

Writing Commerce and Cultural Progress in Samuel Hearne's "A Journey . . . to the Northern Ocean"

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. . . though it is not to be supposed that the compiler of a general work can be intimately acquainted with every subject of which it may be necessary to treat, yet a very moderate share of understanding is surely sufficient to guard him against giving credit to . . . marvellous tales, however smoothly they may be told, or however boldly they may be asserted, by the romancing traveller.

SAMUEL HEARNE, *A Journey . . . to the Northern Ocean*

I Reading the Explorer Reading Culture

THE FULL TITLE of the first edition of Samuel Hearne's published journal accords with the generic conventions of the day in being long-windedly informative: *A Journey From Prince of Wales's Fort in Hudson's Bay, to the Northern Ocean. Undertaken By Order of the Hudson's Bay Company, For the Discovery of Copper Mines, A North West Passage, &c. In the Years 1769, 1770, 1771, & 1772.*¹ This title offers a concise summary of Hearne's material/historical endeavour on behalf of the Hudson's Bay Company, and within the larger context of British imperialist enterprise. What it does not mention — but what its geographical references certainly call to mind — is that aspect of the text which has most fascinated Hearne's literary critics: the *cultural* context in which his journey occurred. Even at the time of its original publication (1795), Hearne's journal was arguably most famous for its presentation of its author's² extended immersion in Dene ("Copper" and "Northern Indian" or Chipewyan) culture, an experience which enabled him subsequently to write, as Russell Brown and Donna Bennett have put it, "cooly dispassionate accounts of the native peoples he encountered" (24). Although Brown and Bennett are

careful to qualify this remark by pointing out that Hearne's ethnography is "not free from cultural bias" (24), other critics have preferred to emphasize that aspect of the text which highlights what might be called its writer's cultural flexibility or open-mindedness. As Maurice Hodgson would have it, Hearne, by allowing himself to be "physically and psychologically captured by the Indians," actually managed to achieve "a unique degree of integration" into Indigenous culture (12). And another of Hearne's critical admirers, T. D. MacLulich, has praised Hearne in similar terms for his ability to adjust himself "completely to the Indians and to the natural environment" (81).³ Hodgson and MacLulich are able to praise Hearne's accomplishment by emphasizing what might be called the text's humanist contexts (rather than the imperialist ones asserted in its title). In other words, Hearne's sensibility here takes precedence, for better or worse, over the *material* role he played in the great and complex power-play of Empire. What these readings share is the implicit assumption that Hearne is a sympathetic humanist subject who is not indelibly constituted by, but utilizes and, to a certain extent, is master of language and its discursive contexts. Such a take on Hearne's subjectivity—aided by a subtle critical elision of the contexts and cultural implications of Empire—enables a kind of romantic celebration: Hearne is seen as transcending his own cultural understandings and ultimately embracing the cultural difference of the Chipewyan "other."

According to many recent studies, however, such a line of argumentation is highly suspect. Terry Goldie argues, for example, that the "natural" images recorded by English explorers such as Samuel Hearne are always, to a great extent, "manifestations of an already existent semiotic field" (38). In Goldie's formulation, the European semiotic field, because it always *precedes* the explorer's experience of another culture, largely determines the character of this experience; hence, cultural representation in exploration literature becomes a grim scenario of *misrepresentation* in which the Indigenous person is translated into "a semiotic pawn on a chess board under the control of the white signmaker" (10). Other critics of exploration literature tend to agree, more or less, with this kind of

argument. For example, in a general discussion of the history of European conquest in North America, Ward Churchill, by emphasizing the “distorting lens” of representations through which Europeans view Indigenous peoples, argues unequivocally that explorers comprise a kind of imperialist “shock troop,” a vanguard of European conquest whose members are inevitably “prepared to undergo hardship and sacrifice in order to actualize the ideal of their own inherent superiority to all that they encounter” (30-31). And, in a rigorously theorized study of Hearne’s text, Edward Parkinson sees *A Journey . . . to the Northern Ocean* as a species of narrative “Panopticon”—a text in which all aspects of cultural representation are inescapably overdetermined by the power of Hearne’s controlling narrative gaze (155). Although there are significant differences inhabiting their arguments, the central theoretical premise that Goldie, Churchill, and Parkinson share, I would argue, involves a sober conviction that there cannot be much room in the experience or textual representation of exploration for any kind of substantial intercultural negotiation. The writing explorer, constituted discursively as a cultural subject, inevitably textualizes and reproduces an oppressive and impenetrable discourse of European imperialism.⁴

But is it not perilous to discount the influence of *local* contexts on the constitution of the explorer’s subjectivity, in favour of *metropolitan* ones? As Homi K. Bhabha has convincingly argued, “the attempt to dominate in the *name* of cultural supremacy . . . is itself produced only in the moment of [cultural] differentiation” (34). If discursive authority is a performative process, as Bhabha’s remark suggests, then the aspects of European discourse and culture which Goldie, Churchill, and Parkinson emphasize not only constitute, but are also constituted *by* the experience of the cross-cultural engagement: the experience of language situations, of reading cultural “texts” (in the largest sense of the term), of encountering landscapes and people, of attempting in narrative to explain and justify one’s intentional and material existence. Granted, ideology functions to organize European discursive formations in such a way as to efface their ambivalences and contradictions—the markers of their internal

heterogeneity—but colonialist discourse can never be an internally consistent, homogeneous site of ideology. What I wish to emphasize here is that, seen from a certain standpoint, Hearne's text is *not* entirely pre-scripted and pre-scriptive: It is also subject to the contextual uncertainties of its *performativity*.

This leads me back to the question of Hearne criticism. While each of the approaches to exploration literature mentioned above—what I shall call for ease of reference the humanist and discourse-oriented paradigms—have enabled helpful and interesting readings of Hearne's text, a third, more nuanced approach—one which attempts to avoid dichotomizing the views of subjectivity offered by the critical paradigms mentioned above—can help to illuminate the rich and troubled complexity of the issues at stake in Hearne's ethnographic practice. In general terms, such an approach to the reading of Canadian literature and criticism has been advanced by Heather Murray, who suggests that we should read texts “for contradiction” rather than for coherence (78). From this viewpoint, “Hearne” would not be unified by his humanistic sensibility, nor would he be entirely enclosed within and determined by the imperialist cultural frameworks which constitute his subjectivity. Murray's alternative reading practice highlights and examines the contradictions that arise as a result of conflicts between “the text's express project” and the language it deploys in its attempt to articulate that project (79). Such a reading of *A Journey . . . to the Northern Ocean* has been admirably carried out by Bruce Greenfield, who has identified and analyzed the tension between the text's motivating ideas and the local contexts and experiences it represents. To quote Greenfield, this tension arises “as Hearne tries to deal with the expectations of his employers, backers, and home audience, on the one hand—what we might call the facts of the imperial context—and the specific demands of life and travel in the remoter regions of eighteenth-century North America on the other—the facts of the local context” (27). The resultant conflicts of this collision between imperial and local contexts produce, as Keith Harrison has gone on to argue, “inconsistencies in point of view” which demonstrate Hearne's “half-conscious drift into multi-cultural flux” (651), that space of “occult instability”

described by Frantz Fanon and, more recently, by Homi Bhabha in his revisionist reading of Fanon (152-53). In the present essay, I would like to expand upon the work done by Greenfield and Harrison, in order further to examine the question of interculturality in *A Journey . . . to the Northern Ocean*; but I will focus especially on the ways in which local contexts affect Hearne's *philosophical* (that is, ideological) articulation of the relationship between his commercial endeavour as a Hudson's Bay Company employee, and his conceptualization of the cultural "distance" that separates English and First Nations societies.

