor, a negative transparency. If discriminatory effects enable the authorities to keep an eye on them, their proliferating difference evades that eye, escapes that surveillance. Those discriminated against may be instantly recognized, but they also force a re-cognition of the immediacy and articulacy of authority – a disturbing effect that is familiar in the repeated hesitancy afflicting the colonialist discourse when it contemplates its discriminated subjects. ("Signs" 173)

Here Bhabha seems to be developing his concept of colonial "mimicry," which does not

pose a "real" resistant colonial subject, but rather evokes the disturbing, dual projection of

"otherness" by ambivalent imperial texts – the opposing presence of the partially

"enlightened," yet still subservient native "subject" (or object) of colonial "presence":

> [i]t is from this area between mimicry and mockery, where the reforming, civilizing mission is threatened by the displacing gaze of its disciplinary double, that . . . instances of colonial imitation come. What they all share is a discursive process by which the excess or slippage produced by the *ambivalence* of mimicry (almost the same, *but not quite*) does not merely 'rupture' the discourse, but becomes transformed into an uncertainty which fixes the colonial subject as a 'partial' presence. (*Location of Culture* 86)

The ambivalent colonial "subject," in other words, "originates" within colonial discourse,

as a reflection of the dual imperial gaze: "[m]imicry conceals no presence or identity

behind its mask . . . . The *menace* of mimicry is its *double* vision which in disclosing the

ambivalence of colonial discourse also disrupts its authority. And it is a double vision

that is a result of . . . the partial representation/recognition of the colonial object"

(*Location of Culture* 88). The mimicking/mocking imperial object is not only the

"partial" product of imperial desire, it reveals its own hybridized desire –

> [a] desire that, through the repetition of *partial presence*, which is the basis of mimicry, articulates those disturbances of cultural, racial and historical difference that menace the narcissistic demand of colonial authority. It is a desire that reverses 'in part' the colonial appropriation by now producing a partial vision of the colonizer's presence; a gaze of otherness, that shares the acuity of the genealogical gaze which, as Foucault describes it, liberates marginal elements and shatters the unity of man's being through which he extends his sovereignty. (*Location of Culture* 88-9)

Such an awareness may clear a discursive "space" for resistant post-colonial allegories,

but it seems to remain theoretically within a critique of imperialism – of the discursive

ambivalences of its textuality.

Bhabha's theoretical critique of imperial/colonial discourse is undeniably useful in "identifying" its lack of "presence" as signifying authority; however, it does raise some problems concerning the agency of the colonized. If imperial discourse ultimately "deconstructs" itself, then what place is there for a resistant, native subjectivity? Why look to counter-discursive voices, in other words, when all is contained within the totalizing discourse of the colonizer? JanMohamed has criticized Bhabha for losing sight of the strong oppositionality between colonizer and colonized, and for his theoretical emphasis on the colonizer. According to JanMohamed, Bhabha's perspective "allows him to circumvent entirely the dense history of the material conflict between Europeans and natives and to focus on colonial discourse as if it existed in a vacuum" ("Manichean Allegory" 79). JanMohamed states that Bhabha's selective vision "permits him to fetishize what he calls 'colonial' discourse (that is, the discourse of the dominators *and* the dominated) and map its contradictions as the problematics of an 'ambivalence,' an 'indeterminacy,' that is somehow intrinsic to the authority of that discourse" ("Manichean Allegory" 79). By privileging the unintentional and deterministic nature of imperial ambiguity, says JanMohamed, Bhabha "[w]ittingly or otherwise . . . serves the same ideological function as older, humanistic analyses . . . [and] he represses the political history of colonialism, which is inevitably sedimented in its discourse" ("Manichean Allegory" 79).

Though such criticism provides a useful warning to those who would focus only on imperial texts, JanMohamed proceeds on unstable, theoretical ground: not only does he seem to underplay the dominant "historical" role imperial texts have played in colonial representations (hence the need for their study), but he fails to recognize that *as* texts −

and highly ambivalent ones at that – they can no more reflect any "material conflict" than reveal some "sedimented" voice of colonized resistance. Both colonizer *and* colonized are unavoidably ambivalent within imperial discourse. Without (ie. outside of) imperialism things may be different, however; and criticisms such as JanMohamed's may serve to remind critics that imperially centred (however *de*-centring) theories such as Bhabha's ought to be used only as a means for clearing a discursive "space" for "other" voices – for "breaking down" the textual monuments of imperialism, to shed "new light" on its problematic margins.

Chapter 3 will use the theoretical paradigm developed in this chapter to "break down" the traditional, "historic" location of Henry's text in order to situate it within a textual trajectory of self-replicating, imperial discourse. The narrative theory of Spivak, the ethnography of Clifford, the genre study of Pratt, the manichean conceptions of JanMohamed, and the discursive resistance theory of Bhabha will be retained as the underlying methodology for the resistant readings of the next two chapters. Before Henry's actual narrative will be examined, the next chapter will engage in destabilizing certain "historical" texts, which constitute an imperially complicit context of traditional and popular discursive reproduction/representation. Chapter 3 will attempt to demonstrate that the "history" of Henry consists largely of a narrated discourse that rests too heavily on the imperial ambivalences and arbitrary, hierarchical oppositions that were "originally" reflected in Henry's journal. The goal of Chapter 3 will be first to problematize Henry's traditional, "historical" context, and then, to relocate its ambiguous and ambivalent "presence" within a "literary" context of production (ie. within the genre

of "travel writing"). Such a relocation will open an interpretive space for the final

reading(s) of this thesis, which will turn the theory of this chapter on the (re)examination

of Henry's actual text. Chapter 3 is designed to "pave the way" for the counter-

discursive, ideologically resistant reinterpretation of Henry's narrative as fictional

allegory. Before Henry's text may be reinterpreted (as a work of artificial, imperial

discourse), it must be relocated, must be freed from the fallacious assumptions and

ambivalent distractions of the ideological discourse that surrounds it.

Chapter 3: Locating the Empire

3.1. "ON A FUNDAMENTAL LEVEL . . ."

> *Can one accept, as such, the distinction between the major types of discourse, or that between such forms or genres as science, literature, philosophy, religion, history, fiction, etc., and which tend to create certain great historical individualities? We are not even sure of ourselves when we use these distinctions in our own world of discourse, let alone when we are analysing groups of statements which, when first formulated, were distributed, divided, and characterized in a quite different way[.]* – Michel Foucault (*Archaeology of Knowledge* 22).

The purpose of this chapter is twofold: first, it attempts to locate Henry in his traditional, historic context(s); and secondly, it intends to reveal such a location as fundamentally allegorical – to reveal Henry, that is, as a mythical figure of an ideologically driven, written discourse. The two agendas are complementary – both suggestive of parallel discursive layers surrounding Henry's narrative. Their separation, however artificial, will be useful in locating "Henry" in opposition to traditional assumptions concerning his context of production – in problematizing the accepted "facts" that have traditionally defined him. On a fundamental level, the traditional distinction between "history" and "literature" (which this chapter challenges) is itself artificial, as both disciplines rest heavily on texts that are subjectively written and subjectively read. Even the "monumental" historical/economic efforts of Harold Innis rest heavily on problematic documents (ie. company records, legal papers, personal correspondences, even adventure narratives). Such a record is not only ambiguous and incomplete, it is highly susceptible to ideological mediation and/or naive misreading.

This chapter does not claim that there is *no* distinction between academic fields so diverse as History and English. It is likely, for instance, that certain texts bear *closer*

reflections of certain "realities" than others. "History," in the present context, refers generally to a type of discourse weighted on certain types of texts and employing certain reading methods. The division between History and English, however, is far from absolute. As Derrida notes, absolute difference[11] "presupposes an originary synthesis" (*Grammatology* 62). When an original, unified truth is assumed (eg. about something as intangible as "human nature"), and when the effects of a perceived difference are naturalized, the self-interested, one-sided "nature" of any signifying system gains representational power. Such a system is dangerous both for the signifying harm it inflicts on its marginalized groups and the destructive potential of its own anxieties. In its authorial ambivalence, it tends to generate a rhetorical delirium of dominancy and dependency "effects" — a myriad of hierarchical oppositions impressing/inscribing themselves on a myriad of peoples and places. Due to its imbalanced (representational) power and the instability of its authority, as its power grows its own destruction becomes increasingly necessary; yet its destruction may only be realised when its signification arrives at/is shown to arrive at its own limits — when its prescribed limits are finally reached by the impetus of its own trajectory. Assertions of absolute difference, whether of cultural or academic discourses, are fundamentally limited, and ultimately self-defeating.

The first part of this chapter, "Historical Henry" (3.2.), is not a proper historical investigation. Instead, it selects certain texts as representative "types" of historical discourse. The goal is not only to outline traditional and/or popular approaches to the Canadian fur trade, but to pose a reasonable doubt concerning the "facts" they tend to

generate. Such an approach is intended to clear a discursive space for the more

imaginative, allegorical readings of Henry's narrative presented in Chapter 4. Historical

discourse(s) may pose either the entry point or the obstacle for allegorical readings of

imperial travel narratives. The "historical" sections of this chapter will attempt to "break

down" and/or "clear away" certain discursive obstacles presented by two "monumental"

works of Canadian fur trade history: Harold A. Innis' *The Fur Trade in Canada* and Peter

C. Newman's two-volume work, *Company of Adventurers* – the former a prominent

example of the "grand theory" historical tradition in Canada, and the latter representative

of the perpetuation of such theory in current popular discourse. These typological

examples will be contrasted with a newer, post-structuralist view of historical imperialism

provided by Matthew Johnson in his recent work, *An Archaeology of Capitalism*. What

follows is not an attempt at defining these "types" absolutely; rather, it is suggestive of a

certain discursive dynamic in scholarly work on imperialism in North American history.

More than a traditional historical outline, the locating of "Historical Henry" is a study of

the discursive *historiography* of Henry's historical zone of "contact."

"Textual Henry" (section 3.3.) does not present a proper literary study; it is a study

of a "literate" discourse on Henry, and a traditional association of his text within a

particular genre. First, Henry's textual "origins" will be "located" within an imperially

complicit, editorial tradition of misreading – of subtle (or naive) ideological transference.

Such editorial readings, lacking in critical sophistication, have tended to represent

Henry's text for their readership in ways that reproduce the artificial imperial

ambivalences generated in the "original" text. Under the "new light" of this thesis, the

conventionally assumed "authority" of "origin" will be resisted. Next, Henry's text will

be "located" within the traditional imperial genre of "travel writing." Travel writing is

not a static or unified system of writing; not only have its meanings been contingent upon

a vast geographical and historical variety of "origins," but its style seems to have evolved

historically. In fact, not long before Henry arrived in "Indian Country," travel writing

seems to have shifted somewhat from idealized types of description to a starker sense of

realism. While realistic description may strengthen the veils of authenticity, however,

Henry's "tradition" of writing seems to have remained fundamentally fictional. Though

detailed, realistic description may strengthen the narrative conviction of travel writers

(and their "loyal" readership), it does not change the "fact" that the historical "genre" of

travel writing generally represents artificial impositions of foreign, imperialist

discourse(s) on "new" landscapes and peoples. By the ambivalent tensions/contradictions

that discourse carries with it, in such texts fictionality is "always already" "present."

3.2. HISTORICAL HENRY

3.2.1. IN THE COMPANY OF HEROES

> *The most remarkable feature of this wilderness empire was its roots in original*
> *exploration. The pathfinders and mapmakers of the North American continent's*
> *upper latitudes were the fur traders of the North West Company.* — Peter C.
> Newman (*Caesars of the Wilderness* 5)

The historic fur trader Alexander Henry the Younger, born in the British colony of

New Jersey (likely in the year 1765), lived his professional life in the company of

adventurers. Raised in a well-connected, well-educated, wealthy English loyalist

family,[12] the adult Henry was very much a product of his *select* "breeding." True to his

British mercantilist roots, Henry lived the early capitalistic ideal. His thoughts and

actions were expansive; his methods, like his goals, seem to have been constant and

focussed. The unflinching agent of pre-colonial, economic expansion on the North America frontier, Henry's example is a paragon of imperial/mercantile occupation, and exploitation. Like the illustrious men of his "company," he has traditionally been viewed as a courageous and industrious individual. More accurately, however, Henry's "individual" example (ie. the "example" provided in his own text) was/must have been an infinitesimal part of a vast Eurocentric system of material and ideological appropriation.

In accordance with the Western historical tradition of the "great man," George Coventry, the "original" editor of Henry's journal, tries to include Henry in a glorified lineage of North American explorers. On the first page of his editorial preface, after noting the exploits of Samuel Hearne, Alexander Mackenzie, and Lewis and Clark, Coventry states that, "Mr. Henry discovered the Source of that noble [Columbia] River and followed it to the Ocean. Where he argued, was much further North, between Lewis and Clark's gap and Sir Alexander Mackenzie's."[13] Henry's next editor, Elliott Coues, claims that "Henry was no geographer, in a technical sense, and not much of an explorer, even; he never traveled for health or pleasure, but always on business, and made no actual discoveries. . . . [– though he] covered an immense area both by land and water, with a good eye for topography en route" (*New Light* xvii).[14] Coues does do his part, though, to place Henry among the "great" explorers, locating him in direct relation to David Thompson, "the greatest geographer of his day in British America" (*New Light* xxii), by providing frequent supplementary footnotes to the latter's journal.[15]

Recently, Peter C. Newman has continued Henry's association with the "great" men of European imperialism in *Company of Adventurers*, a journalistic, double-volume account of the Canadian fur trade, centred heavily on "heroic" British nobles and

merchant adventurers. In his second volume, *Caesars of the Wilderness* (in a chapter titled "Storming of the West"), Newman refers to an incident in which Henry rescues a cowering Thompson from hostile natives on the North Saskatchewan River by poisoning their rum with opium (see *Caesars* 91-2).[16] It is likely that such details, along with numerous other acts of individual "heroism," reflect some degree of historical "reality"; yet to focus so exclusively on the singular actions of wealthy and powerful white males (as Newman does) not only marginalizes the historical "presence" of countless "others," it also overlooks the broader context(s) of those privileged "heroes" of Western tradition.

The historical Henry, a partner of the infamous Northwest Company – a largely British association of merchants and investors notorious for its nepotism – could hardly thank his personal "virtues" for his initial opportunities. As Barry M. Gough, the latest editor of Henry's Journal states, Henry was born in New Brunswick, New Jersey to "a well-educated merchant family, with trading connections on land and sea" (xxi). Though the Henrys (whose roots seem to have been in west England) were not related to the majority of Scottish shareholders, and weren't from New England or New York like several other prominent traders, "as a family they came to form a small yet distinct sub-group of Nor'Westers" (Gough xxi).

Immediately after the fall of New France in 1760, Henry's uncle, Alexander Henry the Elder, and his brother (possibly William Henry), with their trade ties in Britain, took advantage of the new economic opportunities in the newly acquired British territory. In 1761, in his own widely read adventure narrative (*Travels and Adventures in Canada and the Indian Territories*), the elder Henry wrote:

> The surrender of Montréal, and, with it, the surrender of all Canada,

> followed that of Fort de Levi, at only the short interval of three days; and, proposing to avail myself of the new market, which was thus thrown open to British adventure, I hastened to Albany, where my commercial connections were, and where I procured a quantity of goods, with which I set out, intending to carry them to Montréal. (3)

Henry the Elder was among the first English merchants to reach the Michilimackinac trading centre (an island just south of Sault St. Marie, Ontario); and through the course of his many "adventures" with the natives of the region, he was "a pioneer of that branch of the Canadian fur trade which led to the establishing of the North West Company" (Gough xxii). Along with other "great" men such as Alexander Mackenzie and Peter Pond, "Henry the Elder . . . promoted various schemes of British exploration in the far northwest and the Northwest Coast" (Gough xxii).

Fifteen years after the fall of New France, the American Revolution threatened the Henrys' trade ties with Britain, forcing them to move operations from Albany to Montreal, "where the flow of supplies was more steady and where British mercantile regulations and preferential duties in spirituous liquors encouraged their operation" (Gough xxi). After his patriotic, "enterprising" exploits, the elder Henry settled in Montreal in 1785, "where he helped found the Beaver Club, an organization to promote conviviality and to ease the re-entry of a long-absent fur trader 'into Society'" (Gough xxii). Interestingly, in 1792, this well-established, well-connected English fur trader "became a clerk in the North West Company . . . the very day his nephew, Alexander Henry the Younger, also appeared on the list of shareholders" (Gough xxii). Concerning the relationship between these two Henrys, "[t]here is every reason to believe that their business connections were a direct extension of their family linkages" (Gough xxii). On a much larger scale, there is every reason to believe that their thoughts and actions, as

expressed in their own journals, were a direct extension of their imperial linkages.

With a bit of luck, and some pre-established trade connections, it seems Henry the

Elder managed to pave the way for his family's entrance into the exclusive "company of

adventurers" known as the Nor'Westers. By 1824, no fewer than six Henrys had been, or

were employed in the Canadian fur trade (Gough xxii-xxiii). While it would be easy for

the purveyors of popular imperial discourse to pose the historical Henry's capitalistic

ideals as the cause of his "greatness" (which Henry himself seems to imply repeatedly in

his journal), the strong element of imperial associations cannot be denied as a dominant

factor in his "success." The traditional emphasis on his individual, capitalistic virtues

tends not only to hide this fact, but it tends to shape the very conception of such a man.

The preeminent representation of the "great man," overshadowing his greater imperial

context, becomes more mythological than "real" (ie. anchored in observable,

demonstrable "fact"). In becoming the "great man" of Western imperialism, through

imaginative hyperbole and ideological personification, he comes to stand for the system

to the degree that he hides it; he becomes allegorical.

Symbolically, Henry's example may be seen as a parable of early capitalism.

More accurately, it is an extended reproduction or repetition/continuation of the totalizing

trajectory of European imperialism. More *specifically*, his example represents a mere cog

– to use an extended metaphor – in the powerful, global wheel of the industrial,

mercantilist, militaristic English empire. The historical and/or literary representation(s)

of this transnational, military and economic force, however, have traditionally focussed

on men like Henry – representing them as the "brave" and "resourceful" bourgeois males

of European "civilized" expansion. Set apart, a "cut" above the rest, these "great" men

are presented as both the ideal and the norm of the expansive West. But such a location

enacts an historical myth; it not only loses sight of the vast social/political/economic

system working behind them but also ignores the ideological complexities of their

"historical" contexts – namely the discursive natures of their "contact zone"

significations.

3.2.2. FRONTIERS AND FORTS

> *The longer I continue, the more it seems to me that the formation of discourses
> and the genealogy of knowledge need to be analysed, not in terms of types of
> consciousness, modes of perception and forms of ideology, but in terms of tactics
> and strategies of power. Tactics and strategies deployed through implantations,
> distributions, demarcations, control of territories and organisations of domains . .
> . . [O]ne would need to study the history of the fortress, the 'campaign,' the
> 'movement,' the colony, the territory. Geography must indeed necessarily lie at
> the heart of my concerns.* – Michel Foucault (*Power/Knowledge* 77)

The historic fur traders of North America were generally not in favour of

settlement, yet in most cases (in the French and British Americas at least) it seems that

their activity was antecedent to European colonial settlement. If there was such a thing as

a symbiotic relationship in Canada's formative years, it would have likely existed

between the fur trade and the mercantilist/colonial British empire. Without military

conquest, the English fur trade could not have reached the country's northwest interior;

yet without fur trade exploration and settlement, the British empire might not have

reached or claimed the land at all. The trader/adventurers, with their territorial divisions

and markings, were "essential" to the establishment of English "presence" in the Indian

Territories. Ultimately, the distinction between these two imperial forces is artificial, as

both are part of the same expansive Eurocentric system of appropriation.

In North America's historic northwest frontier, fur trade establishments generally

preceded concerted, white settlement. Such a process was driven by competition between British and French colonialists, until the fall of New France, after which the British colonies began to compete amongst themselves for "new" territories. British merchants such as Henry the Elder took advantage of the economic opportunities afforded by British military expansion, but their activities in the northwest soon set them in opposition to the interior expansion of the southern colonies. After France recoiled from the continent in the early 1760's, the French fur trade "régime" dissolved; and, as Harold A. Innis notes, "[t]he French trader in the interior was forced to seek out new sources for supplies and to make new arrangements with English merchants" (*Fur Trade in Canada* 169). The new English system that developed, like that of the French before it, was based almost as exclusively on the fur trade (Innis 176). According to Innis, such an organization played a significant part in the territorial disputes between England and France, and later, in the provocation and the outcome of the American Revolution.

According to Innis, much of the colonial struggles in French and British North America rested upon a tension between the fur trade and settlement – colonial settlement continually outgrowing the confines of trade networks. The presence of an expansive, capitalistic trade, however, might be "viewed" more accurately as a precondition for the spread of European "civilization" in the "new" continent. Innis writes:

> To a very large extent the American Revolution and the fall of New France were phases of the struggle of settlement against furs. The war against New France was a war against an organization which had been built up on the fur trade, and which checked westward expansion of the English colonies. Similarly, the Revolution was a struggle against an organization which had been built up on the fur trade, and which also threatened westward expansion. (78-9)

The development of a new British fur trade regime in the northwest "Indian territories"

soon set the northern "Canadian" colony in direct competition with its southern colonial

neighbours for the occupation and control of "new" territories in the northwest interior:

> [t]he growth of an organization in a territory with interests of pronounced
> difference from those of the remaining English provinces had significant
> effects in the struggle which later developed in the American Revolution.
> It was a contributing cause of the Revolution, and also an important
> element in the determination of the final results. (Innis 178)

While this apparent "struggle" may have been an historical "reality," it "exists" *within* the

European imperial system; its dynamic, on a fundamental level, is the ambivalence of a

powerful, Eurocentric discourse. Innis' theory fails to recognize the effects of this system

on those external to or transacting with it. He generally fails to recognize the ideological

impact of the fur trade on those peoples already inhabiting its regions of trade, who, in

"reality," must have been more resistant to the large-scale influx of white "civilization"

than white imperial capitalists.[17] Innis' ideas, contained largely within the naturalized

associations of Western thought, fail to recognize the powerful part that traditional

discourse on the North American fur trade has "played" in paving the way for and

rationalizing the imperial, British settlement of the continent.

