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Abstract

In the current post-colonial discourse on the revising of imperial history, George Bowering's novel Burning Water provides an interesting case study, as it presents itself as a historical fictional rewriting of George Vancouver's journey of exploration. While bearing clear evidence of extensive research it simultaneously deliberately distances itself from its historical sources, primarily through its imaginary rendering of the dialogue amongst the Europeans and the Indians. With regards to the actual course of events during the expedition as described in the journals of the naval officers, the plot in Burning Water diverges little from the primary material except for the ending. Where the novel does deviate from the historical records is in its selection of certain events as a backdrop for the novel's story, the inclusion of the twentieth century narrator's own movements and narrative considerations in the writing process, the suspension of a linear narrated time and most significantly of all the author's invention of dialogue between his historical characters. This dialogue lends life to the records providing a narrative without which, in Bowering's words, 'George Vancouver is just another dead sailor' (p. 9).

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LARS JENSEN

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In the current post-colonial discourse on the revising of imperial history, George Bowering's novel *Burning Water* provides an interesting case study, as it presents itself as a historical fictional rewriting of George Vancouver's journey of exploration. While bearing clear evidence of extensive research it simultaneously deliberately distances itself from its historical sources, primarily through its imaginary rendering of the dialogue amongst the Europeans and the Indians. With regards to the *actual* course of events during the expedition as described in the journals of the naval officers, the plot in *Burning Water* diverges little from the primary material except for the ending. Where the novel does deviate from the historical records is in its selection of certain events as a backdrop for the novel's story, the inclusion of the twentieth century narrator's own movements and narrative considerations in the writing process, the suspension of a linear narrated time and most significantly of all the author's invention of dialogue between his historical characters. This dialogue lends life to the records providing a narrative without which, in Bowering's words, 'George Vancouver is just another dead sailor' (p. 9).

Following George Bowering's own assertion that beginnings are arbitrary, the episodic structure of *Burning Water* actually invites the reader to dip at random into the novel, and begin to unravel some of the central preoccupations in the novel's universe.

> Peter Puget just plainly hated the natives. Archibald Menzies spent days and nights with them as if they were any other foreigners who were half familiar and half strange. Zack Mudge, who could and did read French, was forever going on about *'le noble savage'*, and so on. But Vancouver had a number of varied reactions to them. (p. 149)[1]

The initial quotation (which admittedly has been carefully selected rather than picked) deals with the disparate responses of the Europeans to the various indigenous peoples encountered on one of the longest journeys of exploration in British naval history, George Vancouver's Pacific expedition in the last decade of the eighteenth century. Apart from the controversial aspect of invented dialogue from a historian's point of view, (who have

all tended to ignore Bowering's novel in their bibliographies, though one would suspect some have read it with a torch-light under their blankets late at night), Bowering's invented dialogue is primarily interesting for the imaginary light it sheds on life on board Vancouver's ships, the reaction of Indians to the whites' arrival and the latent conflict between Menzies and Vancouver. These are all sub-narratives which are at times hinted at in the journals, but effectively censured by the journalists themselves or their editors, though there is no question of the narratives' presence and importance during the expedition. They are the narratives that would provide intriguing reading rather than the tedious records of charting which dominate Vancouver's journal. The sub-narratives which Bowering supplies open up an interesting dialogue between history and literature. Historical reconstructions cannot supply such sub-narratives, because as a discipline the writing of history is tied by 'evidence' though narrative hints do exist. The fact that dialogue did take place does not grant history poetic license; fiction on the other hands is not bound by such allegiances, and yet Bowering's rewriting leans heavily towards historical reconstruction. Concepts such as fancy, imagination, and fact play a central role in his narrative and for his characters and this reinforces the novel's status as metafiction with elements of metahistory.