One of the major conceptual prejudices affecting Hearne's subjective take on Chipewyan culture is the widely-held eighteenth-century assumption that American Indians were representatives of the earliest stages of human development. This cultural hypothesis—encapsulated in John Locke's remarkable proposition that "In the beginning all the World was America"—attained its eighteenth-century apogee in the form of what Ronald Meek refers to as the "four stages theory" of socio-economic development: the idea, formulated by such thinkers as Adam Smith, John Millar, and A. R. J. Turgot, that societies develop through consecutive *stages* according to differing *modes of subsistence* including, respectively, hunting, pasturage, agriculture, and commerce (6). Development through these stages was said to represent a progression from a state of "rude" "savagery" to one of increasingly "refined" "civility." The disparate states of the "savage" and the "civil"—"nature" and "culture"—were thus seen as defining the respective positions of the American Indigene (who was primarily a hunter/gatherer) and the European (who subsisted primarily by means of commercial trade) in the global hierarchy of social development. Hence, imperialist intrusion in the Americas was partially underpinned and justified by the professed ideal that, through contact with commercially-based European societies, Indigenous peoples could be raised to a "higher" state of social and cultural development.

A number of critics have emphasized the pervasiveness of the four-stages theory to late eighteenth-century English understandings of cultural difference. It is true that the competing

theory of the “Noble Savage” articulated by thinkers like Montaigne and Rousseau—a theory which basically reverses the directionality of the progressivist stages-of-society model—faced a history of opposition in English thought stemming in part from the Hobbesian view of the natural human condition as a state of war, a view which conceptualized the lives of Amerindians as “solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short” (qtd. in Meek, 16-17). I. S. MacLaren, who sees the four-stages theory as “Far more deep-seated in English thought than the competing and comparatively notional concept of the Noble Savage” (“Exploration/Travel Literature” 45), points out that one of Hearne’s contemporary reviewers recommended *A Journey . . . to the Northern Ocean* as a realistic corrective to the ideal of Noble Savagery (“Samuel Hearne’s Accounts” 49n). Meek argues that by 1780 this *progressivist* view of cultural development (rather than the notion of Noble Savagery) was so central to Enlightenment social thought that “there were very few historians and social thinkers who remained unaffected by it” (174). In the present study, I will analyze some of the ways in which this stadial framework affects Hearne’s ethnographic practice. First, by analyzing Hearne’s use of various stereotypes associated with the concept of a degenerate, as opposed to noble, Amerindian “savagery,” I will demonstrate the importance of a progressivist view of cultural development to the *general* theoretical makeup of Hearne’s ethnography.⁵ Second, by examining Hearne’s comments concerning the impact of the fur trade on the Indigenous peoples of his acquaintance, I will demonstrate his troubled subscription to the *specific* hypothesis of the four-stages theory: the idea that the level of a society’s cultural development depends upon its particular mode of subsistence. In each of these sections I will argue that, at a time when the four-stages theory was being revised and expanded by European thinkers, Hearne was producing a narrative that *inadvertently*—that is, against its “express project”—brought the whole progressivist thrust of its stadial framework into question.⁶ Because the ultimate success of a literary argument must rest on the strength of internal evidence, I shall devote the remainder of this discussion to a close reading of Hearne’s text.

II The Discourse of Savagery

Although the language he uses to describe Native peoples is relatively mild compared to that employed for the same purpose by most other contemporary writers of exploration,⁷ Hearne nevertheless makes use of numerous words and phrases that demonstrate his subscription to the viewpoint that Indigenous peoples exist prior to, or at a primitive stage of, human cultural development. At his most critical, Hearne discusses the “want of humanity” (199), the “little humanity” (33), or even the downright “inhuman[ity]” (74, 171n) of various Native peoples of his acquaintance. In the same spirit, he speaks of the Indians as “beastly” (81), “brutish” (100), or quite simply as “brute[s]” (238n); and he compares certain aspects of their behaviour to that of “the brute creation” (81). This kind of language is certainly consistent with the progressivist paradigm, for, as MacLaren points out, eighteenth-century subscribers to the four-stages theory posited that “non-agricultural societies necessarily take on the qualities of the beasts they hunt” (“Explorations/Travel” 53; I shall consider further implications of this proposition later). In other places, Hearne speaks in terms of Indigenous “barbarism” (116n), “barbarity” (99, 171, 184), and “barbarous[ness]” (184, 217n); or he simply refers to his Indigenous “crew” as “barbarians” (101). Finally, on at least three occasions, he calls the Indians “uncivilized” (78, 170, 221); and he uses the term “savage” no less than five times as a noun (100, 101, 171, 226, 276) and once as an adjective (103).

Although Hearne uses a significant number of the terms mentioned above quite casually in passing, it should be noted that at least seven of these references (among them, three of his six usages of the word “savage”) occur in the famous passages dealing with the “massacre” at “Bloody Fall.”⁸ Because this part of Hearne’s account is somewhat dramatically exceptional compared to the rest of the text, and because its provenance is particularly open to dispute,⁹ one could argue that it does not accurately represent “Hearne’s” *overall* view of the Native condition. However, as MacLaren points out, it is necessary to remember “the power that the book’s purple patch has on its readers, both those who read it as literature and those who consult it as

a dependable source of facts" ("Samuel Hearne's Accounts" 40-41). Indeed, because Hearne's contemporary reviewers tended to read this sensationalistic scene "as a synecdoche" of the text as a whole (46n), they would likely have looked elsewhere in the text for evidence that would explain this emphatic irruption of the theme of "savagery" into Hearne's writing.

Indeed, the text contains a number of much more subtle passages in which Hearne represents Indigenous people in terms that question the level of their human and cultural development. On a number of occasions, for example, he is particularly critical of what he sees as the Indians' lack of humanizing sympathy. At one point, in speaking of the neglect with which he is treated by his Chipewyan guides during his second journey, Hearne writes: "I never saw a set of people that possessed so little humanity, or that could view the distresses of their fellow creatures with so little feeling and unconcern" (32-33). Hearne makes a similar remark in a reference to the "Esquimaux" [that is, "Copper" Inuit]: the hearts of these people, he declares, "are in general so unsusceptible of tenderness, that they can view the deepest distress in those who are not immediately related to them, without the least emotion; not even half so much as the generality of mankind feel for the sufferings of the meanest of the brute creation" (218). In each of these instances, Hearne's remarks gesture toward the importance of *feeling* as a defining attribute of the human condition. Elsewhere, in a moment of philosophical reflection, he clarifies his concern axiomatically: "social feeling," he asserts, "ought to be the characteristic of men, as the noblest part of the creation" (132). In considering what he views as a lack of social feeling among various Aboriginal peoples, Hearne openly wonders whether the exigencies of "self-preservation" brought on by the harsh conditions of life in the northern wilderness can be at all conducive to the cultivation of this definitively human and humanizing "characteristic" (132).