Matthew Johnson, in his 1996 publication, *An Archaeology of Capitalism* – in

which he "borrow[s] Foucault's use of the term 'archaeology' with all its ambiguities"

(68) – acknowledges both the material and discursive trends of historical, English

imperialism.[18] Johnson's analysis of English, capitalistic expansion rests heavily on the

discursive nature of land ownership. Focussing on the ideological development of

"closure" in pre-industrial England – defined as "the replacement of medieval systems of

open fields and common farming practices with a private, hedged landscape" (47) –

Johnson claims that there existed both "the physical aspect of the replacement of

unbounded land with a hedged and ditched landscape, and the legal aspect of land with

'common rights' versus 'land held in severalty' free from such rights" (47). In his

discussion of such an operation on the frontiers of the expanding English empire, Johnson

provides a description strikingly congruent with Pratt's notions of the "contact zone":

"[b]oundaries perform different functions and carry different social and symbolic

meanings in different contexts. They are rarely purely utilitarian in nature; in pre-

industrial England they were not just functional barriers. Boundaries were symbolically

loaded in different ways that defy simple schematization" (71). The heterogeneity of

territorial ideologies in "zones" of boundary dispute seems to have stemmed from the

arbitrary and artificial "nature" of an imposed English system, as much the product of

rhetorical strategy as "realistic" description. Johnson writes:

> it is important to note that during the time of enclosure, a complexity and
> ambiguity of meaning and how it might be assigned to spaces in the fields
> existed in the minds of contemporaries. This was an ambiguity in part
> between spaces that were physically unbounded but mentally divided –
> closed – and bounded spaces that could nevertheless be the subject of
> common rights. The complexity and subtlety of such divisions was
> understood by different social groups in different ways. Their
> understandings could be renegotiated actively through formal, literate
> discussion of legal and semantic terms or through informal, 'popular'
> actions such as riot, revel or carnival. The definition and nature of
> boundaries across physical and mental landscapes thus became a key
> battleground – a key field – in which different social and cultural interests
> were played out. (71)

Instead of assuming the normalcy of English ownership (which is only *one understanding*

of the situation, though it has been recorded as the *dominant system*) in contact zones,

Johnson recognizes their heterogenous, transcultural dialogue of territorial definition.

In Johnson's parallel investigation of the material and ideological operations of

early English capitalism, he astutely notes the role of literary representation for both

frontier and metropolitan readers in rationalizing the occupation of native lands. Johnson

states that, as the English political and legal system of "closure unfolded, so the view of

the world beyond, the chaos and disorder beyond the hedge, sharpened" (93). "Essential"

to this mode of "sharpening" was the erasure of previously existing systems. The

imposed interpretation of "chaos and disorder" on alien landscapes and/or their depiction

as desert and barren was a common literary device for clearing "space" for European

ideologies. For instance, England seems to have displayed this imperial "mode" in the

seventeenth century during "the opening of two areas in which the farmer came face to

face with what was perceived by the colonist as savage, howling, chaotic, unenclosed

wilderness: New England and Ireland" (Johnson 93). Such an example was provided by

> [t]he Puritan colonists . . . [who] constructed their own narrative of
> settlement on the landscape they confronted upon arrival. The colonists
> were, in their world-view, up against the natural state of land after the Fall,
> a land that was barren, desert, a wilderness. In fact New England's 'Desart
> Wilderness' was a narrative constructed from the 1630s onwards by
> various writers in order to stress the godly labours of Puritans, whose
> settlement thus became an act of imposing godly order onto a howling,
> hideous, heathen and dismal desert. (Johnson 93)

Alluding to the artificiality of such narration, Johnson states that "[i]t is in these colonial

contexts, where the English settlers tended to perceive if not actively construct a *tabula

rasa* whatever the reality, that we see the unfolding of closure in terms of whole areas of

planned landscape" (94).

While the colonial fur trade organization of the NWC was not itself engaged in

wholesale settlement and farming, it would be hard to deny that it was appropriating

frontier landscapes based on the erasure of pre-existing systems. In their narratives, the

Nor'Westers tended to ignore the validity of pre-existing social organization, viewing the

frontier landscape as untouched by civilization (ie. in a "state of nature"). Though men

like Henry did not often generate biblical allegories like their Puritan cousins, an

allegorical level certainly existed in their writings. Generally the ideological basis of

Nor'Wester allegories was economic. As Elliott Coues plainly states, "[b]usiness was

Henry's religion" (*New Light* xxii). The NWC wanted valuable natural resources, of

which the native lands possessed an abundance, and which could only be accessed

efficiently by the native inhabitants themselves. To attain their goals, the Nor'Westers

had to disrupt preexisting socio-political systems and territories. Discursive claims,

along with attempted dismissals of other claims, were effective in justifying/rationalizing

the procurement of exploitive profits – literary representation an "effective" *medium*.

Men like Henry, with their literary drives, were highly effective agents of historical, Euro-

imperial representation; through their powerful, allegorical narratives, however, their

becoming heroes and icons of Canadian national mythology has hidden their systematic,

discursive functioning in the ideological dialogue of Canada's "origins."

Traditional scholarship such as Innis's may shed valuable "light" on the inner

workings of the discursive, imperial system (traditional, popular discourse, such as

Newman's, sheds no new light; it only mythologises the old – even, or especially while it

offhandedly acknowledges the new). Broader-minded work such as Johnson's, however,

suggests the fundamentally arbitrary and artificial nature of such a system and alludes to

the powerful effects of its historical, ideological invasions and erasures. Traditional

approaches to colonialism, focussing on Western ideologies and the "great" men who

perpetuated them, generally fail to recognize the existence of ideological systems

operating external to, or in relation to the powerful rhetoric of imperialism. While it

remains difficult to know what those systems were exactly, or how they operated, their

"presence" may be felt from *within* the Western imperial discourse, in the ambivalences

that drive it, and through the limits inscribed in its own self-contradictions.

3.2.3. A POWERFUL AMBIVALENCE

> *Once knowledge can be analysed in terms of region, domain, implantation, displacement, transposition, one is able to capture the process by which knowledge functions as a form of power and disseminates the effects of power.* —
> Michel Foucault (*Power/Knowledge* 69)

> *Alexander Henry the Younger's life was spent in pursuit of profit and not in promotion of the British Empire. Yet he died in the service of a corporation locked in a deadly struggle with an American company for the commercial domination of the Pacific cordillera, and his death came at a critical moment in the contest for control of the western reaches of the North American fur forest.* —
> Barry M. Gough (*The Journal of Alexander Henry*, lxvii-lxviii)

The Nor'Westers have traditionally been thought of as independent profiteers; yet

not only were they inextricably connected to the British Empire, but their methods of

expansion and occupation were conspicuously similar to the greater English system.

From a theoretical distance, the NWC operation might even appear as an indivisible

extension of one massive, quickly spreading pattern of settlement, emanating from

Western Europe. For example, the establishment of Northwest "trading houses" in

strategic locations (that often became "spaces" of colonial settlement) parallels the

evolution of English settlement in Ireland:

> [b]efore the sixteenth century, medieval strategy in Ireland was as it had
> been in the Welsh Marshes: to set down and extend a network of towns
> and castles along the main valleys and communication routes. This
> strategy changed in the sixteenth century. There was first a shift to a
> pattern of frontiers and forts before the introduction of civil colonies in the
> late sixteenth century. The Governor of Ireland proposed that the new
> plantation of Munsters be walled in and provided with a geometric
> network of seven towns, seven bridges and seven castles, a strategy that

leant on cartography. (Johnson 94)

The organization of the NWC existed, of course, on a much smaller scale (though it covered a far greater geographic area), yet the "[m]ethods of vital importance to the success of the Northwest Company" (Innis 243) were surprisingly similar to those of imperialist England. Of utmost consequence were their establishment and maintenance of extensive communication and travel routes. Though NWC administration was centralized in Montreal and London, as its "empire" was so vast, localized control of each trade zone was essential. Instead of governors (as a political, colonial body would appoint), the Nor'Westers created "wintering partners," who would spend the wintery fur seasons in the interior, setting up and running their appointed regions – usually a network of posts and encampments manned by company clerks and/or voyageurs, with the partner's "trading house" in a strategic location. Innis writes:

> The territory was divided into districts and partners placed in charge. The partner usually chose a central position for his post and established outposts in which more responsible clerks and men were stationed to trade with the Indians of the neighbourhood. Control of the outposts was maintained by periodic visits from the partner in charge. The department and the year were the units of control. (243)

The NWC's vast continental network of fortified trading posts in divided districts, situated along well-established lines of communication and transportation, along with its map-making activities (particularly those of David Thompson), was essential to the discursive claims of ownership as well as the military defence of British North America.[19] Though the historic Nor'Westers were an organization separate from the British empire, as Innis has noted, their opportunities for expansion depended on British military activity; and inversely, the English "presence" in much of the northwestern frontier depended –

initially, at least – on the operations of the NWC.

Though Innis may characterize the colonial conflicts of North America as "the struggle of settlement against furs" (178), it would be hard to deny that, in their "moments" of contact-zone negotiation, the Nor'Westers were the symbolic representatives of the British empire – the exploratory *tendrils* of its territorial acquisitions. As Innis himself states, "The Northwest Company was the forerunner of the present confederation" (392), which itself is a descendant of British colonial rule. The role of the NWC in colonial boundary disputes and colonial agricultural settlement seems undeniable (Innis 392). Newman can only agree with Innis on this fact, but his recognition is more ambivalent: "[t]hat these enterprising expansionists deemed each new North West Company outpost to be an extension of the British monarch's reach was the company's most curious gift to posterity, since the Nor'Westers were nearly all either Scots or French – both victims of English imperialism" (*Caesars* 6). Such a fact may be curious, but not surprising. Not only were such traders dependent on the British military and the London markets, but on an ideological level, they were an indivisible part of the English mercantilist system. The discursive tension between "private" interests and government control, from a broader perspective, was a systematic ambivalence of the European spread from the Atlantic coast of North America to the Pacific. Such an artificial contradiction is one of *many* ambivalences that make up the fabric of *one* powerful system of expansive/appropriative thought and action.

3.3.4. THE "HEART OF A CONTINENT"

> *There is an administration of knowledge, a politics of knowledge, relations of*
> *power which pass via knowledge and which, if one tries to transcribe them, lead*
> *one to consider forms of domination designated by such notions as field, region*
> *and territory. And the politico-strategic term is an indication of how the military*
> *and the administration actually come to inscribe themselves both on a material*
> *soil and within forms of discourse.* – Michel Foucault (*Power/Knowledge* 69)

Beyond their imposition of arbitrary territorial divisions with their rhetorical

claims of imperialist ownership, beyond their establishment of effective, large scale

infrastructures, and beyond the powerful ambivalence between their "private" and

"public" interests, the NWC was engaged in *material* settlement, which led directly and

indirectly to government-sanctioned colonization. The strong (though highly symbolic)

presence of the fur trader's fort, the coercion of natives to follow and camp around him,

and the introduction of European agriculture – all contributed to the establishment of a

year-round, European presence in the "Indian Country." The historical "presence" of the

wintering partner in Canada's interior stands for both the discursive and material

"presence"of the colonizer. He, the bourgeois adventurer-merchant, represented

imperialist power and authority; around *him*, the "district" was centred.

Henry's first assignment as a wintering partner was to establish or reestablish[20] a

trade network in the lower Red River district. Literally, his task was to re-centre both his

men and the natives that would follow him around his primary trading post, which he (ie.

his men) built at the mouth of Pembina River, where it enters the Red. From an imperial

perspective, Henry's function may be seen as the establishment of the "original" roots of

larger-scale, English settlement. The exploitation of various natural resources other than

fur was a fundamental part of such an operation. The Pembina location was selected for

its natural abundance – a variety of lumber, vast buffalo herds, and highly fertile soil, not

to mention furs. Joseph Kinsey Howard idealizes the Red River valley in chapter one of

Strange Empire: The Story of Louis Riel, titled "Heart of a Continent":

> Instinct drew the Indian here, as it was to draw many others, even white
> men, after him; for this vast, well-watered, almost treeless basin [though it
> contained lush *île de bois*, or "islands of forest"] and the neighboring plain
> were rich in resources to support man. The soil, a black loam four to
> twelve inches deep, produced hardy, succulent grasses upon which fed
> millions of buffalo. There were many rivers, and where there are rivers
> there are furs. (29)

According to his accounts, from 1801 to 1808 Henry occupied such a space and took

significant steps in "developing" its colonial potential. Henry's Pembina post certainly

bore the marks of settlement. Apart from trading furs and managing his "subjects,"

Henry (ie. his men) built houses, cut lumber, and tilled the soil. As Gough states,

> [a]t Park River Post [Henry's initial Red River post] and Pembina River
> Post . . . Henry tilled the soil with great profit and enjoyment. . . . [T]he
> Nor'Westers seem to have had greener thumbs than their HBC
> counterparts: Alexander Mackenzie found Peter Pond's 1787 garden on
> the banks of the Athabasca River to be as fine a kitchen garden as he had
> seen in Canada. Of Henry's much could be said on the basis of production
> alone . . . . (xxxv)

The productivity of Henry's garden, along with the incalculable numbers of buffalo, fish

and fur-bearing animals he and his men killed, may have already been enough to support

a settlement. Of the "origins" of Western agriculture in the Red River Gough writes:

> In 1801 Henry planted his first garden in the rich soil at Pembina River
> Post. Though frost spoiled his cucumbers and melons, on 6 October he
> dug up a bushel and a half of potatoes, and complained that the horses had
> destroyed his other vegetables. Two years later he had a bounteous crop . .
> . three hundred large head of cabbage, eight bushels of carrots, sixteen
> bushels of onions, ten bushels of turnips, as well as beets and parsnips. . . .
> [Then] he harvested his potatoes – four hundred and twenty bushels, a
> handsome yield from seven bushels planted and these 'exclusive of
> quantity we roasted since our arrival [they would have gone to Grand

Portage in the summer], and what the Indians have stolen.' (xxxv)

Joseph Kinsey Howard actually tries to credit Henry with the "origin of the Red River

cart" (53), though, according to Innis, the French were the first to use it in their old

régime (296). While the Red River valley had been previously inhabited – by natives for

untold years, and by the French decades before Henry – it is certain that Henry's activities

there were a "substantial" part of the "origins" of its English/Canadian colonization.

Before Lord Selkirk, with his newly acquired majority of HBC shares, began injecting

Scottish farmers into the "district," and well before Métis farms were being surveyed for

the use of the "Dominion" of Canada, Henry was planting vegetables at Pembina.

Though Henry gets credit for all activities in his "district," it is clear that his

activities were not only dependant on the skilled labour of his men and his native trading

partners, but on the larger system of British imperialism. The role of individual traders

such as Henry has likely been overemphasised. Harold Innis, for instance, actually

represents such men as threatening the organizational stability of the NWC itself:

> [t]he weakness of the Company was a result of two conflicting tendencies
> incidental to the necessity for greater concentration of control and for
> greater reliance on the individual trader as competition increased. The
> internal trade as carried on by the wintering partners was conducted by
> men with strong personalities such as Peter Pond and Alexander
> Mackenzie who persisted in breaking from the organization and
> precipitating competition. (258)

Likely, there were ego-driven power struggles within the company (as with most Western

institutions); yet such conflict seems only an inner layer of tension within the greater,

systemically ambivalent, British imperial discourse. Henry's Pembina fort was a NWC

island in a storm of Western territorial conflict. After the fall of New France and the

American Revolution, several British, Canadian, and American[21] based companies were

in direct competition throughout northwestern North America. While British interests may have only represented conflicting tentacles of the same organism, it seems that American activities were of a somewhat separate entity – a broken off portion of the former. Within these imperial boundary tensions, strong individuals and private shareholders seem to have been acting in their own interests, yet they were undeniably engaged in setting the "stage" for colonization. Political uncertainty can certainly be a weakness, but it can also be a strength – not the strength of an individual, but of its discursive system, which draws attention to certain historical factors, while marginalizing others. The idea of individual agency within such a totalizing system as the British Empire is not only problematic, but misleading – one of the many ambivalences of appropriative, imperial discourse.

The "individual" interactions of men like Henry, among "their" men and natives, were minute aspects of a much larger process; yet their discursive operations – particularly the allegorical function of their literary representation – would have them stand for/symbolize the whole of their imperial system. It is very likely that these adventurer-merchants were not only heavily involved in the discursive negotiation of physical boundaries, but also in the material aspects of yearly settlement. The "true" nature of their material activities, however, is inaccessible. Present "knowledge" of such operations as Henry's, beyond the ambiguous statistics of company records, is generally derived from the words of the operators themselves. What is known of Henry's microcosmic Red River "empire," for instance, is largely the product of his own perceptions – mediated by the ideological assumptions and biases of his cultural "origin."

When engaging in historical analyses of Canadian fur trade narratives, one should frequently wonder how much of their meanings may have been/may be largely in the heads of their narrators and their readers (of past and present). One should wonder how much of this history is the artificial representation of a much more complex contact-zone dynamic. From their own accounts, and the critical attention they have received, it is fairly clear that these narratives are/were engaged in the process of discursive re-inscription – of selective, re-interpretive, allegorical representation of infinitely complex territorial and ideological disputes. Historical discussions of this process have generally focussed on the struggle between European companies and European colonial states (including the United States). At the "centre" of such historical representations has all too often been the "great" man of nationalistic, Eurocentric mythology.

From the recorded "presence" of the "great" historical man, a host of ideological repetitions and associations are spun. Through his own writing and later writings *of* him, the apparently endless, ideologically loaded re-presentations of his historical presence (eg. of the establishment and management of his assigned trade district) cause him to take on other levels of *symbolic* significance. He comes to personify the core of British rule at its periphery. Allegorically, he *becomes* the core. His "presence" on the frontier becomes so powerful, in the discourse that surrounds him, one might almost forget that he inhabited a zone of heterogenous, cultural contact. This chapter is concerned with the "origins" – their operations, and their perpetuations – of Henry's allegorical identity.

3.3. TEXTUAL HENRY

3.3.1. THE IMPOSSIBLE LIGHT

*I was accustomed to sit up late, with a candle burning in my tent, for some time
after the fires had been put out. Some of my people, who had occasion to sleep
away from home, assured me that from their camp, which was about 12 miles E.
of us, they could distinctly perceive this light, which they observed to be
extinguished about midnight, when I used to go to bed. Several Indians assured
me of the same circumstances. I could only account for this by supposing the
reflection of the candle-light among the tops of the trees to have caused this
unusual illumination to be conveyed to such a distance, as it was impossible, from
the low situation of my station, that my fire could have been seen through the
woods among which I was tented.* – Alexander Henry (Coues 1-2)

Western writing has repeatedly made use of the "light" metaphor in the process of

disseminating knowledge. The solitary flame has often stood for the mystical emanations

of the human soul. In the allegorical operation of such symbolism, the soul, representing

the "essential" self, casts its "light" for others to "see" or recognize as "truth." Plato, an

"originator" of Western thought, claimed that the human soul comes to earth from the

heavens, bearing divine "truth" (eg. of the "good"). Reason, according to Plato, is an act

of memory – of remembering the universal knowledge inscribed on one's soul from its

heavenly conception. The logic of such "truth" is thus *super*natural, existing external to

this world, but determining its logic from within.[22] Allegorically, the above quotation

from Henry's narrative (from its first two pages), concerning the impossible radiance of

his "scene" of writing, speaks more of the assumed truths of the written words of rational

Western man, than of some extraordinary observation at the frontier of "civilization."

It is no coincidence that Elliott Coues' edition of Henry's journal is titled *New

Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest*. It is Coues' obligation as a Western

thinker to provide new evidence (ie. "knowledge") for the Western discourse on history

(the present project is not exempt from this process). The authenticity of Coues' "new light," however, depends on that of Henry the man in his "historical" context: "Henry's Journal has slept for nearly a century, during which his memory has been almost effaced. But I think it will now take its rightful place among the most important contributions ever made to the inside history of the fur trade in British America in general, and of the Northwest Company in particular"(*New Light* x). In reviving Henry from obscurity, for "his first appearance in public" (*New Light* vii), Coues' hopes to bring new "truth" to the historical context of Henry's literary production. Equating writing with memory, and memory with truth, like his intellectual ancestor Plato, Elliot Coues seems to believe that the "presence" of Alexander Henry the Younger *is* truth – at least part of the greater truth(s) of the British fur trade in North America. The "presence" of Henry in his narrative, however, is questionable. Before a discussion of identity ambivalences and descriptive biases in Henry's actual text – alluded to in this chapter, and "identified" in Chapter 4 – the obscurity of his textual origins should be recognized.

The three major editors of Henry's journal – Coventry, Coues, and Gough respectively – all make attempts to validate their own work in relation to Henry's text. In their attempts to assert their credibility, however, they not only raise questions of Henry's own authenticity, but they also display startling moments of their own imperial complicities. While the three editions are problematic, however, they must be recognized, for nothing appears to be known of the "original" source(s); no scholarly "light" can be shed on its "original" text.[23] Coues claims that his edition, first printed in 1897, represents Henry's "first appearance in public" (vii), yet, in the initial pages of his preface, he is forced to recognize his dependency on Coventry's "transcription":

> Of Henry's original notebooks or diaries, penned *manu sua*, I know
> nothing — not even whether or no they be still extant; I have never seen his
> handwriting, even to the extent of his signature. Henry's Journal, as we
> have it, is what is known as 'the Coventry copy,' *manu aliena*, penned by
> George Coventry, about the year 1824; for the date 'Montreal, February
> 20th, 1824,' is set as a sort of colophon at the end. (xi)[24]

Coventry's "copy" was likely written 1859-63, when he was employed by the House of

Assembly of the Province of Canada to copy historical documents of Western Canada.[25]

Of the "original," Coventry only provides this cryptic, prefatory remark: "[t]hrough the

politeness of Mrs. Henry, the wife of an old North West Trader, I am in possession of a

Box of valuable papers and Journals kept by one of that family who travelled from

Montreal over the Rockey Mountains to the Pacific . . .".[26] While this obscurity is enough

to call into question the veracity of all three versions, they must still be held to the "light,"

as they continue to hold considerable weight in representations of Canada's fur trade past.