Bowering's sub-narratives spring from various *real* events and thoughts described in Vancouver's and the other diarists' journals, as is apparent from the continuation of the quotation above:

> True, he had been struck athwart the head by a paddle in the hands of a Sandwich Islander, and smacked unceremoniously into the waves while serving under James Cook. But the Spanish ruffians had more latterly performed a like operation in the Canaries, throwing his punched-up body into the Atlantic. Still, when they had been in the Sandwiches this most recent time, he'd been suspicious of the Islanders' intentions. When he was spilled from a native canoe into the surf at Oahu, he was certain that they were trying to kill him, even after they saw him rescue a drowning midshipman. (p. 150)

At this point Bowering's rewriting of a historical episode is still derived wholly from the various primary sources, the sole narrative intrusion issuing from his choice and gathering of selected events as instrumental in determining Vancouver's reflections, and of course in the narrator's ever-ironic presence. In this instance Bowering's version rather than enhancing dramatic qualities in the narrative is actually fairly tame in comparison with Menzies' *real* account of a irrational Captain beset by panic. However, Bowering's point is less the devotion to correctness of historical detail than it is to illustrate another side of what he sees as the captain's personality. A captain who instead of automatically achieving the elevated status and respect of his predecessor is forced to battle his way through, only to find that reaching such a status will ultimately be denied him.

Having established a chain of events leading to a situation with a plausible opportunity for his characters to display their personalities, Bowering lets them loose:

> 'Treacherous dogs,' he muttered, pressing salt water out of his skirts.
> 'We should shoot a dozen of them, make our stay here a lot less complicated,' put in Puget.
> 'You are too suspicious, captain,' said Mr. Menzies. 'It is because you learn their language in order to practise your control over them, while you never get close enough to them to listen to that language for a while and find out what they want.' (p. 150)

Bowering's humorous touch is always palpable. He constantly provides the reader with situational comedy such as the once again disgracefully soaked captain, the persistently racist Puget and the at times pedantic Menzies, who never misses a chance to upset the captain.

Bowering's invented dialogue will merit little professional acclaim from historians, but the irony is that when *real* dialogues are written down by the explorers, they are often a product of a heavy editorial exercise and after-rationalisation or even pure invention, e.g. to enhance the dramatic quality of important events during expeditions of discovery, where the explorer might have been too busy or scurvy-ridden to pronounce the famous words appropriate for the occasion.[2]

But Bowering's point with using invented dialogue is a different one. His dialogue presents conversations as they might plausibly have taken place, and it reveals credible attitudes amongst the Europeans to the peoples they encountered and to the landscapes they saw based on their own written material. None of the characters seem remote from the actual officers as they emerge from their own journals. Bowering creates a fictional universe which bears strong historical resemblance to the records from the voyage, it is actually contemplating. The dialogue simultaneously draws the actual events closer through an enhancement of identification for the reader, while the humour and familiarity of dialogue to a late twentieth-century audience draws attention to the fictionality of historical rewriting. Bowering has no desire to reconstruct a *real* historical situation, his response is fictional, emphasizing the subjectivity of historical rewritings and ultimately the post-colonial view of many histories rather than one History. The emphasis on fictionalisation is arguably one of the reasons for the radical departure in the novel's ending from the actual historical event of Menzies' murder of Vancouver.

Another important aspect of the fictionalization of history is that the deviation from historical actuality grants the writer poetic license. This poetic license Bowering uses to undermine accepted historical 'truths' and expose what turns out to be western mythological conventions. One of the great paradoxes of western culture is that it portrays history as a gallery of facts arranged according to a hierarchy of significance, relegating

mythmaking to other implicitly less advanced cultures, while in reality the mythmaking surrounding some of the great events or achievements in western history such as the great journeys of exploration plays a very significant part in western culture. As Gananath Obeyesekere has observed in his book on Captain Cook[3] the apotheosis of Cook has ironically been a European rather than a Hawaiian preoccupation.

Vancouver never reached Cook's towering proportions as a hero, and this is one of Bowering's central concerns in the novel. Vancouver's inability to step out of Cook's shadow combined with the frustration at being too late on the scene to achieve status as a great discoverer becomes Vancouver's tragedy. To add spite to tragedy he is forced to spend season after season discounting myths which have arisen because of Cook's and others' unsubstantiated conclusions regarding the existence of a great inland sea in Western Canada and the existence of a Northwest Passage through the North American continent.

Bowering shares the implied criticism of Cook which emerges in Vancouver's journal, and his severe questioning of the deservedness of Cook's elevated status is only rudimentarily disguised: 'Captain Cook has come down in the British historical imagination as a great seaman and superior Englishman. This is so because he told the Admiralty a lot of wonderful things' (p. 19).