But when he considers the "reciprocity of interest" that his Indigenous companions exhibit in their sharing of personal possessions as they prepare to "ambush" the Esquimaux at the Coppermine River, Hearne's discourse is curiously at odds with these ethnographic observations. For at this point Hearne writes:

"if ever the spirit of disinterested friendship expanded the heart of a Northern Indian, it was here exhibited in the most extensive meaning of the word" (98). Hearne's employment in this passage of the conditional "if" demonstrates a certain unwillingness to accept what his *experience* has shown: that the Chipewyans do in fact attain to his humane ideal of sympathetic social bonding. And Hearne's rather bizarre embodiment of a superlative phrase ("the most extensive meaning of the word") in this conditional statement suggests that his cultural logic is quite simply inadequate to the task of ethnographic analysis. On a general level, this example demonstrates that the assumption informing Hearne's ethnographic practice—that Indigenous people occupy a "primitive" stage of cultural development in relation to that of the "civilized," sensible English—is at odds with the reality Hearne must represent.¹⁰

An examination of a key passage from Hearne's "ORDERS and INSTRUCTIONS" can shed further light on this interpretive contradiction. These orders, which are included in Hearne's published text, were written by Moses Norton, governor of Fort Prince of Wales. Because Norton was of mixed English and Chipewyan descent—a man who worked for the Hudson's Bay Company but lived with his Northern Indian relatives—it might be argued that he occupied a subject position that allowed him a unique critical vantage point from which to consider local intercultural relations. Norton's orders to Hearne contain the following admonition regarding the latter's conduct towards the Chipewyan people who were to guide him during the course of his journey: "It is sincerely recommended to you and your companions [i.e., William Isbester and Thomas Merriman] to treat the natives with civility, so as not to give them any room for complaint or disgust" (lxvii). Now, if Norton himself had conceived of English behaviour in terms of a developed civility—as progressivist theoreticians would certainly have done—why would he take the trouble to admonish Hearne and his fellow Englishmen in this way? And, as for the Chipewyans, does not Norton's comment, in its reference to "complaint or disgust," presuppose a predilection for "civility" on *their* part? It is true that Norton goes on to inform Hearne that his Native guides "have

strict orders not to give you the least offence," but his subsequent language implies that any offence that the Indians might cause would stem from a possible refusal "to aid and assist you in any matter you may request of them *for the benefit of the undertaking*" (Ixvii; emphasis added). While Norton feels the need to instruct the behaviour of both Hearne *and* the Chipewyans, his language suggests that his orders for the latter are given to prevent any neglect of their practical duty as guides for the expedition, while his instructions to the former are quite obviously aimed at preventing breaches of social etiquette or "civility," breaches that would endanger the success of the expedition by making Hearne and his fellow Englishmen objects of "disgust." Far from supporting the conventional assumptions of stadial theory, Norton's orders to Hearne can be seen to defy the notion that the English are more culturally advanced than the Chipewyans.

A close examination of some of the stereotypes that Hearne deploys in his representations of Indigenous peoples further brings into question the notion of English cultural superiority. One of the most common and unstable stereotypes in *A Journey . . . to the Northern Ocean* involves Hearne's characterization of the Chipewyan people as gluttonous¹¹ and wasteful. In a discussion of the occasional Chipewyan practice of killing caribou only for such delicacies as the fat, marrow, and tongues, for example, Hearne emphasizes his efforts to improve Native behaviour by repeated applications of pedagogy: "To induce them to desist from this practice, I often interested myself, and endeavoured, as much as possible, to convince them in the clearest terms of which I was master, of the great impropriety of such *waste*" (75-76; emphasis added). Needless to say, such an emphatic critique presupposes an understanding that the speaker belongs to a culture which conducts itself according to the opposite characteristic of a well-mannered moderation in practices of consumption. A brief analysis of Hearne's discussion of some of the traditional practices of consumption belonging to English culture functions, however, to problematize this stereotypical claim. Hearne recalls in the part of his narrative dated 27 December 1770 that he and his Indigenous guides had spent the Christmas season of that year "in exceedingly straitened circumstances"

(42) as a result of their having been unable to obtain substantial food for a period of eight consecutive days (from 19-27 December). Hearne goes on to discuss the wistful reflections he entertained at the time concerning “the *immense quantities, and great variety of delicacies* which were then expending in *every part of Christendom*, and that with a profusion bordering on *waste*.” Indeed, he goes on to confess that he wished he were back in Europe, if only to have been able to partake of “the *refuse of the table of any one of my acquaintance*” (43; emphasis added). These comments obviously undermine the stability of the position from which Hearne conducts his official critique of Chipewyan “customs” (76), for they reveal that the practices of consumption which he sees as characterizing the supposed state of “savagery” are not fundamentally different from those which define an ostensible “civility.” To this extent, Hearne’s remarks imply a potentially subversive questioning—howsoever inadvertent it may be—of English self-representation and cultural practice.¹²

The discursive backfiring of Hearne’s stereotyping strategies is most apparent, arguably, when he attempts to deploy what is perhaps the ultimate stereotype associated with European notions of natural “savagery”: the charge that Amerindian peoples commonly engaged in the practice of cannibalism. As “a touchstone of the absolutely ‘other’” (Hulme, *Colonial Encounters* 83), cannibalism was “a topic guaranteed to galvanize reader attention” (Archer 478); and this fact helps to explain its ubiquitous presence in exploration literature. Unlike other exploration narratives, which tend to deploy the cannibalism stereotype with great assertiveness, Hearne’s text represents this stereotype in a manner that is curiously unstable. For, while Hearne declares in the body of the text that one of “the *common* occurrences of an Indian life” is that the people “are *frequently* driven to the necessity of eating one another,” he admits in a rather awkward footnote that cannibalism among local peoples is in fact extremely *uncommon*, occurring only in contexts of dire “*necessity*” (22, 22n; emphasis added).¹³ Perhaps even more interesting and problematic than this bald contradiction is Hearne’s subsequent *defense* of cannibalistic practices, for, in a gesture which exceeds

even the bounds of the most extreme eighteenth-century liberalism, he expresses a sense of apologetic sympathy for the “poor wretches” whose extreme “hunger had driven [them] to this act.” The implications of Hearne’s apology for cannibalism become increasingly complex in light of his simultaneous and surprising admission that the practice is “universally” condemned among the Indigenous, because these remarks, taken together, constitute an interesting reversal of the traditional stereotypical scenario: while the ostensibly “savage” Indian unequivocally condemns this quintessentially “savage” practice, the “civilized” European, on the basis of his humanist sympathy, concludes that it is “no crime” (22n). If the discourse of cannibalism is an aspect of the creation of “boundaries of community,” as Peter Hulme maintains (*Colonial Encounters* 85), then Hearne’s rather unprecedented blurring here of the line that separates the “savage” from the “civil” suggests that the experience of intercultural relations in local contexts can indeed destabilize discourse and influence subjectivity.¹⁴

Hearne’s problematic discussion of cannibalism carries some serious ramifications for the four-stages theory, for it ultimately contradicts the idea that cultural development proceeds hand in hand with a society’s movement “beyond” the subsistence economy of hunting and gathering. This problem becomes apparent later in the text, when Hearne discusses what is ostensibly the ever-present danger of famine facing Indigenous societies in the north: “*most . . .* scenes of [famine-related] distress,” Hearne declares, “happen during [the Indians’] journies to and from Prince of Wales’s Fort” (212-13; emphasis added). Now, the pursuit of trade is, of course, the primary reason that local peoples endeavoured to make the arduous journey to and from the fortified trading post on Hudson’s Bay. If we consider this fact in the light of Hearne’s observation that cannibalism arises *only* in circumstances of extreme hunger and “distress” (22n), the above-quoted passage, by positing a direct correlation between the Indigenous adoption of European trading practices and the phenomenon of Indigenous famine, suggests that the ostensible practice of cannibalism is among the *direct consequences* of European contact. The implication, in other words, is that

European commercial enterprise in the New World—that which, according to the four-stages theory, should “elevate” the Aboriginal condition—actually *produces* some of the “savage” phenomena which it ostensibly sets out to eradicate.