Coues uses strong rhetoric to authenticate both Coventry's copy and his own

reproduction of it; though his version stems from the extensive selection and alteration of

a mere "copy" of the original, he seems assured of its veracity, making authoritative

assumptions concerning both Henry's historical context and his narrative intentions.

First, he claims the copy of Coventry's copy he is working from "is duly certified by Mr.

Sylvain [then assistant librarian at Ottawa's Library of Parliament] to be literally true to

copy" (xi). Next, he declares that "[t]he identification and authenticity of the Coventry

copy are established beyond peradventure of a doubt" (xi), an assumption made from

Coventry's inclusion of duplicate versions of certain sections of the journal — one

apparently bearing "an entirely different style of composition" (xii) than the rest of the

journal. Coues presumes that such duplicates are evidence of a contrast between Henry's

own "voice" and Coventry's attempts at an editorial rewrite (*New Light* xii). From this ambiguous observation, Coues somehow makes another, more problematic assumption about Coventry's intellect: the existence of replica versions in Coventry's manuscript, Coues states, "enables us to decide that the main body of this writing is a faithful and well-intended transcript of Henry's own Journal, made by one so profoundly ignorant of the whole subject of which it treats that he could hardly do anything else than copy what he found, in the most servile and wooden-headed manner imaginable" (xii). Somehow, through this line of bizarre reasoning, Coues manages to make absolute claims about the authenticity of both his materials and his own use of them.

From his scholarly assurances of Coventry's authenticity, Coues feels justified in making his editorial changes. Since his predecessor's manuscript contains "too much copy" (*New Light* xiii), Coues states that it "needed to be 'boiled down' by at least one-third" (xiii). Along with the exclusion of "certain insignificant portions, notably meteorological tables" (*New Light* xi), he tries to free Henry's meanings from grammatical tangles; "for solecism seldom failed to supersede syntax in his maze of verbiage, and sense was always liable to be lost in a wilderness of words" (*New Light* xiii). Coues admits to taking great "grammatical liberties" (xiii) with Coventry's text, but remains confident in his project's authenticity. After "almost every sentence was recast in favor of such grammatical propriety as could be impressed upon the composition without entirely rewriting it" (*New Light* xiii), he is still satisfied that he has made Henry "say what he meant to say in plain English" (*New Light* xiii). Though Coues may have been working according to early modes of scholarship, unacquainted with self-conscious critical scrutiny, his careless assumptions of textual meaning(s) and authorial

context/intention(s) are highly problematic.

In his 1992, Champlain Society edition, Gough claims to have stayed truer to Coventry's copy than Coues. Unlike his predecessor, Gough declares that his "first and foremost object has been to present to the reader an accurate text of the Coventry copy . . . . without a high degree of editorial intervention" (xviii). In stating that "the faults of Coues's work are many . . . . [, and that he] had not presented an authentic text of the Journal" (xvi), Gough articulates the necessity of his own reexamination. His claims, however, are somewhat extreme, and seem to be "intended" more to justify his own project than to discredit Coues'. In comparison to Coventry's "copy," Coues is actually very close; where Henry's (or Coventry's) accounts have been altered grammatically, apart from the cutting of the "incessant repetition" (*New Light* xiv) of certain "types" of accounts, "so much alike that one samples the whole" (*New Light* xiv), the narrative's content remains fairly intact. Coues' version actually *remains* incessantly repetitive, both in content and theme. Though Coues' editorial selections were made with "bounds against transgressing upon . . . the thread of his [ie. Henry's] narrative" (Gough xiv), what he seems to have missed is that incessant repetition may be that very "thread."[27]

Given the indeterminacies of Henry's textual origins, and given the ambiguities of his text itself (to be outlined in Chapter 4), it would be unproductive to dwell on transcription issues. It would be fruitless, for instance, to take sides in the obscure debate outlined above. Chapter 4 will rest almost exclusively on Coues' version for three reasons: first, because Gough's claims of authenticity are fundamentally as fallacious as Coues'; second, because Coues' version is the most convenient, for its accessibility, legibility (ie. clarity), and its thorough indexing; and most importantly, because Coues'

version is the one most referred to in historical writing. As this thesis continues its focus

on the issue of representation, it would be remiss to ignore the text (ie. Coues') that has

had the most influence in treatments of Henry's discursive context(s).[28] This thesis is not

concerned with shedding "light" on either Henry the author or his historic "realities."

Instead, this thesis is concerned with undermining the ambiguous and ambivalent

"light(s)" that have traditionally been cast upon such contexts.

Though Elliott Coues has attempted to cut out Henry's "incessant repetition,"

what remains in his *New Light* version is precisely that – not so much literal (ie. realistic)

repetition, but thematic and/or *symbolic* repetition. Interestingly, the two major levels of

repetition that remain in Coues' edition are those for which Henry's text has been

traditionally valued: his descriptive, though ideologically loaded, "wealth" of natural

description, and ethnographic "observation" (all three editors praise each in their

prefaces). While the thematic and allegorical associations underpinning such accounts

may have been relatively "original" to the Red River valley, they are fundamentally the

product of a vast discursive system from an alien land (ie. England), much larger than any

individual man. On a fundamental level, the subject of this thesis is imperial discourse,

within which Henry's text is only a link in a "greater" narrative chain. Its "presence,"

however, cannot only be found around Henry's text, but also within it; therefore, the

examinations of chapters 3 and 4 outline parallel discursive layers of the same ideological

system (the theoretical functioning of which is outlined in Chapter 2). Identifying such

congruent aspects of the imperial signifying system and critiquing their operations will

greatly assist in resisting its repetitive, allegorical inscriptions in Henry's journal, which

have not only been traditionally valued by scholars for their reflections of historical

"reality," but often reinscribed in their own imperially complicit texts. This thesis does

not doubt the value of Henry's accounts of historic landscapes and peoples; it simply

"values" them for what they reveal about the allegorical imperialist and his ideological

discourse(s), rather than for their *appearance* of historic authenticity.

3.3.2. A POWERFUL AMBIGUITY

> *It is easier to write about Henry's journal than about the man himself. Yet . . .*
> – Barry M. Gough (*The Journal of Alexander Henry the Younger* lxv)

To ponder ambivalent claims of Henry's authenticity ultimately does nothing to

shed "light" on Henry the man. This thesis recognizes Henry only as a fictional character.

Indeed, Henry was quite a "character": in his text he seems somewhat "put on,"

exaggerated, somewhat out of place, and a bit of a "fake." The "Henry" of this thesis is

"seen" as artificial, not merely because of the subjective nature of his individual self-

presentation, but because of the ideologically mediated, allegorical quality of his text.

The conception of such a "Henry" problematizes not only his authorial and historical

contexts, but also the discursive contexts of his past and present, ideological mediated

"presence." The fictionality of his narrative, in this "light," is a product of both his

"own" selective, self-serving narration, and of the theoretically unconscious projections

of the ideological codes of his cultural "origins."

In a section of his introduction, titled "The Character of Alexander Henry," Gough

first notes the limitations of such a study (qtd. above), then proceeds to make one himself;

but his analysis is of a fundamentally fictional character, who exists in text as a creation

of "his own" subjectivity, and of a traditional Western discourse. Gough "paints" Henry

as a sort of renaissance man, with varied economic, social, and scientific interests and

knowledge (lxv). Though he does briefly point out some "character" flaws (eg. biasses and hypocrisies), Gough emphasises Eurocentric, ideological virtues, such as "thoroughness," "resourcefulness," "independence," "temperance," "modesty," and "focus" (presented in that order from pages lxv-lxvii). Gough's reading is naive: what he identifies as Henry's *literal* traits are also his *ideal* traits – the desired qualities any early capitalistic/mercantilist of the British empire would want to be known for.

This thesis makes no claims about the man himself. Instead, he is "viewed" as a symbolic representative of ideological constructs functioning allegorically within the imperial discourse. The problems of authorial motivation and intention are too great for any study such as this. The question of Henry's narrative agency within imperial discourse is equally problematic. To know whether he was conscious or unconscious of his imperial complicity is as impossible as knowing whether he wrote for fame, profit, or aesthetic pleasure. This thesis avoids such indeterminacies in order to explore the discursive operations of his narrative – its false hierarchical binaries and/or its ideologically driven, margin-making perspective(s). Such operations are likely larger than the consciousness of one man. Any "motivations" referred to in this thesis are therefore those of *narrative impetuses* existing in specific texts. The frequent references to "Henry" in this thesis are not merely the product of a writing convention; they stem from a redefinition of the historical writer: the "Henry" of this thesis represents more than the authorial target of transcription editors; allegorically, he symbolizes the discursive operation of imperialism, the textual trajectory of which, in its totalizing impulse, (in)tends to implicate all that regard it and/or work upon it. From such a perspective, this thesis "intends" to destabilize, or "deconstruct" the traditional, historical assumptions

behind readings and the writings of such narratives as Henry's by identifying their

moments of textual tension and/or ambiguity, and by *suggesting* the potential presence of

"other" interpretive strategies and/or perspectives in and around such texts.

3.3.3. LITERARY HENRY

> *They were Robinson Crusos* [sic] *on a large Scale and worse off in some respects being surrounded by a treacherous thieving set of Aborigines.*– George Coventry[29]

> *The winterers scattered across the Indian Country led isolated but endurable lives. Almost entirely cut off from the outside world, they created a universe of their own . . .* – Peter C. Newman (*Caesars* 19).

To present Henry as an allegorical "character" leads to the assumption that his

narrated "observations" must be also fundamentally fictional. Such a perspective

problematizes traditional readings of his text, which have tended to "value" it for its

"eye" for detailed "natural" and ethnographical descriptions – both of which are

thematically repetitive, telling more of the narrator's social and economic preconceptions

than any historic "state of nature," or "real" historical condition of Canada's native

peoples. Traditional and popular scholars such as Innis and Newman – along with

historical editors such as Coventry, Coues and Gough – form a tradition of imperial

complicity stretching from Henry's day to the present. Very often writers of this tradition

display their own misconceptions and/or faulty reasonings in their praise and glorification

of men like Henry. George Coventry, for example, assumes that "[n]o one had a better

opportunity than Mr. Henry to acquire a thorough knowledge of the Indian Character,

manners, Customs and habits – he lived among them for many years . . . ",[30] then

immediately goes on to make this startling statement: "[t]here is a great similarity

between them and the wandering Arabs – the same treachery – the same inclination for

theft. Great allowance is to be made from the disadvantages they labour under for want of Education. They have certain laws – the laws of nature, which they consider as binding." [31] Such ethnographic statements, which shroud their "observations" in a fallacious pattern of humanist assumptions, invariably bear the underlying assumptions of a powerful, Eurocentric discourse of appropriation. In some of its earliest "historical" moments, such an ideological pattern was transmitted through imperial travel writing.

Critics such as Pratt and Clifford have recently been engaged in exposing the ideological fictions of the historic/literary genre of travel writing. Such efforts must inevitably run across traditional discourses on "travel" texts that insist on the "reality" of imperial signification (eg. the chain of imperial transferences outlined in this thesis). In *Imperial Eyes*, Pratt expresses some frustration with such barriers: describing her book as "a study in genre as well as a critique of ideology" (10), she goes on to state that

> [s]cholarship on travel and exploration literature, such as it exists, has tended to develop along neither of these lines. Often it is celebratory, recapitulating the exploits of intrepid eccentrics or dedicated scientists. In other instances it is documentary, drawing on travel accounts as sources of information about the places, peoples, and times they discuss. (10)

Scholars like Pratt resist both the "factuality" of imperial travel writings, and the works of of others who persist in reinforcing the myth of the enlightened, humanitarian, yet conquering bourgeois. According to the "myth" of early imperial capitalism, these men conquered alien landscapes, tamed wilderness of fierce natural elements and ferocious beasts, and assimilated/converted ignorant and "savage" peoples. Though often a "nasty" and "brutish" business, these mythical examples are commonly accepted as not only necessary but ultimately beneficial for all involved; however, they are based heavily on Eurocentric modes of thought and their realistic "effects" are fundamentally the products

of symbolism, metaphor, and/or allegory. Another major "barrier" to such a realization seems to be the narrative strength of certain travel writings, which often rests on a "wealth" of realistic, apparently detached "observation."

Some interesting arguments have been made for an historical "evolution" in travel writing around the world. Pratt, for instance, claims that the scientific, "Linnaean watershed" (*Imperial Eyes* 39) generated an historical, intellectual transition that was reflected in travel writing of South Africa as a shift from the "ideal construction of particular motifs" (*Imperial Eyes* 45-8), to a focus on "[t]he encounter with nature, and its conversion into natural history, . . . [which came to form] the narrative scaffolding" (*Imperial Eyes* 51). Janet Giltrow, notes a similar transition in travel writing of the same era in North America. Giltrow claims that after the idealized journal of Jonathan Carver ("Westering Narratives" 30-3), men like Alexander Henry the Elder and Daniel Harmon (contemporary to Henry the Younger) began writing in a "new vein . . . [of] sober realism . . . yoked firmly to the rhythms of travel, [which] superseded the elaborate expository structures Carver imposed on his North American experience" (29). Though Giltrow makes some discursively limited claims about authorial intentions,[32] she does provide this valuable insight: "[while] narrative method varies among the texts, point of view does not" (29). While social and scientific thought(s) may influence narrative structure, it does not alter the imposing nature of imperial narration. As Elliott Coues states, "he who goes over the sea may change his sky but not his mind" (*New Light* viii). Though studies may show that travel writing has evolved from idealized to "realistic" description, the genre seems to have remained fundamentally allegorical (of artificially and rhetorically imposed ideologies on alien lands and peoples); its fictionality would simply have become more

subtle. In other words, if the allegorical words of the imperial invader grew more "realistic," they could not have become more accurate. Such a representational "shift" may have only reflected a reorganization of signifiers, a change of terms or descriptive forms; basic imperial ideologies (eg. of "domination," appropriation, and assimilation) likely did not alter much, if at all.

Whether he is shrouded in the veils of idealized or realistic description, the narrated figure of Alexander Henry remains fundamentally akin to allegorical, colonial figures such as Robinson Crusoe. Like Crusoe, Henry looks out on "new," alien landscapes with his "imperial eyes," and represents himself as the dominant, yet benevolent appropriator of lands and peoples through words of possession (as this thesis represents itself as akin to Pratt's book). Inevitably, such an artificial position gives way to a host of imperial ambivalences reflected in textual tensions and/or contradictions (*Robinson Crusoe* is "steeped" in such a dynamic), which leaves meaningful "gaps" open for the wary or resistant reader to enter. Once a reader manages to "locate" herself (or himself) within such a system, its "deconstruction" seems unavoidable. From such a perspective, imperial texts may be "seen" at a discursive distance from the "empire," while "deconstructing" it from within. This chapter has "traced" such a distance; Chapter 4 will attempt to bridge it.

Chapter 4: Reading/Resisting the Empire

*. . . many and varied obscurities and ambiguities deceive those
who read casually* – Saint Augustine[33]

4.1. DECONSTRUCTING HENRY

4.1.1. "ON AN ALLEGORICAL LEVEL . . ."

So far this thesis has focussed on imperial discourse(s) external to Henry's text,

"tracing" its operation and locating him within it. Rather than glossing over the "origins"

of Henry's imperialism, and the academic discourse that has mediated it (by the imperial

complicity of editors and scholars), this thesis has first examined Henry's context of

literary production and the conditions of his ideological meaningfulness – a critical

direction that may be justified on two levels: firstly, that knowledge of the "real" man is

limited by his own narrow perspective, and by the readings of certain scholars; and

secondly, because these patterns of thought appear be informed largely by the totalizing

discourse of European imperialism. The emphasis of this thesis will now shift to Henry's

text itself. Although its "origins" may be obscure, and the context(s) of its meaning(s)

may be problematic, this text exists; and it exists to be read (ie. interpreted). As Chapter

2 theorizes the imperial operation, and Chapter 3 traces its operation within a certain

historical/literary context, this chapter will isolate one imperial text of a certain "type"

and demonstrate its imperial operation from within.

In general, this project addresses the need for allegorical readings of imperialist

narratives – readings that step back enough from the text and its discourse context(s) to

view the narrator as an ideologically constructed, mythical figure, a radically focussed,

imperial invader of alien lands. On a significant level, Henry's writing demands to be

read according to M.H. Abrams' definition of "didactic literature": a piece of writing

"designed to expound a branch of theoretical or practical knowledge, or else to embody in

imaginative or fictional form, a moral, religious, or philosophical doctrine or *theme*"

(*Glossary* 44). However, Henry's allegory differs fundamentally from traditional,

"literary" allegory. There is little religious import or obvious nationalism in Henry's

allegory, for instance; his agenda is primarily economic; the land and its peoples are

either a means to achieve his economic goals, or an obstacle in his path to these goals. As

well, his narrative is "grounded" in a wealth of realistic detail. And most notably, one

may be reasonably certain that Henry's secondary meanings were mostly unintentional –

at least, not "intended" to be read in the way this chapter attempts. For these reasons, it

seems, Henry's narrative has escaped allegorical consideration; yet for these reasons it

seems imperative that it "face" such a reading.

Beyond his literal details, Henry's writing seeks to rationalize and/or vindicate his

imperial efforts. For a wary reader, such meanings should present both a doctrinal

paradigm for early eighteenth-century, imperial capitalism, and a thorough set of

underlying rationales and justifications for its operation(s). In Henry's secondary

"world," subject and object identities function as ideological personifiers, rather than

fully realized "natural" landscapes or "human" individuals. Beyond Henry's carefully

woven illusions of detached objectivity (and the scholarly illusions outlined in Chapter 3),

"always already," the mythical allegory of Western economic and political expansion is

inscribed/inscribes itself within its text. To extract its tale of invasion/reinscription,

however, one must read against a strong narrative "grain" – positioning oneself in partial

opposition to the "intentionality" of the imperial "voice" with its overwhelming force of

"effective" authenticity. Given the strength of detail and conviction in such a narrative, a counter reading requires concerted critical effort. Henry's writing, for instance, with its propensity for detailed, "realistic" description, appears on the surface to be thorough and objective. A close reading informed by certain, theoretical methodologies, however, is likely to reveal meaningful "gaps" in his narrative fabric – an interpretive anxiety in his literary vision of the places, peoples and events. While it is hard not to be overwhelmed by Henry's wealth of description and seduced by the apparent "truths" of his interpretations, the identification of his ambivalent textual "moments" should indicate the existence of an embedded level of secondary meanings.

4.1.2. THEORY AND PRACTICE

The ambivalence of the native . . . caused by rejection and dependency on the part of the colonizer and by attraction and hatred on the part of the colonized, generates a host of secondary contradictions that engulf the colonial society. – Abdul JanMohamed (*Manichean Aesthetics* 4)

This chapter is not "intended" to impose its own fictional allegory on Henry's narrative; rather, it will impose an allegorical *reading* on it – the meaning(s) of which should already exist, embedded within its text. This secondary "layer" will be identified as allegorical with the recognition that such a "genre" is fundamentally fictional. From such an understanding, Henry's secondary narrative "level" will be "deconstructed" according to its thematic oppositions of arbitrary, ideologically driven identities. Under Henry's meticulous recording of "factual" detail, by his unquestionably selective "vision" and his ideologically loaded terminology and commentary, the identities he prescribes/proscribes for his landscape (ie. setting), the peoples that inhabit them (ie. characters), and the events that shape them (ie. plot) will be revealed as allegorical and

"literally" problematic. Rather than providing objective "truths," Henry's projected

identities ultimately tell more about the narrative subject himself: Alexander Henry, a fur

trade personifier (or "great" man) of the traditional allegory of Western imperialism. In

other words, what Henry has to say about the people, places, and things around him

repetitively indicates his own, secondary "presence" as the imperialist "seeing man,"

which by his self-interested and selective "vision" taints any claims that might be made

concerning his historical accuracy.

The readings of this chapter will proceed with the assumption that Henry's

narrative (re)presents for its reader a complex set of binary identity relations, operating on

a thematic level. Its system will be "located" as a subjective, imperial attempt at

projecting the ideological core of English "civilization" on an alien landscape and its

people(s). Its binaries will then be destabilised by the ambivalence and artificiality of

their textual "nature." In accordance with JanMohamed's "manichean allegory," Henry's

"empire" will be read as "a field of diverse yet interchangeable oppositions between white

and black [or brown, as it may be], good and evil, superiority and inferiority, civilization

and savagery, intelligence and emotion, rationality and sensuality, self and Other, subject

and object" ("Manichean Allegory" 82). JanMohamed notes that "[t]he power relations

underlying this model set in motion such strong currents that even a writer who is

reluctant to acknowledge it and who may indeed be highly critical of imperialist

exploitation is drawn into its vortex" ("Manichean Allegory" 82). This thesis, however,

suggests that these underlying power relations are profoundly textual and that readers who

are "easily seduced by colonial privileges and profits and forced by various ideological

factors . . . to conform to the prevailing racial and cultural preconceptions" ("Manichean

Allegory" 82) are precisely those who are "reluctant to acknowledge" this allegorical

operation. The readings of this chapter willingly allow themselves to be drawn into the

"vortex" of Henry's "Red River" in order to reveal the arbitrary "nature" of its "centre" of

operation: its allegorical hero/protagonist, the bourgeois male of European expansionism,

whose ambivalent "presence" rests on the impossible unification of objective detachment

and subjective desire.

4.2. THROUGH WORDS OF POSSESSION

4.2.1. STYLING THE IMPERIAL, SUBJECT/OBJECT AMBIVALENCE

> *I descended a little on the Side of the delicious Vale, surveying it with a secret*
> *Kind of Pleasure, (tho' mixt with my other afflicting Thoughts) to think that this*
> *was all my own, that I was King and Lord of all this Country indefeasibly, and*
> *had a Right of Possession; and if I could convey it, I might have it in Inheritance,*
> *as compleatly as any Lord of a Mannor in England.* – Daniel Defoe (*Robinson*
> *Crusoe* 73)

Henry was not literally breaking new ground in his voyage up the Red River.