Bowering is intrigued by the differences and similarities between the two navigators, whose tasks were so similar and yet their places in history were so different. He proceeds to pit the convictions of the two men against one another through invented dialogue between Cook and Vancouver, who was on Cook's last two expeditions. Cook eagerly puts forward his theory of Cook's River connecting it to the great Canadian lakes, because he desires such a passage. Vancouver, however, is skeptical, commenting 'it looks like an inlet' (p. 19). Vancouver remains the skeptic even on his own journey. In Bowering's version because of his unwillingness to accept what he cannot immediately see and verify, and his general prejudice against foreign map-makers and what he in his own journal calls closet-geographers. Other journalists on Vancouver's journey optimistically predict they are on the brink of a major discovery, but Vancouver's journal provides little evidence of such optimism except through his outbursts when it turns out, they have another anti-discovery at hand. Whether such an attitude reflects a greater degree of skepticism or higher degree of editing of the journals depends more on the interpreter than the material.

From the writings in Vancouver's journal one might also suggest that his skepticism reflects the fact that he merely mirrors Cook in having a more profound interest in the islands of the Pacific than the inhospitable coast of British Columbia. There is much evidence that both captains felt themselves treated as kings (if not Gods); Cook amongst the Hawaiians and Vancouver amongst the Tahitians. A much more flattering idea to entertain than spending time amongst incomprehensible natives, who were

regarded as primitives in the less benevolent interpretation of the word than the Pacific islanders.

Cook is an idol for Vancouver and a father figure (pp. 71, 126); but also the stumbling-block Vancouver must remove/reject in order to create a name for himself (p. 100). Vancouver's journey to a large extent follows the same route as Cook's and he becomes involved in a mental rivalry with Cook over who will be remembered as the great explorer. Vancouver's feelings towards the 'greatest sea-captain of the century' (p. 50) are ambiguous as he is torn between loyalty and ambition, between envy and admiration. His loyalty and admiration is clear from the reluctance with which he declares Cook's scatological map-making on the Canadian west-coast incomplete;[4] his envy and ambitious desire is according to Bowering expressed in Vancouver's renaming of places, e.g. the New Zealand inlet named Nobody Knows What by Cook is renamed by Vancouver Somebody Knows What (p. 22). The ambitious captain is however constantly reminded of his secondary status throughout his journey, most pertinently expressed in his perpetual need to verbally correct Cook's River to Cook's Inlet (pp. 196, 213). Pertinently, because in spite of the fact that this was the pivotal error Cook committed, it was one that prevailed for quite a while largely because Cook's 'discovery' was a popular one, whereas Vancouver's correction represented an anti-discovery. Once this fancy was discarded it was merely replaced by a new one promulgating a Northwest Passage north of the continent. But for Vancouver his rebellion against his father figure reaches a climax when he discards Cook's myth of a Northwest Passage through Cook's River:

> That night Vancouver was very quiet at dinner. He sat in his blanket and coughed from time to time. The younger officers did not say a word or move in their chairs when Vancouver picked up the bowl that held his sauerkraut and carried it with him through a hanging door to the deck, and threw it as far as his weakened body would allow. (pp. 64-5)

The battle Vancouver finds himself losing is that of fact finding against the appeal of fancy – or wishfulfilment. It is apparent that no major discovery will be made, and yet discovery is his only potential claim to fame. As an eighteenth century scientist he abhors fancy, but his wish to become a hero draws him towards the mythmaking qualities of fancy, e.g. when he contemplates his ships being immortalised in the naval history of the British Empire: 'They were at the upper left corner of the world, utterly alone, and before the night was over they would become one of the many mysteries of the sea' (p. 222). But even this tragic triumph and death-wish is denied Vancouver, as it soon emerges in characteristic Bowering fashion of every-day conversation: '"I see a ship, sir," said Whidbey./ Nothing, at that moment, could have enraged Vancouver more' (p. 222). This is the final realisation by Vancouver that the 'blank spots' in that corner of the

world are rapidly disappearing, as what during Cook's time would have been virgin territory for the exploring expedition is now an anchorage for five ships. There are no longer any fantastic tales to relate of unknown countries, all that remains is the tedious marking of boundaries and navigational recordings of previously visited places, a task which Vancouver's men nonetheless set about 'doggedly' (p. 153), while Vancouver attempts to make his name if not famous then at least unavoidable by naming all the capes and inlets etc. (pp. 62-3), thus surrendering himself to the original mission of fact-finding:

> Whatever the edge of the world was made of, this craft at the nose of the eighteenth century was turning it day by day into facts. Fathoms, leagues, rainfall, names, all facts. The *Discovery* was a fact factory. The charts were covered with numbers and then rolled up and stacked in holes, waiting to be published at home. (p. 186)

