

NARRATIVES OF PROTESTANT MISSION IN CANADA:  
THE WRITINGS OF BENJAMIN KOHLMEISTER,  
JOSHUA MARSDEN, AND JOSEPH ABBOTT, 1814-1846

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## ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: Narratives of Protestant Mission in Canada: The Writings of Benjamin Kohlmeister, Joshua Marsden, and Joseph Abbott, 1814-1846

The critical study of colonial literature in Canada has focused largely on the writings of explorers, soldiers, scientific travellers, tourists, land speculators, emigrant settlers, and even artists. Comparatively little study, however, has been devoted to another Canadian traveller and writer of the period: the missionary.

This thesis surveys the literary history of the Protestant missionary in Canada and examines in detail three individual texts representative of the genre of missionary writing in an attempt to describe and assess its discursive characteristics and to establish the place of the Protestant missionary writer on the Canadian literary continuum. Chapter One establishes the importance of missionary and missionary-inspired literature to the development of the Canadian literary and cultural imagination. Chapter Two introduces the reader to the history of Protestant missionary literature in Canada by exploring the three missionary societies which did the most to produce and promote it: the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, the Methodist Missionary Society, and the United Brethren Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel among the Heathen. Chapters Three, Four, and Five offer readings of individual missionary texts: Benjamin Kohlmeister's and George Kmoch's Journal of a Voyage from Okkak, on the Coast of Labrador, to Ungava Bay (1814), Joshua Marsden's Narrative of a Mission to Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and the Somers Islands (1816), and Joseph Abbott's Philip Musgrave; or, the Memoirs of a Church of England Missionary in the North American colonies (1846). The discussion of each of these texts is devoted to an introduction, biographical sketch of the author, literary and publication details, critical analysis, and conclusion. Critical readings focus on narrative strategies and methods by which the author's experience of the Canadian landscape, and its inhabitants and their manners and customs is communicated to the reader.

Together, these texts chart a development in colonial missionary literature from documentary narrative to fictional representation of missionary experience. It is one of the aims of this thesis to demonstrate that these early missionary texts are part of a larger literary phenomenon in early English-Canadian literature and that they form part of a literary link with the missionary and missionary-inspired literature of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.



To

Kathy, Luke, Zachary, and Duncan

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## PREFACE

This thesis proposes that the Protestant missionary writer has played a contributory role in the development of the English-Canadian literary imagination and deserves, therefore, a place on the Canadian literary continuum. The purpose of this thesis is essentially twofold: firstly, to establish a historical context for early Canadian missionary literature by providing an outline of the literary role taken by three Protestant missionary societies and their representatives in Canada; and secondly, to establish a critical context for the literature by presenting three different but representative examples of Protestant missionary texts and to comment upon their distinguishing features. A concluding chapter will summarise briefly the main points of the study and suggest how this thesis could be linked to subsequent developments in missionary and missionary-inspired writing in Canada. The overall aim of the thesis is to demonstrate that the Protestant missionary writers deserves a place in Canadian literary history and that their contribution be seen as crucial to our understanding and appreciation of the development of the Canadian literary imagination.

In order to realise the above purpose it is firstly necessary to say something about the historical context of

which this thesis treats as its subject and secondly to examine the critical context in which Canadian missionary writing has been recognised and criticised. Chapter One explores both the historical context and critical context of missionary writing in Canada. Chapter Two offers a more detailed description and examination of the literary history of Protestant missionary writing in Canada by exploring the roles of three particular missionary societies who contributed to its development. Chapters Three, Four, and Five examine three individual texts and their authors: Benjamin Kohlmeister and his Journal of a Voyage from Okkak, on the coast of Labrador, to Ungava Bay (1814), Joshua Marsden and his Narrative of a Mission to Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and the Somers Islands (1816), and Joseph Abbott and his Philip Musgrave; or, the Memoirs of a Church of England Missionary in the North American Colonies (1846). The discussion of each text is divided roughly into five parts: introduction, biographical sketch of the author, literary and publication details, critical analysis, and conclusion. Critical readings focus on narrative strategies and methods by which the author's experience of the Canadian landscape and its inhabitants, their manners and customs is communicated to the reader. Together, these texts chart a development in colonial missionary literature from documentary narrative to fictional representation of missionary experience.

**a. Historical context**

Missionaries were prolific writers. One literary historian estimates that since the Renaissance, missionaries have written more works of their experiences and travels than has any other single group of traveller.<sup>1</sup> Religious bibliographies and missionary society archives reveal a seemingly endless wellspring of material. Any exploration of the subject, therefore, must be limited in its objectives and in the breadth of its search; therefore, I have limited my study to the history and literature of three Protestant missionary societies working in Canada during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries: the United Brethren's Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel among the Heathen, the Methodist Missionary Society, and the Church of England's Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. This is not to negate nor in any other way deny the importance of other Protestant missionary societies in the development of Canada's literary culture; it is simply a pragmatic choice based on availability of texts and other records.

**b. Literary context**

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<sup>1</sup> Percy G. Adams, Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Novel (Lexington, Kentucky, 1983), p. 60.



The choice of which missionary texts to select has been based on availability of texts and with thought to the amount of Canadian material which each contains. I have also taken to heart one missionary writer's warning that 'there is generally a sameness in Christian experience' which 'might become tedious through repetition'; it is for this reason that I have selected three different but representative case texts for study.<sup>2</sup> Each work is representative of its respective sect and its publications, and each articulates the missionary experience within the context of the faith of that sect. While religious ideology informs the narrative strategy and discursive manner of each author, each work also represents the missionary experience in a different part of the country: Labrador, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, and Lower Canada. Consequently, different responses to the local environment and its inhabitants can be examined. Again, this is not to suggest that other areas of Canada did not play an important role in the missionary experience. On the contrary, areas like Upper Canada, Rupert's Land, British Columbia, and the North provided important settings for the missionary experience and its articulation.

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<sup>2</sup> See Joshua Marsden, Narrative of a Mission to Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and the Somers Islands (Plymouth-Dock, 1816; rpt 1966), p. 159.

The reader will also note that I have limited my study to missionary literature written by men. Again, this is not to deny the important contribution made by women writers to the field. Female missionaries and the wives of missionaries were active in Canada in the eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries and some of them kept journals and published memoirs. Although there may be an occasional reference to these authors and their works in the thesis, I have avoided a specific discussion of them on the grounds that they should be treated within the larger context of women's discourse and feminist criticism.

**c. Wider historical and literary context:**

The late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries constituted the "great age" of mission in the Protestant Church. It was, in part, an extension of the philanthropic and religious concerns which arose out of the Enlightenment that produced a spirit of brotherhood, a sense of egalitarianism, and a commitment to the idea that humanity could be perfected. Given impetus by the Evangelical movement of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the Protestant missionary movement changed the face of the Empire, making a tremendous impact on both the

colonial and imperial imagination.<sup>3</sup>

Between 1790 and 1914 the Protestant Church's influence expanded at a greater rate than it had at any other time in the history of Christianity, thanks largely to missionary societies and the men and women who were sent out into the world on their behalf to preach the Gospel and convert the "heathen", the "infidel", and the "backslider".<sup>4</sup> The history of the Protestant missionary movement is recorded in the "lives" of thousands of individual men and women who laboured for a variety of missionary societies, sects, and churches. One historian estimates that no other group of men and women 'left more voluminous accounts of themselves to posterity' than the

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<sup>3</sup> See Max Warren, The Missionary Movement From Britain in Modern History (London, 1965) and Social History and Christian Mission (London, 1967); Gustav Warneck, Modern Missions and Culture: Their Mutual Relations, translated by Thomas Smith (Edinburgh, 1888) and Klaus Knorr, ed., British Colonial Theories, 1570-1850 (London, 1963).

<sup>4</sup> I am aware of the pejorative nature of the terms "heathen", "infidel", and "backslider" and am in no way endorsing their use, but rather using them in the historical context of which I am speaking.

The bibliography of works dedicated to the study of Christian mission is extensive. See the list of secondary sources in the bibliography at the end of this thesis. For a good introduction to the subject see Kenneth Scott Latourette, A History of Christianity (London, n.d.) and Stephen Neill, A History of Christian Missions (Harmondsworth, 1975).

missionaries.<sup>5</sup>

In Canada, missionaries assumed a major role in not only planting the Protestant Church, but also in pushing back the frontiers of the wilderness and extending European civilisation upon the native environment and culture.<sup>6</sup> The consequences of this encounter have been profound, but not least of these has been the impact of the missionary movement on the cultural and literary imagination of the country. In his 'Conclusion' to the Literary History of Canada, Northrop Frye charges that religion has been 'the major cultural force in Canada down to the last generation or so' and he credits missionaries as having been instrumental in its application.<sup>7</sup> Frye and others have pointed to the leading role which missionaries assumed in the promotion and production of a literary culture in Canada during the nineteenth century and have indicated the great extent to which the image or character of the missionary had pervaded the literary imagination. One critic estimates that there are more clergymen in Canadian

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<sup>5</sup> Geoffrey Moorhouse, The Missionaries (London, 1973), p. 170.

<sup>6</sup> The term 'Church' in this thesis will henceforward refer to the Protestant Church unless otherwise specified.

<sup>7</sup> See Northrop Frye, 'Conclusion', The Literary History of Canada, edited by Carl F. Klinck, 3 vols, (Toronto, 1965), Vol. 3, p. 832 and The Literary History of Canada, second edition (Toronto, 1976), Vol. 3, p. 328.

literature than in the literature of any other country in the world. In his book, Second Image: Comparative Studies in Québec/Canadian Literature (1971), Ronald Sutherland suggests that 'whether favourably or unfavourably portrayed . . . the dominant presence of the clergyman in Canadian creative works is a clear indication of the special impact of the church on Canadian consciousness'.<sup>8</sup>

As suggested above, this thesis sets out to demonstrate that Protestant missionaries deserve a special place in Canadian literary history and that they have played an important role in the development of Canadian literary culture. While such a role has been recognised by a number of Canadian literary historians and critics as having a major impact on the Canadian literary imagination, and while missionary and missionary-inspired texts have been cited for their unique portrayal of early-Canadian life, no study, to my knowledge, of the missionary and his literature has been undertaken. It is hoped, therefore, that the present study will be viewed in this light and seen as a preliminary or tentative exploration of a much larger subject requiring further analysis and discussion.

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<sup>8</sup> Ronald Sutherland, Second Image: Comparative Studies in Québec/Canadian Literature (Don Mills, Ont., 1971), p. 73.

Examine the journals of our zealous missionaries.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge



## CHAPTER ONE

### TOWARDS A HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL UNDERSTANDING AND APPRECIATION OF PROTESTANT MISSIONARY WRITING IN CANADA

#### I: Introduction

In his 'Conclusion' to the Literary History of Canada (1976) Northrop Frye claims that 'religion has been a major--perhaps the major--cultural force in Canada, at least down to the last generation or two'.<sup>1</sup> Not only has the Church taken an active role in the production and publication of literature in Canada during the past three hundred years, but it has also contributed one of the country's least acknowledged and most misunderstood writers of the Canadian experience: the missionary.

Perhaps no other traveller since the Renaissance left behind such a voluminous record of his or her experience than did the missionary.<sup>2</sup> According to mission historian

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<sup>1</sup> Northrop Frye, 'Conclusion', Literary History of Canada, edited by Carl F. Klinck, second edition, 3 vols (Toronto, 1976), Vol. III, p. 344. See also Literary History of Canada (Toronto, 1965), p. 832. Sociologist S.D. Clark has also written, 'In few countries in the western world has religion exerted as great an influence upon the development of community as it has in Canada' (see S.D. Clark, The developing Canadian community (Toronto, 1962), p. 168).

<sup>2</sup> See Geoffrey Moorhouse, The Missionaries (London, 1973), p. 170. The following, while no means exhaustive, are examples of bibliographies of works related to missions and missionaries: Board of Foreign Missions, A catalogue of the books and maps belonging to the library of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church (New York, 1847); Samuel Macauley Jackson, A Bibliography of foreign missions (New York, London,

Kenneth Latourette this vast record of missionary endeavour and experience comprises 'a record of heroism, of mistakes and achievements, and of failures and successes spelled out in thousands of individual lives'.<sup>3</sup>

Since the early seventeenth century, when the first Christian missionaries came to Canada, the articulation of missionary experience has become integrated into the early formation of a Canadian discourse. Due to the efforts of missionary societies and other sympathetic publishers in Britain, the missionary experience in Canada became more widely known to readers on both sides of the Atlantic. The publication of missionary letters, accounts, journals,

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Toronto, 1891); Yale Divinity School, Catalogue of the Foreign Missions Library of the Divinity School of Yale University (Connecticut, 1892); Edwin Munsell Bliss, Descriptive Catalogue of books on missions and mission lands suitable for Church or Sunday-school libraries or private use (Philadelphia, 1894); London Missionary Society, Catalogue of books contained in the Lockhart Library and in the general library of the LMS (London, 1899); The Woman's Journal, 'Descriptive catalogue of the literature of missions and ammunition for the workers' (Ohio, 1899); World Missionary Conference, Bibliography: missionary publications, Commission VI (Edinburgh, 1910); John Lovell Murray, A selected bibliography of missionary literature (New York, 1912); H.U. Weitbrecht, ed., A Bibliography for Missionary Students (London, 1913); Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, Catalogue of publications and literature issued by the SPG (London, 1915); International Review of Missions, Ten years' selected international missionary bibliography, 1912 to 1922, based on the International Review of Missions (London, 1922).

<sup>3</sup> Kenneth Scott Latourette, The History of Christianity (London, n.d.), p. 1249.

and other autobiographical works enabled the missionary to assume a prominent place in the Canadian and European cultural imagination.<sup>4</sup> Yet while Canadian critics have recognised the importance of the missionary in the formation of an early Canadian discourse, they have tended to focus their critical attention on other travellers like the explorer, the emigrant, and the settler: this, despite one critic's contention that 'there are more clergymen per book in Canadian literature than in the literature of any other country'.<sup>5</sup>

In tracing their country's literary roots, Anglo-Canadian writers have found a national story in the early explorations and missionary activities of the Christian Church. Northrop Frye, an ordained minister himself, identifies the missionary not only as an important contributor to the development of the Canadian literary imagination, but also as one of the original "founding fathers" of Canadian society.<sup>6</sup> Yet while much has been

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<sup>4</sup> See Frye, 'Conclusion', Literary History of Canada, Vol. III, p. 328.

<sup>5</sup> Ronald Sutherland, Second Image: Comparative Studies in Québec/Canadian Literature (Don Mills, 1971), p. 72.

<sup>6</sup> The other two being the explorer and the fur-trader. Frye explores this idea in the film Journey Without Arrival: A Personal Point of View from Northrop Frye, devised by Barbara Moon, Vincent Tovell, and Northrop Frye (CBC-TV, 1975).

written about missions, relatively little has been written about the articulation of missionary experience. Yet before examining the critical context of missionary writing in and about Canada, the following section will briefly explore the historical context in which Protestant missionary literature was produced.

## II: The historical perspective: early missionary and missionary-inspired writing

From the beginning, the Christian story has largely been about the missionaries and their mission.<sup>7</sup> From the Gospel accounts of John the Baptist being "sent" by God to 'prepare . . . the way of the Lord, [and] make his paths straight' (Matthew 3.1-3) to the epistolary narratives of Paul's missionary experience around the Mediterranean, much of the New Testament is devoted to the story of ministry and mission.<sup>8</sup> Central to this story is the figure of Christ whose life was spent preaching the Gospel

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<sup>7</sup> The words 'missionary' and 'mission' come from the Latin verb mittere meaning 'to send'. The Oxford English Dictionary defines a missionary as someone who 'is sent out or forth' upon a mission. A mission is defined as 'the action of sending men forth with authority to preach the faith and administer the sacraments; hence, authority given by God or the Church to preach'.

<sup>8</sup> For a discussion of mission in the Old Testament, see Donald Senior and Carol StuhlmueLLar, The Biblical Foundation For Mission (Maryknoll, New York, 1983).

and preparing humankind for the 'kingdom of heaven'.<sup>9</sup> According to this story the resurrected Christ commissioned his disciples to take up his ministry by 'teach[ing] all nations' (Matthew 28.19), 'preach[ing] the gospel to every creature' (Mark 16.15) and 'be[ing] witnesses unto [him] both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth' (Acts 1.8). The Book of Acts records the 'many wonders and signs . . . done by the apostles' in a narrative of mission that is central to the historical identity of the Christian Church. Acts identifies and reinforces a perception of a growing community of believers who 'were together, and had all things common' (Acts 2.43-44). In his Gospel, Luke attributes 'eyewitnesses and ministers of the word,' or missionaries, with an important role in reinforcing belief among the Christian community. As an eyewitness himself to the events which led to Christ's crucifixion, Luke claims to have 'perfect understanding of all things from the very first' and thus is able to verify 'the certainty of those things' with which he hopes to instruct his readers.