One of the most striking instances of the instability of the stereotype of “savagery” in *A Journey . . . to the Northern Ocean* occurs in the context of Hearne’s account of his meeting with a band of Dene (“Copper” or Yellowknife) Indians who had never before seen an Englishman. The rhetoric Hearne uses to describe this meeting is curious, to say the least: “I must confess,” he declares, “that their *civility* far exceeded what I could expect from *so uncivilized* a tribe” (78; emphasis added). Hearne’s reference to his *expectations* in this instance demonstrates a propensity to judge the Indians as “uncivilized” prior to a consideration of the evidence; but the fact that the sentence is somewhat at odds with itself (in its notion of a civilized incivility) shows that Hearne is not simply a determined product of his discursive conditioning—he is willing, to a certain extent, to question the cultural knowledge that he carries with him into the barren lands.

Hearne goes on to describe this meeting with the Copper Indians by employing an analogy which is rich in potential significance: “it was curious to see how they flocked about me,” he declares, “and expressed as much desire to examine me . . . as an European Naturalist would a non-descript animal” (78). Here, by employing the simile of the European naturalist (for whom Hearne, an amateur naturalist himself,¹⁵ had a great deal of admiration and respect), Hearne articulates a sense of the scientific legitimacy of the inquisitiveness of the Copper Indians, implying that their curiosity is part of an understandable and indeed admirable desire to obtain knowledge. Interestingly, some manipulation of the passage demonstrates that Hearne’s rhetoric takes the structure of a mirror: he declares that “it was curious to see how . . . I was viewed as so great a curiosity” (78). Here, the representation of the economy of the gaze (in the mutual activities of “seeing” and “viewing”), in concert with the reiterated reference to curiosity, gives rise to a sense of reciprocity, making it difficult to determine, at least for a moment, who in this meeting is the subject, and who the object.

The richness of this passage necessitates a few more observations. First of all, by comparing himself to a “*non-descript* animal,” Hearne reveals what amounts to a profound underlying awareness of his *own* otherness—an understanding that he himself does not yet fit into any established category which organizes the Indigenous repertoire of knowledge. Even more significantly, the self-reflexive aspect of Hearne’s analogy—his figurative self-bestialization—inverts traditional Eurocentric stereotypes which question the humanity of autochthonous peoples by correlating “savagery” with animality; for although the Copper Indians “flock” about the English explorer, it is Hearne himself, and not the Indians, whom Hearne explicitly figures in bestial terms. Finally, the perspectival shifting implicit in Hearne’s analogical comparison—his seemingly self-conscious attempt to see *himself* from the standpoint of the Other—emphasizes the double-edged structure of difference: from a particular way of conceptualizing the intercultural encounter, the positions of “cultured” Self and “natural” Other are shown to be reversed—or, more precisely, interimplicated.

III Commerce, Culture, and the Civilizing Mission

Now that I have delineated some of the ways in which the progressivist thrust of the four-stages theory influences Hearne’s *general* assumptions regarding the cultural distance that separates ostensibly “primitive” Indigenous societies from the “developed” culture of English “civilization,” it is necessary to examine the evidence that would support my thesis concerning Hearne’s subscription to—and troubled problematization of—the four-stages theory *as such*. Hearne is no socio-economist, so he does not explicitly affirm the argument that cultural development depends upon a society’s mode of subsistence. To answer the question of whether, or to what degree, Hearne’s text deals philosophically with the four-stages theory, then, it is necessary, as it were, to read between the lines.

Hearne makes an explicit connection between the development of trade and the process of civilization in a lengthy footnote concerning relations between the Northern Indians and the Esquimaux. In his discussion of the latter people, he declares

that "It is but a few years ago that the sloop's crew who annually carried them all their wants, durst not venture on shore among the Esquimaux unarmed, for fear of being murdered; but latterly they are so civilized, that the Company's servants visit their tents with the greatest freedom and safety, are always welcome, and desired to partake of such provisions as they have" (218n). Although this passage refers to the "civilizing" of the Esquimaux, it does not explicitly identify this process as a direct effect of trade. However, in speaking of the history of violent hostilities between the Northern Indians and the Esquimaux, Hearne hopes that "the measures taken by the Governors at Prince of Wales's Fort of late years, will . . . by degrees be the means of bringing about a lasting, friendly, and reciprocal interest between the two nations" (217n); and in the body of the text he declares that the advent of peaceful relations between these traditional enemies "is entirely owing to the protection [the Esquimaux] have for several years past received from the Chiefs at the Company's Fort at Churchill River" (217). If these passages do not directly assert the influence of trade itself to a cessation of Indigenous warfare, they certainly suggest that the English traders and their policies have played a role in bringing about this more "civilized" state of affairs.¹⁶ And, from the point of view of the four-stages theory, perhaps Hearne's reference, which I mentioned at the beginning of this paragraph, to the cessation of Esquimaux violence against the English traders—one of Hearne's signs for the "civilizing" of the Esquimaux—could be explained in the same way: contact with the representatives of English trade, for one reason or another, "civilizes" Indigenous peoples, bringing an end to the Hobbesian "condition of warre" which Hearne tends to see as their natural state.

But some of the best evidence for the importance of the four-stages theory to Hearne's ethnography can be found in one of Hearne's retrospective remarks concerning the consequences of the withdrawal of the "Copper and Dog-ribbed Indians" from the fur trading economy (115-16n). Years after he makes his historical journey to the Coppermine River—during which he establishes direct English contact with representatives of the former people—Hearne writes that, because these tribes have "been

totally neglected [by the English trade] for several years, they have now sunk into their original barbarism and extreme indigence" (116n). Here, in a nutshell, we see the logic of the four-stages theory—only in reverse. According to Hearne's implicit argument—an argument ostensibly based on empirical observation—it was participation in the commercial economy that raised these peoples out of "barbarism," and a subsequent loss of this participation that caused them to "sink" back into this "original" condition. From such a perspective, commercial imperialism in North America can be ethically justified by the "improving" influence it exercises over local Indigenous populations.

In the same paragraph, however, Hearne goes on to point out that, with the loss of the English trade, "a war has ensued" between the Copper and Dog-ribbed nations. This observation would support the notion that participation in trade goes hand in hand with a cessation of the violence characterizing the state of "original barbarism," were it not for Hearne's remark that this war is being fought "for the sake of a few remnants of iron-work which was left among them" (116n). Once again, Hearne's argument is internally contradictory: Although the first part of his commentary reveals explicitly his subscription to the progressivist logic of the four-stages theory, the subsequent reference to the outbreak of war brings into question the notion that commercial activity is correlative with cultural improvement, for it indirectly identifies war in this instance as part of the legacy of commercial enterprise itself.