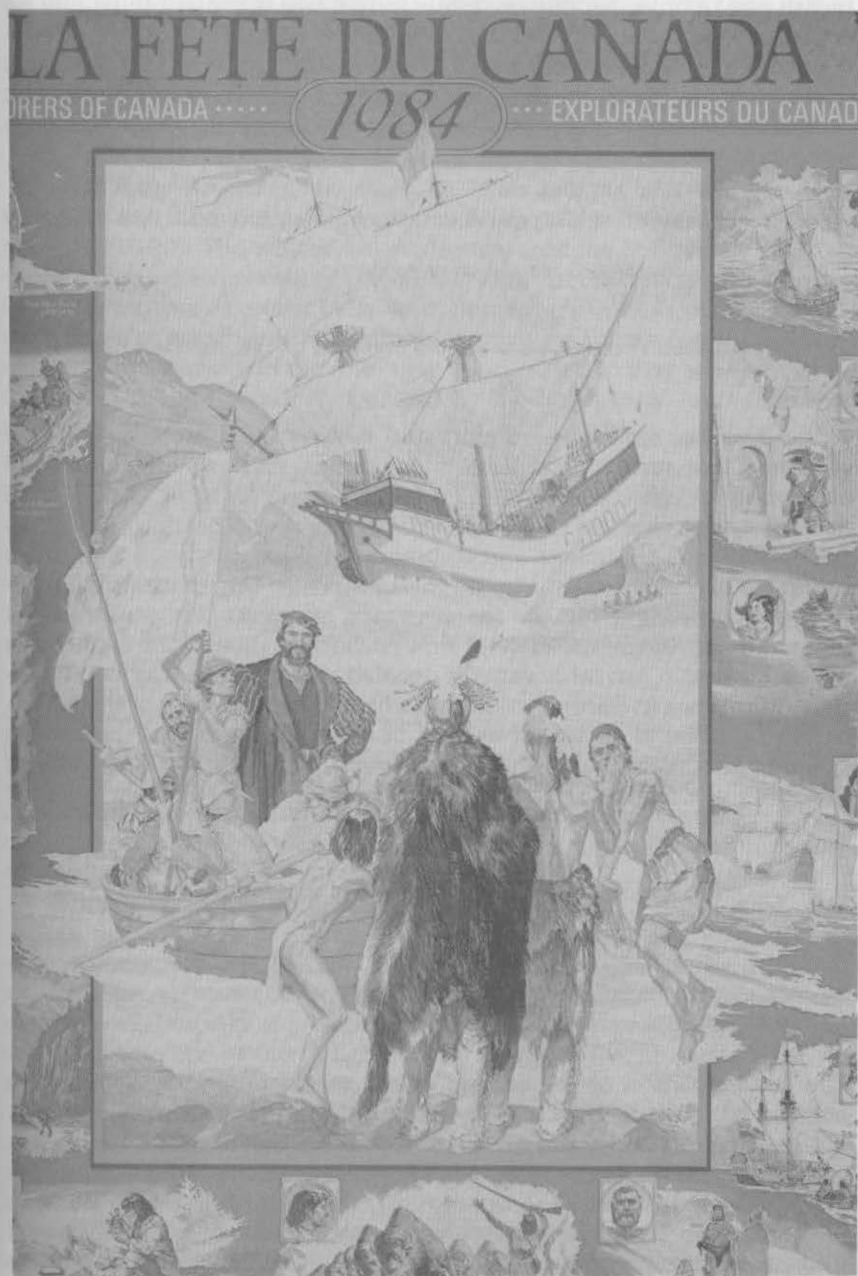
While Vancouver engages in the process of dispelling popular myths of inland seas and passages across the continent, Bowering's narrator novelist is preoccupied with his own quest to create a picture of Vancouver's complex personality (p. 161). In that process he explodes the European myth of larger-than-life explorers and other myths surrounding European first encounters with the Indians. He exposes the fact that they were actually 'mere' humans, not the mythologised explorers through dialogue between Europeans, the behaviour of the Europeans towards the Indians and in particular through Indian dialogue.