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<sup>9</sup> See Matthew 4.23: 'And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.'

The emphasis on personal testimony is nowhere more evident than in Paul's Epistles. Throughout them Paul not only records his experience of travelling throughout the Mediterranean world preaching and propagating the faith, but he also articulates his thoughts and feelings about his missionary experience. Writing about his experience is central to his mission. 'I have written the more boldly unto you', he writes in his Epistle to the Romans, '. . . because of the grace that is given to me of God, that I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel'. Paul reminds his readers and listeners that by narrating the 'mighty signs and wonders' by which he has invoked 'the power of the Spirit of God', he has 'ma[d]e the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed' (see Romans 15.14-21). Paul also emphasises his plain manner of speaking, a style devoid of high-blown rhetoric ('not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect' (I Corinthians 1.17)), a lesson which later generations of missionaries have adopted in their own writings.<sup>10</sup>

Missionaries sent out into the world by the Church during the Middle Ages and afterwards also reported their words

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<sup>10</sup> Paul repeats his literary advice often. See, for example, I Corinthians 2.4: 'And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.'



and deeds. Missionaries were not only emissaries of the Christian Church, but the advance guard of an encroaching European civilisation.<sup>11</sup> Missionaries reaching as far as Russia, India, China, and Japan, for example, sent or brought back accounts of their journeys into these "exotic" lands. In his Principal Navigations the sixteenth-century preacher and writer Richard Hakluyt compiled an number of these writings 'with the same intention that the old Romans set up in wax in their palaces the Statues or images of their worthy ancestors'.<sup>12</sup> Among them were two accounts written by Minorite missionaries--Johannes de Plano Carpini and William de Rubruquis. Their 'rare and memorable journals' not only offered 'glad tidings of the Gospel', but provided fascinating accounts of 'savage Tartars' and their customs.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> In 1102 a fleet of 200 'Christian ships' arrived at Joppa presumably, among other things, to spread the Gospel. See James Burney, Chronological History of the Discoveries in the South Seas or Pacific Ocean, 5 vols (London, 1803-1817), Vol. V, p. 546.

<sup>12</sup> Richard Hakluyt, The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation, 12 vols (Glasgow, 1903), Vol. I, p. lxxv.

<sup>13</sup> The voyage of Johannes de Plano Carpini unto the Northeast parts of the world, in the year of our Lord, 1246 in Hakluyt, Principal Navigations, Vol. I, pp. 134-179; and The Journal of frier William de Rubruquis, a French man of the order of minorite friers, unto the East parts of the worlde (1253) in Hakluyt, Principal Navigations, Vol. I, pp. 229-293. Other medieval missionary journals include The Journal of Friar Odoric (1300) in The Travels of Sir John Mandeville, edited by A.W. Pollard (London, 1905; rpt New York, 1964), pp. 326-

Carpini and de Rubruquis were the first Christian missionaries to take the Gospel beyond the Volga River and Hakluyt was unabashedly impressed with their travels. According to him, Carpini's journey surpassed even that of Alexander the Great 'both for length and difficultie'.<sup>14</sup> He was equally if not more impressed with their descriptive accounts. Asked to 'write all things . . . which [they] should see', Carpini and du Rubruquis recorded the ordinary along with the unusual. Fanciful descriptions of monster women and canine men are juxtaposed alongside tedious details of weather and war.<sup>15</sup> Lest he be censured for taxing his readers' patience, du Rubruquis reminded them that he had been instructed 'that

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362; and Francisco Alvarez's Ho Preste Joam das Indias (Lisbon, 1540) which was included in Samuel Purchas' Purchas His Pilgrimmes (1625). See also The Prester John of the Indies: A True Relation . . . of the Portuguese Embassy to Ethiopia in 1520, translated by Lord Stanley of Alderley (1881), revised and edited by C.F. Beckingham and G.W.B. Huntingford, 2 vols (Cambridge, 1961).

<sup>14</sup> Hakluyt, Principal Navigations, Vol. I, p. lii.

<sup>15</sup> This was not unusual among medieval missionaries. In his Journal of 1324 Friar Odoric described how he had 's[een] and heard great and miraculous things' in Abyssinia including 'a certain man leading about with him more than four thousand partridges'. Aware that he might be stretching his reader's belief Odoric confessed that he had omitted 'many strange things . . . because men will not believe them unless they should see them' (The Journal of Friar Odoric in Pollard, pp. 326 and 359).

[he] should not feare to write long letters'.<sup>16</sup> Despite his eye for detail, he wished he possessed an artist's skill in rendering his description.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, Hakluyt praised both of them for the knowledge they had gathered and for the 'homely stile wherein they were first penned'; these journals, he added, 'deserve most exceeding and high commendation'.<sup>18</sup>

So inspired was Hakluyt with the very idea of missionary exploration that he called upon all venturers to the New World to 'take a more godly course'.<sup>19</sup> The discourse of exploration soon rang with peals of zeal. In 1583

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<sup>16</sup> The journal of frier William du Rubruquis in Hakluyt, Principal Navigations, Vol. I, pp. 229-293. Among the other more interesting items in du Rubruquis' Journal is a description of a Tibetan custom which calls upon the people to drink from the skulls of their dead parents in order to 'call [them] . . . to remembrance' (p. 291).

<sup>17</sup> Hakluyt, Principal Navigations, Vol. I, p. 235.

<sup>18</sup> Hakluyt, Principal Navigations, Vol. I, pp. liii-liv.

<sup>19</sup> Quoted in George Malcolm Thomson, The North West Passage (London, 1975), p. 47. Elsewhere, Hakluyt addressed Philip Sidney with similar remarks, saying, 'Certes if hetherto in our own discoveries we had not been led with a preposterous desire of seeking rather gain than God's glory, I assure myself that our labors had taken far better effect. But we forgot that godliness is great riches and that if we first seek the kingdom of God all other things will be given unto us' (from Divers Voyages touching the Discovery of America (1582), in The Renaissance in England: Non-Dramatic Prose and Verse of the Sixteenth Century, edited by Hyder E. Rollins and Herschel Baker (Lexington, Mass, 1954), p. 888.

Humphrey Gilbert stepped upon Newfoundland's shores proclaiming that he had not only been ordained by the Crown to colonise the island, but he had also been given the right to subjugate the 'poor infidels . . . into Christian civility'.<sup>20</sup> In 1584 John Davis announced that England's sole purpose in going to the New World was to preach the Gospel: 'There is no doubt but that we of England are this saved people, by the eternal and infallible presence of the Lord predestinated to be sent unto these Gentiles in the sea, to those Isles and famous Kingdoms, there to preach the peace of the Lord: for are not we only set upon Mount Zion to give light to all the rest of the world?'<sup>21</sup>

While most explorers engaged in their own form of evangelising, some, like Martin Frobisher, carried clergymen with them on their journeys. During his third voyage to the Arctic in 1578, Frobisher was accompanied by the 'Minister and Preacher' Robert Wollfall, an English clergyman who had been requested by the Crown 'to save Soules, and to reform those Infidels [i.e. natives] . . .

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<sup>20</sup> Stephen Neill, The History of Christian Missions (Harmondsworth, 1975), p. 225.

<sup>21</sup> John Davis, A Discourse of Western Planting, written by M. Richard Hakluyt (1584), The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation, edited by Walter Raleigh (Glasgow, 1905), Vol. XII, p. 31.

to Christianitie'.<sup>22</sup> Interestingly, it was Wollfall, and not Frobisher, who became the object of fascination in George Best's account of the voyage. Impressed by Wollfall's dedication and spiritual leadership, Best was puzzled as to why Wollfall had abandoned the domestic comforts of a country parish in order to spend a year in the Arctic wilderness with a hundred other 'intending

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<sup>22</sup> George Best, The third voyage of Captaine Frobisher, pretended for the discoverie of Cataia, by Meta Incognita [1578], in Hakluyt, Principal Navigations, Vol. VII, pp. 319-375. See also The Three Voyages of Martin Frobisher, edited by Vilhjalmur Stefannson (Amsterdam, 1971; New York, 1971). Best was a lieutenant on board Frobisher's flag-ship, the Anne Frauncis, and had the additional duty of keeping a history of the expedition. See also Andrewe Thevet, The New Found Worlde, or Antarctike (London, 1568; facsimile rpt. Amsterdam and New York, 1971). Thevet reports on how Cartier took some natives back to France where they 'were made Christians' (p. 123).



colonists'.<sup>23</sup> Why, he asks, would a clergyman with a good reputation and who was 'well seated and settled at home in his owne Country' risk his life on such a 'painful voyage'? why would he leave 'a good and large living, . . . a good honest woman to wife, and verie towardly Children'? what would inspire him, he wonders, to live 'among a savage and brutish kind of people, in a place hitherto ever thought for extreme cold not habitable'?<sup>24</sup> As Best's questions suggest, the impact of the missionary and the idea of mission in the New World was beginning to be reflected in the discourse of exploration, revealing

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<sup>23</sup> George Best, Third voyage of Captaine Frobisher, pretended for the discoverie of Cataia, by Meta Incognita in Hakluyt, Principal Navigations and Best, 'A true discourse', Principal Navigations, Vol. XII, p. 209. On a previous expedition, Frobisher had reportedly found gold and silver on the island. He planned to return and leave a hundred men on the island for a year during which time they would mine the ore and prepare it for shipment home. See also Stefannson, Three Voyages, p. 100; The implementation of moral order was also important to Frobisher who ordered his men to abstain from 'swearing, dice, and cardplaying, and filthy communication'. Assumedly, Wolfall was there to make sure the men did not fall into temptation. During the voyage he 'serve[d] God twice a day, with the ordinarie service, usually in the Church of England' (see Stefannson, Three Voyages, p. 81). During a severe storm Best remarks on how Wolfall led the men in 'devoute Prayer and meditation to the Almighty' and how, later, he preached a sermon 'exhorting them especially to be thankfull to God for theyr strange and miraculous deliverance' (see Stefannson, Three Voyages, pp. 90 and 100).

<sup>24</sup> Stefannson, Three Voyages, p. 100 and p. 81. Stefannson provides a list of the names of the hundred colonists who were to spend a year on Baffin Island. He includes 'Mr Woolfall preacher' who was to receive a mere monthly salary of £2 10d for his sacrifice (see Stefannson, Three Voyages, Vol. II, p. 220).



the growing influence of the missionary on the European imagination.

### III: The Discursive Tradition in Canada: The Jesuit Relations

Before examining Protestant missionary literature, it is worth noting that the Catholic missionary tradition in Canada extends back to the early seventeenth century when Récollet and Jesuit missionaries came to New France to preach to and convert the Indians. They kept accounts of their experiences among the Indians and recorded their observations of the settlers and fur-traders. Catholic missionaries described their experiences in a series of narrative reports and accounts known as the Jesuit Relations. They were written in the mission field, sent to the superior at Quebec, and then on to Paris for publication, where they attracted keen public attention.<sup>25</sup>

Copies of the Relations were widely-distributed throughout Europe, editions appearing in Latin, Italian, and eventually, in English.<sup>26</sup> The poet and playwright Oliver

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<sup>25</sup> The North American mission reports were made between 1611 and 1768. From 1632 until 1673 the Jesuit Relations were issued annually by Sebastien Cramoisy in Paris. They appeared as a duodecimo volume, neatly printed and bound in vellum.

<sup>26</sup> For an early English edition of the Relations see John Lockman, Travels of the Jesuits into Various Parts of the World (London, 1735 and 1743).

Goldsmith took issue with the 'accuracy and veracity' of some of these accounts.<sup>27</sup> He complained that certain claims made in Jesuit narratives were wildly exaggerated and beyond the realm of reason or believability. Readers, he argued, might 'pardon any improbabilities' in such an account when they 'consider[ed] the hazards [the traveller] must have encountered, in procuring us any information whatsoever'; but they should not have to tolerate exaggerated distortions of reality. 'Of all accounts', he wrote, 'those of the Missionaries, as they depart most from truth, stand most in need of this indulgence. . . . The dangers they have undergone should be set in the opposite scale, against the improbabilities they relate'.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Oliver Goldsmith, 'Foreign Article' [a review of Histoire du Paraguay by R.P. Francois-Xavier de Charlevoix], The Monthly Review, no. xvi (June 1757), pp. 558-563, in The Collected Works of Oliver Goldsmith, edited by A. Friedman, 5 vols (Oxford, 1966), Vol. I, pp. 50-51 and pp. 55-56.

<sup>28</sup> Goldsmith, 'Foreign Article', Collected Works, Vol. I, pp. 50-51. Goldsmith took up the issue again in The Citizen of the World:

The missionary . . . informs us, with what pleasure the country to which he was sent embraced christianity and the numbers he converted; what methods he took to keep Lent on a region where there was no fish, or the shifts he made to celebrate the rites of his religion, in places where there was neither bread nor wine; such accounts, with the usual appendage of marriages and funerals, inscriptions, rivers, and mountains, make up the whole of an European traveller's diary; but as to all the secrets of which the inhabitants are possessed, those are universally attributed to magic; and when the traveller can give no other account of the wonders he sees performed, he very contentedly ascribes them to the power of the devil.

Despite their faults, however, the Relations were avidly read. In the nineteenth century efforts to collect the Relations were hampered by the fact that most of the copies had been frayed and tattered through use by their seventeenth- and eighteenth-century readers; but in 1858 the Canadian government managed to republish the original Cramoisy series. Studies of the Relations soon followed and other editions published, most notably Reuben Gold Thwaites's seventy-three volume edition which appeared at the end of the century.<sup>29</sup> It was at this point that the full weight of these documents began to bear upon the

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See Goldsmith, Citizen of the World (1761), Collected Works, Vol. II, p. 420.

<sup>29</sup> Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., The Jesuit Relations and allied documents: travels and explorations of the Jesuit missionaries in New France, 1610-1791, 73 vols (in 36) (New York, 1959). See also E.B. O'Callaghan, The documentary history of the State of New York, 4 vols (Albany, 1850); John Romeyn Brodhead, Documents relative to the colonial history of the State of New York; procured in Holland, England and France, 10 vols (Albany, 1856-58) and Documents relating to the history and settlements of the towns along the Hudson and Mohawk Rivers (with the exception of the Albany), from 1630 to 1684, and also illustrating the relations of the settlers with the Indians, Vol. 13, translated, compiled, and edited by B. Fernow (Albany, 1881); and John Gilmary Shea, Discovery and exploration of the Mississippi Valley; with the original narratives of Marquette, Allouez, Membré, Hennepin and A. Douay (New York, 1852). Francis Parkman, the American historian, made extensive use of the Relations in several of his works, including Pioneers of France in the New World (1865) and The Jesuits in North America (1867). In 1871 Abbés Laverdière and Casgrain published their Le Journal des Jésuites based on original manuscripts in the archives of the Seminary of Quebec (now Laval University).

Canadian imagination.

In their attempt to mythologise space and time Canadian writers and critics have repeatedly turned to the Jesuit missionary and his experience for inspiration. Anna Jameson, Agnes Machar, Marjorie Pickthall, E.J. Pratt, F.R. Scott, Leonard Cohen, and Brian Moore are all examples of Canadian writers who have been inspired and influenced by the Jesuit missionary and his writing. In her Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada (1838) Anna Jameson writes of the 'unrequited labours and sacrifices of the missionaries' and tells of how they 'perished in tortures' or 'devoted themselves to the most horrible privations . . . [with] none near to applaud the fortitude with which they died, or to gain hope and courage from their example'.<sup>30</sup> Even a Presbyterian minister's daughter like Machar was inspired by the Catholic legacy:

Ours their faith and inspiration, though we worship  
not as they,  
Still their spirit we would cherish in our country's

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<sup>30</sup> Anna Jameson, Winter Studies and Summer Rambles in Canada, 3 vols (London, 1838), Vol. II, pp. 237-238. Jameson included Methodist and Moravian missionaries in her remarks. Of the Moravians she wrote, 'They only stand between the Indian and his oppressors, and by their generous self-devotion in some measure atone for the injuries and soften the mischiefs which have been inflicted by their countrymen and fellow Christians' (Vol. I, p. 245). Jameson shared a Moravian missionary's belief that the only way to Christianise the Indians with any degree of success was to remove them 'as far as possible from all intercourse with Europeans' (Vol. I, p. 249).



life to-day;  
 Death of truer heroes never hallowed our Canadian sod  
 Than the men who, like their Master, died for love of  
 man and God!<sup>31</sup>

Similarly, Duncan Campbell Scott in 'On the Way to the Mission' (1905), Marjorie Pickthall in 'Père Lalemant' (1913), and E.J. Pratt in Brébeuf and His Brethren (1940) all make poetic use of Jesuit missionaries and their experience. Scott paints a tragic vignette of the Christian Indian on his way to the Jesuit mission, Pickthall elevates the Jesuits' martyrdom in the wilderness into a pastoral eulogy, while Pratt creates a modern Canadian epic from material gathered in the Jesuit Relations.<sup>32</sup>

Through such discursive practice, then, the missionary experience has become part of the Canadian writer's attempt to articulate Canadian experience and national identity. In 1901 Thomas O'Hagan referred to the Jesuit missionaries as Canada's 'first explorers' and stated that Canada had not only 'received its first impulse of Christianity' from missionary priests, but also 'its first

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<sup>31</sup> Agnes Machar, Lays of the 'True North' and Other Canadian Poems, second edition (London, 1902), pp. 15-17. Originally published in Rose-Belford's Canadian Monthly, VII (November, 1881), p. 365.