Some observations concerning the famous "massacre" at "Bloody Fall" are in order here. This scene has been discussed in great detail by Hearne's readers—occasionally at the expense of other important aspects of the text—so it will here suffice to make some observations that are relevant to the commercial aspect of the present study. Prior to his description of the massacre itself, Hearne notes that only about half of his male Indigenous companions were ultimately willing to participate in the planned attack on the Inuit people; and he questions the motivations of those who have chosen to withdraw from the enterprise. These men, he points out,

very prudently begged to be excused, saying, that they could not be spared for so long a time from the maintenance of their wives and families. . . . This seemed to be a mere evasion, for I am clearly of opinion that poverty on one side, and avarice on the other, were the only impediments to their joining our party; had they possessed as many European goods to squander away among their countrymen as Matonabee and those of my party did, in all probability many might have been found who would have been glad to have accompanied us. (74)

In this passage, the men whom Hearne characterizes in terms of "poverty" (because of their lack of European trade goods) behave in a manner that is consistent with the *virtue* of "prudence": their major concern is with "the maintenance of their wives and their families." On the other hand, those men whom Hearne characterizes in terms of material wealth (because of their possession of European goods) manifest what Hearne reads as the *vice* of "avarice"; and the immediate aim of this latter group of men is to get "rid of all the women, [and] children" (75) in order to go to war. Hearne thus inadvertently observes that the possession of European goods actually encourages the Indians to engage in what he judges as an "inhuman design" (74), the end of which is "massacre" (99) and "murder" (98, 101). Needless to say, this observation is clearly at odds with the ideology of the four-stages theory, according to which involvement in commerce will elevate the Aboriginal condition—not cause it to regress, as Hearne puts it, into the realm of the "inhuman" (74).

According to the four-stages theory, Hearne himself should not be immune from the cycle of progress and regress that he delineates in the above-mentioned discussion of the Copper and Dog-ribbed Indians. Logically, in other words, he should also be subject to transformation when his own mode of subsistence changes. And indeed, Enlightenment stadial theory is a *metropolitan* discourse which privileges the European city as the site and seat of a "civilized" lifestyle; hence, the imperialist ideology of the civilizing mission comes face-to-face with the paradox that European explorers were forced temporarily to adopt nomadic and "savage" wilderness lifestyles in order to extend the influence of a "civilized" metropolis.¹⁷ It could be argued, then, that this exigency of inland exploration necessitates Norton's admo-

nition, mentioned earlier in this essay, that Hearne and his English companions remember at all times to exercise civility in their relations with their Indian guides. Certainly, Hearne's representation of particular instances of his involvement in Chipewyan practices is often at odds with the polite language which embodies the representation; and a number of his anecdotes can be seen to support the proposition that "civility" is in danger of disappearing where the wilderness begins.

To begin, one might look at Hearne's depiction of Indigenous dietary practices, for conduct regarding food was regarded as a fundamental cultural index during the colonialist era. On the one hand, Hearne himself correlates the "civilizing" of the Inuit people with their gradual adoption of English eating habits:

[T]hese people, when I first knew them, would not eat any of our provisions, sugar, raisins, figs, or even bread; for though some of them would put a bit of it into their mouths, they soon spit it out again with evident marks of dislike; so that they had no greater relish for our food than we had for theirs. At present, however, they will eat any part of our provisions, either fresh or salted; and some of them will drink a draft of porter, or a little brandy and water; and they are now so far civilized, and attached to the English, that I am persuaded any of the Company's servants who could habituate themselves to their diet and manner of life, might now live as secure under their protection, as under that of any of the tribes of Indians who border on Hudson's Bay. (105n)

These ethnographic observations represent the processes of "civilization" and dietary change (in the face of an increasing familiarity on the part of the Inuit with the dietary practices of English traders) as at least somewhat interimplicated. In other words, the taking of brandy and water and other English provisions is here a *sign* of the gradual "civilizing" of the Esquimaux.

But does this ostensible process of transformation work in the other direction, as Hearne himself leaves the immediate environs of the trading post and, out of necessity, adopts the lifestyle, including the dietary practices, of the Chipewyan hunter-gatherers? The following excerpt from one of Hearne's discussions of the eating habits of the Chipewyans will help us to answer this question: "Those poor people," Hearne remarks, "live in such an inhospitable part of the globe, that for want of

firing, they are frequently obliged to eat their victuals quite raw . . . but early custom and frequent necessity make this practice so familiar to them, that so far from finding any inconvenience arise from it, or having the least dislike to it, they frequently do it by choice" (203). According to Hearne's commentary, the fact that the Chipewyans consume raw food by "choice" does not signify freedom, for choice in this instance is conditioned by "custom and frequent necessity." Thus, the Chipewyans remain, for Hearne, "poor people." Hearne's use of third person pronouns in this passage suggests, moreover, that he distances himself from the Chipewyans and their practices, despite his immersion in their culture.

Hearne's ensuing remarks, however, serve excellently to illustrate the extent of his actual *identification* with the cultural context in question: "I have *frequently* made one of a party who has sat round a fresh-killed deer, and assisted in picking the bones quite clean, when I thought that the raw brains and many other parts were *exceedingly* good" (203; emphasis added). One might note that this anecdote—a rather indelicate one from the eighteenth-century English standpoint—functions to reinforce, rather than to problematize, European prejudices concerning Indigenous customs; for it paints what the eighteenth-century reader would certainly have construed as a patently "savage" picture. Indeed, that an English narrator speaks approvingly of his *own* consumption of such fare—not merely for the sake of survival, but also for the derivation of pleasure—suggests a certain loss of "civility" on his part. However, if the "nicest" eighteenth-century reader¹⁸ found such a flirtation with or fall into "savagery" at all offensive, any feelings of revulsion which arose as a result could not have been aimed entirely at the Indians Hearne represents. Hearne himself, as the only representative European in this scenario, must also become an object of any critical aversion that the reader may feel; and, if the reader has been identifying with Hearne until this rather late point in the narrative (and presumably, because Hearne is the sole European dramatized in the text, s/he has), such aversion would have become correspondingly and disturbingly *Self*-directed as well. Throughout the text, Hearne's representations of his own involvement in the cultural

practices of the Chipewyan people—his relative departure from the “civilized” contexts of commerce and subsequent adoption of a nomadic lifestyle—implies a potentially dangerous mixing of the categories of the “savage” and the “civil”; and such a transgression of discursive boundaries tends to *support* the basic tenet of the four-stages theory, that cultural development is contingent upon one’s mode of subsistence. But because the four-stages theory tends to emphasize “progress” rather than “regress,” many of Hearne’s self-representations tend to be unsettling. Indeed, if MacLaren’s observation is correct, any movement in a “downward” direction on the hierarchical ladder separating the stages of “savagery” and “civility” carried profound implications for the late-eighteenth-century English mind: “As with the rungs of Plato’s ladder,” MacLaren remarks, “the stages, once passed, disappear in a progressivist theory of civilization. To regress, then, is not to falter; it is to plummet” (*Samuel Hearne’s Accounts* 42).

The four-stages theory, then, is not without its attendant anxieties, many of which are produced by the contradictions involved in any attempt to harness the socioeconomic teleology of this stadial framework to the imperialist ideology of the “civilizing mission.” And, in *A Journey . . . to the Northern Ocean*, such anxieties are most apparent in Hearne’s perplexed discussion of the Chipewyan practice of impounding caribou. Pounds, Hearne explains, are large enclosures built and maintained for the purpose of entrapping herds of migrating caribou. This traditional method of hunting, he observes, provides “[s]uch an easy way of procuring a comfortable maintenance” “that many families subsist by it without having occasion to move their tents above once or twice during the course of a whole winter” (51, 50-51). It is important to note that such a description of near-Edenic plenty—what Mary Campbell has called, in a related context, the “paradox of the superabundant wasteland” (228)—stands out sharply in a text which often dwells at length on what it represents as the extreme difficulties and hardships of Indigenous existence in the northern wilderness. The Chipewyan people, the text would seem to suggest, have developed a mode of subsistence *ideally* adapted to the exigencies of survival in a harsh and unforgiving environment.