Bowering's debunking of Eurocentric and stereotyped images of noble or primitive savages is not always subtle (p. 92) but always poignant. It is, therefore, far from coincidental that the novel opens with the arrival of the two European ships seen through the eyes of two Indians who are fishing, a view-point deliberately aimed at subverting European perceptions of awe-struck Indians facing the arrival of civilization, and implicitly a criticism of the tendency of Eurocentric discourse to use oppositional strategies in its portrayal of colonial/imperial relations, or the periphery/centre dichotomy. The image Bowering presents of the Indians displays only sporadic evidence of Indian life from an ethnographic point-of-view. This avoidance is deliberate because Bowering's use of Indian characters (who are only known as first, second, and third Indian) serves primarily to show how the appearance of Europeans might have been perceived by the Indians. Bowering's approach focuses on a no-man's-land of first encounter, where no boundaries between the two cultures have yet been established, no centre/periphery created except in the minds of the Europeans. Such an approach highlights the current post-colonial view that to see colony/empire only in terms of incompatible oppositional stances ignores the constant dynamic process of cultural exchange taking place, a particularly fertile process during the period prior to actual colonisation.

The familiarity of every-day conversation between the two Indians stresses communality of human experience rather than the traditional view of cultural alienness and thwarts any vision of Indians as either ennobled primitives or primitive savages. The communality of human experience intensifies reader identification, while the subversion of accepted conventions defamiliarises the reader's experience. In this light the novel seems directed at a western audience though the universality of European explorers' behaviour wherever they went indicates that Bowering's rewriting of a history may on a general level illustrate the Other's experience of first encounters. Bowering removes the Indians from the familiar yet culturally alien frame of ethnographic contemplation to a realm of western experiences in a reversal of roles. Bowering's Indian explode the myth of how Indians reacted with a unified awe at the Europeans' arrival, emphasising instead like James Axtell[5] and Obeyesekere the way in which Indians absorbed the shock of the European presence, and indeed very often tried to exploit the opportunities offered by the unexpected presence. This is not to discount the later disastrous impact of European invasion and colonization, but rather to suggest that the vision of sheer subjection of indigenous people tends to lend credence to the image of indigenous societies as totally static and incapable of absorbing or adapting to new conditions, while offering little in terms of explaining the development of complex relations between indigenous peoples and transplanted Europeans.

Bowering's opening with the two fishing Indians seems at first to follow conventional depictions of enigmatic European arrival: 'Whatever it was, the vision, came out of the far fog and sailed right into the sunny weather of the inlet. It was June 10, 1792' (p. 13). But instead of being followed by a scene of native uproar, Bowering presents a scene where two Indians sit fishing. The dialogue between the two Indians also opens with a predictable relation of the vision to Indian mythology, but again the impression of conventional presentation of Indians is quickly undermined by the conversation turning to a discussion about whether lack of food might be responsible for the vision, thus marginalising the vision that western history has told us is an awesome appearance and demystifying the Indians;[6] Bowering is already introducing the central issues of his novel, fact, fancy and imagination. The first Indian continues in the anticipated rhetoric characteristic of a culture rich on mythology:

> 'I see two immense and frighteningly beautiful birds upon the water.'
> 'Birds?'
> 'Giant birds. They can only be spirits. Their huge shining wings are folded and at rest. I have heard many of the stories about bird visions, the one who cracks your head open and eats your brains...'
> 'Hoxhok.' (p. 14)


LA FETE DU CANADA
RERS OF CANADA
1984
EXPLORATEURS DU CANAD

Indian one rambles happily on, while Indian two is content to let him get carried away until it becomes too much for the narrator: '*He* stopped writing and went out for a while in the Triestino sunlight. When he came back this all seemed crazy' (p. 15). After the return of the narrator he resumes control of the wandering minds by letting the older Indian two's common sense prevail:

> 'Now, look at the highest point at the rear of the larger dugout. What do you see there?'
> The first Indian looked with his very good eyes.
> 'It looks like a man.'
> 'Yes?'
> 'In outlandish clothes. Like no clothes ever seen on this sea. He must be a god, he ...' (pp. 16-7)

Indian two has seen whites before and assures Indian one they are not gods and that such a perception is dangerous, ending with the rational observation, '"can you imagine a god with hair on his face?"' Such Indian deductions are needless to say a severe blow to the deification of the Europeans. Rational arguments and common sense prevails with Bowering's Indians much as they would with the Europeans. Bowering's Indians, irreverently fishing while in the presence of great change, forward a deliberately coincidental view of first encounter, though the significance of the European arrival is eagerly debated much in the way that a likewise occurrence in Europe would have been. The responses of the Indians to the situation is as varied as that of the Europeans, and Bowering's humour in contemplating Indian theological concepts remains sharp, as they ponder what has since become the predominant Eurocentric view of the event:

> 'Okay. The world is coming to an end and they are going to take us away on their great winged canoes to their homeland in the sun.'
> The third Indian's efforts to be creative were noted by his friend with approval. That is why he wasn't impatient with him. A lot of people think that Indians are naturally patient, but that's not true. Before the white 'settlers' arrived there were lots of impatient Indians. (p. 92)

The contemplation of the ending of the world is familiar to Christian beliefs such as the arrival of anti-Christ but it is also reminiscent of other indigenous peoples' literary responses to the invasion of the whites such as Colin Johnson's *Doctor Whoreddy's Prescription for Enduring the End of the World*, which deals with the last of the Tasmanian Aboriginals. Johnson's vicious humour may seem more poignant than Bowering's sabotage of European stereotyped images of patient Indians, but the third Indian's vision brings out the dire long-term consequences of the whites' presence:

> The third Indian shifted uncomfortably, despite all the people who think Indians are always fully comfortable in their natural environment....
> ...'You are telling me that these people from the sun will eat all our clams.'
> 'And oysters and shrimp.'
> 'And we will then become the Indians with nothing,' said the first Indian, picturing their fate mainly in terms of his wife and children. (pp. 93-4)

The incidents Bowering describes between Indians and whites range from hilarious moments and great parties (pp. 128-9) to naked confrontation (pp. 218-20). The whites' behaviour towards the indigenous peoples varies according to prevailing prejudices, local circumstances and increasingly to Vancouver's erratic behaviour. Bowering's Indians react in a variety of ways suggestive of their different tribal traditions. They are, however, constantly aware of the roles they are expected to play when meeting the whites, though genuinely puzzled by the Europeans' inept attempts at communication:

> A Yankee named Magee stepped out of the nearby copse with a donkey loaded with supplies. He held his hand up, palm forward.
> 'How!' he said, in a deep voice.
> The two Indians made their faces look patient.
> 'What is this "How"?' asked the first Indian of his companion.
> 'Search me,' said the second Indian. 'But we may as well go along with him.' He put his hand up in his best imitation of the skin-covered stranger.
> 'Aeh, shit!' he said. (p. 199)

The complete reversion of roles as both parties continue with absurdly bungled conceptions of how to communicate on the other's terms provides many of the humorous incidents which proliferate throughout the novel, emphasising the two culture's relative independence of each other and consequently their ability to co-exist at this early stage. The conflicts surfacing because of different attitudes to the nature of the contacts are more rife and persistent amongst the English than between the English and Indians.

The question of how to treat the natives is thus one of the obstacles which dominates the complex relationship between Menzies and Vancouver, a relationship that seems in many ways a prolongation of the diverging opinions of the Enlightenment botanist, Joseph Banks and the naval commander, James Cook.

This brings us back to the first quotation in the article, and Bowering's assertion that Vancouver has different reactions to the natives, implying that the only other round character in the novel, Archibald Menzies, has not.

The question is what variety of reaction Vancouver displays? His choice of response is governed by his perception of his own role as captain, and his typical reaction to the natives varies little regardless of where he is.

Natives are all the same to Vancouver, as Menzies replies in one of his instances of insight, that worries the captain:

> 'You are too suspicious, captain,' said Mr. Menzies. 'It is because you learn their language in order to practise your control over them, while you never get close enough to them to listen to that language for a while and find out what they want.'
> ... [Vancouver:] 'I found out what they wanted in Tahiti. What they wanted chiefly was British property, including the uniforms at the time worn by the British sailors.'
> 'Yes, and you had two Tahitian men, in front of their families and neighbours, shorn bald and flogged, for purloining one hat.'
> 'That is correct Mr. Menzies. We also have some of their hats, which we paid for, in trade. It is the way we British do it, sir. We are not, sir, a bunch of republicans.' (p. 150)

The argument centres on different ways of perceiving Others, ways of travelling and ends with the different definitions of why the British are present in the Pacific. In Menzies' view they are there to obtain information on the natural history of the region, collect plant specimens and for cultural exchange. To Menzies any new surroundings provide a fresh unlimited reservoir of novelties, because his scientific approach is that of the enthusiastic amateur collector happy to contemplate the immediate world around him, whereas Vancouver carries the added burden of the need to deliver significant discoveries, if he wants to be immortalised. Vancouver is stuck with an unrewarding mission, whereas Menzies' will be successful regardless of where he goes. Vancouver is there first of all as a representative of the British navy, as the spearhead of British civilisation and to instigate any trade that might be beneficial to the British.