<sup>32</sup> Duncan Campbell Scott, The Complete Poems of Duncan Campbell Scott (London, 1927); Marjorie Pickthall, The Complete Poems of Marjorie Pickthall (Toronto, 1927); and E.J. Pratt, Brébeuf and His Brethren (Toronto, 1940).

impulse of civilisation, its first impulse of national life'.<sup>33</sup> Similarly, the Canadian historian Arthur Doughty, writing in Canada and Its Provinces (1914), spoke of the 'wider import' of missionary narratives and stated, 'They give reality and substance to the commonplace, that [Canada] is a Christian country. . . . In this field of activity, we catch glimpses of heroism and self-sacrifice which arouse our interest and compel our admiration'.<sup>34</sup> More recent literary historians and critics have also commended missionary writing. Writing in the Literary History of Canada (1965) Victor Hopwood describes early missionary narratives as the 'basic documents of Canadian literature, history, ethnology, and geography'; while W.H. New, in his History of Canadian Literature (1989), claims that narratives of missionary experience have a mythic-like quality 'suffused with visions of an absolute salvation, visions at once of the heroic and the holy'.<sup>35</sup>

#### IV: Protestant Missionaries and their Literature

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<sup>33</sup> Thomas O'Hagan, Canadian Essays, Critical and Historical (Toronto, 1901), pp. 161-162.

<sup>34</sup> Arthur G. Doughty, 'Introduction', Canada and its Provinces, Vol. 11, edited by Adam Shortt and Arthur G. Doughty (Toronto, 1914), p. 4.

<sup>35</sup> Victor G. Hopwood, 'Explorers by Land to 1867', The Literary History of Canada, Vol. I, p. 21 and W.H. New, A History of Canadian Literature (London, 1989), p. 48. Neither critic has much to say about Protestant missionary literature.

Although Protestant missionaries did not begin their mission in British North America until the eighteenth century, they had already begun the articulation of their experience from elsewhere in the New World.<sup>36</sup> Some of the earliest Protestant missionary writing from North America comes from Puritans like William Bradford of Massachusetts. In 1620 Bradford wrote to describe how he and his fellow pilgrims had planned their voyage to America 'for the glorie of God, and advancemente of the Christian faith'.<sup>37</sup> In that 'hideous and desolate wilderness', he stated, he and his followers hoped to '[lay] some good foundation . . . for the propagating and advancing the gospel of the kingdom of Christ' in the New World.<sup>38</sup> Puritans and Quakers, too, took to public preaching and the giving of spiritual testimony in 'the streets and squares' of Massachusetts. By the end of the seventeenth century a number of them had written and published accounts of their spiritual lives in the newly-created American colonies, including Alexander Whitaker's Good Newes from Virginia (1613) and George Fox's Journal (1694).

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<sup>36</sup> Throughout this thesis the term 'British North America' will refer to Canada before 1867.

<sup>37</sup> William Bradford, 'Of Plimoth Plantation' (1630-1650), from Norman Foerster, ed., American Poetry and Prose, (Cambridge, Mass, 1934), p. 18.

<sup>38</sup> Bradford, 'Of Plimouth Plantation', p. 18.



Seventeenth-century Protestant missionary literature in America produced its "heroes", missionaries who became role models for those who followed in their footsteps. One of the best-known of these missionary "heroes" was John Eliot, better known as the 'Apostle to the Indians'.<sup>39</sup> Eliot was a Presbyterian missionary who, in

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<sup>39</sup> Eliot was born in 1604 and became the subject of numerous biographies. For a typical nineteenth-century biography of Eliot see John Wilson, The Life of John Eliot, the Apostle to the Indians (Edinburgh, 1828). Eliot published a number of works which circulated both in America and in Britain. They describe the life and morals of his 'Indian towns' (like Nonanetum, Natick, and Okommakamesit) and celebrate his conversions of many of the Indians with their recorded testimonies. See, for example, John Eliot and Thomas Mayhew, Tears of repentance; or, a further narrative of the progress of the Gospel amongst the Indians in New England (London, 1653). In this work, Eliot and Mayhew recorded the confessions of a number of converted natives. Eliot's major literary accomplishment, however, was in the form of a number of works translated into the Mohecan language. By 1663 he had translated both the Old and New Testament (copies of these rare works entitled, Mamusse wunneetupanatomwe Up-Biblium God (1663) and Wusku Wuttestamentum Nul-Lordunum Jesus Christ Nuppoquohwussuaeneumun (1663), can be found in the Edinburgh University Library). Eliot also printed grammars and primers for native use such as The Indian Grammar begun; or, an essay to bring the Indian language into rules (Cambridge, Mass, 1666) and The Indian primer; or, the way of training up our Indian youth in the good knowledge of God . . . and an ability to reade (Cambridge, Mass, 1669) (reproduced from the original edition of 1669 with an introduction by John Small (Edinburgh, 1877)). In 1664 Eliot also published a translation of Richard Baxter's A Call to the Unconverted, a book describing 'the holy labours of the ministers of Jesus Christ'. In a letter to Baxter, Eliot writes: '[The Indians] have no books for their private use of ministerial composing. For their help,--though the word of God be the best of books, yet human infirmity is, you know, not a little helped by reading the holy labours of the ministers of Jesus Christ' (see Wilson, The Life of John Eliot, p. 157). More than a thousand copies were circulated, making it one of the

1632, became pastor of the church at Roxbury, Massachusetts. He had been inspired by the work of Jesuit missionaries in New France, and like them encouraged the natives to settle in villages and adopt the rudiments of husbandry and a market economy. By 1671 he had placed some thirty-six hundred 'Praying Indians', as they were called, in fourteen settlements or 'Indian towns'. His work among the natives became more widely-known largely through his published letters and accounts. His first account was published in 1647 and was said to have 'excited grateful feelings in the minds of many of the friends of the Saviour throughout the country'.<sup>40</sup> Eliot's first-hand accounts of his own missionary work among the Indians spoke of the 'progress' and 'improvement' that had

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earliest missionary-inspired narratives to be published in an aboriginal tongue. The following year, a similar work, The Practice of Piety, was also translated. It was reprinted in 1667 and again in 1687 suggesting that it was of some interest to Christian natives or at least that Eliot was successful in distributing them. Missionary, teacher, author, and philologist, Eliot was one of the first missionary heroes of the seventeenth century and his death in 1690 was lamented by many in New England and in Britain. 'There was no man on earth whom I honoured above him', Richard Baxter told Increase Mather in 1691. Recalling a letter from Eliot, Baxter said, 'It pleased me to read from him in my case: "My understanding faileth, my memory faileth, my tongue faileth, [and my hand and pen fail,] but my charity faileth not." That word much comforted me' (see Wilson, The Life of John Eliot, pp. 299-300).

<sup>40</sup> See Wilson, Life of John Eliot, p. 78. The work was included in a pamphlet entitled, 'The Day-breaking, if not the Sun-Rising of the Gospel with the Indians in New England'.

been made 'in the moral condition of the Indians'.<sup>41</sup> He boasted of the success he had in converting many of them to Christianity and exulted in the progress he had made in educating them in the rudiments of carpentry and in reading and writing.

Eliot's death in 1690 marked the birth of the great age of reform and philanthropy in Britain. Reformers like Josiah Woodward called for a remedy for what he called 'these degenerate and debauched times'.<sup>42</sup> 'Do all that you regularly can toward the suppression of abounding vice, and the reviving of languishing Religion', he urged his colleagues, 'that this our good Land may not be as Sodom, first in sin, and then in Desolation'.<sup>43</sup> Since the strife of 1688 England had been left in an irreligious and immoral state and an atmosphere of ignorance, intolerance, and general antipathy toward the Church itself had led to degeneracy and moral chaos. Education and moral reform, Woodward contended, were the answers to England's

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<sup>41</sup> John Eliot, Strength out of Weaknesse; or, a Glorious Manifestation of the further progresse of the gosple among the Indians (London, 1652). See also Wilson, The Life of John Eliot, p. 112.

<sup>42</sup> Josiah Woodward, An Account of the Rise and Progress of Religious Societies in the City of London, etc. and of their Endeavours for the Reformation of Manners (London 1697; seventh edition, York 1800), p. viii.

<sup>43</sup> Woodward, Account, p. vii.

spiritual woes.<sup>44</sup> Central to his prescription was the Bible and what Woodward called 'Books of plain Instruction, and of necessary Devotion', all necessary for the reformation of the 'manners and morals' of the people.<sup>45</sup> Religious societies, Woodward argued, were central to this work and he urged them to propagate the fruits of their reform even overcoming 'Christian Modesty' in order to publish accounts of their work for the edification of the public.<sup>46</sup>

The philanthropic movement of the 1690s led to the formation of the first missionary societies whose express aim was to preach to and convert the "heathen", the "infidel", and the "backslider". Thomas Bray's Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (SPCK), founded in 1698, also attempted to attend to the spiritual needs of Britain's North American colonies. Yet it became apparent that the SPCK would be unable to carry out this

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<sup>44</sup> J.H. Overton reports that within ten years of their formation, 'more than 20,000 persons had been convicted of swearing, cursing, and profanation of the Lord's day, in and about London and Westminster', and 'about 3,000 lewd and disorderly persons had been punished within the same limits'. See J.H. Overton (with Frederic Relton), Life in the English Church, 1660-1714, (London, 1906), p. 214.

<sup>45</sup> Woodward, Account, pp. 68-69.

<sup>46</sup> Woodward, Account, p. 102 and p. 105. See also H.P. Thompson, Into All Lands. The History of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts 1701-1950 (London, 1951), p. 5.



work on its own and in 1701 it was joined in its missionary effort by a sister society, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG).

The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts played an important role in the development of missionary literature written in and about British North America. The SPG was the first missionary society to ask its missionaries to keep regular journals of their experiences and to send them to the Society at least twice a year.<sup>47</sup> These journals contained, among other things, facts and figures related to births, baptisms, marriages, and deaths, information which was enlightened with relevant anecdotes, observations, and personal testimonies of experience. As other missionary societies came into being they too requested their missionaries to keep and submit journals. Some, like the Moravian Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel among the Heathen and the Methodist Missionary Society, capitalised on public interest in missionaries and their experience by publishing regular missionary periodicals and pamphlets of missionary experience. The Moravians' Periodical Accounts

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<sup>47</sup> In its 'Instructions for the Clergy' (1706), the SPG instructed its missionaries to 'keep a constant and regular Correspondence' and 'that they send every six months an Account of the State of their respective Parishes' (see Pascoe, Two Hundred Years of the S.P.G., p. 839).

were highly regarded by many and they provide us with a useful and illuminating picture of mission life in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Following the transfer of Quebec to the English in 1763, and particularly after the American War of Independence (1775-1783), Protestant missionaries began to extend their mission to the natives and settlers of British North America. After spending three years with her missionary husband at Quebec the novelist Frances Brooke wrote a novel entitled The History of Emily Montague (1769) in which she described the missionaries who had come to Lower Canada as the principal civilisers in the wilderness.<sup>48</sup> Indians, she reported, regarded 'a missionary of any nation as a kind father'; another character remarked that missionaries were sent 'to anglicize the Canadians' through '"the gentle arts of persuasion, and the gradual process of knowledge"'.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Her husband was John Brooke, a SPG missionary who had come to Lower Canada shortly after the defeat of the French at Quebec in 1759. Brooke is credited with being the first Church of England clergyman to officiate at Quebec (see Pascoe, Two Hundred Years of the S.P.G., pp. 135-138). The USPG archives at Rhodes House Library at Oxford contain letters from Brooke to the SPG (USPG Letters, C/CAN/PRE 4, 66 and C/CAN/PRE 2, 3, 6).

<sup>49</sup> Frances Brooke (1724?-1789), The History of Emily Montague (1769), edited by Mary Jane Edwards (Ottawa, 1985).

While most missionaries continued to write to inform their superiors and their supporters of the missionary work being conducted in the colonies on their behalf, missionary literature began to take other discursive forms. In addition to journalistic reports, some missionary writings began to show more of a literary imagination. Roger Viets and Jacob Bailey, two itinerant clergymen who came to Nova Scotia from the United States in the wake of the American War of Independence, demonstrated a certain literary flair in a variety of writings. Viets's numerous sermons and his long poem Annapolis Royal (1788) reveal the clergyman's Tory leanings and his predilection for neo-classic poeticisms and literary decorum; Bailey's memoirs and satiric verse demonstrate a definite rejection of American political values and attitudes to religion. In the latter's poetic satire, The Adventures of Jack Ramble, Methodist Preacher (1788), for example, Bailey attacks Methodist circuit preachers from America whom he accuses of disseminating principles of republicanism and democracy in British North America. Despite a professed inability 'to describe the beauties' of his adopted home, Bailey has impressed critics with his prose. According to A.J.M. Smith, for instance, Bailey's memoirs evoke 'a freshness and vitality' and are said to contain 'touches of keen observation and some passages of satirical humour'



gathered from his Puritan childhood and from his life among his American neighbours.<sup>50</sup> Other SPG missionary authors of note were Jonathan Odell, Adam Hood Burwell, Adam Kidd, George Jehoshaphat Mountain, Edward Wix, John Strachan, William Stewart Darling, A.W.H. Rose, and Joseph Abbott.<sup>51</sup> All were written to satisfy the public's 'deep

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<sup>50</sup> See A.J.M. Smith, ed., The Book of Canadian Prose: Early Beginnings to Confederation (Toronto, 1965), p. 26.

<sup>51</sup> In his Literary History of Canada, second edition, 3 vols (Toronto and Buffalo, 1976) Carl F. Klinck remarks on the preponderance of SPG missionary-authors in Canada in the early nineteenth century and remarks that 'a literary study of the influence of the SPG' should be undertaken (Vol. I, p. 146). Jonathan Odell (1737-1818) ministered in New Brunswick and is mostly noted for such satiric verse as American Times (1780). Adam Hood Burwell (1790-1849) preached in both Lower and Upper Canada and was one of the best-known poets of his day. He is the author of Talbot Road (1818), a topographical poem on Colonel Thomas Talbot's settlement on the north shore of Lake Erie. Adam Kidd (1802-1831) was an SPG candidate but left to pursue a career as a poet after falling afoul of Archdeacon George Jehoshaphat Mountain (1789-1863). In 1830 Kidd published the Huron Chief, a long poem dedicated to the memory of the Huron Indians. It was one of the first poems in Canada to attack Christian missionaries and the white man's treatment of the native peoples. Mountain was a member of the well-known ecclesiastical family at Quebec. He became Bishop of Montreal and later of Quebec. Many of his journals were published in London in the 1840s as was a collection of verse, Songs of the Wilderness (London, 1846), composed while on a canoe trip between Montreal and the Red River settlement in Rupert's Land. Edward Wix (1802-1866), missionary Bishop of Newfoundland published his Six Months of a Newfoundland Missionary's Journal in 1836. Joseph Abbott (1789-1863) began his missionary career in Lower Canada in 1818. In 1846 he published his autobiographical novel, Philip Musgrave, the first work of Canadian missionary writing to adopt a fictional form (see Joseph Abbott, Philip Musgrave; or, the Memoir of a Church of England Missionary in the North American Colonies (London, 1846)); John Strachan, The Church In Canada. A Journal of visitations to the western portion of his diocese (London, 1844) and 'A journal of

interest in the spiritual condition of the scattered members of [the] protestant episcopal church'.<sup>52</sup>

The SPG was not the only missionary society to satisfy the public's interest in the 'scattered members' of the Protestant Church overseas in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. John Heckewelder, George Henry Loskiel, and Benjamin Kohlmeister, for example, were missionaries belonging to the United Brethren's Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel among the Heathen.<sup>53</sup> Heckewelder's and Loskiel's travel accounts and studies of

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visitation to the western portion of the province . . . in 1842', The Church in the Colonies, Vol. I (London, 1850); William Stewart Darling, Sketches of Canadian Life, Lay and Ecclesiastical (London, 1849); and A.W.H. Rose, The Emigrant Churchman in Canada in 1849 (London, 1849).