Imperialists such as Henry rarely (if ever) saw a piece of land not already known to

human eyes. They did seem, however, to see their "new" lands much differently than

their native inhabitants. As they traversed territories already divided and occupied by a

diversity of peoples, the "vision" of men like Henry appears to have been heavily

mediated by the ideologies of their cultural "origins." Like Daniel Defoe's allegorical

imperialist, Robinson Crusoe (quoted above), for instance, the imperial writer tends to

display "characteristic" preconceptions pertaining to European ownership (see Johnson

on English "closure" in section 3.2.2.). In traditional Western narratives such ideas may

be so ingrained as to appear "natural" to a careless reader. The invariable ownership

assumptions of allegorical figures such as Crusoe or Henry, however, rely on a complex

system of hierarchical, binary oppositions shrouded in illusions of authenticity. In the case of Henry, this fabrication often rests on a narrative style of detached objectivity.

While the authorial style of Henry's narrative may seem steady, its content is mixed. Under his veil of detachment, several "types" of description are juxtaposed – each of which present their own set of binaries, which facilitate the thematic operations of the narrative. Three of these "types" are dominant in Henry's journal: first, there is his "natural" description, from which springs a host of dichotomies, such as beauty/horror, bounty/scarcity, safety/danger, etc., all (re)enforcing the theme of "man vs. nature" (see section 4.2.2.); the second is Henry's discourse on the "space" of his authority, based on the division of peoples into either "subjects" or "enemies," supporting the socio-political theme of "man vs. man" and/or "man *over* man" (see section 4.2.3.); thirdly, there is Henry's ethnographic content, bearing his central distinction between "civilized" and "savage," upon which the greater bulk of his allegorical "empire" rests (see section 4.2.5.). The "presence" of each of these thematic "types" may shift, at times, from explicit to implicit; yet, fundamentally, they all support Henry's ideological conceptions of bourgeois superiority and right of possession, and they all reinforce his imperial presence in the politically contentious "contact zone." Once the textual operations of his manichean themes are outlined, however, they may be reversed – that is, turned back upon their creator. From within his text, Henry's apparently objective "truths" may be revealed as illusory by the underlying subjectivity of his imperial focus.

The content of Henry's narrative may shift frequently, but it is presented in a monologue of "unadorned," documentary-style description; while he mixes subjective interpretation with "reality," Henry's matter-of-fact tone tends to blur his observations

and his personal reflections into one steady, authoritative voice. For instance, the

following quotation (from September, 1800) subtly interjects natural description with

cultural assumption, while moving through accounts of natural "horror," natural "beauty,"

and even of his own destructive behaviour, all within one paragraph:

> This afternoon I rode a few miles up Park river. The few spots of wood
> along it have been ravaged by buffaloes; none but the large trees are
> standing, the bark of which is rubbed perfectly smooth, and heaps of wool
> and hair lie at the foot of the trees. The small wood and brush are entirely
> destroyed, and even the grass is not permitted to grow in the points of
> wood. The bare ground is more trampled by these cattle than the gate of a
> farm-yard. This is a delightful country, and, were it not for perpetual wars,
> the natives might be the happiest people upon earth. I returned at sunset,
> having shot a fat cow, the choice pieces of which I brought in. I also killed
> four bulls, only the tongues of which I took. (*New Light* 99-100).

Underlying this jumble of description and commentary must lie certain ideological

assumptions concerning the concepts of "delight," and "happiness"; yet nothing of this

passage immediately strikes its reader with evidence of either. It helps, at such moments,

to remember who Henry is, and what his function is. For instance, such an abundance of

buffalo, which serve both as food and clothing (not to mention bourgeois "sport"), may be

"delightful" to an English trader about to spend a "savagely" cold and bitter winter in

"Indian country." Furthermore, native warfare (which hardly exists in Henry's accounts

of the Red River, save for a few "skirmishes," which may be the result of his disruptive

presence) may seem to him a major obstacle in his attainment of "happiness" (ie.

prosperity) in this new land of rich natural resources. In other words, there is every

reason to believe that such problematic passages are the result of projected bourgeois

ideals. By his steady and forceful tone, however, such passages are easily taken literally.

It seems that many editors and scholars have fallen into Henry's stylistic trap,

assuming literal detail as evidence of the narrator's scientific powers of observation, rather than a biased perspective. For instance, George Coventry calls a passage of Henry's (August, 1800), "a curious description relative to Natural History,"[34] though it simply includes an observation of natural destruction with one of Henry's countless inventories of things he is able to shoot and things he hopes to shoot. Coventry quotes the passage (see page 39 of *New Light*) as follows:

> During my walk, I shot several Ducks and observed the tracks of Moose Red Deer and Bears, the beach here, was covered with dead Grasshoppers, which had been thrown up by the waves forming one continued line as far as the eye could see, In some places, they lay from 6 to 9 Inches in depth and now were in a state of putrefaction, which occasioned a horrid stench. I also shot a Pelican of which there are great plenty here.[35]

Such accounts of natural mass destruction (numerous in Henry's text) seem to serve two symbolic functions: to point out the excessive bounty of nature's resources, and to minimize the destructive impact of his exploitive behaviour (suggested in section 4.2.2.).

The buffalo, in particular, seems to be the strongest symbolic or allegorical signifier of Henry's perceptions of the Red River's natural bounty. Many of Henry's accounts impress the buffalo upon the reader as a terrible force of nature. In August of 1800, for instance, after an account of the herd's destructiveness, he declares: "[t]he ravages of buffaloes at this place are astonishing to a person unaccustomed to these meadows" (*New Light* 64). Henry also provides accounts of their numbers: in October of 1800, he states that, at "the foot of the Panbian [ie. Pembina] river . . . . I climbed a high tree, and, as far as the eye could reach, the plains were covered with buffalo in every direction" (*New Light* 117-8). There are also accounts of the fragility of such animal abundance in the "face" of the mighty Red River:

> The river clear of ice, but drowned buffalo continue to drift by entire
> herds. Several are lodged on the banks near the fort. . . . It is really
> astonishing what vast numbers have perished; they formed one continuous
> line in the current for two days and nights. One of my men found a herd
> that had fallen through the ice in Park river and all been drowned; they
> were sticking in the ice . . . (*New Light* 174)

Such passages, however overwhelming in their descriptive force, may present a

sophisticated reader with a symbolic development; rather than telling us of "things as they

were" (*New Light* xxiv), in other words, they may suggest the subjective "presence" –

especially in relation to Henry's wasteful "hunting" (ie. sporting) techniques – of Pratt's

allegorical "seeing man" (see section 2.4.), impressed/impressing with his "vision" of

infinite resources, opening a "natural" space for his imperial agenda – seeing nature not as

something to be disturbed, but something to be harnessed and perfected (or domesticated

as "productive") – something that, without Western domination, is an horrific waste.

In Henry's narrative, even the natural description which appears the most

detached is tainted with the ambivalent "presence" of the bourgeois. For instance, this

depiction of the lowlands near present-day Winnipeg displays selective, imperial vision:

> This woody country continues S. up Red river to Rivière la Sale. On the
> E. side the land is low, overgrown with poplars and willows, frequently
> intersected by marshes, stagnant pond, and small rivulets. Moose, red
> deer, and bears are numerous. The banks are covered on both sides with
> willows, which grow so thick and close as scarcely to admit going
> through; adjoining these is commonly a second bank of no great height.
> This is covered with very large wood, such as liard, bois blanc, elm, ash,
> and oak; some of the trees are of enormous size. In the rear of this are
> oaks alone; then poplars and willows (*New Light* 48-9).[36]

While such accounts seem thorough and objective, their content is highly particular and

repetitive. Rather than scientific curiosity, Henry's natural description is likely driven by

economic desire. Generally, Henry seems to be "looking" for three resources: wood,

animals, and water. Wood is a central concern in his establishment of trading fort(resse)s. His "selection" of the Pembina site, for instance, seems to depend on these observations: "[b]etween this spot and the plains on the W. are great numbers of fine large oaks, very proper for building, and on the N. side, between this and a small rivulet, are plenty of fine large bois blancs, proper for flooring and covering. The stockades must be hauled from some distance below, where there are fine patches of poplar" (*New Light* 181-2). The value of wood resources for Henry's Red River establishment is emphasised by his October 1800 inventory of lumber for the Park River post, which includes no less than 3114 pieces of timber (ie. posts, planks and logs) including the flag-staff, and 120 cords of oak for firewood (*New Light* 123-4). Animals, an essential source of food and furs, are also inextricably tied to Henry's "geography." Wooded terrain, for instance, ensured the presence of deer, black bear and moose, plains were likely to sustain buffalo, and water systems could indicate the existence of beaver (the most valuable source of fur in the interior) and the viability of transportation (ie. deeper territorial penetration).

Thus, on a fundamental level, Henry's natural descriptions contribute more to the history of imperial discourse than to scientific knowledge: it tells more of an expansive desire for exploitable resources than intellectual curiosity. His monotonous, authoritative tone, however, masks the subjective, thematic quality of his major "types" of description. His landscape depictions, his accounts of trade activities, and his ongoing cultural commentaries, for instance, are generally intermixed within a tightly woven veil of objectivity. While rapidly shifting from one "type" of account to the next, Henry often generates a strange sense of detachment, or desensitization, through his heavy monotone. For example, this passage displays a callous narrative detachment as it interjects an

apparently routine listing of cultural horrors into accounts of daily fur trade operations:

> We found our strayed horses. Indians having asked for liquor, and promised to decamp and hunt well all summer, I gave them some. Grande Gueule stabbed Capot Rouge, Le Bœuf stabbed his young wife in the arm, Little Shell almost beat his old mother's brains out with a club, and there was terrible fighting among them. I sowed garden seeds. (*New Light* 243)[37]

Throughout Henry's narrative facade of "unadorned" mimesis, many signs point to the

"central presence" of the allegorical bourgeois "hero" – the bringer of a "new light" (or a

"superior" system of behaviour and thought) to a land of natural chaos and cultural

depravity. In contrast to a "dark" and "violent" landscape, Henry continually presents

himself as the source of ideological stability – of political and economic order.

4.2.2. THE BRAVE/BLIND BOURGEOIS

> [T]he Nor'Westers stepped over the edge of the horizon and explored virgin lands beyond the known world.
> Like Crusaders of the Middle Ages they ultimately failed in their quest and soiled the banner under which they set out to conquer a continent. But between 1783 and 1820, the Nor'Westers braved the wilderness and won.
> – Peter Newman (*Caesars* 3)

This section begins by assuming that certain binary associations used in Henry's

landscape description (beauty vs. horror, order vs. chaos, safety vs. danger etc.) are as

interpretive as perceptive – as much the product of mental projection as objective science.

On a literal level they may seem like accurate reflections of "reality," but allegorically,

Henry's linguistic oppositions appear to be arbitrary and artificial reproductions of

European based discourse(s). The preceding section recognized the "nature" of Henry's

landscape "vision" as selective and ideologically loaded – its explicit and implicit

suggestions of hierarchical (though ambiguous and ambivalent) oppositions implying a

subjective narrator.[38] While an imperial text cannot be purely objective, a forceful

narrator such as Henry (by his sustained sense of conviction) can shroud his secondary

meanings under a surface of overwhelming detail. Underlying such textual "surfaces"

often lurks a symbolic system of hierarchical binary associations functioning on a

secondary (ie. "thematic") level of meaning.

In Henry's landscape, bleakness and chaos are often privileged over its hospitable

qualities and its "natural" order. At the heart of this binary structure lies the delineation

of "man" and "nature." While his narrative binaries of beauty and horror, or order and

chaos appear to be objective "truths," an allegorical reading should reveal that such

binaries are not only projected, but based upon complex subject/object relations. For

instance, Henry's accounts of nature most often serve the ideological function of

justifying his imperial "presence," by suggesting the "heroic" theme of "man vs. nature"

(or more accurately, "man *over* nature"). This thematic undercurrent marginalizes or

limits the reader's awareness of the "natural" impact of Henry's allegorical "type" — the

imperial harbinger of new wars, diseases, and "modes" of resource depletion. While such

subtextual forces must be extracted from or "read into" Henry's narrative, the residual

effects of their marginalizing operation remain as entry points for resistant reading.

As noted in the previous section, Henry's thorough portraits of the ugliness and

brutality of nature in the "Indian Country" pose a symbolic space for his exploitive

presence. His narrative interactions with such horrors serve also to glorify his imperialist

operations. In such a harsh, alien landscape, even his most destructive behaviour is

glossed over by the "realities" of survival and the apparent need for such ideals as

"courage" and "perseverance." Henry's northwest interior is a world depicted in

extremes: of beauty and horror, of unimaginable natural resources and unimaginable

natural destruction – a land of plenty and a land of scarcity, of safety and shelter, and

danger and devastation – a land of life and death. Though all of these elements exist in

his narrative, he generally privileges the harsh and desolate qualities of his landscape. A

man charged with the exploration and exploitation of such a region, one might infer,

would require heroic qualities. Alexander Henry *appears* as such a man.

Henry's narrative opens in the midst of extreme natural dangers; from the initial

pages we "see" glimpses of his struggles with sickness, starvation, life-threatening

transportation, and wild animals. In his first, fragmentary chapter, titled "My First

Venture" (*New Light* 1-5), Henry tells of a horse ride near Portage la Prairie (just west of

Winnipeg), during which he is "suddenly seized with a violent colic" (*New Light* 2) and

drops to the ground, where he falls unconscious. From this sickly sleep Henry is

apparently awoken "by the howling of a number of wolves that [have] surrounded [him]"

(*New Light* 2). Assuming these animals want to eat him, he manages to escape (with

much pain and discomfort) on his horse "at a slow walk" (*New Light* 2). Soon after, he

tells of going three days without food, until someone gives him "a moose's head, which

was boiled and divided among 17 persons" (*New Light* 3-4).

Not very far into the second chapter, "The Red River Brigade of 1800," Henry is

facing new life-threatening perils. Setting out across Rainy Lake, he is caught in a storm:

> a black thunder-storm was collecting; we could not land, as a reef of rocks
> prevented approach to the shore; and, before we could reach a proper
> landing, the storm burst upon us, with thunder, lightning, rain, and a
> terrible squall from the W. We got under the lee of a large stone, where,
> all hands clinging to it, with much trouble we kept our canoes from being
> blown out upon the lake, where we must inevitably have perished. The
> thunder and lightning were horrid; every flash served but to show us our

> danger, and instantly left us in utter darkness. Toward day the storm abated, but we did not think proper to stir from our large stone till daybreak. (*New Light* 19)

A few days later, at Portage de l'Isle (where the English River meets the Winnipeg), while shooting rapids Henry's men lose a canoe, and this poignant scene is narrated:

> At length she [ie. the canoe] appeared and stood perpendicular for a moment, when she sank down again, and I then perceived the man riding upon a bale of dry goods in the midst of the waves. We made every exertion to get near him, and did not cease calling out to him to take courage and not let go his hold; but alas! he sank under a heavy swell, and when the bale arose the man appeared no more. (*New Light* 29)[39]

It is not surprising that popular writers and historians like Peter C. Newman have seized upon such intensely realistic accounts and sensationalised them as allegorical moments in Canada's mythological "heritage."[40]

While the allegorical figure of the French-Canadian labourer is commonly foregrounded in accounts of dangerous fur trade voyages, the undertaking is ascribed to the bourgeois trader, the company partner charged with the winter operations of particular districts. In their narratives, the bourgeois are more often represented in their posted, managerial roles, or undertaking land-based trade or hunting expeditions (establishing trade networks or locating resources). Such actions usually bring their own amount of personal danger. One of the most common "images" of Henry in his journals, for instance, is that of him looking down the barrel of his gun at "dangerous" beasts. While hunting down a particularly powerful bull on horseback, for example, Henry writes:

> I sent a ball through the liver. The blood instantly gushed out of his nostrils and mouth, in a stream as thick as my arm; at the same time he turned about and plunged at me with his tongue hanging out of his mouth, and his tail twisted over his back, presenting a frightful figure. I was surprised at his agility in attempting to gore my horse; but I avoided him as best I could, until a second shot knocked him down. (*New Light* 68)

Henry offers a similar account of slaying of a powerful and potentially aggressive bear:

spotting the animal across a river attempting to drink, he states:

> I crossed over and followed him; he soon stopped within a few paces and
> ran up a large oak. I shot him between the shoulders and he fell to the
> ground like a log, but in a moment was scampering away as fast as he
> could. I traced him by the blood and soon found him sitting under a brush-
> heap, grumbling and licking his wounds. A second shot dispatched him.
> By the hideous scream he uttered when he fell from the tree I imagined he
> was coming at me, and was waiting for him with my second barrel cocked
> when he ran off. . . . I found that my first ball had gone through his heart. I
> was surprised that he should have been so active after a wound of that
> kind. (*New Light* 87).

Despite the "fact" that such animals are invariably acting in self defence, such accounts

add greatly to the underlying theme of the heroic bourgeois in a dangerous natural setting.

In "light" of Henry's own accounts of the Red River's "natural" bounty – of its

abundance of animal foods, its fertile soil, its accessibility of oak and poplar for building,

and its rich supply of fur-bearing animals (not to mention the numerous natives willing to

sell those furs) – his continued privileging of the inhospitable aspects of the district seems

arbitrary (its hospitable aspects, for instance, could be given a greater narrative weight

and/or emphasis). While it does seem that his journal displays a major narrative drive to

account for the land's economic potential, the emphasis on the dangers he must face (eg.

from perilous voyages, to wild "beasts" and aggressive "savages") seems aimed at

building up his own "presence" – that is, his identity as the "heroic" source of superior

culture and/or economic modes of development in an "undeveloped" country. In turn,

such an identity, with its mythical hyperbole, tends to mask the more dubious "nature" of

his Red River "reign." In other words, Henry's landscape description serves to

demonstrate the imperial potential of his district, while opening a discursive space for his

appropriation.

Considerable "traces" of Henry's material impact exist in his journal. Though such elements are heavily marginalized, an interpretive emphasis on their thematic significance is not a terrible stretch. Such an inversion also requires an allegorical connection of Henry's destruction to the "greater" devastation of his imperial "type" – of the historical legacy of European invaders in their "new" worlds. Unquestionably, Henry's "kind," is responsible for hundreds of years of imposed Eurocentric ideologies. Men like Henry, the resolute agents of European imperialism, also exacted a heavy material impact on the "new" lands and the native peoples inhabiting them. "Traces" of such destruction exist in Henry's narrative. On his way up the Red River in 1800, for instance (half-way from the Forks to Pembina), Henry makes this significant observation: "[a] few years ago beavers were plenty on the upper part of these forks [where Rat River meets the Red], but now they are nearly destroyed" (*New Light* 60-1). Though this statement is brief – and interjected between natural description, accounts of native behaviour, and lists of animals Henry shot and fish his men caught – it reveals two important things about his present situation: first, that there were men like Henry there before him, who "nearly destroyed" the beaver population; and second, that he must travel farther up the river to find beavers that have not yet been devastated. Revelations of this sort are extremely marginal in Henry's narrative; yet, undeniably, they situate him within a vast imperial context of rapid expansion and destructive natural exploitation.

Of the human impact of European imperialism, Henry offers a cryptic entry from the Forks (present day Winnipeg) in August of 1800. After recounting the numerous fish his men caught, and the extraordinary numbers of pigeons they shot,[41] he provides this bit

of cultural "history," loaded with implicit, symbolic connections:

> In French times there was a trading establishment on this spot, traces of which are still to be seen where the chimneys and cellars stood. . . .
> We are troubled by swarms of water-snakes, which even come into our tents at midday; every morning some are sure to be found on our beds; but they are harmless. They appear to lurk and breed in the old graves, of which there are many, this spot having been a place of great resort for the natives in 1781-82; and at the time the small-pox made such havoc many hundreds of men, women, and children were buried here.
> This afternoon a few Indians arrived on horseback. They came from the direction of Portage la Prairie, and were of the tribe called Snakes, who formerly inhabited Lake of the Woods. They once were numerous, but now cannot muster more than 50 men. They may be said to be of the same nation as the Crees, but have a different dialect, somewhat resembling the Saulteur [ie. Ojibway] language. They are a mischievous and thieving set of scoundrels. (*New Light* 46)

It is probable that Henry does not realize that such "traces" of the French régime, along with the impact of their past "presence," are connected to him in a legacy of European imperialism in that territory. Likely he does not realize that the snake-filled graves might have been dug for the ancestors of the dwindling "Snake" tribe. His words display no remorse for these people, or even any self-awareness of his own destructive nature. It is true that he himself did not literally spread smallpox or hunt the buffalo to virtual extinction; Henry himself may not have trapped the beaver out of entire regions; yet his behaviour is in accord with and his ideologies are complicit with the greater imperial system that is largely responsible for such destruction. Henry's continual, narrative sense of self-assured superiority and righteousness does much to dispel such malignancy.

Undeniably, one of the major themes of imperial travel writing – with its inherent need to glorify the human efforts of frontier exploration in terms of Western ideals (eg. "bravery" and "courage") – is that of man vs. nature. As the "great men" of Western history explored the "New" World for the sake of their mother countries, their stories

have abounded with "heroic" tales. Such allegorical, conquest narratives of the "Seeing-man" not only assert his dominance over "his" narrated world, but they attempt to justify his possession and exploitation of its lands and peoples. The imperial allegory, in other words, seeks to legitimize the traditionally conceived, dominant role of the individual "Western man" in the historical, global expansion of Europe.

The allegorical heroes of traditional Western discourse are almost invariably "civilized" Western men – most often of an upper, or upwardly mobile class, bearing such ideological "characteristics" as "enlightenment," "courage," "industriousness," and "resourcefulness." These "heroic" figures risk their lives and those of countless others in the process of discovering and occupying "new" resource-rich lands for individual and/or imperial profit. However, while natural dangers are generally presented as the first obstacles in such allegories, the land's resources would not be attainable without complex negotiations with its native inhabitants. Traditional treatments of the European invasion of Canada's interior have tended to downplay interactions between imperial "heroes" and their native "subjects." Any popular or scholarly endeavour, however, must eventually come to terms with the territorial significance of such transcultural communion.