Despite the practical efficacy of the Chipewyan method of trapping caribou in pounds, however, Hearne's official attitude toward the practice is one of disapproval. Hearne bases his denunciation, initially, on a very particular understanding of the concept of "industry." Impounding caribou, he argues, is *too* "easy"; and it is thus "too apt to occasion a habitual *indolence* in the young and active, who frequently spend a whole Winter in this *indolent* manner" (51; emphasis added). Hearne's notion of indolence is an interesting one in light of his earlier careful emphasis on the extraordinary amount of labour required to build and maintain the pound enclosure, which often measures a mile or more in circumference and which sometimes includes protruding hedge-rows (used to funnel caribou into the pound) of "not less than two or three miles" in length (not to mention a carefully constructed "maze" within the enclosure itself) (49-50). Clearly, Hearne's denunciation of this traditional hunting method is based on a notion of "indolence" which signifies not laziness or a lack of labour-intensiveness, but a particular progressivist conception of what may "properly" constitute labour. The truth of the matter, he finally reveals, is that pounds are built in "those parts of the country [which] are almost destitute of every animal of the furr kind." Hence, Hearne characterizes Indigenous people who hunt by way of the pound as "indolent" because they live in an area which forbids them to be what he calls "masters of any thing for [commercial] trade" (51). Those who deserve to be called "industrious," on the other hand, are the ones who devote their energy to the procuring of furs, for it is by way of this activity that they are able to be "of most importance and value to the Hudson's Bay Company" (51), that centre of commerce which defines the "proper" constitution of work in the economy of Hearne's "official" theoretical discourse. Hearne's judgement rests in part on the basis of the commercial potential of the land itself, for, according to the logic of the four-stages theory, terrain suitable only for hunting (the most "primitive" mode of subsistence) will produce only "savage" people who, while remaining inhabitants of such terrain, will be unable progressively to ascend the ladder of socio-economic development. An important corollary of this theoretical argument is that

captor as a captor first and foremost while a white child might blithely overlook that role, as the books encourage them to do. For what these books provide, over and over (currently there are over forty different titles and twenty million copies in print), is a miniature version of the colonialist project. In each book, George gets into trouble because he is as yet uncontrolled, undisciplined, uncivilized. He then saves the day in some way and gains the praise but not necessarily the respect of society, virtually always represented by white, male adults. George learns his lesson and is assimilated to convention. Thus these books participate in a colonial project even in their half-hearted attempts to critique such colonialism; in their "civilizing mission," they imbue child readers with values that at some level perpetuate the very ills they seem to condemn. By portraying and excusing imperialism, the books coerce children into accepting their own and others' colonization.

It is natural to wonder about the extent of Margret and H. A. Rey's awareness of having created a character and story that echo slave capture narratives. The information available about them, however, yields few clues to their intentions. Without their testimony, one can only guess about their motivations and goals. The Reys themselves were exiles, forced to leave their homeland like Curious George, but they were fleeing from the Nazis (*Something* 173). Once in America, they likely encountered many of the aspects of disenfranchisement that George experiences, including language barriers, nostalgia for home, and cultural clashes. On the other hand, the Reys can also be perceived as on the side of those who wield power over others. Before becoming a writer, H. A. Rey participated in the imperialist system, selling bathtubs on the Amazon River. When he and his wife were living in Brazil, they kept pet monkeys which died when the two were on a trip to Europe (Rey, *Authors* 359-63). More important than these snippets of information, the voice of the Reys in the books is indisputably that of the white, male adult, represented by the Man in the Yellow Hat, a voice William Moebius describes as "the injunctions of the suave master" (40). Always warning, often scolding, and forever superior, the voice telling George's story is definitely not George's. The Reys' relationship with George, and by exten-

its inhabitants as correspondingly indolent and primitive. His troubled ambivalence concerning the morality of an abstract "industriousness" that in reality transforms happy people into what he himself calls "slaves" (51) points toward Hearne's underlying awareness that the interpretive framework he uses to represent and assess the land and its inhabitants is both inaccurate and ethically questionable.

There are other significant problems inhabiting Hearne's discourse on the pound. For example, although Hearne explicitly favours the "industrious" activity of commercial enterprise over the "indolent" lifestyle of the Chipewyan hunting economy, he admits that the latter mode of subsistence is "wonderfully well adapted to the support of the aged and infirm" (51). As Bruce Greenfield has noted in his analysis of this passage, it is probable that Hearne was aware "that, while those who lived off the pounds were able to care for the sick and aged members of the group, others, following the furs, were often forced to leave behind those who could not keep up" (29). Indeed, when Hearne describes in his narrative an episode wherein the Northern Indians are forced to abandon an ailing woman who has lost the ability to walk, he emphasizes the compassion he feels for her ("poor creature!"), lamenting that a "custom apparently so unnatural is perhaps not to be found among any other [peoples] of the human race." Hearne does not in this instance condemn the Northern Indians for any "want of humanity," however; instead, he attributes this practice of abandoning the aged and infirm to "necessity and self-preservation" (132). But, as I noted earlier in my examination of Hearne's discussion of "cannibalism," instances of "distress" (212) which give rise to such acts of "self-preservation" tend often to be related to participation in the trading economy, which necessitates the perilous treks to and from the English factories. Hence, Hearne's horror at the practice of abandonment functions on a certain level as an indictment of the fur trade, which, in contrast to traditional modes of subsistence, provides a context which generates such "unnatural" practices.

Hearne's "confession" that the commercial economy is actually harmful to the well-being of the Chipewyan people is espe-

cially interesting in light of an important subsidiary tenet of the four-stages theory itself. D. M. R. Bentley points out, in a related context, that, according to this socio-economic narrative of cultural progress, the commercial stage of social development was thought to bring with it not only the advantages traditionally associated with civility (such as art, leisure, convenience, and patriotism), but also numerous possible *evils*, including luxury and vice. These social evils, it was argued, could lead to the decadence and downfall of the individual, or even, in extreme cases, to the collapse of an entire society or nation (77). Moreover, in terms of moral conduct, it was believed that a disregard for "mutual good" could all "too easily . . . reintroduce savagery to a society at its commercial stage" (78).²⁰ Clearly, Hearne's denunciation of the practice of impounding caribou is the product of a Self-centred cultural morality; it does not rest on a supportable consideration of "mutual good," but on a narrow understanding of the negative implications of this hunting practice for the development and proliferation of English commerce. And in a general sense, Hearne's reflections concerning the effects of trade on the lives of the local people bring the morality of commercial imperialism and the so-called "civilizing mission" very much into doubt. Upon reading Hearne's text, the "civilized" reader must ask him- or herself, as Hearne does (however tentatively) in the process of writing, whether it is morally *vicious* to destroy the "happiness" of Indigenous people by imposing upon them the much-touted values of Western "civilization." The "confession" that follows Hearne's critique of the caribou pound signifies an uncomfortable sense of self-directed suspicion: Hearne is aware at some level that he may in fact *be* involved in a vicious and highly culpable enterprise. This personal confession — a product of Hearne's experiential effort to *perform* his cultural authority in, and in writing about, the local cultural context — inadvertently transforms his critique of Chipewyan "indolence" into an indictment of Anglocentric "industry," ultimately exposing the questionable moral underpinnings of the progressivist logic which informs his *official* discourse as a servant of the Hudson's Bay Company.