The continuing importance of missionary writing in the twentieth century is shown by the publication of a number of missionary diaries and journals such as the following: William Case, A Circuit Rider on the River Thames. The Diary of William Case, 20 June--20 August 1809, edited by John S. Moir (London, Ont., 1958); J.J. Talman, ed. Report of a Missionary Journey made by the Hon. and Rev. Charles James Stewart through Upper Canada in 1820 (London, 1942); Leslie R. Bray, ed. 'Phoebe Robert's Diary of a Quaker Missionary Journey to Upper Canada', Ontario History, 42:1 (1950), pp. 7-46; and Harry E. Parker, 'The Diary of Rev. William Fraser (1834-1835) with an Introductory Essay on Early Presbyterianism in Western Ontario', Transactions of the London and Middlesex Historical Society, 14 (1930).

<sup>52</sup> Edward Wix, Six Months of a Newfoundland Missionary's Journal, p. v. See also Edward Wix, A Retrospect of the Operations of the SPG in North America. A Sermon Preached . . . by Edward Wix, M.A., Archdeacon, second edition (St John's, 1833).

<sup>53</sup> Benjamin Kohlmeister, Journal of a Voyage from Okkak . . . to Ungava Bay (London, 1814).

the North American Indians were influential among North American travel writers and poets and remained popular well into the nineteenth century.

The Methodists also took an important part in the development of Canadian missionary and missionary-inspired literature. William Black, Freeborn Garrettson, Joshua Marsden and Charles Churchill are just some of the Methodist missionaries to have published accounts of their experience in British North America. Under John Wesley's direction, the Methodists influenced the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries' literary imaginations.<sup>54</sup>

Writing to Thomas Poole in 1797 Samuel Taylor Coleridge admitted that '[he] ha[d] never read . . . a Methodist's Experience . . . without receiving instruction and amusement'.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> See Frederic C. Gill, The Romantic Movement and Methodism: A Study of English Romanticism and the Evangelical Revival (London, 1937).

<sup>55</sup> Samuel Taylor Coleridge to Thomas Poole (February 1797), in the Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, edited by E.L. Griggs, 4 vols (Oxford). Coleridge wrote favourably of the missionary on several occasions. See, for example, The Friend (1818), Essay XI where he remarks on how the 'friendly missionary' brings the 'unlettered African, or rude yet musing Indian' language and literature (see The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, edited by Kathleen Raine, 13 vols (London, 1971-1981), Vol. IV); and in Aids to Reflections (1825), Aphorism XVIII: 'Examine the journals of our zealous missionaries. How often, and how feelingly, do they describe the difficulty of rendering the simplest chain of thought intelligible to the ordinary natives' (see Aids to Reflections, edited by T. Fenby, revised



Other Methodist missionary narratives from British North America included autobiographical works by John Marrant, Peter Jones,<sup>56</sup> Peter Jacobs<sup>57</sup> and George Copway.<sup>58</sup> John

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edition (Liverpool, 1877)).

56 Peter Jones (1802-1856) also known as Kahkewaquonaby ("sacred feathers") was an Mississauga Ojibwa native who became a Methodist missionary in 1824. Jones published numerous works including the Life and Journals of Kah-ke-wa-quo-na-by (Toronto, 1860) and History of the Ojibway Indians; with especial reference to their conversion to Christianity, edited by Eliza (London, 1861). See Donald B. Smith, Sacred Feathers: The Reverend Peter Jones (Kahkewaquonaby) and the Mississauga Indians (Toronto, 1987) and Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Vol. VIII, 1851-1860, edited by Frances G. Halpenny et al (Toronto, Buffalo, London, 1985), pp. 439-443.

57 Peter Jacobs (c.1807-1890), also known as Pahtahsega, was a member of the Mississauga tribe and, like Jones and Copway, became a Methodist missionary. In 1838 he accompanied James Evans on a missionary tour of Lake Superior and in 1840 helped Evans construct homes for the Indians at Rossville in Manitoba. Jacobs was the author of the Journal of the Reverend Peter Jacobs, Indian Wesleyan missionary, from Rice Lake to the Hudson's Bay territory, and returning; commencing May, 1852; with a brief account of his life; and a short history of the Wesleyan mission to that country (Toronto, 1853). See Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Vol. XI, 1881-1890, edited by Frances G. Halpenny et al (Toronto, Buffalo, London, 1982), pp. 660-661.

58 [John Marrant], A Narrative of the Life of John Marrant, of New York, in North America (Halifax, 1813). Other works by Marrant include A Narrative of the Lord's wonderful dealings with John Marrant, a black (London, 1785) and A Journal of the Rev. John Marrant . . . to which are addressed two sermons (London, 1790). Peter Jones, Life and Journals of Kah-Ke-Wa-Quon-A-By (Toronto, 1860), The Sermons and Speeches of the Rev. Peter Jones (Leeds, [1832]), History of the Ojibway Indians. With Especial Reference to their Conversion to Christianity [with memoir of author] (London, [1861?]; Peter Jacobs, Journal of the Reverend Peter Jacobs (Toronto, 1853); and George Copway, The Life, History, and Travels of Kah-Ge-Ga-Gah-Bowh (George Copway) . . . Chief of the Ojibwa

Marrant (1755-1701) was born in New York and educated in St Augustine, Florida. He was converted to Christianity at the age of thirteen after listening to the Methodist preacher George Whitefield. He spent two years living among the Cherokee Indians before returning to Southern Carolina. At the outbreak of the American War of Independence, Marrant was pressed into naval service as a musician, but later joined an evangelical group in London known as the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion. He was ordained in 1785 and later travelled to Nova Scotia in response to his brother's request to bring religious instruction for the black community near Shelburne.<sup>59</sup> George Copway, or Kah-ge-ga-gah-bowh as he was known, was born in 1818, the son of a Mississauga chief and medicine man.<sup>60</sup> The family converted to Christianity in 1827 and young Copway attended the Methodist mission school at Rice Lake in the early 1830s where he became a model student. He

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Nation . . . and a Missionary to his People . . . written by himself (Philadelphia, 1847), The Life, Letters, and Speeches of Kah-ge-ga-gah-bowh (New York, 1850), and Recollections of a Forest Life (London, 1850).

<sup>59</sup> Marrant published several works including A narrative of the Lord's wonderful dealings with John Marrant, a black, edited by the Rev. Mr Aldridge (London, 1785) and A journal of the Rev. John Marrant, from August the 18th, 1785, to the 16th of March, 1790 (London, 1790). See Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Vol. IV, 1771-1800, edited by Frances G. Halpenny et al (Toronto, Buffalo, London, 1979), pp. 514-516.

<sup>60</sup> Sometimes spelled as Kahkakahbowh and Kakikekapo.

adopted European manners and appearance and learned to speak English. Religion dominated Copway's life. He became a missionary and in July 1834 moved west to preach the Gospel to the natives living around the shores of Lake Superior. Despite his European appearance Copway was still an Indian and he never forgot the plight of his people. His writings and lectures spoke of native issues and attempted to make his white audience aware of the dangers and difficulties which faced his peoples. But Copway was himself a victim of what Donald B. Smith calls a 'divided loyalty', a division resulting from the different roles played by the author in order to get his message across. In the preface to his autobiography, Recollections of a Forest Life, Copway told his British readers that he was giving them his 'life' in order that his 'poor countrymen' might be 'rescu[ed] from an untimely grave'. It was through his adopted white persona that Copway dealt with Americans and Europeans 'in order to create interest in, and possibly raise money for, the Indian people'.<sup>61</sup> Copway's autobiographical works offered their readers 'a wealth of proudly recounted historical information about tribal beliefs, ceremonies, customs, and folklore' though the language is 'pervaded by deep Christian piety and biblical cadences, the Bible being the

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<sup>61</sup> Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature, edited by William Toye (Toronto, Oxford, and New York, 1983), pp. 384-385.

predominant literary influence in these Indians' lives'. Nevertheless, his works offer some of 'the first written evidence of the ideas, responses, and feelings of individual Indians as opposed to the collective expressions contained in myths and legends'.<sup>62</sup>

By the beginning of the nineteenth century Protestant missionary writing had begun to gain wider circulation in Britain and Europe. The publication of missionary journals like the Moravian Periodical Accounts and John Wesley's Arminian Magazine ensured that the missionary experience in British North American and elsewhere was being read by a wider audience than that of the missionary

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<sup>62</sup> ibid., p. 385. George Copway (1818-1869), also known as Kahgegagahbowh, was the son of a Mississauga chief and medicine man. Copway became a Methodist missionary in 1834, working initially along the south shore of Lake Superior among the Ojibwa Indians. Copway published his autobiography, The life, history, and travels of Kah-ge-ga-gah-bowh in 1847, the first book to be published by a Canadian Indian. It became a best seller and launched Copway on an extensive lecturing tour. His other works on the Indians and his missionary work introduced him to writers and historians like Henry Longfellow and Francis Parkman. In 1851 he received support from the likes of James Fenimore Cooper and Washington Irving for his weekly paper, Copway's American Indian although the project was shortlived. Other publications included The life, letters and speeches of Kah-ge-ga-gah-bowh or George Copway (New York, 1850), The traditional history and characteristic sketches of the Ojibway nation (London, 1850) and Running sketches of men and places, in England, France, Germany, Belgium, and Scotland (New York, 1851). Copway died in 1869 but not before renouncing Methodism and turning to Catholicism. See Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Vol. IX, edited by Frances G. Halpenny (Toronto, Buffalo, London, 1976), pp. 419-421.



society itself.<sup>63</sup> By 1800 nearly every missionary society in Britain was publishing a missionary journal or magazine, and within twenty years it was no longer unusual to see a missionary or missionary-inspired piece of writing in a respectable journal or magazine.<sup>64</sup>

**V: The Narrative of a Mission: to instruct, entertain, and inspire**

According to Joshua Marsden, a Methodist missionary who published a narrative of his experience in Nova Scotia in the early part of the nineteenth century, missionary literature should serve a number of purposes. A 'Narrative of a Mission,' he explained, ' . . . should be entertaining as a book of travels, and instructive as a natural history'.<sup>65</sup> Marsden's definition acknowledged

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<sup>63</sup> See Chapters Three and Four for a detailed discussion of these works.

<sup>64</sup> Secular publishers too were not immune from showing an interest in the missionary or in missionary-inspired writing. The missionary figures in a number of early nineteenth-century works by secular and sacred writers alike. Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey all expressed interest in the missionary as did William Lisle Bowles whose poem, The Missionary (1813) was typical of the poetic treatment of the itinerant clergyman and his experience. The publisher John Murray, for example, included missionary works alongside those of more established and literary artists like Byron and Melville. See John Lovell Murray, A selected bibliography of missionary literature compiled by J. Lovell Murray (New York, 1912).

<sup>65</sup> Joshua Marsden, The Narrative of a Mission to Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and the Somers Islands (Plymouth-Dock, 1816; rpt New York, 1966), p. iii.

popular literary convention and recognised two of the most prevalent forms of writing in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries: travel writing and natural history. Yet Marsden did not believe that a missionary should simply seek to entertain and instruct his reader with these informative modes of writing; missionary literature should also inspire. A 'narrative of a mission', he argued, 'is supposed to combine some of the excellencies of both these kinds of writing, together with subjects of a much higher order; even the prosperity of the ineffable Redeemer's kingdom in Heathen lands, and the diffusion of truth, righteousness and felicity amongst the most forlorn and miserable portion of the human family'.<sup>66</sup>

Marsden's tripartite definition helps us to identify the ideological and literary strands which are intertwined in the discursive expression of missionary experience. Yet examined more closely, we can see that the purpose of missionary writing was essentially fivefold: firstly, to provide information about the mission; secondly, to inspire the reader with an exemplary illustration of Christian life; thirdly, to offer useful and practical information about the colonies to the emigrant reader; fourthly, to entertain readers with tales of missionary travel and adventure; and fifthly, to illustrate, through

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<sup>66</sup> Marsden, The Narrative of a Mission, p. iii.

the use of the missionary figure and other images and ideas associated with Christian morality, the religious and communal values which the Church wished to convey about Canadian frontier society.

**a. a literature of information**

In order to maintain an accurate picture of their missions, missionary societies required regular information about their missionaries' activities. The missionary journal was the principal form of communication between the missionary in the colonies and his superiors and supporters in Britain. Missionaries were required to keep journals and submit them at least twice a year to their Society for inspection. Details and description helped the Society administer the mission. In the journal the missionaries recorded their observations and gathered evidence pertaining to the administration of the mission. In this way the journal provided the missionary society with information which would allow it to build up an accurate picture of the mission. Details of births, baptisms, conversions, marriages enabled the missionary society to assess and evaluate its success or failure in the field. Societies also used these records to compile 'histories' of the missions in order to demonstrate to what extent they had been successful in planting Christianity in the wilderness and bringing civilisation

to the colonies.

The pedantic nature of the missionary journal was occasionally relieved by the missionary's personal observation or anecdotal digression. These are often the most revealing portions of the journal. James Balfour, writing in 1764, for example, described how the 'barbarous, perfidious, cruel people' of Newfoundland had mistreated him and he wondered why he had come to help them at all.<sup>67</sup> Edward Wix, the Bishop of Newfoundland, wrote in 1836 to complain that Newfoundland's weather and relative isolation had caused him annoying difficulties in keeping his journal. He lacked a gas-lamp by which to write and he complained that his 'ink would frequently freeze' in the cold weather. Writing paper was scarce forcing Wix to scrounge the beaches looking for boxes of paper which had been washed ashore from recent shipwrecks.<sup>68</sup> These details of the missionary's experience acquainted readers with the difficulties which the missionary had to face in the wilderness, and provided them with the means by which to gain a greater

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<sup>67</sup> Quoted in C.F. Pascoe, Two Hundred Years of the S.P.G.: An Historical Account of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, 1701-1900 (London, 1901), p. 91.

<sup>68</sup> Edward Wix, Six Months of a Newfoundland Missionary's Journal, From February to August, 1835 (London, 1836), pp. 2-3.



appreciation of the missionary's efforts.

Many missionaries became depressed due to the isolation they suffered; they resented being cut off from civilisation and lamented the lack of conversation with their brethren. Writing a journal was seen as one way of re-establishing contact and was deemed by many to be an important psychological tool of survival. Remarking on the importance of such communication, Joshua Marsden wrote, 'If ever man needed comfort, it is a foreign Missionary; solitary and insulated his mind is liable to be deeply depressed!'<sup>69</sup> Thus, while the missionary journal was primarily a source of information for the missionary society, its writing provided the missionaries with an important and necessary link with their colleagues overseas.

#### **b. exemplary life**

According to the eighteenth-century American theologian Jonathan Edwards, there were 'two ways of representing and recommending true religion and virtue to the world, . . . the one [was] by doctrine and precept, the other [was] by instance and example'.<sup>70</sup> Edwards defended his edition of

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<sup>69</sup> Joshua Marsden, The Narrative of a Mission, pp. 83-85.

<sup>70</sup> Jonathan Edwards, An Account of the Life of Mr. David Brainerd, Missionary from the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge and Pastor of a Church of

the Life of David Brainerd, for example, on the grounds that it provided readers with an

opportunity to see, not only what were the external circumstances and remarkable incidents of the life of this person, and how he spent his time from day to day, as to his external behaviour; but also what passed in his own heart, the wonderful change that he experienced in his mind and disposition, the manner in which that change was brought to pass, how it continued, what were its consequences in his inward frames, thoughts, affections, and secret exercises, through many vicissitudes and trials.<sup>71</sup>

For Edwards this opportunity to partake in the life of the missionary through the discourse of experience provided readers with an opportunity to "better" themselves. Readers could 'compare various parts of the story', he explained, 'and deliberately . . . view and weigh the whole, and consider how far what is related is agreeable to the dictates of right reason and the holy word of God'.<sup>72</sup> In other words, a "good life" preached its own sermon. One ~~eighteenth-century~~ missionary who went to North America claimed he had written a journal of his experience in order 'to encourage the humbled careful traveller in the way of his duty', or, as he suggested, to illustrate how one might '"live of the gospel"'.<sup>73</sup> The late

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Christian Indians in New Jersey (London, 1798), p. 1.

71 ibid., p. 3.

72 ibid., p. 3.