4.2.3 SUBJECTS AND ENEMIES

> *The fact was that Henry lived a symbiotic relationship with native peoples. Some Indians were in his immediate employ and some were trading with him from near and from distant parts. Others were military enemies of Indians with whom he lived and traded and others were Indians among whom he travelled. That he had preferences for some Indians over others is not surprising and indeed is only natural. And his preference for certain chiefs over others (whom he might openly despise) is a further testament to his discerning and sometimes judgmental character, as it appears in his frank and occasionally ascerbic commentary.* – Barry M. Gough (*The Journal of Alexander Henry the Younger* lxvi)

Gough's statement (above) is not merely disturbing for its privileging of "discerning" over "judgmental," and "frank" over "ascerbic," nor for its naturalization of Henry's selective preferences of certain natives over others. It is not merely disturbing for his careless association of "symbiosis" with "fact," nor for his overly general references to "native peoples." Gough's statement is especially disturbing because it points directly to his own imperial complicity, and his naive interpretive view of Henry's narrative. To decipher the subtextual, ideological associations of such a representative "tyranny," one must recognize the following things about Gough's terminology as it pertains to the Red River district: first, that his reference to "native peoples," in its linguistic context, is meaningless; second, that "some Indians" refers to a diversity of Algonquian-speaking tribes (mostly Ojibway, or "Saulteur"); third, that "others" refers to the plains Sioux; and finally, that "certain chiefs" refers to symbolic representatives of either preferred or discouraged native behaviours – that is, according to Henry.

Though the "seeing-man" tends to see new lands as unpeopled, as the disciplines of history and anthropology have generally discovered, they are/were most often already heavily populated and have/had been so, by the sustenance of "nature's bounty," for thousands of years. Social-scientific research has also "shown" that these regions were

most often already divided according to indigenous systems of territorial negotiation. Furthermore, it can hardly be doubted that the "imperial" invasions of men like Henry stirred up and/or "played" upon such ancient boundaries. Though it may be fruitless to speculate on the "nature" of inter-tribal warfare, "evidence" of Henry's role in the native "wars" of the Red River "district" exists in his own words. Despite his tendency to project his preconceptions on those around him, and his narrative knack for bold and unfounded reductive statements concerning the "savagery" of native culture(s), Henry provides ample textual "space" for speculation on the "central" role that he himself "played" in the organized, native violence of his trade zone.

The allegorical Henry is a boundless figure in a shifting field of opposing, symbolic identities. He projects his biases on his mythical setting by first dividing things according to arbitrary oppositions, then by holding one object of each binary over its "other." Thematically, he relates to these symbolic objects according to his own fundamental, imperialist opposition, posing himself "always already" as above all that he purveys. In relation to the "people" that existed in this "space" before him, his assumptions of ownership are privileged by negations of their discursive "presence," and by assertions of his territorial power (however arbitrary it may be). Under the veils of dauntless, authoritative narration, such a process may seem somehow "natural" to a naive reader. For the wary reader, however, even the hint of this discursive operation should give her or him pause. At such a "moment" one should wonder, like Pratt in her study of the South African travel writer Anders Sparrman, "[w]here . . . is everybody" (*Imperial Eyes* 51). In Sparrman's narrative, Pratt writes, "[t]he landscape is written as uninhabited, unpossessed, unhistoricized, unoccupied even by the travelers themselves"

(51). She goes on state that "[t]he activity of describing geography and identifying flora and fauna structures an asocial narrative in which the human presence, European or African, is absolutely marginal, though it was, of course, a constant and essential aspect of the traveling itself" (51). Henry's journal may be less scientific than Sparrman's, and it does "contain" numerous people(s), yet one should still wonder where the "real" people of Henry's Red River are. Generally, Henry's people tend to exist as either "naturalized" aspects of the landscape, or as obstacles in the way of/vehicles of access to the region's capitalistic potential. In other words, when "Henry's" natives are not sliding silently into the scenery, they are either doing things to hinder or help his "progress" – behaving "well," that is, or "badly," and their tendency towards "unproductive" behaviour in turn justifies or demonstrates the "necessity" of his stern, managerial "presence."

It seems that all of the native "people" in Henry's Red River "empire" were either working for him or against him. In Henry's "imperial eyes," there are two spaces: that which is his, and that which is not/is to be his, occupied respectively by either "good" Indians or "bad" Indians. The "good" Indians – though apparently "lazy" and "treacherous" – are generally the Ojibway, while the "bad" ones are the Sioux. The difference between the two seems to be defined in their relations to the process of imperial assimilation: the Ojibway appear to be already on the road to colonial complicity (ie. trading and living with, even forming kinship bonds with white traders), while the Sioux seem to remain militantly resistant to British economic incursions. Both "types" of native, however, in their allegorical functions, are assimilated into Henry's system. For instance, the Ojibway are continually associated with the "subjected" French-Canadian labourers (selfish and careless, yet very useful when working under bourgeois

management),[42] and the Sioux, in their extremely marginal and highly derogatory apparitions, occupy a textual space similar to the NWC's British and American based rivals.[43] Henry's economic agenda comes to "terms" with issues of territory – territorial authority being the prerequisite for access to resources – which must be negotiated with both "his" people and those "others" whom he holds no direct power over.

Henry is quick to judge the behaviour of his native trade partners. In November of 1800, for instance, after visiting an assembled Indian "war" party, he writes: "[a]t the Bois Percé I remained about an hour with the worthless vagabonds, who do nothing but play at the game of platter. Nothing is heard but the noise of the dish, and children bawling from hunger; their scoundrelly fathers are deaf to their cries" (*New Light* 153). While it is hard to believe that he could gain such "knowledge" after one hour of observation, and while his condemnation seems to rest upon his own preconceptions of child rearing, as always with Henry, such "observations" are best understood in their greater context(s). In October of that year, Henry states that

> Desmarais told me the Indians were forming a war-party below us, near the Bois Percé, where several of them are tented. Langlois' Indians, and some of mine, where to be joined by a party of Crees and Assiniboines, who were to assemble at my establishment at the mountain, very soon. I did not like this news, being apprehensive they would trouble our people there, and, perhaps, even pillage them. (*New Light* 132)

Henry correctly sees that the assembly could "trouble" his trade operations. It does so, in fact, almost immediately, and as usual, chief Tabashaw is at the heart of the matter:

> Tabashaw, with six others of Langlois' Indians, came on a visit, being camped at the Bois Percé. They soon got a dram from those who had liquor, and then troubled me all the evening for more; but I would not give them a drop, as I was displeased with them for having left Reed river and remained idle. Tabashaw and I had some hard words; however, they availed him nothing. (*New Light* 134)

This is only one situation of many in which Henry judges "his Indians" according to the ideological standards of behaviour he projects upon them. It is, however, a particularly poignant example of his self-interested and problematic reasoning. One can easily imagine Henry siting at the Bois Percé camp, watching the men enjoy themselves, and thinking obsessively of the "productive" labour they could presently be engaged in. All the while he is brooding, one might imagine him selectively absorbing all that might be negative, or "uncivilized" about their behaviour – thinking of their "bad" parenting skills, perhaps, or that, "[t]his is a delightful country . . . were it not for perpetual wars" (*New Light* 99). Meanwhile, Henry the bourgeois sits in misery, while the "savage warriors" enjoy a game of platter with their comrades. At such moments, one might imagine Henry calculating his revenge; he might be thinking about writing it all down – all of his "observations" and all of his judgements – so that like-minded people might one day read it and sympathize with his suffering.

Ultimately, any speculation concerning the "real" Henry is as indeterminate as drawing conclusions about the morality of "his" natives. What is certain, however, is that Henry the narrator tries to position himself as the imperial authority over those people(s) who would trade with him. For example, not long after Tabashaw and his people join up with Henry's brigade, the following, highly symbolic passage is related:

> Tabashaw and some others slept in my tent. They were very curious to know what I was writing every evening, as I never sent away any person with letters. To satisfy his curiosity, I told him I kept an exact account of the Indians' behavior; that every word they said was put down; that this memorandum was to be laid before the gentlemen at Grand Portage next summer, and that every Indian would be rewarded according to his deserts – which made Tabashaw look very serious. (*New Light* 68)

Though Tabashaw's "serious" face is fundamentally inscrutable, we are left to infer that

Henry has given him a fright. It is equally plausible, however, that Tabashaw's look reflects confusion, or even annoyance at such a strangely veiled threat. Yet beyond mere speculation concerning the "reality" of their situation, such an account (subtly veiling its own speculations) tells more of the allegorical power of his writing – of the qualities of his text that artfully imply historical "truths."

Nowhere does the discriminatory power of Henry's narrative focus more frequently than on the resistant figure of chief Tabashaw. Set in almost total ideological opposition to Henry, Tabashaw seems to represent, through Henry's eyes, all that is wrong with Ojibway culture. Henry's frequent, derogatory allusions to Tabashaw, whom he "looked upon as the greatest villain of them all" (*New Light* 60),[44] serve to naturalize the cultural opposition between Henry and "his" natives. This narrative operation is so powerful that it has tended to draw readers and scholars into its ideological threads. An interesting example of such naive complicity is posed by Duncan Campbell Scott. Seizing upon a particularly horrible incident in which a native man apparently disfigures his wife's face for making sexual advances at Henry, Scott renders it into poetic form in "At Gull Lake: August, 1810." Though Henry only refers to the husband as "the greatest scoundrel among them"[45] (*New Light* 71), Scott identifies the culprit as "Tabashaw Chief of the Saulteaux" (20). Washed in the romantic, imperial binary of "[t]he beauty of terror" (45) of native life, Scott has "Keejigo," Tabashaw's third wife (completely fictional) in love with the "heroic" Henry figure, "Nairne of the Orkneys" (17):

> . . . she had found her hero,
> And offered her body and spirit
> With abject unreasoning passion,
> As Earth abandons herself
> To the sun and the thrust of the lightning. (52-6)

In painfully suggestive, sexual symbolism Scott writes: "Her lips still moved to the words of her music,/ 'Release the captive,/ Heal the wound under the feathers" (93-5). Such a "literary" repetition/representation displays the popular naturalization of both the "savagery" of Ojibway males and the exoticism of Ojibway females, and it also displays the ambivalent nature of their binary associations within imperialist rhetoric. Thus, the power of Henry to vilify Tabashaw through his words transfers itself to the allegorical acceptance of a complicit readership, willing to take this "troublesome Indian" (Gough xv) as a representative of "uncivilized" Ojibway masculinity. This, in turn, reinforces both Henry's dominant appearance and his heroic image – the former pertaining to his managerial role, the second to his expansive, imperial presence.

Though the Ojibway are continually slandered in Henry's allegory, even the "antagonistic" Tabashaw remains an imperial "subject," rather than a pure "enemy." In comparison to the demonic Sioux of Henry's text, Tabashaw is simply "troublesome." While Henry's treatment of Tabashaw and his people serves his labour management themes, the treatment of the Sioux clearly "locates" the Ojibway as imperial allies. Positioning the Sioux more clearly as "evil" opponents seems to justify Henry's discourse on space – that is, the territorial claims and/or disputes of the Red River district. As Henry rarely accounts for the Sioux directly, however, their identities are even more problematic than those of the Ojibway. In August, 1800, at Rivière aux Morts ("River of the Dead"), Henry relates this traditional tale of Sioux atrocity:

> [i]t [ie. the river] derives its melancholy name from a tragic event which
> happened many years ago, when the Crees, who had no other means of
> procuring necessaries than by making an annual journey to York Factory,
> on Hudson's bay, generally assembled at this spot in the spring. . . . Once,
> during the absence of the main party, the Sioux fell upon this helpless

camp, and destroyed a great number of old men, women, and children. (*New Light* 41)

Of another tale of past inter-tribal conflict, Henry writes: "[s]ome of the Saulteurs who were present have often recounted the affair to me. It seems the Sioux from the first were inclined to treachery, being very numerous, and the others but few" (*New Light* 165). Such accounts generally serve to separate the Ojibway, who may be "lazy" and "treacherous," from their ancient enemies the Sioux, who appear diabolical. While the Sioux are not directly evoked in these initial tales, their "presence" grows stronger as Henry leads "his" people deeper into Sioux territory. At first only ambiguous "signs" of Sioux existence appear in Henry's landscape; but ultimately their "reality" "dawns" on Henry in the form of bloodshed. Even physical confrontation, however, in its magnification of Sioux "demonism," further masks the "true" cause of Sioux hostility: the disruptive "presence" of the Englishman and his imperialist incursions. Henry may not want war, but "war" (if it can be called that) is what he stirs up.

At first it seems that native territorial presence exists for Henry textually – as a vague, subjective concept. He sees native people interspersed along his path (mostly Ojibway), but they seem more a part of the landscape, "signifying" access to its economic potential (eg. selling canoes, fur, or food along the way). Henry seems to ignore the territorial significance, interpreting their transactions as "signs" of imperial complicity and/or assimilation. Though the Ojibway may not fully recognize Henry's imperialist nature, their generally unthreatening and co-operative demeanor (ie. their desire to trade and to gain alliance through gifts and offerings of marriage) seems to diminish the power of their occupying "presence." Through the eyes of the "seeing-man," natives who do not

make a concerted effort to repel him do not seem to gain territorial significance, while those who do are treated as enemies, fitting even more neatly into the manichean allegory. In the case of the Sioux, Henry is very willing to accept and/or encourage their "evil" identifications, yet he spends much of his Red River narrative suppressing the recognition of their territoriality. Such a realization would likely impede his imperial "progress."

Though at first Henry seems to be troubled by Ojibway warnings of possible Sioux attacks, for much of the time he tries to resist these alarms, seeing them instead as evidence of Ojibway "cowardice," "laziness," and/or "treachery." The "substance" of such claims, however, along with his naive and/or biased interpretations of them, must ultimately become apparent in the "actual" violence of Sioux aggression. On his way up the Red River, as Henry entices Ojibway families to follow him continually deeper into Sioux territory, many signs of the "enemy" become apparent: at one spot the Ojibway claim to have found "the vestiges of a Sioux camp" (*New Light* 55); later they see a wounded buffalo, presumably shot by the Sioux (*New Light* 64, 88); and later they "perceive a thick smoke to the S.W. at no great distance" (*New Light* 123), which could be that of a Sioux war party. Such "signs" are numerous and tend to impede Henry's progress from the start of his Red River voyage – both his men and the natives apparently unwilling to risk an encounter with the legendary Sioux warriors.

Adding to Henry's frustration are the frequent alarms that are proven false: at one point his party flies into alarm at the arrival of friendly natives (*New Light* 57); later, dung from their own horses gives them "a momentary alert" (*New Light* 85), and not long after, buffalo tracks are mistaken for Sioux horses (*New Light* 89). Soon Henry grows resentful of such alarms, and begins to attribute character flaws to their messengers. By actively

engaging in the suppression of their validity, Henry takes control of the meanings and/or

interpretations of such "signs" in the service of his own agenda. During the building of

Henry's Park River post in September (1800), for example, one false alarm is attributed

to the "cowardice" of a sentry (*New Light* 92). The next morning Henry states: "having

cracked some jokes at the expense of the brave sentry, I gave them all a dram and set

them at work to build a storehouse" (*New Light* 93). Near the end of that month he again

tries humour to suppress an alarm, but is less successful, as his scepticism is opposed by

the spiritual belief of an elderly Ojibway woman:

> Crooked Legs' old wife came to inform me secretly that during the night
> she had seen a Sioux at the door of all the Indians' tents, who peeped in,
> and counted the number of men in each, and then retired. I wished to
> laugh her out of her story, but she insisted upon it. I suppose this old
> woman had a dream, and believed it to have been a fact; they are
> remarkably superstitious. I let the children sleep in the fort whilst the men
> and women were drinking in their tents. (*New Light* 104)

While jests of "cowardice" seem to work with his labourers, they seem no match for

native "superstition." Nonetheless, utilizing other tactics – from putting on shows of

bravery to bribes and political manipulation – in his first year as wintering partner in the

Red River district, Henry manages to coerce the natives relatively far upstream.

Eventually, this "progress" would ensure his own place in the legends of Sioux ferocity.

For much of his 1800 voyage up the Red River, repressing his own apprehension,

Henry takes on the role of the fearless leader. Late in August, after the natives claim to

have heard shots in the distance, Henry states: "I did not think proper to comply, but

proceeded, advising them to follow, which they did" (*New Light* 61). After denying

Ojibway warnings of a Sioux attack in the night, he admits: "My notion in keeping my

ground was to convince the Indians that I did not fear any danger, as by this means I

hoped to get more of them to follow me. Had I appeared alarmed their fright would have

been still greater, and probably they would all have returned below" (*New Light* 74).

Along with his pretence of bravery, Henry also uses gifts to entice the Ojibway to

follow him. After giving out chief's clothes, tobacco, rum, and "high wine" to his new

native partners, for instance, he claims: "I then, in a long speech, encouraged them to

behave well, and not to be afraid of the Sioux, but to follow me" (*New Light* 56). Later in

the same month, when one of the Ojibway tribes wishes to encamp for the winter near

bears (which could be hunted in the lean months), in a characteristically patronizing tone,

Henry states: "[t]his I would not agree to, telling them I was determined to proceed

further up the river, even if I should go alone; if they were afraid of the Sioux, they might

remain and join me after my fort was built; and as for liquor, they should have none at

present. This sent them away in a pet" (*New Light* 66). The next day Henry offers this

revealing account of his divisive, managerial tactics:

> [t]he Indians being so obstinately bent upon remaining at this place, where
> I was assured there were very few beavers, I sent for the principal men of
> the Red Sucker band, and by many persuasions and promises detached
> them from the Saulteurs and prevailed upon them to decamp. . . .
> Tabashaw [and the Saulteurs] soon joined us by land, told me a smooth
> story of his having prevailed upon the Indians to follow me, and begged I
> would camp early. (*New Light* 67)

Despite Henry's pretence of courage, his manipulative strategies suggest the suppression

of valid territorial apprehensions. Such a possibility would, in turn, suggest that his

economic goals outweigh the threat of human annihilation – a "demonic" stance indeed.

In Henry's second year in the Red River, still without "substantial" evidence of

Sioux danger, he seems more sure of his authorial/authoritative "presence" than ever.

When he returns to the Pembina site in August of 1801 (then nearly complete), he states:

"[m]y people have been alarmed the whole summer, our Indians telling them almost every day that they saw the enemy. Those alerts, however, always proved to be false – merely schemes to shelter their indolence, as they have done nothing, not even providing any provisions, though buffalo have been very numerous" (*New Light* 185-6). After the next spring arrives without a Sioux encounter, he writes: "[t]he Indians have daily alarms and would persuade me of danger; but I am no longer a stranger and easily imposed upon" (*New Light* 198).

Three more winters pass without a Sioux attack, and Henry seems to have all but forgotten that his "district" exists within "enemy" territory. On his return from the annual NWC meetings at the Kaministiquia fort (present day Thunder Bay, Ontario) in August of 1805, however, the "scene" that greets Henry is "truly" gruesome. Apparently, the Sioux had fallen on "his Indians" near Pembina, and had murdered and/or captured "14 persons – men, women, and children" (*New Light* 260), including the parents of his native wife. This is the description Henry provides of the aftermath:

> My beau-père's head was severed from his body even with the shoulders, his right arm and left foot were cut off, his right leg from the knee stripped of the skin, and all carried off. In the plain lay the bodies of the women and children, within a few yards of one another, and the remains of Aceguemanche, he who had fought so bravely, lay near his wife and children. The enemy had raised his scalp, cut the flesh from the bone, and taken away the skull for a water-dish; his limbs were severed from his body, and only the trunk remained, with the belly and breast ripped up and thrown over the face; his private parts had been cut off and crammed into his dead wife's mouth. She was also butchered in a shocking manner and her children were dismembered and thrown in different directions. All the bodies were stuck full of arrows, and there were found also many old knives, two or three broken guns, some war clubs, broken bones." (*New Light* 262)

Thus, the Sioux finally arrive in Henry's narrative. Rather than a moment of narrative

self-realization, Henry integrates the "evil," phantasmal Indians into a set of notions

already prescribed for their "arrival." Compared to the clumsy, drunken Ojibway of

Henry's narrative, the "evidence" of Sioux "savagery," not only reinforces the division of

"good" and "bad" Indians, but also reinscribes the potential extremes of native

"incivility" – that is without their apparent assimilation into the white man's imperialism.

"Archaic" bows and arrows, war clubs, broken bones, old knives and broken guns

symbolize Sioux resistance to British trade. Implicitly, such material resistance is

connected to the new, shocking "reality" of Sioux "presence."

Reflecting the landscape off his bourgeois ideologies in binary patterns, Henry

continually privileges one half of each oppositional set over the other. The focussing of

that tendency on the native peoples of his "empire" tends to negate their potential for

territorial claims. Viewing the Ojibway as "his," for instance, assimilates them into

English territorial assumptions; and the treatment of Sioux "signs" as indicators of

unproductive, Ojibway behaviour negates their potential territorial "presence."

Furthermore, the imminent realization of Sioux territoriality is deferred again, as their

attack becomes "evidence" of native "chaos" (or social instability), rather than "order" (or

established political control of territories); even the resistant Sioux are assimilated into

yet another aspect of the totalizing discourse of imperialism. Thus, the narrative

ambivalences of Henry's manichean allegory continually absorb cultural differences as

familiar, binary patterns of Western recognition, even while it encounters ideological

and/or material resistance(s).

Along with recognising Henry's textual dichotomies, this section has also

"viewed" the territorial "nature" of Henry's Red River "empire" as highly discursive; it

has implied that Henry's territorial expansion and occupation is as assumed as it is "real."

The discursive nature of his territoriality, however, is naturalized by his own narrative.

As writers such as Johnson tend to note, frontier regions, or contact zones – especially

where surveyors have not yet left their "marks"[46] – seem to be initially divided by

imperialists along lines more discursive than (f)actual. In short, this section has assumed

that the power of written, Eurocentric imperialism, with its virtual monopoly on history,

has traditionally undermined the discursive "presence" of native peoples by representing

them according to systematized ideologies of European "origin."