Samuel Hearne's incompatible reflections concerning, on the one hand, his unquestionable "duty" to his employers and, on the other, the appalling effects on Indigenous populations of performing this duty, point to an irreconcilable doubleness inhabiting the writing Self: Hearne is both loyal servant *and* tyrannical imperialist, sympathetic participant/observer *and* violent destroyer of Indigenous freedom and happiness. The disparity between these roles emphasizes the existence of what Homi Bhabha has called "a map of misreading" between "the Western sign and its colonial signification" (95), and thus brings into question the self-sufficiency of the European "semiotic field" or (if one prefers) of colonialism as a discursive structure. Hearne's "experiences" in the New World certainly problematize the ideas of progress that he brought with him from the Old World, but, as Greenfield has so succinctly put the case, Hearne, as a Hudson's Bay Company employee, "was not free to become the creature of his own experiences" (27). Hence, Hearne is not "Indigenized" by his experience in the barren lands²¹—but, at the psychological level, neither does this experience comfortably reinforce his "Englishness." Hearne writes his identity, rather, in terms of various degrees of perplexity brought on by performative disruptions of his cultural knowledge; and this is why he is unable ultimately to validate the idea of cultural progress and perfectibility upon which the four-stages theory is so grandly established. It is only with the relatively recent rise of what has been called a "postcolonial" critical awareness that academic readers of *A Journey . . . to the Northern Ocean* have been willing or able to consider Hearne's self-reflexive doubt as something other than a flaw in his character.²² From a "postcolonial" perspective, Hearne's narrative perplexity, rather than being a sign of personal failure or weakness, might be conceived of as a tentative—if ultimately realized—early manifestation of critical *self-reflexivity*, that anti-monological impulse which, if continually "improved" upon by intercultural discussion and debate, can help to provide the basis for sound cultural criticism, intercultural negotiation, and productive sociocultural transformation.²³

NOTES

- ¹ For a facsimile of this title page, see I. S. MacLaren, "Notes" 36.
- ² Since *A Journey . . . to the Northern Ocean* was first published in 1795, many readers and critics have taken Samuel Hearne's authorship of it entirely as given. On the other hand, Richard Glover has cared enough about the problem to defend Hearne's authorship (xxx); and, much more recently, I. S. MacLaren has convincingly questioned the provenance of key passages in the text (see note 9, below). No matter how one conceives of the text's authorship, however, it will always be problematic to speak of the "real" Hearne. For how much *more* real is the "man" than the "text"? From a cultural standpoint, the text is worth studying as a site of ideology—and it has always carried the authorial signifier "Hearne." It is with *this* "Hearne" that the present study is concerned: the cultural *subject position* that the text articulates, the determinacies of this position—as well as its shifts. But while studies of subjectivity can be provocative, they can also make for very awkward prose. So I will use the name "Hearne" throughout this essay, and ask that the reader consider it as written within quotation marks.
- ³ To quote in this way is to do so dangerously, because it is out of context; and, if justice is to be done, Hodgson and MacLulich need to be read on their own terms—as do the critics I will discuss in the following paragraphs. Some *general* observations on the cultural assumptions that underpin the work of the various critics I will mention in this essay are in order, however, for they will enable me to delineate—and position myself within—what I see as three basic schools of thought in academic cultural criticism of *A Journey . . . to the Northern Ocean*.
- ⁴ Studies of exploration that focus primarily on the determinacies of colonialist discourse and culture can have a forceful critical and strategic efficacy (Ward Churchill's criticism, for example, aims in part to reclaim the Amerindian voice that has been appropriated and grossly distorted by representatives of Anglo-American culture); but such studies can also be distortive insofar as they tend theoretically to homogenize agents of discourse as well as the geographic and social localities in which these agents function. Cultural discourses manifest themselves in different ways in their influencing of diverse historical subjects. (To state the obvious, Hearne's subjectivity is influenced by different metropolitan and colonial contexts than that of James Cook, Alexander MacKenzie, Anna Jameson, or anyone else.) And discourses are certainly subject to different types of social pressure in, say, "Bloody Fall" compared to Dorset, England. Totalizing views, I would argue, run the danger of effacing the heterogeneous complexity of peoples, places, and processes of interaction.
- ⁵ I do not mean to suggest that the concept of "Noble Savagery" is absent in Hearne's writing. Particular aspects of Hearne's presentation of Matonabee, for example, most certainly partake of this paradigm. However, Hearne's overall portrayal of Matonabee is exceedingly complex. On the one hand, Hearne speaks of this man as "the most sociable, kind, and sensible Indian I had ever met with" (35-36); and he praises the latter's behaviour not only as "courteous" (34), but as demonstrative of "vivacity . . . gravity and nobleness" (225). Moreover, Hearne declares that, "Notwithstanding [Matonabee's] aversion from religion, I have met with few Christians who possessed more good qualities, or fewer bad ones" (224). This adds up to high praise indeed; but Hearne's panegyric is seriously compromised by other aspects of his characterization of Matonabee. For example, Hearne points out that Matonabee's jealousy in matrimonial matters "sometimes carried him beyond the bounds of humanity" (225), having caused him to beat one of his wives to death (170-71) and to attempt to murder one of his tribesmen (70). Of the latter incident, Hearne writes: "I know not one ['Northern Indian'], beside Matonabee, who ever made an attempt of that nature; and . . . I am at a loss how to account for his having been guilty of such a crime, unless it be by his having lived among the Southern Indians so long, as

to become tainted with their blood-thirsty, revengeful, and vindictive disposition" (70). Finally, when Hearne emphatically condemns his Dene companions as "savages" (100, 101) in his account of the "massacre" at "Bloody Fall," he does not exclude Matonabee from this charge. Thus, Hearne's presentation of Matonabee, "the greatest man in the country" (66), does not conform categorically to the concept of "Noble Savagery." Although much remains to be written on the *tension* between "Noble Savagery" and progressivist theory in Hearne's particular representation of Matonabee's character, the present study will be concerned with Hearne's *general* representation of the Indigenous condition (which, as I will demonstrate, *does* largely conform to the stages-of-society paradigm), and the implications of this representation for Hearne's articulation of his commercial mission.