73 John Churchman, An Account of the Gospel Labours and Christian Experience of a Faithful Minister of Christ (Philadelphia, 1779), pp. 18 and 306.



eighteenth century saw a growing emphasis on personal testimony in the religious literature of the day. Missionary societies increasingly focused public attention on missionary experience and encouraged readers to "learn" from that experience. While factual data and information continued to be important, the missionary "life" or "experience" was seen as both an integral part of missionary society's propaganda and a theologically-sound method of indoctrinating the reader with the precepts of religion. Not only did many evangelicals believe that God revealed himself through the printed page of the Bible, but through the published testimonies of ministers and others who had been converted to Christianity. Richard Altick explains: 'They believed that the grace of God could, and did, descend to the individual man and woman through the printed page. The cultivation of the reading habit was therefore as indispensable as a daily program of prayer and observance of a strict moral code. With the Bible always at the centre, there grew up a huge literature of admonition, guidance, and assurance.'<sup>74</sup>

The Christian biography was the staple of the missionary and religious journal. Based on "real-life" experience Christian biography gave meaning to humankind's mundane

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<sup>74</sup> Richard Altick, The English Common Reader: a social history of the mass reading public, 1800-1900 (Chicago, 1967), p. 99.



existence. They provided the Church with an alternative to novels and other works of fiction. In 1812 the Baptist Magazine defended its policy of not reviewing novels by stating, 'the region of fact supplies such combinations of character, principle, and circumstances, as are fully adequate to every purpose of moral suasion or spiritual instruction'.<sup>75</sup>

In its charter the SPG revealed that a missionary's character and discursive talent were of utmost importance to the Society's mission. It stated that only candidates 'of a sober and exemplary Life' should be chosen as missionaries.<sup>76</sup> In addition, discursive skills were deemed crucial to the missionaries being able to give a suitable account of their experience. Missionaries were told to make their 'ordinary Discourse . . . grave and edifying' so that their 'Conversation' might reveal 'Instances and Patterns of the Christian Life'.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Baptist Magazine, No. 4 (1812), pp. 391-392. For a discussion of biography in the religious press during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries see also Samuel Pickering Jr., The Moral Tradition in English Fiction, 1785-1850 (Hanover, New Hampshire, 1976), pp. 66-67.

<sup>76</sup> An Abstract of the Charter granted to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, with a Short Account of what hath been, and what is designed to be done by it (London, 1702), p. 2.

<sup>77</sup> Instructions for the Missionaries (London, 170[4]?). Cited in Thompson, Into All Lands, p. 27. The idea of the using the missionary as an exemplum of Christian faith and virtue originates in the New

Edwards' own account of the life of the Scottish missionary David Brainerd was one of a number of examples in the eighteenth century of the use of the missionary life to teach and illustrate the doctrines and values of the Christian faith.<sup>78</sup> Perhaps the most significant use of the missionary "life" at this time, however, was made by John Wesley and the Methodists.

Methodism was born out of Wesley's own experience as a missionary. During the 1730s he had gone to America 'to preach to the Indians'.<sup>79</sup> There, he met August Gottlieb

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Testament. In I Corinthians 4.9, Paul speaks of God 'set[ting] forth . . . the apostles' in order to make them 'a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men'; while in Romans 11.13-14, he writes of how he will 'magnify [his] office' so that he 'may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them'. Eighteenth century autobiography, as Patricia Spacks has recently reminded us, also 'demanded that the writer offer his life, tacitly or explicitly, as an exemplum of worldly achievement or vocational dedication' (see Patricia Meyer Spacks, Imagining a Self: Autobiography and the Novel in Eighteenth-Century England (Cambridge, Mass, 1976), p. 24).

<sup>78</sup> Jonathan Edwards, An Account of the Life of Mr. David Brainerd (1749) (Edinburgh, 1798). Also includes Brainerd's Mirabilia Dei Inter Indicos: The Rise and Progress of a Remarkable Work of Grace Amongst a Number of the Indians in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, Represented in a Journal (London, 1748); Divine Grace Displayed; or, The Continuance and Progress of a Remarkable Work of Grace Among Some of the Indians in New Jersey and Pennsylvania Represented in a Journal (London, 1748); and some miscellaneous letters and sermons.

<sup>79</sup> Wesley sailed for Georgia in 1735. See John Wesley, A Short History of the People Called Methodists (1781), The Works of John Wesley, edited by Rupert E. Davies (Nashville, 1989), p. 428.

Spangenberg, leader of the Moravian missionary community in Georgia. Spangenberg asked Wesley whether or not he 'ha[d] . . . the witness within'. 'Does the Spirit of God', he queried, 'bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God? . . . Do you know yourself?' Wesley paused, then replied in the affirmative, but he later reflected that he had spoken 'vain words' for Spangenberg had gone to the heart of what it meant to be a Christian: to be a witness of God's presence both within the soul and in the world was essential to the proclamation of one's faith.<sup>80</sup>

Wesley placed great emphasis on personal testimony and proclamation of faith. He and his clergy became "living witnesses", missionaries of Christ who were 'fully determined to spend [their] li[ves] in testifying the gospel of the grace of God'.<sup>81</sup> This emphasis on religious

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<sup>80</sup> The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M., edited by Nehemiah Curnock (London, 1910), Vol. I, p. 151. See also John 5.19-47 for Christ's explanation of the meaning and significance of 'witness'.

<sup>81</sup> The phrase comes from Wesley (see Journal, Vol. I, p. 468). See also Short History, p. 431. Depending where one reads, Wesley appears to have differing opinions on the impact which the Moravians made on him in America. In his Principles of a Methodist (1742), for example, he claims that he 'came back with the same notions [he] went' (p. 57). Nevertheless, it is evident that Wesley was inspired by the Moravians both enroute to America (see Journal, Vol. I, pp. 142-143), during his encounter with Spangenberg, and during his subsequent visit to their communities in Germany in 1738 when he wrote that he was 'exceedingly comforted and strengthened by the conversation of this lovely people' (see Short History, p.

"experience" and personal testimony by the Methodists was reflected in the literature published both during Wesley's life and after his death.<sup>82</sup> In virtually every publication the emphasis on personal testimony or witness was plainly evident. Wesley democratized autobiography and biography by encouraging "ordinary" men and women to give their testimonies.<sup>83</sup>

The importance of personal testimony lies in its author's confession of faith and belief in God's intervention in one's life.<sup>84</sup> After reading Jonathan Edwards' Narrative of the Late Work of God at and near Northampton, in New England (Bristol, 1744), Wesley remarked that it was 'a truly-surprising narrative' and was inspired to turn to

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<sup>82</sup> For the titles of these works see Richard Green, The works of John and Charles Wesley; a bibliography containing an exact account of all the publications issued by the brothers Wesley, arranged in chronological order with a list of the early editions and descriptive and illustrative notes (London, 1896).

<sup>83</sup> Examples of these works include A Short Account of the Death of Thomas Hitchens (London, 1747), Some Account of the Life and Death of Matthew Lee (London, 1752), An Extract of the Life and Death of Mr. John Janeway (London, 1753), Letters Wrote by Jane Cooper: To which is prefixt some Account of her Life and Death (London, 1764), An Extract from the Journals of Elizabeth Harper (London, 1769), and A Short Account of Ann Rogers (London, 1770).

<sup>84</sup> For a discussion of Wesley's contribution to popular literature and literacy see Chapter Six in H.F. Mathews, Methodism and the Education of the People, 1791-1851 (London, 1949).



his own missionaries and preachers for similar 'patterns of holiness'.<sup>85</sup>

In 1777 Wesley drew up plans to print a journal, the Arminian Magazine, which would include, among other religious items, 'accounts and letters containing the experience of pious persons'.<sup>86</sup> Prevalent among these would be the "lives" of his preachers and missionaries. Wesley commissioned his clergy to supply him with their journals from which passages were extracted for publication. Many journals became the basis for the many autobiographical "lives" which appeared in the Arminian or in separate pamphlets. Wesley exerted editorial control over these writings and instructed his clergy on the form they should take and the type of material which to which

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<sup>85</sup> Wesley, Journal, Vol. II, pp. 83-84. Wesley's interest in missionary testimony is revealed in the list of publications produced by him in the eighteenth century. Four of Wesley's most popular works, for example, were editions of the "lives" of missionaries, Thomas Haliburton, Monsieur de Renty, Gregory Lopez, and David Brainerd. Of these, Brainerd seems to have provided a favourite and, judging from Wesley's own prescription, influential model of Christian faith and behaviour. He urged his missionaries to follow Brainerd's example: 'Read David Brainerd again, and see your pattern! He was a good soldier of Jesus. Ah! but he first suffered, and then saw the fruit of his labour. Go and do likewise!' (in a letter from Wesley to Thomas Rankin, 4 December 1773; see Letters of John Wesley. A Selection of Important and New Letters with Introductions and Biographical Notes, edited by George Eayrs (London, New York, Toronto, 1915), p. 246). For his comments on 'patterns of holiness', see Wesley, Journal, Vol. IV, p. 539.

<sup>86</sup> Arminian Magazine (January, 1778), p. i.



they should aspire. He also held up certain models for emulation. Writing in 1780 Wesley urged his preachers 'to read carefully over the Life of Brainerd. Let us be followers of him as he was of Christ';<sup>87</sup> As Isabel Rivers has recently reminded us, Brainerd was an ideal model for the Methodists simply 'because he was an itinerant, unlike the subjects of other religious biographies, and he successfully resisted the temptations of place, possessions, and affection which the preachers continually faced'.<sup>88</sup>

Brainerd inscribed the mundane with spiritual meaning and significance. His travels became more than a quest for souls; they enacted a pilgrimage through a strange land toward heavenly redemption. His life was transformed into a religious analogy from which readers were expected to draw spiritual sustenance. 'I love to be a pilgrim and stranger in this wilderness', wrote Brainerd in a

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<sup>87</sup> Minutes of the Conference (1780), Vol. I, p. 579, quoted in Green, The works of John and Charles Wesley (London, 1896), no. 253. After reading Brainerd's account, Wesley wrote, 'Find preachers of David Brainerd's spirit and nothing stand before them' (Journal of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M., edited by Nehemiah Curnock, 8 vols (London, 1909-16), Vol. III, p. 294); see also Wesley's journal entry for 9 December 1749 in Journal, Vol. III, p. 449.

<sup>88</sup> Isabel Rivers, '"Strangers and Pilgrims": Sources and Patterns of Methodist Narrative', Augustan Worlds: Essays in honour of A.R. Humphreys, edited by J.C. Hilson, M.M.B. Jones and J.R. Watson (Leicester, 1978), p. 196.

published letter to a friend, 'I would not change my present mission for any other business in the whole world'.<sup>89</sup> This sense of being a 'pilgrim' and a 'stranger' was crucial to understanding the missionary experience in the wilderness. Each journey became a pilgrimage, part of the missionary's religious devotion to God; each account of a missionary's journey was a reminder to his readers of their duty to yearn toward God no matter how alienated they might feel. The missionary's journey became an analogy for the Christian's spiritual journey from sin toward salvation.

Ironically, some missionaries wondered that their lives could represent any pattern of holiness. According to one, 'The average Missionary [was] . . . not an interesting character'.<sup>90</sup> 'The very system of our societies', admitted another, had produced nothing more

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<sup>89</sup> From an letter written on 31 July 1744. Published in Edwards, An Account of the Life of Mr. David Brainerd, p. 300. Rivers also quotes a passage from Brainerd's diary in a similar context: 'My soul longs to feel itself a pilgrim and stranger here below that nothing may divert me from pressing through the lonely desert, till I arrive at my Father's house' (Rivers, 'Strangers and Pilgrims', p. 196; the quote comes from The Works of the Rev. John Wesley London, 1772), Vol. XII, pp. 58-59).

<sup>90</sup> Julian Moreton, A Letter to the Rev. H. Bailey, B.D. . . . in Reply to Recent Strictures upon Missionary Societies and the Missionaries (London, 1864), p. 5.

than 'married men, salaries, and comfortableness'.<sup>91</sup> Others suffered more from an anxiety of influence: Joshua Marsden, for example, 'deem[ed] himself a mere dwarf in Missionary stature' when he compared himself and his mission with the missionary heroes of the past.<sup>92</sup> Living in the 'friendly colony' of Nova Scotia, he complained that his situation hardly qualified him as a heroic figure. 'Things', he admitted, 'flow in much the same course as a regular itinerancy at home'.<sup>93</sup>

If unable to justify themselves as heroic figures, Canadian missionaries also seemed to have had trouble in offering themselves as accomplished writers. In fact, most missionaries went to great lengths to admit their lack of literary talent. 'A good writing implies a good writer', Marsden confessed, 'a character which the subject of the following pages does not assume'. Marsden blamed a youth spent at sea for providing him with 'few opportunities of improvement'. Consequently, he apologised for the lack of 'scientific subjects, which

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<sup>91</sup> A Letter to the Rev. H. Bailey, B.D., p. 5. In their book, The Missionary Myth (1973), Richard and Helen Exley state that missionaries 'were more noticeable for their ordinariness than their eccentricity. . . . [They had] no profound charisma'. See The Missionary Myth (Guildford and London, 1973), p. 6.

<sup>92</sup> Marsden, Narrative of a Mission, p. v.

<sup>93</sup> Marsden, Narrative of a Mission, pp. iv-v.

might have pleasingly and profitably adorned [the] pages' of his journal.<sup>94</sup> Anglican missionary Joseph Abbott similarly apologised for his literary shortcomings, blaming the 'many literary errors' in his autobiographical novel Philip Musgrave on his being 'shut out from the world' for more than twenty-five years 'in the backwoods' of Lower Canada.<sup>95</sup> Nevertheless, he did not 'anticipate the severity of criticism', explaining that he 'ha[d] a true and plain tale to tell' for which he expected 'a blessing'. His goal, he said, was simply to 'excit[e] in the minds of [his] readers . . . interest in missionary exertions'.<sup>96</sup>

Nevertheless, the problem of being an exemplary character remained. Literary convention of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries dictated that the travel writer (the

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<sup>94</sup> Marsden, Narrative of a Mission, pp. ix and x. The books to which Marsden refers are David Crantz, The History of Greenland: containing a description of the country and its inhabitants: and particularly, a relation of the mission, carried on for above these thirty years by the Unitas Fratrum, at New Herrnhuth and Lichtenfels, in that country (London, 1767) and The ancient and modern history of the Brethren: or, a succinct narrative of the Protestant Church of the United Brethren, or, Unitas Fratrum, in the remoter ages, and particularly in the present century, translated by Benjamin La Trobe (London, 1780).

<sup>95</sup> Joseph Abbott, Philip Musgrave; or, the Memoirs of a Church of England Missionary in the North American Colonies (London, 1846), p. 3.

<sup>96</sup> Abbott, Philip Musgrave, p. 3.

missionary was considered a traveller) should not include too much of himself or herself in the narrative. To do so was to run the risk of being called an egotist. Yet the very nature of the journal, as Jonas Hanway remarked in 1762, 'render[ed] egotisms unavoidable'.<sup>97</sup> The author of a journal, therefore, had to balance his subjective and objective impressions. He strived to avoid what Coleridge called 'the alcohol of egotism'.<sup>98</sup> Torn between 'recommend[ing] his Church' and 'meet[ing] the expectations of [his] Society' on the one hand, and making himself 'the hero of his own tale' on the other, George Jehoshaphat Mountain, the missionary Bishop of Quebec, found himself divided 'between a natural backwardness . . . to all semblance of puffing, and a desire . . . to do justice to the cause which [he] support[ed]'.<sup>99</sup> In his journal of 1830 Mountain admitted that his writing was 'stiff and constrained' when it came to saying 'something favourable or interesting . . . about the Canadian Church'; and he was torn between his ecclesiastical duty and a desire to make 'a good or at least, decent figure' of himself. 'A simple narrative of facts without a single

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<sup>97</sup> Jonas Hanway, Travels from London . . . into Persia (London, 1762), Vol. I, p. 16.

<sup>98</sup> Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Notes and lectures upon Shakespeare and some of the old poets and dramatists, edited by Mrs H.N. Coleridge, 2 vols (London, 1849), Vol. II, p. 116.

<sup>99</sup> Armine Mountain, A Memoir of George Jehoshaphat Mountain, D.D., D.C.L. Late Bishop of Quebec (London and Montreal, 1866), pp. 132-133.



touch of description or a single glow of feeling', Mountain confessed, 'would be found cold and dry'. Yet by putting too much of himself into his narrative he ran the risk of obscuring his true mission, to promote his Church and missionary society. '[The ability] to sustain [the reader's] attention without making more of one's own part in it that it deserves, or more than one likes, . . . without thinking one's self egotistical', Mountain concluded, 'are points which it passes my skill to manage to my satisfaction'.<sup>100</sup> Thus, while missionary societies saw in the missionary experience an exemplary illustration of Christian piety and behaviour, missionaries were often perplexed over the problem of rendering themselves as the subject of their narratives. Some missionary writers, like Mountain, simply apologised for the intrusion of the self into the narrative; while others, like Joseph Abbott, for example, distanced themselves from their narratives through the creation of fictional alter-egos. Abbott adopted an editorial role in his novel while creating a protagonist through whom he narrates his life in Lower Canada during the early nineteenth century.