4.2.4. SOILING THE IMPERIAL BAGGAGE

> *Mimicry reveals the limitations in the authority of colonial discourse, almost as though colonial authority inevitably embodies the seeds of its own destruction.*
> – Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin (*Key Concepts* 140)

> *Henry's trading Indians were essential to his success as a trader. He was at their behest and, like other Europeans acknowledged his own weakness in the relationship.* – Barry M. Gough (*The Journal of Alexander Henry the Younger* xxxiv)

Traditional colonialist discourse tends to acknowledge or allows for a limited

dependency reversal between the colonizer and colonized; rarely is it a full reversal, and

rarely does it accept the operation in terms external to its own systematization. Such a

"reversal" is usually measured in Western economic terms (ie. the naturalized "laws" of

supply and demand), and it generally serves to reaffirm the dominance of the mythical

Western man. For instance, Gough's statement (quoted above) concerning the "essential"

role played by the native in the trader's success, assumes that such "success" is dependent

on the "subjection" of the native; it claims that the bourgeois depends on the native's

dependence on him. This is one of the more "effective" gestures of imperial

ambivalence: it nods to/gives tacit approval of the "essential" role "played" by the native in building imperial mythology, while suggesting the "presence" of native complicity. While colonial rhetoric may allow for some degree of native independence, in other words, it does not allow for the existence of such independence without the confines of its totalizing discourse. In focussing on the native's "essential" products (eg. food, shelter, transportation and food) and/or their market demands (their desire for European trade goods), the native is not allowed an identity external to contact-zone trade; they are "always already" "seen" as part of the larger apparatus of European imperialism.

Traditional reversals of fur-trade hierarchies might include emphases on the independent authority of voyageur guides during dangerous travel or of native economic power during European trade competition. Such an example occurs in Henry's journal in August of 1800: "[e]arly this morning I was anxious to proceed. The wind had fallen, but as the swell was still very high, the guide thought it imprudent to attempt the traverse of about six leagues to the entrance of the Red river" (*New Light* 39). Though one could read much into such apparent reversals of authority, the "fact" is that in the same wind the day before, they had split a canoe, which the guide had had to repair with much labour (*New Light* 37-8). If Henry had suspected "laziness," or if the guide had been rude, there would have likely been rebukes and/or reprimands. Though issues of authority do arise between Henry and his labourers on several occasions,[47] there is little to no possibility in his narrative of identifying the voyageur as external to Euro-imperial discourse; the "Canadian" fur trade labourers generally seem as dependent on the British colonial system for their identities as the existence of that system depends on the exploitation of their skills. Such an investigation, like traditional approaches such as that of Innis, could

easily slide into complicity with the self-replicating dominance/dependency (or core and

periphery) operations of the imperial system. While textual "spaces" do exist in Henry's

narrative for a resistant critique of capitalist class and labour assumptions, their meanings

are so thoroughly naturalized that they are virtually inseparable from his ambivalent

imperialism; they are pieces of the imperial baggage he has brought with him into the

interior. It seems that a more fruitful analysis could be made of the effects of Henry's

"baggage" on the alien peoples he burdens with its ideological weight. Unfortunately,

traditional representations of native resistance to imperialism have focussed on their

strength in trade negotiations – on their desire for lower prices on European goods. Such

reasoning, still focussed on inter-cultural transaction from a naturalized, Western

perspective, does little to dispel colonial images of native conformity, complicity, or

willful assimilation.

As the fur trade depended largely on native produce, and since there was often

fierce competition between white traders, native trappers were often in positions of great

bargaining power. In Henry's Red River, the Ojibway were often able to choose between

Northwest, Hudson Bay, or XY (an offshoot of the NWC) company traders in order to

gain favourable exchange rates or better services and/or quality of goods. Henry himself

notes this dynamic, as a source of his native "troubles." He admits, for instance, in the

spring of 1804 (*New Light* 239-40), to fighting natives for their furs, which were

promised to his neighbouring XY competitor. Undeniably, the success (even the

survival) of white traders was often owed to the hunting and trapping abilities of the

natives. On Henry's first venture, during the particularly harsh winter of 1799, he humbly

pays native hunters high rates for furs and meat, admitting that, "[e]ven upon these hard

terms I was obliged to consider it a great favor they did me" (*New Light* 3). Henry's

dependence on the Ojibway for the success of his Red River establishment is also

displayed in his choice of sites for his first fort (at Park River): "had I not told them this

morning that I should stop here, I believe they would have returned" (*New Light* 91).

While such passages suggest the "value" of the natives in the fur trade, they do nothing to

suggest their resistance to, or their cultural identities apart from, European economics;

within Henry's narrative, there is little to no evidence of native thought or action external

to his imperial discourse.

In North America, as noted in the previous section, certain tribes seem to have

engaged white imperialists in "warfare," while others appear to have engaged them in

direct trade, and social and political alliances – the former classified as "enemies," and

the latter as "subjects." The native "enemies" were dealt with diplomatically and/or

militarily (directly or indirectly), while the "subjects" are generally represented as being

assimilated, economically and hegemonically, into white-dominated political structures.

It may seem genuinely humanitarian, or even liberating, to discuss the problem of

assimilation in terms of power reversals; yet such efforts tend to fall into imperial

complicity – caught in the mythical, manichean web of colonial master/slave dialectics

(for example, natives and Europeans might be seen as working together to create the

"great" nation of Canada); it establishes a tradition of cooperation, between the culturally

divided Europeans and native North Americans, which assumes a native complicity in the

projected Eurocentric agenda. Unfortunately, while such conclusions serve only to

reinforce imperial hegemony, from careless interpretations of historical ethnography, they

are easily made by the most well intentioned reader.

Neither the authority of the voyageur guide, nor the opportunistic trade strategies of the native trapper could have done anything to slow imperial progress in the interiors of North America; at times they may have hampered the individual efforts of traders such as Henry, but such efforts would have been "essential" to the greater process of colonial expansion. In fact, the cultural content of narratives such as Henry's rests heavily on assumptions concerning the imperial complicity of his "subjects." The Ojibway, in particular, are continually judged on their degree of cooperation with Henry's enterprise (see previous section). His anecdotal evidence of native complicity, however, is generally indeterminate. Faced with observable differences of Ojibway culture, Henry continually attempts to assimilate their thoughts and actions into his own ideological system of meaning yet his narrative "effects" of native complicity may often indicate a mimicry that borders more on mockery than subservience. Rather than proposing imperially contained power reversals, in "light" of the problematic nature of narrative "evidence," a more effective gesture of native liberation could be made by negating textual assumptions of imperial influence. Certain narrated moments of historical native mimicry may actually tell more of veiled resistance than covert compliance.

A traditional notion of the complicity of natives is "centred" on their cooperation in the depletion of animal resources – especially the buffalo. Though there may be convincing material evidence to support such a notion, the idea exists primarily as naturalized assumption; it is hardly scrutinized in scholarly treatments, and often ignored altogether – seen as too evident, perhaps, to warrant discussion. Though in Henry's narrative the greatest amount of buffalo seem to be killed by him and his men, he takes care to note the frequent involvement of the natives in his orgies of slaughter. At one

point, for example, when Henry and "his" men are firing volleys into a herd at a drinking

spot, he provides this apparent example of native complicity:

> [t]he Indians suggested that we should all fire together at one lone bull which appeared, to have the satisfaction, as they said, of killing him stone dead. The beast advanced until he was within six or eight paces, when the yell was given and all hands let fly; but instead of falling he galloped off, and it was only after several more discharges that he was brought to the ground. The Indians enjoyed this sport highly – it is true the ammunition cost them nothing. (*New Light* 67).

Though it is not clear when or where the natives actually fired, the result of the initial

volley is peculiar. The Ojibway were expert hunters, and likely would not have all

missed had they intended to kill the "brute," and their great "enjoyment" of the event may

lead one to suspect the nature of their participation in the vulgar display of wastefulness.

It could be that the incident is the product of native "trickery": perhaps their suggestion of

a definite target was intended to display (at least to themselves) the poor marksmanship of

Henry and his men, who seem to have been firing randomly before. If this was the case,

the demonstration must have been effective. Adding to this line of speculation is another

hunting incident (later the same day), in which the natives want Henry to chase a bull

which turns out to be surprisingly strong and agile. After finally managing to kill the

animal, which nearly gores his horse (quoted in section 4.2.2.), Henry states that, "[t]his

was another diversion for the Indians" (*New Light* 68). In such ambiguous incidents, it

could be that the natives are amusing themselves at Henry's expense, while appearing to

follow his example and/or assist in his senseless behaviour.

Whether it is Henry's intention or not, careless readings of his native "subjects"

tend to lead to assumptions of their imperial complicity. Such careless readings seem

based on or in congruence with the imperial assumptions of Henry himself. To assume

that Henry's vision, with its continual ideological implications and insinuations, represents any unified truths, however, is bad reading. Whether the mimicry of "his" natives is "real" or not, from a critical reading, the "traces" it bears of mockery are often as strong as (or stronger than) those of subservience. The "fact" that either interpretation is possible displays the inherent ambivalence of Henry's portrait of the Ojibway. The possibility of resistant meanings may be the result of poor writing, yet this lack of clarity is characteristic of the journal as a whole, and nowhere is this opaqueness more apparent than in the inscrutable "faces" of Henry's narrated "Indians."

"Central" to Henry's "inscrutable" portrayal of native peoples is the towering figure of Tabashaw, a chief of many faces: he opposes Henry, yet works with him; he is a man of conviction and courage, but also of treachery and bombast; he seems ambitious, yet lazy. Tabashaw is a man of Henry's text, yet he cannot reside fully within it. The role of "chief" itself seems to be inscribed by Henry almost in the same stroke that it is deprived of a unified presence. Henry "signifies" Tabashaw's identity as "chief" at the start of his initial Red River voyage in 1800: "I gave Tabashaw, Maymiutch, and Vieux Collier each some clothing and other articles, as follows: A scarlet laced coat; a laced hat; a red round feather; a white linen shirt; a pair of leggings; a breech clout; a flag; one fathom of tobacco, and a 9-gallon keg of rum" (*New Light* 56). Only two days later, however, the arbitrariness of such a symbolic recognition is revealed in Henry's outrage at Tabashaw for voicing native demands. After the "chief" makes several speeches on behalf of his people, Henry threatens violence; and when Tabashaw remains to make peace, he is labelled by Henry as a "villian" (*New Light* 59-60).

As Tabashaw seems to grow more "troublesome" through the course of Henry's

Red River operation, one might try to picture him at certain moments standing before

Henry — before the authorial gaze of the imperialist. But how might this Ojibway "chief"

appear? Surely this is a mystery. Might he be wearing those symbolic imperial trappings

that were Henry's "gift"? Perhaps the scarlet coat and the laced hat are torn; maybe the

white linen has become soiled. Does Tabashaw stand before his English counterpart with

a "very serious" (*New Light* 68) look, or that of "the greatest villain" (*New Light* 60)? Or

might he be laughing (ie. having great "sport") or smirking ruthlessly? Perhaps Henry is

simply an amusing "diversion" for the prominent Ojibway. In Henry's last direct account

of him, could Tabashaw be "seen" walking off with a 9-gallon keg of rum under his arm

(October, 1805): "I turned Tabashaw over to my neighbor [an HBC trader], and positively

refused to have anything more to do with him" (*New Light* 266). Or maybe Tabashaw is

waving that British flag in Henry's final account of him two winters later: "a large war-

party of Sioux had fallen upon our principal body of Saulteurs in camp . . . and killed our

great chief Tabashaw, his eldest son, and an old woman. The Saulteurs had fought like

heroes against superior numbers, and obliged them to retreat, by which means the camp

was saved" (*New Light* 427).[48] But maybe, when we try to picture this obscure, yet

prominent Ojibway leader, he does not appear at all.

The ambivalence of Henry's "Tabashaw" is the allegorical ambivalence of the

"Saulteur" as a whole; it is an obscure identity conceived of and signified by the

imperialist narrator, who would "picture" his ambivalent "subjects" as divided yet

indivisible parts of an arbitrary system of ideologically driven inscriptions/proscriptions.

It may be easy to "see" the "troublesome" Tabashaw soiling the imperial vestiges —

staining the sanctity of "civilized virtue" perhaps; but could it be that the symbolic

clothing designed to signify "chief" were already soiled? Beyond a reasonable doubt, it

cannot be proven that the allegorical adornments and embellishments of the imperial

"chief" were not already steeped in the "essence" of "savagery." It is likely that the

imperial notions of Ojibway "savagery" prefigured its discovery in "Tabashaw."

Narrative traces of imperfect assimilation – mocking mimicry and "images" of

inscrutability – signify the limits of imperial "subjugation." At the least, they point to the

ethnographic failings of imperial narrators; at the most, they allude to the limits of the

imperial discourse itself – to its allegorical "essence" of arbitrary signification, which is

all too often misread as historical truth. "Always already," it seems, narratives such as

Henry's are conceived of behind the shifting manichean mask of imperial "otherness."

4.2.5. HENRY THE BARBARIAN

> *Henry was a careful and frank observer of Indian life. His day by day reporting of Indian movements and actions, of internecine rivalry and warfare, and of indigenous practices and pursuits comes down to us as a valuable record. But it also gives us an appreciation of the man. That he held no love for an intoxicated Indian, or for the terrible and violent consequences of drink that he describes in his Journal should not be sufficient to condemn him, as did one writer in a Canadian popular magazine in 1935, under the title of 'Hard-Boiled Henry.' Such an inflamed and injudicious view of Henry does nothing to improve the image of the native or the fur trader.* – Barry M. Gough (*The Journal of Alexander Henry the Younger* lxvi)

Ambivalent ethnographic statements made by historians such as Gough must be a

continual source of frustration for conscientious readers, who are aware of the historical

indeterminacies of "original" texts such as Henry's. Critical moments of near awareness

in such careless scholarship seem only to reinforce fallacious assumptions and faulty

reasoning. In the above quotation, for instance, just when one might think Gough is

finally on the right track, as if by magic he shifts gears, instinctively defending the

"honour" of his fur trade hero. Yet how could anyone condemn Henry, who was never fully "present" in his own text (in fact, he is all too often conspicuously absent from it), and who is now so enshrouded with problematic discourse(s) as to be fundamentally inaccessible? All that may be done is to question the historical "evidence" of his text based on its own inconsistencies. The closest this thesis comes to condemnation is in the "deconstruction" of "Henry's" artificially generated, narrative identities – of both his "subjects" and himself. Gough seems to stake Henry's credibility on the veracity of his "realistic" observations – praising him for his ethnographic prowess, for instance – for his "valuable" images of the detestable, allegorically "intoxicated Indian." In his defence of Henry's reputation, Gough seems compelled to guard the sanctity of Henry's violent significations, which artificially locate the sign of the "Indian" within an alien discourse of arbitrary oppositions. This chapter does not wish to improve such images; it seeks to *dispel* them.

Henry's "frank" observations and his "day by day reporting" of Indian life truly "gives us an appreciation of the man" – not the "real" man himself, that is, but the textual, allegorical bourgeois hero of traditional historical discourse. Frankly, though nothing said today can condemn Henry the man, the *image* of him provided in his text is anything but that of a "valuable" recorder. The narrated "view" of Henry is often "inflamed"and rarely "judicious," but it cannot be fully determined whether his callous and problematic accounts of native peoples are the product of an individual mind or a greater Eurocentric discourse. Arguments could be made for either perspective. It is very possible at times that he was entirely convinced of his own "frankness" of "vision," or even that he made his records with a general sense of cultural detachment. There would be little value,

however, in such a distance; it might even obscure his vision further by resting more heavily on his ideological presuppositions. In other words, Henry the narrator cannot win this critical battle; his accounts are fundamentally flawed; and while his allegorical, historical "presence" remains strong, Henry the man is forever lost.

This section continues the critique of Henry's ethnographic authenticity by holding his allegorical image of native people up to that of his own. In order to show that his "view" of the natives in his journal is as much the product of imaginary projection as "real" observation, Henry's ethnology will be reversed from three thematic perspectives: first, his unrelenting "views" of native intoxication will be seen as stemming largely from his own thoughts and actions; second, his repetitive allusions to native selfishness and treachery will be reassigned to Henry himself; and third, his tendency to eroticise the role of the native woman in fur trade interactions will be viewed as largely the projection of Henry's own, obsessive ambivalence concerning inter-cultural sex. While it may be that the fur trade saw much internecine, hypocritical, or degrading behaviour among its native participants, such apparent observations are far from a credible record of native culture; they provide an interesting record of the selective, biased "vision" of literate traders perhaps, but they are not of much ethnographic value regarding historic North American cultures.

The fundamental binary of all oppositions in Henry's narrative (on a thematic level) must be that of "civility" vs. "savagery," and nowhere is that apparent difference "demonstrated" more thoroughly and obsessively than in Henry's "frank" observations of Ojibway "drinking bouts." From his indirect perspective – from his vegetable garden, or his fortified trading "house" perhaps, or (more likely) from second-hand accounts –

Henry views acts of native "savagery" with the self-assured presence of mind of a

"civilized" bourgeois of English descent. He "observes," for instance, how

"Cautoquoince jumped on Terre Grasse, and bit his nose off" (*New Light* 161), and he

"witnesses," just days later, how a small child was "torn asunder" (*New Light* 161) by

rival males. Though Henry does not say whether he saw the incidents directly (he does

not even say whether the child lived), he seems confident that both incidents were caused

by the apparently endemic "jealousy" (*New Light* 161) of the native male. Both cases, as

with the rest of Henry's numerous accounts of Ojibway "savagery," occurred after he had

provided them with great amounts of liquor. Indeed, it is possible that such "types" of

behaviour may have been witnessed near or around the bourgeois traders of the pre-

colonial, Canadian Northwest. Not only is it very likely, however, that men like Henry

only saw a small part of native culture during their trade epoch(s),[49] and that they simply

did not record much of what they saw,[50] but it is also likely that they embellished,

exaggerated, and even imposed arbitrary interpretations on what they saw and/or heard.

While alcohol seems to have been "central" to Henry's material operation, it also

takes a central role in his narration of native culture; the majority of his ethnographic

"observations" (mostly second-hand accounts) of the Ojibway rest on the "effects" of

alcohol consumption. Throughout his countless images of such "savagery," however, he

does not acknowledge his own part in the debauchery of "his" natives. Most telling of

such repetitive and self-denying accounts is the horrifying saga of "old Crooked Legs,"

who after a string of traumatic altercations with his second, much younger wife, is finally

ejected by Henry from the post for "laziness." On September 29th, 1800, Henry writes:

"[t]he Indians continued drinking. About ten o'clock I was informed that old Crooked

Legs had killed his young wife. I instantly sent Desmarais to inquire into the business.

He soon returned, and told me she was not dead, but had received three dreadful stabs"

(*New Light* 105). When he is sober, Crooked Legs spends days nursing her back to

health, only to be attacked by her a month later, in another "drinking bout":

> Crooked Legs and his family arrived from below. His young wife is now
> perfectly recovered, and enjoys a glass. All who had any skins to trade
> held a drinking match, during which the lady gave her old husband a cruel
> beating with a stick, and then, throwing him on his back, applied a fire
> brand to his privates, and rubbed it in, until somebody interfered and took
> her away. She left him in a shocking condition, with the parts nearly
> roasted" (*New Light* 156).

Though Henry notes the role of alcohol in these "shocking" events, he still attributes them

to the Ojibway disposition towards "jealousy" and "revenge" – emphasising their

"savage" essence over his own catalytic "presence" (ie. as alcohol supplier). Amazingly,

Henry later associates the terrible condition of Crooked Legs with worthlessness, and has

him hauled away: "[t]he old gent with the roasted cods was in a sad condition, and

appeared to be failing fast. I had him dragged away on a travaille with my horse, and now

the ground is clear of needy pensioners and lazy jades" (*New Light* 159).[51] Henry's

callous lack of tolerance and/or sympathy for "his" natives, who seem to be suffering

from his introduction of alcohol into their lives, is truly shocking. To a critical reader,

however, what should be more disturbing is Henry's continual assignment of Ojibway,

alcohol-induced behaviour to their cultural "essence," which is judged heavily by the

ideological standards of his own "civilization."

Throughout Henry's narrative lurks an inherent contradiction concerning his

trading of alcohol and his "view" of native culture. While providing the Ojibway with

copious amounts of liquor, he continually expects/demands that they "behave well" (*New*

Light 56); wishing them to conduct themselves like "good Indians," he steadily proceeds

to supply the necessities of their drunken "savagery." This contradiction is not dealt with

in Henry's journal; rather, it is systematically suppressed. In one "uncharacteristic"

passage, however, he does admit the negative impact of alcohol in the "Indian country."

On February 25th, 1803, Henry writes:

> the Indians totally neglect their ancient customs; and to what can this
> degeneracy be ascribed but to their intercourse with us, particularly as they
> are so unfortunate as to have a continual succession of opposition parties
> to teach them roguery and destroy both mind and body with that pernicious
> article, rum? What a different set of people they would be, were there not
> a drop of liquor in the country! If a murder is committed among the
> Saulteurs, it is always in a drinking match. We may truly say that liquor is
> the root of all evil in the North West. (*New Light* 209).

In Henry's narration of his Red River "empire," this startling revelation is the first and

only unrepressed outburst concerning the erosion of native culture by the fur trade; its

powerfully expressed meaning, however, is enough to erode much of the content of his

historical ethnography – at least as it pertains to authentic, Ojibway culture, and/or the

moral superiority of white practices in the interior. Still, though this passage is highly

significant, and indeed valuable, it does not fit thematically with the rest of his journal; it

provides enough evidence for the careless reader to rest assured that Henry was a self-

conscious individual, yet it does not resolve either his narrative self-contradictions or the

problematic nature of his "cultural" content. Even during Henry's strange outburst, it is

hard to determine the degree of his self-awareness, and the rest of his narrative either

suggests the failure or repression thereof.[52]

Henry the narrator, in relation to his imperial "subjects," appears to have very

little "authentic" self-awareness. Even in his treatment of sober natives, he seems to not

only project his own standards of judgement upon them, but to deny his own failure to

abide by such codes. When he accuses them of "treachery," for instance (which is often),

he is invariably expressing his frustration with some resistance to his authority. Though

he often claims that he has previously treated them with "fairness" or "kindness," there is

rarely any evidence to verify such claims (other than his "gifts" of alcohol). It is also very

clear that the standards of behaviour he attempts to impose on the natives are not those he

follows himself. On October 25th 1800, after an Ojibway named Maymiutch attempts to

draw Henry's hunter away with gifts (alcohol and a sacred drum) in order to open the

"market" for others, Henry declares that,

> [i]t might be considered ungrateful in Maymiutch to debauch my hunter
> away, but similar affairs occur so frequently among the Saulteurs that we
> think them not at all extraordinary. Gratitude they have none; treat them
> ever so well and satisfy every demand for a long time, then refuse them but
> a glass of liquor, and all past obligations are forgotten in an instant; those
> very persons are then your greatest enemies (*New Light* 125).