But the arguments between Vancouver and Menzies have much wider implications, as they form the central axis in the novel around which the plot evolves. It is through the struggle between Menzies and his captain that the conflicting sides of Vancouver emerge, and the antagonism between the two is of such a strength that it forces the narrator on one of the few occasions of invented dialogue between the two, to comment that they 'did not often have such quiet conversations, and usually one just had to imagine them' (p. 108). The narrator seems bound by his own narrative or by the primary material to pit the two against each other, while the aesthetic discussion between the two referred to above is used by the narrator as clarification of the ideas behind the two men's actions and the equality and mutual respect that paradoxically lies behind the animosity. Vancouver's personality and Bowering's own infatuation with its complexities form the quest of the narrator in *Burning Water*, and as the novel progresses the story of the captain increasingly merges with the metanarrative quest of the narrator: 'He was mainly perplexed that two men like Vancouver and Menzies, who so much resembled one another in energy, professional devotedness, and pride, should be at such odds during their voyage' (p. 233). Bowering provides a tentative answer to his own

bewildered question based on their equality forming the foundation of their rivalry, as he has earlier on talked about quarrels over 'the definition of work and worthwhile activity aboard a military vessel' (p. 178). But the presence of such considerations at this late stage in the novel, suggests the narrator's uncertainties; which stem primarily from his acceptance of evidence of the captain's irrational behaviour, broached in his realisation where the narrative of the novel has carried him: 'he was more than beginning to concur with Menzies' apprehension or perhaps diagnosis of the commander's mental condition' (p. 234). In the light of their antagonistic positions has the narrator allowed himself to be lured by the one side and sacrificed his own position as outside observer? The two characters are totally interdependent, because Menzies only participates on the expedition because the captain allows him to, while Vancouver after the loss of his first physician and due to his increasing sickness depends more and more on Menzies. The cool repose with which Menzies shoots the albatross and proceeds to dissect it sends shivers through Vancouver and the premonition of the incident is difficult to ignore when Menzies at the end of the novel kills Vancouver with two shots. His disappearance over the railing is indicative of a wish not to end in the doctor's hands, dissected like the albatross, but in a final desperate gesture to join his mythologised predecessor.

NOTES

1. George Bowering, *Burning Water* (Toronto: New Press Canadian Classics, 1983). All subsequent references to the novel are to this edition.
2. The question of the fictionality of explorers' own written dialogue originates from my thesis on perceptions of the Australian Outback and the Canadian Interior. Both the Australian explorers Charles Sturt and Edward John Eyre invented dialogue to enhance the drama of their journeys, partly because their journeys were characterised by a lack of discoveries. This was not due to any fault of theirs, the Australian Outback provided no landscape scenery that met the expectations of the colonial Establishment.

   The Canadian explorers were often helped extensively by editors, to the extent that they hired a ghost-writer, and the loss of original material, e.g. in the case of Alexander Mackenzie, makes it very difficult to ascertain the degree of fictionalisation. But the presentation of dialogue in narratives, either written by somebody else, or written by the explorer himself often many years later probably did little to enhance the accuracy.

   Gananath Obeyesekere, in *The Apotheosis of Captain Cook; European Mythmaking in the Pacific* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1992) observes that since he could not actually communicate with the natives in many instances, Captain Cook interprets the natives' gestures into words. A very dubious undertaking to say the least, but one which allowed the explorer to present himself through the eyes of the natives in much the way he wanted. Who would be there to argue?

3. *The Apotheosis of Captain Cook; European Mythmaking in the Pacific* (Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1992).
4. Menzies and other journalists' criticism of Cook's charting on the Canadian coast is far more direct.
5. James Axtell, *The Invasion Within; The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America*, (Oxford: Oxford U.P., 1985).
6. For a presentation of first encounter by the Indians, see James Axtell's description of the Micmac Indians' reaction to the arrival of the French. (James Axtell, op. cit., p. 7)