Despite the discursive difficulties, missionary narrative served both an important religious as well as a propagandistic purpose. Through the example of the

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<sup>100</sup> Mountain, Memoir, p. 133.

missionary experience in the wilderness the reader witnessed Christian faith and good works in action. The missionary's trials and accomplishments were to be interpreted as being analogous to the Christian reader's, thus providing the reader with a source of inspiration for his or her own life.

### c. practical advice to emigrants

Among the missionaries' readers were those who were either contemplating a move to British North America or those who had recently arrived in the country. William Bell's Hints to Emigrants (1824), for example, responded to a growing influx of emigrants to British North America after the War of 1812 and attempted to provide practical advice and information for prospective or newly-arrived settlers. SPG missionary authors Joseph Abbott and William Stewart Darling both had emigrant readers in mind when they published their narrative works.<sup>101</sup> Concerned that 'so little should be known [in England] of our social,

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<sup>101</sup> Examples of emigrant handbook literature about Canada are plentiful. The following are typical of the genre: John Howison, Sketches of Upper Canada, Domestic, Local, and Characteristic: to which are added, practical details for the information of immigrants of every class; and some recollections of the United States of America (Edinburgh, 1821); John McDonald, Emigration to Canada. Narrative of a voyage to Quebec, fifth edition (Edinburgh, 1823; rpt Ottawa, 1978); and Patrick Shirreff, A Tour through North America; together with a comprehensive view of the Canadas and United States, as adapted for agricultural emigration (Edinburgh, 1835).

political, or religious condition', Abbott hoped his book would awaken emigrant readers 'to all the sad realities of life' in the Canadas. So impressed were the emigration authorities with his Emigrant to North America (1842) and his subsequent autobiographical novel, Philip Musgrave (1846), that hundreds of copies were distributed among potential emigrants by the country's governors-general.<sup>102</sup> Darling's Sketches of Canadian Life (1849) also attempted to convey something of the emigrant experience by relating, in fictional form, the story of Harry Vernon, a young man who, after a thwarted attempt to live an individual existence in the woods, becomes a missionary to the settlers of Upper Canada. Despite its fictional nature Darling stressed the work's veracity and hoped that his missionary novel might prove 'of some service' to intending settlers 'in leading them to correct views of the actual state of the colony'.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> See Chapter Five for this and other related information surrounding Abbott's literary career.

<sup>103</sup> Abbott, Philip Musgrave, p. 1. See also William Stewart Darling, Sketches of Canadian Life, Lay and Ecclesiastical. Illustrative of Canada and the Canadian Church (London, 1849), p. iv. Darling's Sketches is a pseudo-novel which traces the adventures of Harry Vernon, a young romantic Englishman who crosses the Atlantic to try his fortunes in the wilds of Canada. Darling was one of many writers writing for an increasing emigrant market and the story focuses on the emigrant experience. Like most emigrants in the early nineteenth century, Vernon is largely ignorant of Canadian life; accordingly, Darling's book is as much an emigrant handbook as it is an adventure story. Against the backdrop of Vernon's experience, Darling outlines and contrasts the many advantages of Canada with its neighbour to the south. Amongst these

#### d. entertaining tale of adventure

For those not contemplating a journey to British North America, however, missionary narratives still offered a window onto an exotic and exciting world. Missionary travels provided "armchair" exploration and adventure; the missionary's account provided good entertainment value. In 1704, at about the same time the SPG published its first missionary journal, Bishop Gilbert Burnet told the Society that 'a [missionary's] long Voyage, a strange Countrey [sic] and a very small Encouragement, that is both narrow and precarious, are things that will always make great Impressions on the Flesh and Blood'.<sup>104</sup> As

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advantages, Darling argues, is the greater community and Christian spirit among Canadian settlements where religion has taken root. Vernon's desire to march off into the woods alone Natty Bumppo style to 'make a paradise . . . out of what is a wilderness' draws rebuke from Vernon's companion Mr Lawrence (p. 13). Lawrence, a religious man by nature, urges Vernon to reconsider and suggests that rather than seeking delight in nature, Vernon look to his own soul as well as to the souls of others for grace. 'Certainly that is a subject which I have never thought of considering', Vernon replies (p. 13). That 'subject' assumes greater importance as the novel progresses with Vernon eventually becoming a missionary for the Church of England.

<sup>104</sup> Burnet also said, 'Our Designs upon Aliens and Infidels must begin on the Instructing and Reforming our own People, in opening Schools every where, in sending over Books of good Instruction, and above all things, in encouraging and preparing many labourers to go into that Harvest.' A Sermon Preach'd at St. Mary-le-Bow, Feb. 18, 170[4]. Before the Society Incorporated for that Purpose (London 1704), pp. 20-21. Gilbert Burnet (1643-1715) was born in Ediburgh and educated at Marischal College in Aberdeen. He was made Bishop of Salisbury in 1689 and



mission historian Max Warren explains, 'Tales of adventure among remote and far-off peoples which the missionary purveyed were the nearest equivalent the [English] villager ever got to our modern television screen'.<sup>105</sup> Missionaries became celebrities and their meetings were, as one historian as indicated, 'attended by many hundreds, often thousands, [who] thrilled to meet the Empire traveller as much as the missionary, and hear his stories. Books about missionaries were best-sellers for decades'.<sup>106</sup> The publication of missionary adventures catapulted the missionary into the public imagination for there was a sense that any man or woman who left home and relatives and friends and went 'to a distant land to labour amid surroundings which, at their best, are not conducive to ease or comfort, and . . . are, positively

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continued to serve in that capacity until his death in 1715. For a biography of Burnet see T.E.S. Clarke and H.C. Foxcroft, History of His Own Time (London, 1907).

<sup>105</sup> Max Warren, Social History and Christian Mission (London, 1967), p. 70.

<sup>106</sup> David Daniell, 'John Buchan and the Popular Literature of Imperialism', Literature and Imperialism: a conference organised by the English Department of the Roehampton Institute in February 1983, edited by Bart Moore-Gilbert (Roehampton, 1983), p. 122 [pp. 118-134]. See also Julian Pettifer and Richard Bradley, Missionaries (London, 1989). Pettifer and Bradley remind us that the nineteenth-century missionary was the object of the kind of adulation which we now normally associate with the public appearance of a pop star or sports hero (p. 20). The Catalogue of publications and literature issued by the SPG (London, 1915), for example, includes dozens of titles of missionary biographies and autobiographies.



dangerous' was inherently a hero or heroine.<sup>107</sup> Christian piety, manly adventure, "heathen savages", and an unwavering faith in God and Western civilisation were the key ingredients in these missionary adventures. The titles became increasingly indicative of what the reader could expect: The Romance of Missionary Heroism, Heroines of the Missionary Adventure, and Heroic Deeds on the Mission Field. As Julian Pettifer and Richard Bradley have recently reminded us, such works 'were the source of the romantic picture painted of missionaries and their work. . . . Hundreds of similar titles stress the danger, excitement and sacrifice of missionary life, the piety, bravery and nobility of the missionaries, and the savagery, degradation and treachery of the heathens'.<sup>108</sup> The Church was clearly appealing to the public's appetite for missionary and missionary-inspired literature. In its 1901 catalogue, for example, the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions advertised dozens of 'appetizing missionary books', 'flesh and blood books', and 'books with a missionary flavour'.<sup>109</sup> The 'flavour' of these books can be detected from the following passage taken

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107 Charles D. Michael, ed., Missionary Heroes: Stories of Heroism on the Mission Field (Kilmarnock, [1910]), p. vii.

108 Pettifer and Bradley, Missionaries, p. 20.

109 See Board of Foreign Missions, A chat about missionary books (New York, [1901]).

from W.H. Fitchett's essay, 'The Romance of the Missionary': 'In all the world there is no more thrilling romance than that of these pioneers of progress who have carried the gospel of the clean shirt side by side with that of salvation'.<sup>110</sup> Always didactic and moralistic, the missionary adventure portrayed its protagonist as a representative of Christian "good" in opposition to the "evil" and "heathen savage". Yet despite its romantic and often fictional form, missionaries emphasised the veracity of their tales. Introducing his autobiographical novel, Philip Musgrave, Joseph Abbott reaffirms the truth of his Canadian tale: 'Although much which may seem extraordinary or romantic will be found in my narrative, I can assure the reader that a similar tale of toil, suffering, and strange adventure could be told by a great many other missionaries in this country.'<sup>111</sup> As a host of other missionary publications about British North America suggest, Abbott was correct.

#### **e. religious motif**

At the centre of every missionary adventure was the missionary himself. Yet unlike the protagonists of other works of literature missionaries were deemed by some to be

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<sup>110</sup> Quoted in Pettifer and Bradley, Missionaries, pp. 21-22.

<sup>111</sup> Joseph Abbott, Philip Musgrave, p. 3.

rather unusual figures. The missionary "voice", one nineteenth century critic said, was like 'a voice transmitted to us from a strange and distant region, -- almost like a voice from another world.'<sup>112</sup> In some ways there was something "otherworldly" about the missionary and his discourse. While descriptions and accounts of selfless action in the face of danger had obvious entertainment and didactic value, they often had little bearing on the reader's everyday existence. So unique was the missionary's experience in the wilderness that some readers found that 'it [was] hard to acknowledge them [the missionaries] of the same kindred and brotherhood'.<sup>113</sup> Missionaries and their critics were wont to point out ways in which the reading of the missionary's life in the wilderness could be brought to bear on the reader's experience, thus bringing him to a more fruitful understanding of the similarities between the missionary and himself. 'We find our sympathies awakened by seeing how warmly his are engaged in his work', the editors of the Mission Field (the SPG missionary magazine) explained to their readers, 'we see they are men influenced by motives like our own, and the distance between us and them

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<sup>112</sup> The Eclectic Review, New Series, Vol. XXVII (London, 1827), p. 439.

<sup>113</sup> The Mission Field (1 January 1861), p. 2. The Mission Field was a SPG journal.

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Missionaries were urged to use their experience in such ways as to teach or convey universal lessons in Christian morality and behaviour. Missionaries represented "good", savages symbolised "evil". Moravian missionaries in Labrador, for example, used the Arctic and sub-Arctic wilderness as a backdrop for the struggle between good and evil. Descriptions of light and dark become metaphors for godliness and heathenism. Nature and Native are depicted as heathen, civilisation and the missionary as Christian and, therefore, morally good. Beneath the metaphorical veneer of their descriptions, however, lay a moral message, one that pitted the superiority of God and the Church against the "heathen" native and his environment.

Tales of missionary journeys through an inhospitable wilderness were meant to be analogous to the Christian's journey through life. Like Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, missionary stories depicted the Christian's struggle against sin and despair. The missionary's quest became a metaphor for the search for salvation. Landscapes became spiritually symbolic. According to the editors of one missionary magazine the missionary's 'simple, daily narrative' could not only bring the reader to a better

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<sup>114</sup> The Mission Field, p. 3.

understanding of what 'a life amongst savages' was really like, but teach him how this experience could be relevant in his own life.<sup>115</sup>

By 1800 there were half a dozen missionary societies in London, all supporting missionaries in British North America and all publishing some form of literature devoted to missionary activity. Led by the Methodists and Moravians other missionary societies soon saw the advantages of publishing full-length missionary accounts and testimonies.<sup>116</sup> The Church Missionary Society, the London Missionary Society, the Baptist Missionary Society, and the SPG joined the Moravians and Methodists in the publication and distribution of journals or other

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<sup>115</sup> The Mission Field, p. 3.

<sup>116</sup> The subject of personal testimony in Christian literature is an obviously important one and one which is too big to be covered in detail here. For a discussion of personal testimony in religious and other literature see John Beverly, 'The Margin at the Centre: On Testimonio (Testimonial Narrative)', Modern Fiction Studies, Special Issue: Narratives of Colonial Resistance, 35:1 (Spring, 1989). In the Preface (pp. 3-8) to the issue by Timothy Brennan writes: 'We are speaking instead of a mode of writing linked to a process of nation-building and identity formation that has been carried out at the expense of an empire consisting not only of occupation armies, World Bank ultimatums, and saturation bombing, but of a network of tastes and values. Western culture is an imperial culture, and literary studies as we know them were first created under its (often unconscious) directives' (p. 4). . . . As such, we expect to meet, as we often do, an aesthetic of the anti-literary itself: a kind of counterfiction, a poetry without metaphor, a narrative without irony' (p. 5).



narratives of missionary experience. John Wesley's Arminian Magazine was founded in 1778 partly as a forum for the printing of accounts and letters from his itinerant preachers in both Britain and America; and in 1790 the Moravian missionary society, the United Brethren's Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel among the Heathen, published the first of its Periodical Accounts, a quarterly magazine dedicated to missionary matters. As one missionary argued, a 'narrative of a mission' might '[detail] the best means necessary to prosecute and establish Missions, [and] might greatly assist the young Missionary in his noble career'.<sup>117</sup> It could also be, he added, 'profitable and interesting'.<sup>118</sup>

Missionary journals and magazines were aimed at the general reader with an interest in missions; some were aimed at specific audiences like women and children. The Victorian era embraced the missionary movement, finding in countless biographical, historical, and descriptive works of 'saintly heroism' practical instruction, moral entertainment, and spiritual inspiration. 'The lives of great missionaries illustrate, with a deep personal interest', wrote one commentator, 'the greatness of the

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<sup>117</sup> Marsden, Narrative of a Mission, p. ix.

<sup>118</sup> Marsden, Narrative of a Mission, p. viii. For a full discussion of Marsden and his work see Chapter Four of this thesis.

work.'.<sup>119</sup> By the middle of the nineteenth century, missionary literature was no longer a curiosity, but a regular feature of a number of religious as well as secular journals and periodicals. From Labrador to Vancouver Island missionaries articulated their experience in numerous autobiographical narratives. W.H. New's recent inclusion of a section on missionary journals in his History of Canadian Literature (1989) suggests that missionary writing is indeed worthy of serious academic study. New accords missionary writing a serious place in Canadian literary history alongside the literature of exploration, captivity, settlement, and travel.<sup>120</sup>

#### VI: The critical reception

Despite numerous calls to study missionary and missionary-inspired literature, the Canadian critical response has been less than enthusiastic. This is not to say that the Canadian missionary narratives have been totally ignored, but what has been written has largely been biographical and historical. The missionary movement and the establishment of the Protestant Church in Canada has been the subject of numerous histories. William Gregg's and

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<sup>119</sup> Samuel G. Green, The Story of the Religious Tract Society for One Hundred Years (London, 1899), p. 124.

<sup>120</sup> See Chapter Two in W.H. New, The Literary History of Canada (London, 1989).

John Moir's histories of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, for example, are indebted to material written and gathered by missionaries in the nineteenth century.<sup>121</sup>

Other sectarian histories include Ernest Hawkins' Historical Notices of the Missions of the Church of England in the North American Colonies (1845), Thomas Beamish Akins' A Sketch of the Rise and Progress of the Church of England in the British North American Colonies (1849), T.C.B. Boon's The Anglican Church from the Bay to the Rockies: A History of the Ecclesiastical Province of Rupert's Land and its Dioceses from 1820 to 1950 (1962), and Philip Carrington's The Anglican Church in Canada (1963). Works by J.M. Bumsted,<sup>122</sup> S.D. Clark,<sup>123</sup> John Webster Grant<sup>124</sup>, John Moir,<sup>125</sup> George Rawlyk,<sup>126</sup> William

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121 William Gregg, History of the Presbyterian Church in the Dominion of Canada from the earliest times to 1834 (Toronto, 1885) and John S. Moir, Enduring Witness: A History of the Presbyterian Church in Canada (Byrant Press Ltd, n.d).

122 J.M. Bumsted, ed., Canadian History Before Confederation (Georgetown, 1972).

123 See S.D. Clark, Church and Sect in Canada (Toronto, 1948).

124 See for example John Webster Grant, A Profusion of Spires: Religion in Nineteenth Century Ontario (Toronto, 1988) and Moon Over Wintertime: Missionaries and the Indians of Canada in Encounter since 1534 (Toronto, 1984).

125 See for example John S. Moir, Church and State in Canada West: Three Studies in the Relation of Denominationalism and Nationalism, 1841-1867 (Toronto, 1959); Enduring Witness: A History of the Presbyterian Church in Canada (Toronto, 1987); and John S. Moir and C.T. McIntire, eds, Canadian Protestant and Roman Catholic

Westfall<sup>127</sup> and others have contributed much to our understanding and appreciation of the history of the Protestant Church in Canada.<sup>128</sup>

The importance of missionary literature to the development of a Canadian literary consciousness has been recognised

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Missions, 1820s-1960s: Historical Essays in Honour of John Webster Grant (New York, 1988).