While Henry's interpretation clearly favours the role of alcohol in the situation, it seems

fairly clear that the negotiations between Maymiutch and "his" hunter have cultural

significance. The drum that is given, as Henry writes, is an article "of superior value and

high consideration among these people; when given with a view to obtain any particular

favor, that is seldom denied" (*New Light* 125). This passage, under close scrutiny, reveals

the allegorical operation of Henry's imperialism: here, as in most of his ethnographic

reflections on the Ojibway, his narrative attempts to naturalize his ideologies of bourgeois

authority by diverting the reader from the "realities" of the situation (in this case, of

economic trade negotiations) with comments on the cultural inferiority of the native – the

allegory of the heroic European male dominating the unenlightened savage "always

already" attempting to veil the "brute reality" (*Orientalism* 5) of his imperialism.

The relative nature of Henry's concept of "duty" is displayed in his narrative on three levels: first, by his failure to prove the indebtedness of "his" natives (ie. their rationale for gratitude and subservience); second, by his one-sided, self-interested perspective on their interactions; and third, Henry ultimately undermines the validity of his notion of "duty" by failing to demonstrate it himself. Only two weeks after Henry is outraged at "his" hunter's potential betrayal (the hunter does not actually go with Maymiutch), we find Henry interfering with native loyalties via bribery:

> [t]his evening I had a long conversation with Charlo. He is a great rogue, but I was obliged to trust him for the present, and with some difficulty persuaded him to accompany me in search of the Indians about Grandes Fourches. He told me it was dangerous, and hoped I would reward him well for his trouble should we return safe. I promised him half a keg of liquor if he would set off to-morrow morning with me and take the mare with him. He was afraid his brother would be displeased. However, the liquor was too great a temptation; so he consented to risk his life and his brother's displeasure. (*New Light* 137)

Again the allegorical, cultural deprivation of native alcoholism and "roguery" serves to deflect Henry's own blamable position: the emphasis on Charlo's insatiable "thirst" for debauchery and his "natural" tendency towards "treachery" diminishes the underhanded tactics of Henry himself. In "light" of such self-contradictory passages, Henry's frequent ethnographic comments become highly suspect: accusations of "treachery" may be seen as discursive assertions of his imperial authority; and his ascriptions of "selfishness" to native peoples may be seen as the projections of his own desire for personal gain.

Nowhere does Henry's personal desire seem more suppressed in his Red River narrative than when it comes to sex. While making no mention of his own sexuality (either his desires or his practices), he spends many words depicting native promiscuity,

and always lurking in his narrative is the "presence" of inter-racial sex. He provides

frequent accounts of sexual involvement between the "Canadians" (ie. voyageurs) and

Ojibway women, for example, along with numerous accounts of him being propositioned

by native women or being offered native wives. In his narrative treatment of such

incidents, Henry tends to exhibit revulsion at the moral degradation of open sexuality,

especially when it appears to be accompanied by economic transactions. A literal reading

might pose Henry as a "civilized" European male, highly critical of those who, unlike

him, are unable to conquer their physical desires with the "light" of reason. However,

based on some conspicuous inconsistencies in his narrative (textually and contextually), it

seems more likely that Henry's representations of sex in his Red River district exhibit

signs of personal repression and/or projection due to an ambivalent attitude towards his

own assimilation into Ojibway culture. As Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin state, "[t]he

construction of native cultures as either primitive or degenerate in a binary discourse of

the colonizer/colonized led . . . to a widespread fear of 'going native' amongst the

colonizers" (*Key Concepts* 115). This fear "is particularly associated with the temptation

posed by inter-racial sex where sexual liaisons with 'native' peoples were supposed to

result in a contamination of the colonizers' pure stock and thus their degeneracy and

demise as a vigorous and civilized (as opposed to savage or degenerate) race" (*Key

Concepts* 115). The literary examples Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin provide of "going

native" belong to contexts different from Henry's; yet the undertones of such an operation

are easily discovered in his narrative. While Henry's fear of cultural contamination must

be read *into* his narrative, its "presence" may be felt in the conspicuous "gaps" left open

in his ambiguous treatment of transcultural, contact- zone sex.

In *Caesars of the Wilderness*, Newman makes some problematic references to

Henry's treatment of fur trade sex. Before quoting Henry's account of an apparent

example of organized prostitution among the plains natives (which occurs after his

posting in the Red River), Newman writes:

> [t]here were examples of women and girls as young as nine or ten being
> traded for horses or kegs of rum, but such transactions were a perversion
> of Indian custom. More common was the taking of 'country wives' in
> temporary marriages that customarily lasted the length of a Nor'Westerer's
> posting – although many such liaisons endured the stretch of their
> partners' lives. If the traders' diaries are to be believed, some of these
> matings were entered into by the men with considerable initial reluctance.
> (21)

Rather than suggesting that Henry's representations of native culture may be "a

perversion of Indian custom," it seems that Newman assumes that "Indian custom" was

perverted by their thirst for rum. Such a view is consistent with the traditional tendency

to privilege the allegorical image of the alcoholic native (over that of the self-serving,

imperial liquor supplier) along with unfounded statements concerning their culture –

statements which rest almost exclusively on problematic narratives like Henry's. For

instance, Newman's careless reference to young girls being "traded" for alcohol seems to

come from this passage of Henry's:

> The Indians brought me a horse which I purchased for liquor. About
> sunset they all arrived and camped with us. Old Buffalo, still half drunk,
> brought me his eldest daughter, about nine years of age, and insisted upon
> my taking her for a wife, in hopes I would give him a keg of liquor; but I
> declined the offer. I gave him and each of his brethren a dram, and sent
> them to their cabins. I was plagued by several others. Charlo brought me
> his daughter, about 12 years old, for a wife, but I would have nothing to do
> with any of them, and a dram apiece was all they could get. (*New Light*
> 58)[53]

In this scene, Henry has only recently assembled his Red River "brigade," and the natives

appear to be celebrating. Trade is already occurring, and friendships and alliances are

likely forming. From current thought on native and "contact zone" marriages, they were

likely a common method of establishing personal and family loyalties. Henry, who

appears to be heading the Red River expedition of 1800, was probably an excellent

candidate for such a bond.[54] Newman himself refers to the tradition of taking "country

wives," which may be all that is occurring in the above account. Though alcohol seems

to be playing a part in the festivities, and even in "trade" negotiations, there is no reason

to believe (at least according to the evidence provided by Henry) that young girls were

being "prostituted" for liquor, as he infers.[55] That the scene constitutes evidence for

native depravity, or even the "perversion" of native customs, must itself be read into the

narrative. Such a derogatory reading, however, is what Henry seems to encourage.

Henry often seems ignorant of the cultural significance of his "ethnographic"

observations, and nowhere is this more evident than in his "views" of native sexuality.

His references to the Ojibway "Grand Medicine" every spring (usually late May), for

example, are generally minimal, save for his indirect depiction of their mysterious sexual

rites in 1801. Typical of such accounts is the May 23, 1802 entry that simply reads:

"Indians making their grand medicine. Langlois returned with a few packs of beavers and

bears" (*New Light* 212). On May 18th, 1801, however, Henry is clearly interested in the

exotic sexual aspects of the festivities:

> we returned to Reed river and found the Indians busy making the grand
> medicine – a ceremony performed every spring, when they meet and there
> is some novice to be admitted into the mysteries of this solemn affair. On
> this occasion two young men were received, besides a woman and
> Langlois' girl. Many curious circumstances are reported concerning the
> admittance of women into this mystery of mysteries. The most ancient and
> famous for the art among the men, it is said, take every privilege with a

novice and are granted every favor they wish to enjoy (*New Light* 182).

But while Henry is often fascinated with the apparently open sexuality of the Ojibway, his

own sexual involvement with native women is heavily marginalized in his narrative,

overshadowed by his accounts of native promiscuity and his criticism of his men for

"taking" native women.[56] Since he seems to have "taken" a native wife himself, his

narratively suppressed sexuality raises many questions of authenticity concerning his

"views" of Ojibway sex. For instance, was such descriptive selectivity simply a

continuation of his imperial privileging of "civilized" (ie. English) over "savage" (ie.

Ojibway), and/or an attempt to repress his own personal desires?

Newman appears to question whether "the traders' diaries are to be believed"

(*Caesars* 21), yet he not only believes Henry's accounts, but also seems to readily fall

into the narrative traps of Henry's journal – that is, to read into it what the narrative

merely suggests. Of Henry's apparent marriage, Newman writes: "[o]n New Year's Day,

1801, Henry awoke with a chief's dark-eyed daughter in his bed. . . . [and a]fter a month

of sparring, he accepted the young woman as his companion" (*Caesars* 22). Here

Newman seems to be inferring some romantic notions of playful sexual tensions between

Indian princesses and noble, bourgeois traders. However, Henry does not state whether

he awoke to this woman, that he sparred for a month with her, or even what colour her

eyes were. There are only three, stark references to this "dark-eyed daughter" of an

Indian chief, and some vaguely related, obscure and symbolic allusions to transcultural

marriage and sexuality. On December 31st, 1800, Henry writes: "[t]he Indians are very

officious in wishing to provide me with a wife, but my inclination does not agree with

theirs in the least" (*New Light* 162). The next night, after much drinking and celebrating,

he states that "Liard's [ie. Buffalo's] daughter took possession of my room, and the devil could not have got her out" (*New Light* 163). Five days later, Henry enters this highly symbolic passage concerning copulation between "domestic" and "wild" animals: "[t]he female wolves prefer our dogs to their own species, and daily come near the fort to entice the dogs. They often succeed, and if the dogs ever return, they are in a miserable condition, lean and covered with sores" (*New Light* 166). Then, on January 30th, Henry states: "I got rid of my bed-fellow, who returned to her father with a good grace" (*New Light* 169). Two days later, amid his usual accounts of trade activity, meteorological observations, and the animals he kills, he adds this cryptic sentence: "[t]he lady returned" (*New Light* 169). Save for the later account of her parents being slain by a Sioux raiding party (August of 1805, *New Light* 260-4), February 1st, 1801 seems to mark the last appearance of Henry's mysterious "wife" in his Red River narrative.[57] What can be deemed from Henry's marital saga is very little. It is hard to say whether "Mrs. Henry" (as Coues refers to her on page 169 of *New Light*) was even accepted as his wife. In answer to Newman's rhetorical quandary concerning fur trader believability, on a fundamental level, little of such accounts is to be believed, because little is provided *for* belief.

Of Henry's apparent Red River wife, there are only a few things that may be known with any sort of assurance. First, if she was the Old Buffalo's eldest daughter (see above quotation from *New Light* 58), she was either nine or ten years old when she first "took possession" of Henry's room. Secondly, she is likely the woman that he refers to in his will of 1813, as "daughter of an Indian commonly called the Buffaloe of the Chipway [ie. Ojibway] Indians, and who has been in the habit of living with me since the year

1802" (qtd. in Gough xxiv). Thirdly, it seems that she is his second wife (of the first,

Gough says, "[w]e know nothing" [xxiii]). And finally, it seems that Henry's Ojibway

"wife" bore him at least four children (as they are provided for in his will [Gough xxiv]).

The remaining "knowledge" of Henry's (second) marriage is either speculation or

contextual inference. Both Coues and Gough, however, seem to believe Henry truly

"married" the woman. Though Coues' references to her are vague, and possibly

facetious, Gough's assumption rests on contemporary thought concerning the customs of

"contact zone" marriages of the fur trade, particularly that of Sylvia Van Kirk.

Van Kirk says many useful things concerning the inter-cultural gender relations of

Henry's historical context. Of most value to this thesis (especially in the present "light")

is her work on fur trade marriages between white men and native women, which she calls

marriage by the customs of the land, or *à la façon du pays* (*Tender Ties* 39-40).

According to Van Kirk, the tradition was a hybrid custom derived from an elaborate,

historical process of contact-zone transculturation (ie. the assimilation of multiple

cultures into a heterogenous social system) (see section 2.4.). From Van Kirk's ideas, it

seems that Henry was (being) assimilated into an historical "contact" culture with ideas of

matrimony and kinship alien to his "civilized" upbringing. If such a process occurred,

however, the ideological fabric of Henry's narrative was too strong to fully admit its

presence. A "deconstructive" reading of imperial texts may be required to allow "space"

for such a contextual theory. In Henry's narrative, contradictory, textual anxieties

concerning cultural contamination reveal "gaps" large enough for Van Kirk's ideas.

Henry's sexual activity and the "presence" of his wife are so marginal, and his projected

sexual commentary so prevalent, that inferences concerning his involvement in contact-

zone copulation may gain a suggestive power in his Red River "empire."

This chapter has sought to problematize Henry's descriptive binaries – to expose their false hierarchies and their thematic implications. The "deconstruction" of Henry began by revealing the artificial nature of his stylistic veil of objectivity and has continued that critique throughout – from an examination of his ambivalent views of natural resources and political territory, to a look at his "central" binary of imperialist over native (theoretically equivalent to colonizer/colonized or "civilized"/"savage"). Under the critical scrutiny of the theoretical methodology developed in Chapter 2, Henry's ethnographic evidence – so "valued" by certain scholars introduced in Chapter 3 – becomes questionable at the very least; at most, Henry's "cultural" description, along with his "natural" observations, may be seen as fictional aspects of an imperial allegory, in which the mythological, bourgeois figure of European imperial expansion is the hero – the "centre" of its systematization of lands and peoples. Under the scrutiny of this thesis, the bountiful yet inhospitable Red River "district," with its wild animals and "savage" peoples – some of which are "good," and others "bad," all of which are "lazy," "treacherous," "depraved," and "lecherous" – all of this narrated world of Henry's appears suspect, subtly crafted, and dangerous to read. The purpose of this chapter has not been to simply reverse Henry's narrative binaries; it has also been to demonstrate their meaninglessness. Section 4.2.5., for instance, has intended to show that Henry is no less "savage" than any of his "subjects," no matter what his "voice" continually implies. Unfortunately, since Henry's publication, readers and writers alike have fallen all too easily into his narrative "traps." Some have become so entangled within Henry's

imperialism that only the most industrious "gnawing" (ie. at their linguistic "limbs")

could free them. This thesis has done some "gnawing," but the only "subjects" it wishes

to free are the future readers of narratives like Henry's; it wishes to free them from the

arbitrary allegories of righteous dominance and justified exploitation of imperial travel

writing. Allegory, after all, is merely a form of fiction.

.

5. Concluding the Empire

August 1805, after Henry has returned to Pembina from a trade mission and learned that the Sioux have killed or captured fourteen Ojibway:

> *On my return all was grief and lamentation; and at sight of me it broke out afresh*
> *with such sobs and cries that I almost wished I had not been so expeditious on my*
> *voyage. The Saulteurs were assembled, preparing for war and only waiting for*
> *the Assiniboines and Crees to join them; a number of Saulteurs are also awaiting*
> *them above this place; they will form a party of about 300 men, mostly mounted.*
> *I gave them a nine-gallon keg of gunpowder and 100 pounds of balls, to*
> *encourage them to revenge the death of my beau-père and his family. At this they*
> *said among themselves that I had 'almost as much sense as an Indian'; and if I*
> *had added a few kegs of rum I should have been considered fully as wise as*
> *themselves. This manner of comparing a white man to an Indian is the highest*
> *compliment they can pay. Let no white man be so vain as to believe that an*
> *Indian really esteems him or supposes him to be his equal. No – they despise us*
> *in their hearts, and all their outward professions of respect and friendship*
> *proceed merely from the necessity under which they labor of having intercourse*
> *with us to procure their necessaries. (New Light 264)*

The most common reading error is likely that of interpreting according to

presupposed, ideological biases. The extended danger of such a tendency is that such

readings may be represented for others as objective fact. In the case of "Henry," and

those scholars who have continued his discursive legacy, this project is intended to

suggest that their interpretive strategies tend to be mediated by irrelevant notions and

fallacious reasoning, and to *demonstrate* that their written representations of such

"readings" are less than factual. Rather than measure the authenticity of such texts based

on their proximity to inaccessible realities, it might be more helpful to think of

"authenticity" in terms of self-awareness. In such a "light," what is most remarkable

about the "boundless" trajectory of the imperial discourse traced throughout this thesis is

that at each link of its narrative chain each author seems to have been exposed to, or at

least had ready access to, counter-discursive "presences"; yet such alien forces are always

suppressed or rather transformed and appropriated into the familiar, ambivalences of imperial rhetoric "always already" awaiting the arrival of its "others."

Amazingly, textual "moments" of near self-awareness in imperial writing tend to be followed by the strongest enunciations of "us" and "them" and by the most forceful suppressions of ideological counter-currents. In this way, the "presence" of imperial non-presence (its potential negation in the face of truly alien cultural systems) is continually deferred and/or suppressed in imperial contact-zone narratives. Just when one might expect some "new light" to be cast on the ancient mythology of white male supremacy, the "seeing-man" readjusts his interpretive blinders. Though I could only speculate as to the self-awareness of any imperialist *writer*, in the "new light" of my thesis, I have intended to demonstrate not only the rhetorical failures of imperial *discourse*, but its indomitable lack of critical "authenticity" regarding its appropriative, inter-cultural perceptions and/or experiences. Such a "lack," it seems, allows for/enables its perpetuation. Without self-doubt, one's words or actions can only seem natural.

All discussion of the failure or insidiousness of imperial representation aside for the "moment," the dependence of imperial discourse on travel writing should finally be noted (explicitly at least). As the "meanings" of imperial travel literature seem to have depended on its discursive contexts and/or "origins," such a signifying system doubtlessly relied on its literary/narrative extensions for the perpetuation of its global trajectory. Allegorically (as well as materially), men such as Henry are/were engaged in the "fortification" or reconstruction of English "civilization" – rapidly reproducing microcosmic cores of "civility" at the very peripheries of its "origin"/"centre." This repetition served not only to preserve the ideological identities of imperial agents, while

generating "new" identities for native peoples and their lands, but also served to

perpetuate/preserve the discursive expansiveness of the "empire" itself.

That this thesis has *differentiated* somewhat between imperial discourse and

imperial texts is fundamentally artificial; the "two" should be more accurately *assimilated*

into the "whole" of imperialism. If any symbiotic relationship existed in contact zones, it

was likely between travel writings and their ideological discourse(s), between which there

is little or no "tension" or "gap." On a representational level, imperial text, along with the

discourse it contains, *was/is* the "empire." Fundamentally, any distinction between the

two represents a further ambivalence of the totalizing discourse of the West; to continue

to differentiate between imperial narratives (or texts) and imperial discourse (or

ideological context) in the present "light" may leave little way "out," even for the

resistant reader. Such "light" would cast ambivalent shadows indeed. Under such "light"

the beleaguered margins could only exist in darkness – could only shield their "faces"

from its blinding intensity.

To clarify things a little: the title of this thesis is (of course) facetious; one can no

more locate ambivalence than shed any true "light" on the imperial allegory, which is (of

course) fictional. Ambivalence, that which defies absolute presence, in the present

context, can only be discovered as textual operation; like Derrida's *différance*,

ambivalence provides "light" or presence (ie. provides meaning) only as it generates

"darkness" or margins (ie. negates meaning). The purpose of this thesis has been to

demonstrate how traditional representations of contact-zone experience/narration have

been/still remain ambiguous and ambivalent, ambiguous *in* their ambivalence. The

means of such an agenda (no less narrative or ideologically driven than any written project) has been to "locate" such problematic meaning/non-meaning within the critical ambit of discursive theory and to "identify" such "discourse" as inherently fictional and/or allegorical.

Though I have tended to marginalize (while tacitly acknowledging) the potential validity of Henry's textual "observations" and the interpretations and/or representations of such "historical" moments provided by certain scholars and editors, I have not wished to suppress the potential value of reading Henry's text altogether. The "new light" of this thesis has been "aimed" at the utility of new*er* reading methods for historical, imperial texts. Such reading methods have already been applied to temporally and spatially varied texts (they are not "new" as such); yet they seem to "hold up" well when applied to the newer critical agenda of "breaking down" the artificial significations and self-perpetuating, oppressive rhetoric of popular/traditional imperial discourse on Canada's historic fur trade.

✿

Notes:

1. Mary Louis Pratt notes the irony of using the concepts of genre and trope, which have traditionally been used to unify meaning (eg. in defining and codifying), in a study that aims to destabilize as much as unify the rhetoric of an historical discourse – "to suggest its heterogeneity and its interactions with other kinds of expression" (*Imperial Eyes* 11)

2. For example, the "origins" of Canada's expansion into its northwest interior are remarkably similar to that of countries like South Africa, where state sanctioned mercantilism saw the establishment of sedentary habitation and transportation and communication infrastructure by private companies well before organized colonial settlement.

3. Presumably, Slemon is equating the native Canadian experience here with "Third World" aesthetics.

4. While this study is not directly concerned with the material impact of Eurocentric representation, it does recognize the correlation between such discourse and the cultural "realities" it affects. In his introduction to *Orientalism*, Edward Said admits that, "[t]here were – and are – cultures and nations whose location is in the East, and their lives, histories, and customs have a brute reality obviously greater than anything that could be said about them in the West. About that fact this study of Orientalism has very little to contribute, except to acknowledge it tacitly" (5). This thesis also must humbly acknowledge its inability to shed any "new light" on the "brute reality" of the cultures and nations of its study.

5. JanMohamed recognizes, of course, that historical, imperial agents wrote to preserve their identity, and that this operation depended on the defining and degrading of native 'others.' In *Manichean Aesthetics*, for instance, he notes that the colonizer/colonized hierarchy "is accompanied by an equally profound dependency, particularly on the part of the colonialist. . . . for his sense of moral superiority and, therefore, ultimately for his very identity"(4). While this is a valuable reflection, without the post-modern theory of a critic such as Bhabha, such a revelation falls easily into the traditional Hegelian dialectic.