- 6 Although I attempt in this essay to bring to light the discrepancies which arise between the theoretical discourse Hearne brings *from* the Old World and the implications of its attempted deployment *vis-à-vis* the New, I do not mean to suggest, thereby, that the four-stages theory is formulated in a context of discursive self-containment which Hearne's experience subsequently disrupts; nor do I wish to imply that the original formulators of this theory were entirely unaware of the ambivalence that inhabits the very heart of their conceptual model. But the four-stages theory, I would argue, functions in Hearne's text as a trans-historical truth and hence as an ideological formation—what Jerome McGann has called, in a different context, "another illusion raised up to hold back an awareness of the contradictions inherent in contemporary social structures and the relations they support" (134).
- 7 See, for example, Christon Archer's study of the ethnography of James Cook, John Ledyard, John Meares, and James Strange (*passim*), all of whom employ language that is much more forcefully stereotypical than that which Hearne uses in *A Journey . . . to the Northern Ocean*.
- 8 Two of the other three usages of the word "savage" occur rather casually in Hearne's observations concerning the "Athapuscow" people and their customs (171, 226); and the third occurs in a passing reference to one of the sartorial practices of "Indian men" in general (276).
- 9 See I. S. MacLaren's important bibliographical studies on the provenance of *A Journey . . . to the Northern Ocean* ("Samuel Hearne's Accounts" *passim*; "Exploration/Travel Literature" 56-58; and "Notes" *passim*).
- 10 Elsewhere in the text Hearne writes that during times of mourning the Chipewyans "seem to sympathise (through custom) with each other's afflictions so much, that I have often seen several scores of them crying in concert, when at the same time not above half a dozen of them had any more reason for so doing than I had, unless it was to preserve the old custom, and keep the others in countenance" (219). Here, in order to support his thesis that the Northern Indians are incapable of affective bonding, Hearne must explain their behaviour as a mode of "custom," something that occurs not out of authentic feeling for the misfortunes of others, but merely for the sake of social form. Interestingly, Hearne's objective distance (his assertion that the people mourning "had no more reason for so doing than I had") demonstrates a certain coldness or lack of sympathy on his *own* part. Thus, Hearne's behaviour evidences a lack of that quality of feeling that he uses in part to argue for the superiority of his own culture over that of the Northern Indians.
- 11 For Hearne's comments concerning what he refers to as Native "gluttony," see pages 44 and 138 of *A Journey . . . to the Northern Ocean*.
- 12 Hearne's discourse on Native "waste" ultimately fails to take into account the importance of language difference to philosophical reflections on matters of cultural practice. It is obvious, however, that there is some significant discontinuity between the English and Chipewyan understandings of "waste." Hearne

himself admits that animal carcasses left by the Indians are often "devoured by the wolves, foxes, and other beasts of prey" (26); and, on one occasion, Hearne mentions that he and his companions were able to make a "very acceptable" meal out of "several joints of good meat" that had been left in the "old tent-places" of other Indians who had passed through the same territory before them (42). These observations suggest that the Chipewyans may have conceptualized the leaving of animal carcasses as an act of *sharing* rather than of waste. As for Hearne's own eating practices, might not his refusal to be "persuade[d]" to eat the warbles out of caribou skins, a repast of which his guides were "remarkably fond" (128), have been construed by the latter as an act of waste? Finally, it is interesting to consider some of Hearne's comments on the caribou pound (I discuss the pound in detail towards the end of this paper); for here Hearne points out that the people who impound caribou—those who are not yet entirely assimilated into the European-centred trading economy—are, compared to their fur-trading countrymen, "by far the greatest philosophers, as they never give themselves the trouble to acquire *what they can do well enough without*," but are content, instead, to satisfy their "*real wants*" (52; emphasis added). Among other possibilities, the Chipewyan "philosophy" that Hearne here considers somewhat resembles a rejection of conspicuous consumption—and, as such, it is very much at odds with Hearne's explicit discourse on Indigenous "waste."

- ¹⁵ Surprisingly enough, Hearne qualifies his original affirmation of the existence of Indigenous cannibalism in a discussion that pertains specifically to the "Southern [Cree] Indians" (22n); and, given that Hearne commonly characterizes this group as the least civilized of all local autochthonous peoples ("the most debauched wretches under the Sun" [81]), this unexpected retraction in their favour further undermines his claims concerning the frequency of Indigenous cannibalism in general (for if the "Southern Indians" scrupulously avoid the practice, as Hearne points out, then it is only logical to conclude that the people whom Hearne constructs as their more morally-developed neighbours would abhor it altogether).
- ¹¹ In a moment of compassion for a man whom (Hearne says) was "despised and neglected" by his fellow Indians because circumstance had driven him to the necessity of eating one of his unlucky comrades, Hearne writes in the voice of the 'other': "Why do you despise me for my misfortunes?" he represents the man as saying: "the period is probably not far distant, when you may be driven to the like necessity!" (22n). Keith Harrison identifies in this moment an instance of something resembling cultural dialogism: In this "remarkable act of identification," Harrison remarks, "Hearne moves beyond a great European taboo, and interrogates himself through the eyes of a 'cannibal.' . . . As in a mirror, Hearne acknowledges his potentially shared inhumanity" (652).
- ¹⁵ It is well-known that Hearne cultivated the acquaintance of the eminent zoologist Thomas Pennant (Glover xxxviii). In the "Preface" to his published journal, Hearne gratefully acknowledges "the assistance I have received from the perusal of Mr. Pennant's Arctic Zoology" (Hearne lii).
- ¹⁶ Moreover, because war tends to be waged to the detriment of commerce, Hearne's original orders instruct him to persuade any "far-off Indians" he may meet on his journey "from going to war with each other, to encourage them to exert themselves in procuring furs and other articles for trade" (lxvi-lxvii).
- ¹⁷ I am indebted to Bridget Orr for this insight, which she offered during a panel discussion at the annual meeting of the Northeast American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (University of Ottawa, 8 Sept. 1995).
- ¹⁸ This phrase belongs to Captain James Cook, who encouraged his editor, John Douglas, to make his own published journal "unexceptionable to the nicest readers" (qtd. in MacLaren, "Exploration/Travel Literature" 44). Douglas was, of course, Hearne's editor as well.

- 19 Indeed, as John Bartlet Brebner has pointed out, one of the historical results of Hearne's expedition across the barrens "was to eliminate a huge area of North America from attention for over a century" (326).
- 20 The notion of "degenerationism" functions as a trope in the texts of a number of eighteenth-century writers. In an issue of his newspaper the *Review*, for example, Daniel Defoe speaks of the likelihood that widespread immoral behaviour in England could cause a scenario in which England would "become like the Continent of *America*," and its inhabitants become as "savage[s]" (455-56). Similarly, In his *Charge to the Grand Jury*, Henry Fielding writes of the danger that certain forms of public entertainment (masked assemblies in particular) might reduce civil society to a "downright State of wild and savage Barbarism" (qtd. in Castle 189-90).
- 21 As historian E. E. Rich has noted, when Hearne was formally asked to undertake his journey, the Committee promised him "his position as mate of the *Churchill* for as long as he should remain at the post, rais[ed] his wages to thirty pounds a year, and [held] out hopes that on his return he would be made Master of the brigantine *Charlotte*" (48). And the success of his mission did in fact help Hearne to improve his position within the ranks of the Hudson's Bay Company. As Hearne himself points out, not only did he receive a generous gratuity for successfully carrying out his expedition, but, "As a farther proof of the Company's being perfectly satisfied with my conduct while on that Journey, the Committee unanimously appointed me Chief of Prince of Wales's Fort in the Summer of 1775; and Mr. Bibye Lake, who was then Governor, and several others of the Committee, honoured me with a regular correspondence as long as they lived" (footnote lxx). These remarks suggest that Hearne's extended immersion in Chipewyan culture should not be read unproblematically for proof that he has undergone a significant process of "Indigenization," for they make it clear that Hearne's journey played a material role in consolidating and improving his status as an *Englishman*.
- 22 E. E. Rich, has criticized Hearne in passing for his lack of assertiveness (49); Brebner has labelled Hearne "somewhat timorous" (326); and Glover has tried to correct the tendency among historians "to regard Hearne as a weak personality who cared only for peace at any price" (xix-xx).
- 23 Versions and portions of this paper were presented at the annual meetings of the Northeast American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (University of Ottawa, September 1995) and the Pacific Coast Conference on British Studies (University of California, Los Angeles, March 1996). I would like to thank Sylvia Bowerbank, McMaster University, for her consistently critical readings of early drafts of this essay; and I gratefully acknowledge the generous support of McMaster University and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada during the researching and writing of this piece.

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