126 George Rawlyk, Ravished by the Spirit: Revivals, Baptists, and Henry Alline (Montreal & Kingston, 1985).

127 William Westfall, Two Worlds: The Protestant Culture of Nineteenth Century Ontario (Montreal & Kingston, 1989).

128 See for example, Arthur Wentworth Eaton, The Church in Nova Scotia and the Tory Clergy of the Revolution (1891); John Thomas McNeill, The Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1875-1925 (Toronto, 1925); William Perkins Bull, From Strachan to Owen. How the Church of England was Planted and Tended in British North America (Toronto, 1937); A.E.E. Legge, The Anglican Church in Three Rivers, Québec, 1758-1956 (Russell, 1956); Elizabeth Hewat, Vision and Achievement, 1796-1956: A History of the Foreign Missions of the Churches united in the Church of Scotland (1960); Goldwin French, Parsons and Politics: The Role of the Wesleyan Methodists in Upper Canada and the Maritimes from 1780 to 1855 (Toronto, 1962); Judith Fingard, The Anglican Design in Loyalist Nova Scotia, 1783-1816 (London, 1972); G.P. de T. Glazebrook, The Church of England in Upper Canada, 1785-1867 (Toronto, 1982); Laurie Stanley, The Well-Watered Garden: The Presbyterian Church in Cape Breton, 1798-1860 (Sydney, Nova Scotia, 1983); Reginald Bibby, Fragmented Gods: The Poverty and Potential of Religion in Canada (Toronto, 1987); Marguerite Van Die, An Evangelical Mind: Nathaniel Burwash and the Methodist Tradition in Canada, 1839-1918 (Kingston & Montreal, 1989); Curtis Fahey, In His Name: The Anglican Experience in Upper Canada, 1791-1854 (Ottawa, 1991); and Michael Gauvreau, The Evangelical Century: College and Creed in English Canada from the Great Revival to the Great Depression (Kingston & Montreal, 1991).

by modern literary historians and critics, yet little has been achieved in the way of assessing that importance. 'One might assume that Canadians would be anxious to explore their religious heritage', writes Mark McGowan in an essay on the study of religion in Canada, 'but the harvest of scholarly materials on Canadian religion pales in comparison to studies of other aspects of Canadian life'.<sup>129</sup> Another critic, David Kent, editor of Christian Poetry in Canada (1989), blames an indifferent and even hostile secular academic community for ignoring religious literature. 'Canadian academics, literary critics and editors, and other students of this country's literature', Kent complains, have displayed a considerable 'lack of attention' to which he responds that 'religious faith . . . has seldom been fashionable during successive phases of idealistic rebellion against authority and of materialistic self-indulgence that have so characterised so much of Canadian cultural life since the 1960s, when Canadian literature effectively emerged as a subject for intensive study'.<sup>130</sup>

Yet literary scholars have continued to sound calls for

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<sup>129</sup> Mark G. McGowan, 'Coming out of the Cloister: Some Reflections on Developments in the Study of Religion in Canada, 1980-1990', International Journal of Canadian Studies, 1-2 (Spring-Fall, 1990), p. 176 [pp. 175-202].

<sup>130</sup> David A. Kent, ed., Christian Poetry in Canada (Toronto, 1989), p. 15.



study of missionary and missionary-inspired literature. Writing in the Literary History of Canada in 1965, for example, Victor Hopwood called attention to the importance of Jesuit missionary narratives to our understanding and appreciation of early Canadian literature and history; while at the same time (and again in 1976) Carl Klinck urged scholars and students of Canadian literature to take up a study 'which would reckon with the literary influence' of the first Protestant missionary society to send missionaries to Canada.<sup>131</sup>

Yet critical studies of colonial literature in Canada have been slow to respond to these and other calls for a study of missionary and missionary-inspired literature. Rather, they have continued to focus largely on the secular writings of explorers, fur-traders, soldiers, naval officers, emigrants, tourists, and even artists. This despite Dick Harrison's inviting remark in 1977 that Canadian missionary 'journals, diaries, and reports' comprised 'some of the most revealing writing in the early West'.<sup>132</sup> 'The narratives of the missionaries', he argued, 'are in many ways the most instructive. . . .

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<sup>131</sup> Carl F. Klinck, 'Literary Activity in the Canadas, 1812-1841', The Literary History of Canada, Vol. I, p. 146.

<sup>132</sup> Dick Harrison, Unnamed Country: The Struggle for a Canadian Prairie Fiction (Edmonton, 1977), p. 48.

[T]hey offer the purest evidence of how Europeanized culture shaped and limited men's response to the new land'.<sup>133</sup> In 1978, Carl Klinck (in a report written for the ALQC Committee on Research in English-Canadian Literature) again recommended that a study of the 'literature of missions' and its 'impact on Canadian Literature' be undertaken.<sup>134</sup> Yet by the end of the 80s no such study had been attempted.

This lack of critical attention raises the question whether the study of missionary literature is a proper academic subject at all. In his essay, 'The History of Missions: An Academic Discipline', Stephen Neill confesses that while 'everyone knows that the Christian world missions exist . . . not everyone would be prepared to agree that the mission should be regarded as a fit subject for academic study'.<sup>135</sup> Research shows that there are few academic studies of missions and missionary-related activity outside the precincts of the divinity school or missionary college. As Neill points out, the study of

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<sup>133</sup> Unnamed Country, p. 48.

<sup>134</sup> ALQC Committee on Research in English-Canadian Literature (Ottawa, 1978).

<sup>135</sup> S.C. Neill, 'The History of Missions: An Academic Study', Mission of the Church and the Propagation of the Faith: Papers read at the seventh summer meeting and the eighth winter meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society, edited by G.J. Cuming (Cambridge, 1970), p. 149.

missions has been left largely to the 'experts in missions', a phrase usually meaning the missionaries themselves or their clerical colleagues. While there have been many good studies of the missionary movement and its impact on other cultures, mission histories are often nothing more than hagiographies, glorified stories of individual missionary lives or propagandistic accounts of Christianising the colonial and non-Western world. The result is a literature which is too self-serving and self-congratulatory. The authors of a book on missions recently commented that 'what literature there is about the subject is produced by missionaries about missionaries for missionary society members. . . . [I]t is amateurish, which is not a sin, and unreadable which is. It fails to tell the story as it is'.<sup>136</sup>

Of course, this all depends on what "story" one wishes to tell. Studies of missionaries and their activities have either tended to mythologise or denigrate the missionary and his role in the world. The popular image of the missionary is either one which depicts a heroic martyr or

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<sup>136</sup> Richard and Helen Exley, The Missionary Myth-an agnostic view of contemporary missionaries (Guildford and London, 1973), pp. 1-2. Missionary writing too often 'fail[s]', Stephen Neill points out, 'to set the events recorded in the frame of contemporary history', but rather, treats its own narrative history as if it were 'a special world of its own' (see Neill, 'The History of Missions', p. 152).

a meddling philanthropist: depending on one's view, he is either an angel bringing civilisation to the unenlightened, or an evil harbinger who destroys the indigenous cultures of the peoples to whom he or she has been sent. This dual vision of the missionary has characterised the twentieth-century's view of the missionary. When they undertook their study of the missionary in the early 70s, Richard and Helen Exley 'discovered that most people regarded missionaries as irrelevant, although the subject', they added, 'was always good for a joke'. In their book, The Missionary Myth (1973), they attempt to see beyond the images of missionaries as 'neo-imperialist busybodies' or 'jungle-bashing heroes of the Livingstone era' in an effort to present a more realistic view of the missionary and his contribution to colonial culture.<sup>137</sup> In a more recent study, Julian Pettifer and Richard Bradley admitted that when they were preparing for their television documentary they 'were astonished to discover that when [they] mentioned to friends or acquaintances [their] plans to film with missionaries, the news was commonly greeted with incredulity or even hilarity'. Most people, they reported, had difficulty believing 'that there could still be missionaries out there trying to convert "the heathen".'

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<sup>137</sup> Richard and Helen Exley, The Missionary Myth, p. 3.

There were also, predictably', they added, 'a lot of well-worn jokes about cooking pots and the missionary position.'<sup>138</sup>

As Pettifer and Bradley remind us, 'our modern perception of missionaries is rooted in the nineteenth century, at a time when missionaries were firmly in the forefront of public consciousness'. For many of us, our idea of the missionary is based on a 'stereotyped mental image . . . adorned with pith helmet, baggy shorts, cannibal cooking pots and gawping savages'.<sup>139</sup> Such images have been perpetuated in the media and in popular song. Noel Coward's satirical lyric 'Uncle Harry', for example, reinforces the image of the missionary as a meddling buffoon:

Poor Uncle Harry  
 Wanted to be a missionary  
 So he took a ship and sailed away.  
 This visionary  
 Hotly pursued by dear Aunt Mary,  
 Found a South Sea Isle on which to stay.  
 The natives greeted them kindly and invited them to dine  
 On yams and clams and human hams and vintage coconut  
 wine,  
 The taste of which was filthy but the after-effects  
 divine.  
 Poor Uncle Harry  
 Got a bit gay and longed to tarry  
 This, Aunt Mary couldn't quite allow,

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<sup>138</sup> Julian Pettifer and Richard Bradley, Missionaries (London, 1990), p. 7. Cartoons and popular song have also treated the missionary in this comical fashion (see Pettifer and Bradley, pp. 18-20 for examples).

<sup>139</sup> Pettifer and Bradley, The Missionaries, p. 19.



She lectured him severely on a number of church affairs  
 But when she'd gone to bed he made a get-away down the  
 stairs,  
 For he longed to find the answer to a few of the  
 maiden's prayers.  
 Uncle Harry's not a missionary now.<sup>140</sup>

Media images too continue to reinforce stereotypical  
 images often to ludicrous effect as in the case of Michael  
 Palin's comic film, The Missionary (1983), in which the  
 Protestant missionary is portrayed as a bumbling fool and  
 clownish prude.<sup>141</sup> Though humorous Palin's film reminds  
 us that the missionaries themselves were often the victim  
 of their own making as the following conversation from the  
 film reveals. The missionary "hero" is the Rev. Charles  
 Fortescue who has just returned from his mission in  
 Africa. Shortly after his arrival in London, Fortescue is  
 joined for tea by his friend and colleauge, the Rev.  
 Fitzbanks, who is eager to learn of his Fortescue's  
 missionary experience:

Fitzbanks: How was it out there, frightful?  
 Fortescue: No, not half bad, sir . . .  
 Fitzbanks: Any cannibalism?  
 Fortescue: Not where I was, no . . .  
 Fitzbanks: (faintly disappointed) Ah . . . People  
 eaten near you, I suppose.  
 Fortescue: No . . .  
 Fitzbanks: Atrocities?  
 Fortescue: Not to speak of . . . no, sir.  
 Fitzbanks: (sadly) Oh, well . . . One hears such

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<sup>140</sup> Noel Coward, Pacific 1860, in Noël Coward, The Lyrics (London, 1983), p. 262. Even the recent pop hit, 'Missionary Man' by the Eurythmics, with its heavy-handed vocals by Annie Lennox, leaves no doubt about the group's irreverant attitude to the missionary.

<sup>141</sup> The Missionary, directed by Michael Palin (Handheld Films, 1983).

dreadful stories.

Of course, the 'dreadful stories' to which Fitzbanks refers were those 'flesh and blood' type of missionary adventure which were so popular in the Victorian era. The ironic pun on 'dreadful' serves both to highlight their dramatic import (as in full of dread) while at the same time casting dispersion on their literary value (as in just plain awful) and their veracity.<sup>142</sup> Similar images of the missionaries and popular attitudes to their discourse have discouraged serious study of the missionaries' literary expression of their experience.<sup>143</sup>

Current academic interest in missionary literature, though slight, could be stimulated by the current reassessment of colonial and post-colonial literature in Canada. Such

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<sup>142</sup> David Livingstone's Narrative of an Expedition to the Zanzibar and Its Tributaries (London, 1865) is typical of the kind of book Palin is satirising. Set against an exotic backdrop Livingstone struggles against "dark" nature and "heathen" native. Within the first few pages of his book he narrowly escapes death in the jaws of a lion, the first of many providential deliverances from danger. Ironically, while such a work transformed Livingstone into a larger-than-life hero, he was unsuccessful in making any lasting conversions to Christianity.

<sup>143</sup> As a note of contrast, Catholic missionaries have tended to attract a more "serious" treatment from film-makers, but even these are equally guilty of distorting the image of the missionary. Recent film treatments of Robert Bolt's The Mission (1983) and Brian Moore's Black Robe (1985), for example, romanticise the Jesuit missionary's martyrdom and mythologise him making him into a larger-than-life hero.

reassessment could be linked to what Northrop Frye has called a 'real, genuine advance in criticism . . . when every work of literature, regardless of its merit, [is] seen as a document of potential interest, or value, or insight into the culture of the age'.<sup>144</sup> If seen in this light, then missionary writing merits a place alongside its literary cousins--the explorer narrative, the emigrant narrative, and other forms of travel and autobiographical literature--which articulate the colonial experience.

## VII: Conclusion

A critical examination of missionary narrative would, like other travel narratives written in the early nineteenth century, reveal the author's conflict with the land and its inhabitants, and would increase our appreciation and understanding of the Protestant missionaries' perspective on their experience in Canada. How missionaries saw this world is as important as what they saw. The following chapters explore the missionaries' perception of their environment and their role in it and looks at how missionaries constructed a vision of the Canadian landscape and colonial society. In order to appreciate and understand the purpose and the discursive functions of missionary writing, it will be necessary to see missionary

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144 Northrop Frye in an interview with Imne Salusinszky in Criticism in Society, edited by Imne Salusinszky (New York, 1987), p. 32.

narrative as part of a much larger literary project which encompassed numerous missionary societies over an extensive period of time. The following chapter, therefore, examines the literary history of three Protestant missionary societies. With this historical context in place we can then begin to ask such critical questions as why was missionary literature written and published? who were its readers? what discursive form (or forms) did it assume? and what were its underlying assumptions, values, ideologies and narrative strategies?

The London Missionary society abounds in documents; the Moravians have minute accounts and interesting histories of the Missions; the Baptists both astonish and edify the world with the just and yet splendid accounts of their translations and success; the Church Missionary society is gathering up even the crumbs and fragments of their Missions, to form an entertainment for the public.

Joshua Marsden, Narrative of a Mission (1816)



## CHAPTER TWO

### ANGLICANS, METHODISTS, AND MORAVIANS: A STUDY OF THREE PROTESTANT MISSIONARY SOCIETIES

Few characteristics of recent Church life in Great Britain are more marked or of higher promise than the new interest in Christian missions. The great enterprise is not only more largely supported, it is more deeply studied, more thoroughly understood. Many tributary subjects acquire new attractiveness from this central theme. Geography, Ethnology, Comparative Religion, are fraught with a higher interest because of their bearing upon the endeavour to win the world for Christ; hence the call for missionary books of all kinds . . .<sup>1</sup>

To understand and appreciate the discursive development of the Canadian missionary "life", it is first necessary to explore the early history of the Protestant missionary society. From this examination, we will note the importance of the missionary's communication with his society and the general public. Tracing the history of the missionary society through the eighteenth century and into the early decades of the nineteenth century, we can discover how missionary writing evolved and what influences were brought to bear on its development. This chapter proposes to explore the history of three Protestant missionary societies--the Church of England's Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, the Methodist Missionary Society, and the United Brethren's Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel among

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<sup>1</sup> Samuel G. Green, The Story of the Religious Tract Society (London, 1899), p. 124.

the Heathen--and to examine their role in the development of Canadian missionary writing.

I:     **The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel:  
Letters, Journals, and Accounts**

The literary history of the Anglican Church in Canada originates with the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (SPG). Founded in 1701 by Thomas Bray, the SPG took over from its sister organisation, the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK), in attending to the spiritual needs of the North American colonies.<sup>2</sup> Between 1703 and 1900 the SPG sent more than fifteen hundred missionaries to British North America and Canada to propagate the Gospel and plant the Church in the colonies.<sup>3</sup> As part of their mission, they distributed

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<sup>2</sup> Protestantism was slow in organising its missionary outreach to the colonies. Despite a few attempts to send and support missionaries in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the age of Protestant missions begins with the founding of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge in 1698 and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts in 1701. See W.K. Lowther Clarke, A History of the S.P.C.K. (London, 1959).

<sup>3</sup> See C.F. Pascoe, ed., Two Hundred Years of the S.P.G., 1701-1901 (London, 1901). Pascoe's work provides one of the most comprehensive histories of the SPG; see also H.P. Thompson, Into All Lands: The History of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel In Foreign Parts, 1701-1950 (London, 1951); Philip Carrington, The Anglican Church in Canada (Toronto, 1963); and Judith Fingard, The Anglican Design in Loyalist Nova Scotia, 1783-1816 (London, 1972). 'British North America' refers to what we now know as Canada before 1867; 'Canada' refers to the country after 1867.