6. Though these narratives have continued to mediate the ideologies of contact-zone descendants (both native and "non-native"), the present focus is on their historic points of "origin."

7. For instance, concerning Daniel Harmon's narrative, Giltrow writes: "His adoption of stricter views in religious matters not only distinguished him positively from his alien companions and helped him to resist local influences but also bound him more closely to his distant American home" ("Westering Narratives" 36).

8. To be fair to JanMohamed, whose work is very useful on the whole, this difference may simply be a matter of differing historical contexts (of place as well as time).

9. Pratt's major evidence of such a discursive system rests on the early, eighteenth-century publication of Carl Linné's *Systema Naturae*, and contemporary records of the launching of joint, European scientific expeditions around the world (*Imperial Eyes* 15), which "interrupted existing networks of historical and material relations among people, plants, and animals wherever it applied itself" (*Imperial Eyes* 32).

10. As all ethnographic texts are inescapably allegorical, for instance (by Clifford's reasoning), their rhetorical nature (ie. artificial/fictional) may always be exposed.

11. In particular, Derrida is referring to Ferdinand de Saussure's structuralist view of absolute meaning derived from absolute differences within systems of signification.

12. The information concerning Henry's family is taken from Barry M. Gough's introduction to his Champlain Society edition (of Henry's journal), pages xix-xxvi, which he claims "will provide . . . the context for a greater appreciation of Henry's Journal" (xviii-xix).

13. George Coventry, editor's preface, *Mr. Henry's Journal across the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific: 1799 to 1816*, National Archives of Canada, Ottawa, 1.
The page numbering for Coventry's preface differ from the manuscript proper. Thus, to avoid confusion, I have provided endnotes for such references.

14. Coues attributes the Columbia discovery to David Thompson, "the first white man who ever voyaged on the upper reaches and main upper tributaries of that mighty river, the pathfinder of more than one way across the Continental Divide" (*New Light* xxii).

15. Coues makes heavy use of Thompson's journal to annotate Henry's, and the extended title of his edition actually gives Thompson second billing (*New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest: The Manuscript Journals of Alexander Henry Fur Trader of the Northwest Company and of David Thompson Official Geographer and Explorer of the same Company . . .*). Indeed, Henry and Thompson seem to have not only travelled the same trade routes, interacting with some of the same people, but they also appear to have travelled for a time together.

16. While Henry is introduced by Newman in this section concerning the "heroes" of Canadian history, it should be noted that most of Newman's references to Henry's journal (Coues' edition) are in the context of its assumed ethnographic value. At a few points in his massive, two volume work, Newman does provide some brief references to certain native scholars, but his ethnic "knowledge" of Canadian natives seems to come largely from writers of European descent.

17. Where Innis does refer to the "wholesale destruction of the [Indian] peoples" (388), it is in the context of their apparently "insatiable demands" (391) for apparently superior European trade goods. He states, for instance, that the "tribes demanded European goods in increasingly large amounts. The fur trade was the means by which this demand of the peoples of a more limited cultural development was met" (388-9). Adding to these jumbled assumptions (Innis' reference to "Indians" are usually vague, or condensed and disjointed), he provides such cryptic statements as: "[t]he disappearance of the beaver and of the Indians necessitated the extension of European organization to the interior" (388). Innis generally does an excellent job of outlining the imperial dominance/dependency dynamic between *imperialists*, but his scattered references to material and ideological "contact" dynamics in of the fur trade are invariably ambiguous and ambivalent.

18. Though Johnson focusses mainly on material evidence, throughout his book he seems continually aware of the discursive relationship between such "knowledge" and the Western tradition of written history. He expresses the utility of such a theoretical association in this insightful passage: "As many forms of history have taken on a 'linguistic turn,' stressing the many meanings of the past and the document as a piece of text rather than as raw evidence, so at the same time the practice of historical writing has opened itself to forms of evidence other than the document and other ways of telling stories about the past than traditional narrative texts. So the linguistic turn has opened up new and exciting opportunities for archaeologists to contribute to current historical debates, a widening of scope for the study of the material world" (14).

19. According to Innis, not only were northwest fur traders valuable for bringing news (eg. of the American declaration of war in 1812 [Innis 247]) and supporting war efforts (eg. Henry the Elder supplied the British army in the conquest of New France [Innis 167]), these capitalistic merchants often *were* the politicians involved in colonial negotiations and legislation. Innis writes: "[t]hese merchants were active in the negotiations prior to the Constitutional Act of 1791 and the Jay Treaty of 1794. As prominent members of the government formed under the Quebec Act and the Constitutional Act, they did much to direct the general trend of legislation. The later growth of the Northwest Company assured a permanent attachment to Great Britain because of its dependence on English manufacturers" (391).

20. Trading posts had existed in the Red River during the French régime, and English traders – Henry included – had already been active in and around the area for some time.

21. American military and economic interests were also engaged in securing several areas of fur trade activity according to existing treaties. The NWC, for instance, was obliged to pay tariffs on their activities in Grand Portage (present day Minnesota), until they moved their inland headquarters to Kamanistiquia (presently Thunder Bay, Ontario), north of the Pigeon River. "

22. This is the "logos" that Derrida refers to – the "centre" of "logocentric," Western writing, separate from the system, yet controlling it from within. From this impossible identity springs Derrida's concept of "différance." It is a linguistic and discursive paradox: to locate such a "centre" would be as easy as finding the London of Henry's day in his Red River trade district. It cannot be wholly present, yet its symbolic *effects of presence* are undeniably powerful.

23. According to Gough, four other partial copies of the journal exist, all either incomplete or inaccurate: one, very similar to Coventry's in the library at U of T; two inferior fragments at McGill and the B.C. Provincial Archives; and an outline resembling Coventry's and an incomplete index, both in the Archives of Ontario.

24. This quotation from Coues has been pasted on the inside cover of the first volume (of two) of Coventry's 1638 page manuscript.

25. Though Coues sets the date at 1824, the watermark bearing an 1859 patent by A. Cowan & Sons may not have been visible in the "clerical copy" (xi) he was working from.

26. George Coventry, editor's preface, *Mr. Henry's Journal across the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific: 1799 to 1816*, National Archives of Canada, Ottawa, 1.
Gough claims that "longtime clerk and later partner, Robert Henry, in conjunction with his wife, acted as Alexander Henry the Younger's literary executor and preserved the Journal" (xxii), yet this does not shed any more "light" on the "original."

27. For example, the incessant recording of meteorological tables (for much of Henry's stay in the interior, he seems to have recorded such things as wind, precipitation, and temperature three times a day) – not included in Coues' version – may suggest the "presence" of a narrative subject writing from obsessive compulsions, rather than "purer" motives such as industry, or utility.

28. Many of the historical scholars referred to in this thesis, for instance (eg. Van Kirk, Innis, Newman, and Kinsey Howard), only use Coues' edition.

29. George Coventry, editor's preface, *Mr. Henry's Journal across the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific: 1799 to 1816*, National Archives of Canada, Ottawa, 68.

30. George Coventry, editor's preface, *Mr. Henry's Journal across the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific: 1799 to 1816*, National Archives of Canada, Ottawa, 74.

31. George Coventry, editor's preface, *Mr. Henry's Journal across the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific: 1799 to 1816*, National Archives of Canada, Ottawa, 74.
Similar statements are made by Coues and Gough. Both men are more critical of Henry, but their own words reveal certain ambivalences symptomatic of imperialism. For instance, Coues writes that for Henry, the natives were "simply the necessary nuisances of

his business, against whom his antipathies were continually excited and not seldom betrayed in his narrative" (xviii), then goes on to state that he is "persuaded that Henry's disillusionment, his practical pessimism, his entire lack of imagination, and his insistence upon bare fact through sheer infertility of invention, have conspired to a singularly veracious contribution to ethnology in all that he has to say of his Indians. They are the genuine aboriginal articles . . ." (xix).

32. Giltrow claims, for instance, that their "art" sprang from their estrangement within alien cultures, "from the fact of their mobility, from their conviction that they did not come west to stay, and from their need to explain and organize their experience of estrangement" ("Westering Narratives" 29)

33. *On Christian Doctrine*, Book Two, VI, page 112 of Hazard Adams' *Critical Theory Since Plato.*

34. George Coventry, editor's preface, *Mr. Henry's Journal across the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific: 1799 to 1816*, National Archives of Canada, Ottawa, 3.

35. George Coventry, editor's preface, *Mr. Henry's Journal across the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific: 1799 to 1816*, National Archives of Canada, Ottawa, 3.

36. To this description, Dr. Coues adds an extensive footnote using various terminology for the trees Henry appears to be referring to, including both popular and Latin (ie. of European discourse) genus names. Such attempts at enhancing the scientific "value" of Henry's natural descriptions (which is a constant "theme" of Coues edition), however, tends to veil their economic significance.

37. Kinsey Howard quotes this passage (*Strange Empire* 223) in a chapter titled "The Dusk of Evening," in which he states that "smallpox, whiskey, prostitution, and the slaughter of the buffalo did more to win an empire for the whites than bullets could. It may be that bullets could never have done it alone" (218).

38. A human reaction of "horror," or a human state of "happiness," in this sense, would be "seen" as stemming more from an offence to, or congruity with certain human sensibilities, than some inherent "natural" order.

39. Most interestingly, Gough notes (correctly) that this episode "has become famous in 'white water' archaeology" (xxxii), yet he fails to note the death of this anonymous voyageur – instead listing the trade goods Henry lost, and noting that "[l]ocal Indians appeared, and he put them to work to help find the drowned cargo. . . . [and that t]hey pestered Henry until he gave them liquor" (xxxii).

40. Of the apparently brave yet foolish voyageur, for instance, Newman (in a chapter called "The Magnificent River Rats") writes: "[t]*heir exuberant and highly un-Canadian sense of daring propelled them to risk everything for a cause as ephemeral as their own*

brotherhood. . . . No smear of their sweat or echo of their ribaldry reaches out to us, yet in their time they were cockleshell heroes on seas of sweet water" (*Caesars* 25). Such is the familiar tone of the popular, historical discourse on our not-so-distant Canadian past.

41. Of this slaughter, Henry writes: "the trees were every moment covered with them, and the continual firing of our people did not appear to diminish their numbers" (*New Light* 46).

42. Henry often lumps the "Indians" and the "Canadians" (ie. the Ojibway and the French) together in careless and "uncivilized" behaviour – from "laziness" and "debauchery" to "treachery" and "selfishness." For example, Henry provides this description of their "unproper" treatment of horses: "The poor brutes are in a shocking condition; some of them, as soon as they are unsaddled, will bite and tear the raw flesh until the blood flows, and then kick and roll for some time, whilst their whole bodies quiver and they appear to be in agony. Indians and Canadians ride horses in this condition with the greatest composure, and no care is taken of them" (*New Light* 47). This account seems loaded with embellishments and unsubstantiated assumptions.

43. Though there were traders of other companies in and around Henry's trade district, as Gough notes, "[m]ost of Henry's Journal references are to his fellow Nor'Westers, and the others receive much less attention" (xxviii). The attention his rival traders do receive is generally derogatory, characterized by observations of incompetence or depravity.

44. This quotation comes after an episode of which Henry writes: "Tabashaw came to my tent, with some others; they were all intoxicated; he said his errand was liquor, and liquor he must have, otherwise 'the children would cry.' I comprehended his meaning, and desired my men to examine their guns and be on their guard . . . . I was fully determined not to give them even a dram, as they had made use of very unbecoming expressions, and it appeared to me their plan was to frighten us" (*New Light* 59). Of course, it is not clear at all what Tabashaw meant by his words, or even that they were interpreted properly; and it is not clear what their "unbecoming expressions" were intended to signify. Tabashaw remains in Henry's tent when the rest have left (after assuring Henry they "did not come to rob or murder [him]" [*New Light* 59]), and actually seems to try to explain his meaning, but Henry dismisses him roughly (ie. with his words).

45. Coventry's wording is almost identical.

46. Of course, cartographic knowledge itself is based heavily on a certain "set" of naturalized, ideological concepts conveyed by symbolic "graphing" more than pure reflection of "real" space.

47. At one point, for example, Henry faces strong worker solidarity when none of "his" men are willing to give him information concerning a stolen keg (*New Light* 73).

48. John Tanner, an American who lived among the Ojibway in and around Henry's "district" for approximately thirty years, provides this account of Tabashaw's "heroic" demise: "When the Sioux began to move, and a number of them came near the place where they had concealed themselves, Ta-bush-shish [from a comparison of Henry and Tanner's texts, one can be all but certain that this is Henry's Tabashaw] and Be-na [an ally and friend] rose up together, and fired upon them, and the latter, as he had been instructed to, instantly fled. When at a considerable distance, and finding he was not pursued, he stopped to listen, and for [sic] great part of the night heard now and then a gun, and sometimes the shrill and solitary sah-sah-kwi of Ta-bush-shish, shifting from place to place. At last many guns discharged at the same moment; then the shouts and whoops of the Sioux at the fall of their enemy" (*The Falcon* 161).

49. Tanner corroborates the "fact" that native abuses of alcohol did often lead to disaster, yet such instances are far from the norm of *his* people's behaviour, and they invariably happen near or around white traders at certain times of the season. For instance, at one point in his narrative, Tanner states that, "[t]he Indians were now about assembling at Pembinah [very likely around Henry himself] to dispose of their peltries, and have their usual drunken frolic" (*The Falcon* 153). Tanner's "Indians" seem to have spent the rest of the year doing things of a much more sober nature. Such a perspective paints Henry more as the proprietor of a seasonal liquor camp (at least for the many natives that did not reside with him year-round), than an objective ethnographer.

50. Often, when Henry seems about to relate an interesting account of "native culture," he simply refuses, offering only arrogant suppositions of cultural superiority. For instance, at "Devil's Mountain," (on the Assiniboine River) he writes: "Many extraordinary stories are related of this mountain, both by Indians and Canadians – of the strange noises heard in its bowels, and the nightly apparitions seen at one particular place; but as I cannot vouch for any of them, I shall relate none" (*New Light* 297). Coues' footnote to the passage is not very helpful either: "the name [of the mountain] originated in some Indian superstition concerning the shiftiness of the sands under the supervision of some manitou, who was god or devil, as the case might be" (*New Light* 297). Unbelievably, such off-handed ethnographic gestures seem to be presented, and often read, as examples of historical, cultural authority.

51. Tanner provides this remarkably complementary account of an expulsion of a native man from a trader's camp: "we came to a small creek of salt water [possibly Henry's Park River which was apparently salty], and on the summit of a little hill by the side of it, we saw a man sitting. . . . [W]e found him stiffened by the cold, and when we took our hands off him, he tumbled to the ground as if he had been frozen entirely stiff. . . . We tried all the means in our power to resuscitate him, but all in vain. . . . It appeared that he had been sent away from the trading house at the head of the river, as too indolent to be suffered to remain." (*The Falcon* 80)

52. Kinsey Howard claims that "the whites [of Henry's fur trade context] deliberately schooled the Indian to periodic, murderous debauch" (224). While such claims are fundamentally speculative, there is some documented "evidence" to suggest that the company knew that alcohol abuse was bad for unified organization. For example, as Innis notes, in 1801 (at the very meeting Henry was made partner) the NWC "agreed that every effort should be made to . . . stamp out drunkenness among the partners" (249).

53. In a chapter titled "Howling with the Wolves," Newman actually quotes a portion of this passage of Henry's in a strangely fragmented state (*Caesars* 115), taking parts of several other passages in Henry's journal (all examples of Henry's view of native alcoholism) and lumping them together (out of order), as if from one extended expostulation on native "savagery."

54. According to Henry, chiefs not only offered their daughters to him, native women actually seemed prone to making their own advances at him – entering his tent, for instance, "without solicitation" (*New Light* 71). According to Van Kirk, "Alexander Henry the Younger may have exaggerated his difficulties in fending off young Indian women, but his personal experiences underline the fact that the women saw nothing unusual in taking the initiative" (79). Van Kirk goes on to state that "[w]hile the prejudices of the traders resulted in their exaggerating the degradation of Indian women, there can be no doubt that, on a material level, life in a fur-trade post offered an Indian woman an easier existence" (80)

55. Van Kirk states that, "in its early stages, marriage *à la façon du pays* was mainly derived from Indian practices. A first and essential step for the trader who wished to take an Indian wife was to obtain the consent of her parents. He would then be required to pay a bride price which was determined by the girl's relations, for the Indians were adamant that the traders should follow their custom. According to the younger Henry, the common medium of exchange was a horse for a wife, but bride price could vary considerably among the tribes" (*Tender Ties* 36).

56. Henry often displays his negative views of interracial sex in his observations of voyageur "intercourse" with native women. At one point, for example, Henry states that one particular voyageur is "foolish . . . to sign an agreement of perpetual bondage on condition of being permitted to have a woman" (*New Light* 206). As usual, however, such "observation" is tainted by the potential of Henry's own involvement in the affair. According to Van Kirk, "[t]he bourgeois were well aware that many of the voyageurs were deeply concerned about their Indian mates. An engagé had to secure the permission of his bourgeois before taking a wife, and the more unscrupulous officers were prone to taking advantage of this to keep the men in debt" (*Tender Ties* 47).

57. There is another potential, though highly obscure reference to her as "Her ladyship" (*New Light* 274), which, as Van Kirk suggests, may have been due to her "demanding nature" (*Tender Ties* 79).

WORKS CITED

Abrams, M. H. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1993

Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies*.

London: Routledge, 1998.

Augustine, Saint. *On Christian Doctrine*. *Critical Theory Since Plato*. Ed. Hazard Adams.

Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992. 107-113.

Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994.

—. Homi K. "Signs Taken For Wonders: Questions of Ambivalence and Authority under a Tree

Outside Delhi, May 1817." *"Race," Writing, and Difference*. Ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

Chicago: The U of Chicago P, 1985. 163-184.

Clifford, James. "On Ethnographic Allegory." *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of*

Ethnography. Ed. James Clifford. Berkeley: U of California P, 1986. 98-121.

—. *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. Berkeley: U of California P,

1986.

Defoe, Daniel. *Robinson Crusoe*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1994.

Derrida, Jacques. *Of Grammatology*. Trans. Gayatri Spivak. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins U P,

1976.

—. "Structure Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences." *Critical Theory Since*

Plato. Ed. Hazard Adams. Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992. 1117-1126.

Foucault, Michel. *Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*. Trans. A. M.

Sheridan Smith. New York: Pantheon Books, 1972.

—. *Power/Knowledge*. Ed. Colin Gordon. New York: Pantheon Books, 1980.

Giltrow, Janet. "Westering Narratives of Jonathan Carver, Alexander Henry, and Daniel

　　Harmon." *Essays on Canadian Writing* 22 (Summer 1981): 27-40.

Henry, Alexander. *Travels & Adventures in Canada and the Indian Territories Between the*

　　Years 1760 and 1776. ed. James Bain. Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1901.

Henry, Alexander the Younger. *The Journal of Alexander Henry the Younger, 1799-1814*. Ed.

　　Barry M. Gough. Toronto: Champlain Society, 1988.

—. *Mr. Henry's Journal from Lake Superior to the Pacific Ocean across the Rocky Mountains*

　　and his discorvery of the source of the Columbia River, 1799 to 1816. Coventry ms. M

　　G 19 A13. National Archives, Ottawa.

—. *New Light on the Early History of the Greater Northwest: The Manuscript Journals of*

　　Alexander Henry Fur Trader of the Northwest Company and of David Thompson Official

　　Geographer and Explorer of the Same Company 1799-1814. Ed. Elliott Coues.

　　Minneapolis: Ross & Haines, 1965 [reprint of 1897].

Howard, Joseph Kinsey. *Strange Empire: The Story of Louis Riel*. Toronto: Swan P Co., 1952.

Hutcheon, Linda. "Circling the Downspout of Empire." *Past the Last Post: Theorizing Post-*

　　Colonialism and Post-Modernism. Ed. Ian Adam and Helen Tiffin. Calgary: U of Calgary

　　P, 1990. 167-89.

Innis, Harold A. *The Fur Trade in Canada*. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1956.

JanMohamed, Abdul R. "The Economy of Manichean Allegory: The Function of Racial

　　Difference in Colonialist Literature." *"Race," Writing, and Difference*. Ed. Henry Louis

　　Gates, Jr. Chicago: The U of Chicago P, 1985. 78-104.

—. *Manichean Aesthetics: The Politics of Literature in Colonial Africa.* Amherst: U of

Massachusetts P, 1983.

Johnson, Matthew. *An Archaeology of Capitalism.* London: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1996.

Newman, Peter C. *Company of Adventurers Volume I.* Markham: Penguin Books, 1985.

—. *Caesars of the Wilderness: Company of Adventurers Volume II.* Markham: Penguin Books,

1987.

Pratt, Mary Louise. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation.* London: Routledge,

1992.

Said, Edward W. *Orientalism.* New York: Pantheon Books, 1978.

Scott, Duncan Campbell. "At Gull Lake: August, 1810." *The Evolution of Canadian Literature

in English 1867-1914.* Ed. Mary Jane Edwards, Paul Denham, and George Parker.

Toronto: Holt Rinehart and Winston of Canada, Ltd., 1973. 255-7.

Slemon, Stephen. "Post-Colonial Allegory and the Transformation of History." *The Journal of

Commonwealth Literature* 23:1 (1988): 157-66.

—. "Unsettling the Empire: Resistance Theory for the Second World." *World Literature Written

in English* 30:2 (1990): 30-41.

Spivak, Gayatri. *The Post-Colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues.* New York:

Routledge, 1990.

Tanner, John. *The Falcon: A Narrative of the Captivity and Adventures of John Tanner.*

Ed. Edward Hoagland. New York: Penguin Books, 1994.

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

1870.* Winnipeg: Watson & Dwyer Publishing, 1980.

—. "'This Rascally & Ungrateful Country': George Nelson's Response to Rupert's Land,"

Rupert's Land: A Cultural Tapestry. Ed. Richard C. Davis. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier UP,

1988. 113-26.

Wa Thiong'o, Ngũgĩ. Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature.

London: James Curry, 1986.