Bibles, tracts, and other religious literature; translated Scripture and other devotional literature into a number of native tongues; and recorded their missionary experience in countless letters, journals, and other autobiographical and historical accounts. It is these latter documents which link the SPG with the development of the Canadian literary imagination.

According to its charter the SPG's main function was to send 'Learned and Orthodox Ministers' to preach to and convert the "heathen" to Christianity.<sup>4</sup> That its missionaries should be 'learned' is reflected in the SPG's 'Instructions' to its missionaries, printed in 1706.<sup>5</sup> Intending itinerants were requested to 'lodge not in any Publick House; but at some Bookseller's, or in other private and reputable Families' where, presumably they could spend their time praying, preaching, and studying the Bible and other religious literature. Missionaries were expected to be literate and well-studied.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> An Account of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (London, 1706), p. 15.

<sup>5</sup> Quotes from the SPG's Instructions to Missionaries (London, 1706) are from Pascoe, Two Hundred Years, pp. 837-840. A subsequent Instructions was printed in 1715 and another, especially for North American missionaries, in 1735. It asked missionaries 'to promote loyalty, brotherly love, the evangelization of the Indians, and the propagation of the Gospel generally' (see Pascoe, p. 840).

<sup>6</sup> 'The most conspicuous mark of the prudent care of the Society has been exhibited in the choice of their Missionaries', remarked Bishop Butler in 1784 (see Pascoe,

As part of their duties, missionaries were asked to 'keep constant and regular Correspondence with the Society' and, every six months, were required to send the SPG 'an Account of the State of their respective Parishes'. This Notitia Parochialis, as it was known, was to be drawn up soon after the missionary's arrival in the colony and 'was kept by him for his own Ease and Comfort, as well as the Benefit of his Parishioners'. In it the missionary lodged the names of each of his parishioners, their religion, and details and numbers of baptisms and communicants as well as numbers of 'Heathens and Infidels' in the parish. In a separate category missionaries were asked to record 'what Obstructions they meet with in their Ministration' and it is here that we often find some of the more personal and interesting aspects of a missionary's life in British North America.<sup>7</sup> It is from these reports and letters that we are able to construct a picture of religious life in British North America during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

The first missionary to work in Newfoundland under the

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p. 837). Butler (1717-1802) became Bishop of Oxford in 1777. He was an avid supporter of the SPG and published a number of political pamphlets (under the pseudonym 'Vindex') during the American War of Independence espousing Tory principles.

<sup>7</sup> Pascoe, Two Hundred Years of the S.P.G., p. 839.

auspices of the SPG was John Jackson.<sup>8</sup> Jackson arrived in St John's in 1700 with his wife and eight children. He came on a private subscription of £50 per year (for three years) to act as 'Minister of St John's Fort', but his mission was short-lived and by 1703 poverty and the hostility of many of his parishioners had forced him to request the SPG to bring him home.<sup>9</sup>

Four years later, Jacob Rice arrived to find that the church which Jackson had built had been damaged and 'most unchristianly defaced' by the settlers. His first task, therefore, was 'to provide it with communion vessels, a pulpit cloth, surplices, and glass for the windows'.<sup>10</sup> Hostility toward the Church was not uncommon. Many emigrants had left Britain to escape clerical control and

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<sup>8</sup> Jackson was by no means the first resident clergyman in Newfoundland. In 1610 James I granted a charter to Lord Bacon, Lord Baltimore and others to colonise Newfoundland. That year John Guy of Bristol established a small 'Plantation' at Conception Bay in Newfoundland. Two years later, Erasmus Stourton became the first resident clergyman on Canadian soil. Stourton, however, was a Puritan and did not get along with his overseer, Lord Baltimore, a Roman Catholic; he abandoned his mission and returned to England in 1628.

<sup>9</sup> An Account (1706), p. 67. See also Carrington, p. 29. Upon his return to England Jackson was shipwrecked. He survived and was later given a job and a pension by the SPG.

<sup>10</sup> Carrington, The Anglican Church in Canada, p. 30. Pascoe reports that Rice, though he 'passed the Society's usual examination' did not 'comply with certain conditions necessary to secure him appointment on its list of Missionaries' (Two Hundred Years of the S.P.G., p. 89).



they were openly hostile to clergymen of every faith.<sup>11</sup> In his Anniversary Sermon of 1732 Bishop George Berkeley told the SPG that they were engaged in nothing short of 'spiritual warfare', not with the natives, but with the 'English planters'.<sup>12</sup> He spoke contemptuously of the settlers' behaviour. '[A]s for their morals', he said, 'I apprehend there is nothing to be found in them that should tempt others to make an experiment of their principles, either in religion or government'. The conversion of the natives, he further argued, could not be successfully undertaken until the settlers had shown that they could be brought to account for their immoral behaviour.<sup>13</sup> 'The likeliest step toward converting the heathen', he told the missionaries, 'would be to begin with the English planters; whose influence will for ever be an obstacle to propagating the gospel, till they have a right sense of it themselves'.<sup>14</sup> Despite the hardships three other missionaries were sent to Newfoundland with a promise from one of the island's merchants that 'the people of the

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<sup>11</sup> A fact confirmed by many missionary letters and journals.

<sup>12</sup> C.H. Sisson, ed., The English Sermon: 1650-1750, 4 vols (Cheshire, 1976), Vol. II, p. 321.

<sup>13</sup> John Wesley, who himself went to Georgia to minister to the inhabitants of the English colony, complained that the colonists had 'very little more knowledge of a Saviour than the aboriginal natives' (quoted in Stephen Neill, Anglicanism, p. 217).

<sup>14</sup> Sisson, pp. 323 and 324.

country . . . [would] do something for them'.<sup>15</sup> Yet despite their efforts success was not forthcoming and the SPG had to withdraw its support.

In 1726, however, the SPG renewed its role in Newfoundland when it assisted Henry Jones with his mission to the island. By 1734 Jones reported that his congregation was in 'a flourishing condition'.<sup>16</sup> Yet not all Newfoundland's missionaries were able to boast of success. James Balfour arrived in 1764 and reported that the colony's 'good-natured People' had 'declare[d] themselves overjoy'd at [his] coming'; but, he added cautiously, 'I cannot say, how much they are to be depended upon'.<sup>17</sup> He complained that 'scarce any of them would condescend to board [him], even for ready money, lest his presence should check some favourite vice'.<sup>18</sup> On at least one occasion, Balfour was forced to defend himself against a drunken mob, while on another he had to suspend a burial when he was alerted to suspicious marks of violence on the corpse. He later discovered that the deceased had been

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<sup>15</sup> Quoted in Pascoe, Two Hundred Years of the S.P.G., p. 89.

<sup>16</sup> Quoted in Pascoe, Two Hundred Years of the S.P.G., p. 89.

<sup>17</sup> USPG Letters, C/CAN/PRE, B.6 (Newfoundland), 157b, 158, 160, 162, 172, 178, 179, 183.

<sup>18</sup> Quoted in Pascoe, Two Hundred Years of the S.P.G., p. 90.

murdered by his family. Balfour concluded that his parishioners were 'a barbarous, perfidious, cruel people' and wondered why he had bothered to help them at all.<sup>19</sup> Newfoundland, he concluded in one of his letters, was 'a most barbarous and lawless place';<sup>20</sup> 'Believe me!', he wrote after having spent ten years in the colony, 'these are Uncouth Regions here indeed, for a Man to spend his short Life in'.<sup>21</sup>

Missionary letters, journals, and accounts were useful in helping the SPG to make a proper assessment of 'the Spiritual State of their respective Parishes'.<sup>22</sup> In addition to their author's personal opinions, details of population, climate, topography, along with particulars regarding conversions and deaths which had occurred in the parish, were eagerly awaited by the Society. Information was extracted and compiled in the Society's Annual Reports. These, in turn, were circulated among members of the Society or read during special sermons dedicated to

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<sup>19</sup> Quoted in Pascoe, Two Hundred Years of the S.P.G., p. 92.

<sup>20</sup> USPG Letters, C/CAN/PRE, Box 1, 38b.

<sup>21</sup> USPG Letters, C/CAN/PRE, B.6, 200.

<sup>22</sup> An Account of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (London 1706), p. 35.

the missionaries.<sup>23</sup> Such information was highly regarded by the Society and was considered an integral part of its religious propaganda. As early as 1706, the Secretary of the SPG could report that 'the Society ha[d] obtained many large and good Accounts of the State of Religion in all our several Colonies and Plantations abroad, which they carefully preserve among their other Books and Papers, that by having recourse to them, they may understand and know how most effectually to answer the Wants and Occasions of them'.<sup>24</sup>

The first missionary journal to be published by the SPG was written by George Keith.<sup>25</sup> Printed in 1706, it told the story of Keith's two years spent as a missionary 'on the Continent of North America, betwixt Piscataway River in New England, and Coretuck in North Carolina'.<sup>26</sup> Covering more than eight hundred miles, Keith recorded numerous statistical details necessary for the SPG to plan

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<sup>23</sup> See An Account of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (London, 1704), p. [1].

<sup>24</sup> An Account (1706), p. 67.

<sup>25</sup> George Keith, Journal of the Travels and Ministry of the Rev. George Keith in North America (London, 1706). Keith was born in Aberdeen in 1638. He had been a Presbyterian and a Quaker before joining the Anglican Church in 1700. He travelled in North America between 1701 and 1704. Later he resided as Rector of Edburton in Sussex. He died in March 1716.

<sup>26</sup> See Pascoe, Two Hundred Years of the S.P.G., p. 10.

its activity in the colonies. The Journal also gives a rare look into the spiritual life of the colonies in the early eighteenth century. Keith 'found the people generally well affected to the Doctrine that [he] preached among them' and said that they were desirous for the Society 'to send Ministers unto them'.<sup>27</sup> However, he was concerned about widespread sectarianism and urged the SPG to send missionaries 'who have discretion and due qualifications' before the country was 'overrunne with Presbyterians, Anabaptists, and Quakers'.<sup>28</sup> Keith's emphasis on the character of the itinerant underlines the growing concern of the SPG, the public, and the missionaries themselves over the experience of the colonial missionary. Similar reports from missionaries in

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<sup>27</sup> Quoted in Pascoe, Two Hundred Years of the S.P.G., pp. 10 and 11. The entries are for 4 and 18 November 1701.

<sup>28</sup> Journal entry for 18 November 1701 and a letter from Keith (24 February 1703) both quoted in Pascoe, Two Hundred Years of the S.P.G., p. 11. While in America Keith took up the battle against dissenters by printing a number of sermons attacking them and defending the episcopal faith. His presence was welcomed by the fledgling episcopal church in America. One minister wrote to the SPG: '[W]e crave leave to return you our most thankfull acknowledgements for your pious care in sending over the Rev. Mr. Keith whose unparalleled zeal and assiduity, whose eminent piety, whose indefatigable diligence, . . . whose frequent preaching and learned conferences, whose strenuous and elaborate writing made him highly and signally instrumentall of promoting the Church and advancing the number of Christians not only here but in the neighbouring provinces' (Appendices to the Journals of the Society, Vol. A, p. 235; also quoted in Pascoe, Two Hundred Years of the S.P.G., p. 34).



Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and in the Canadas painted a picture of missionary life which though optimistic in its outlook was difficult in its execution.

After the American Revolution in 1776 many SPG missionaries were forced to flee to the Maritimes. Two missionaries who came to Nova Scotia and who earned something of a literary reputation were Jacob Bailey and Roger Viets. Bailey had been an itinerant clergyman at Pownalborough, Massachusetts at the outbreak of war and for three years had undergone 'the most severe and cruel treatment' at the hands of the revolutionaries.<sup>29</sup> He was assaulted, imprisoned, shot at, and stripped of all his possessions. In 1779, he and his family finally escaped to Halifax.

What we know of Bailey and his missionary life comes largely from letters, journals, poems, and a Memoir, published posthumously in 1853 by William S. Bartlet.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Jacob Bailey was born at Rowley, Massachusetts in 1731. He received an MA from Harvard and was ordained in 1759. He served as an itinerant preacher around Massachusetts Bay until 1779 when he fled to Nova Scotia to escape persecution at the hands of the American revolutionists. From the next year he served as a missionary for the SPG at Cornwallis and from 1781 at Annapolis until his death in 1808.

<sup>30</sup> William S. Bartlet, The Frontier Missionary: A Memoir of the Life of the Rev. Jacob Bailey, A.M. Missionary at Pownalborough, Maine; Cornwallis and Annapolis, N.S. (Boston, 1853).

In this latter work Bailey describes his trip from Pownalborough to Halifax in 1779. From the opening description, Bailey's poetic sensibility is at once evident:

June 7th, 1779. We arose this morning before the sun and began to prepare for our expulsion, our hearts replete with apprehension, anxiety and distress.

As the rising sun tinged the various objects around us, I beheld the once delightful scenes with bitter emotions of grief. This, in a word, was the silent language of our faces as we looked upon each other, and it was agreeable to the inward impulse. Must we, after all the trouble, harassment and cruel persecution we have endured for the cause of truth and virtue, must we leave these pleasing scenes of nature, these friendly shades, these rising plants, these opening flowers, these trees swelling with fruit, and yonder winding river, which appears through the umbrageous avenue, to revive and elevate the mind? We must no longer behold the splendid orb of day peeping over the eastern hills to dissipate the fog, and to brighten the field and the forest. We must hear no more the sweet music of the tuneful tribe, amidst the trembling grove, to gladden, charm and animate the desponding heart.<sup>31</sup>

Bailey and his family endured storms and privateers as they sought to make their way to their new home. In stark contrast to the "Edenic garden" he felt he was leaving behind was the hellish prospect he envisaged in Nova Scotia:

June 21st. No sooner did the morning light begin to soften the horrors of darkness, than I arose and took possession of the deck to observe the weather and to survey the adjacent country. I found that we were overtaken by a

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<sup>31</sup> The Frontier Missionary, p. 129.

dead calm, and the heavens were covered with rolling volumes of black and dismal clouds which shed a dark and dejecting gloom over all the surrounding scenes of nature. But if I was inspired with melancholy sentiments at this dusky prospect, I was perfectly shocked when I turned my eyes towards the land which stretched along the western quarter. The shore which now engages my attention is the famous Jebucto Head, a most enormous congress of rocky ledges running with a lofty and impregnable front into the sea, while the surface is inexpressibly rugged and broken, covered with shrubby spruce, fir and hemlock, which by their starving and misshapen appearance sufficiently indicate the severity of the climate and the barrenness of the soil.<sup>32</sup>

Nevertheless, Bailey thanked Providence for a safe delivery and he set off to make his way in this 'strange country'.<sup>33</sup> What impresses the reader about Bailey's journal is his eye for detail whether it is a description of his own dress, the character of a stranger, or the dream of a neighbour. One Canadian literary historian writes that there is 'a freshness and vitality' in Bailey's prose and 'a directness that is almost biblical' while another 'finds touches of keen observation and . . . passages of satirical humour'.<sup>34</sup>

Bailey's early reports to the SPG were confident and optimistic. He reported in one, for example, that he

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<sup>32</sup> The Frontier Missionary, pp. 153-154.

<sup>33</sup> The Frontier Missionary, p. 156.

<sup>34</sup> A.J.M. Smith, ed., The Book of Canadian Prose: Early Beginnings to Confederation (Toronto, 1965), p. 26.

'ha[d] baptized twenty-five persons, buried ten, and married five couples'. He also boasted of having a 'Church at Annapolis sixty feet long and forty broad, with a steeple and bell', although he and his parishioners could not afford to finish the exterior of the building.<sup>35</sup> Despite having problems gaining the support of the settlers (many of whom were Methodists), Bailey remained confident that the number of his parishioners would increase because of the daily influx of Loyalists from the United States. 'The circumstances of those unfortunate people', he wrote, 'are truly wretched and deplorable beyond all modern example, no advantage can be expected from them; their necessities, on the contrary, must demand frequent effusions of pity and beneficence. These destitute and despised wanderers, instead of increasing my emoluments, must daily make demands upon my compassion and charity.'<sup>36</sup>

While his parishioners demanded 'effusions of pity and beneficence' from Bailey, he committed effusions of another kind to paper. In 1780 he published 'The Factious Demagogue', a hudibrastic attack on republicans and democrats:

Should they in mighty Congress plod

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<sup>35</sup> In a letter from Annapolis dated 30 April 1783 (quoted in Frontier Missionary, p. 194).

<sup>36</sup> Frontier Missionary, p. 195.

To set up Hancock for a God;  
 A God in earnest he must be,  
 With all the forms of deity;  
 The high, the low, the rich, the poor,  
 Must quake and tremble at his pow'r;  
 And who denies him adoration,  
 Is sentenc'd straightway to damnation.<sup>37</sup>

While Bailey's prose and poetry revealed his religious and political views, he himself was the subject of discourse between his fellow ministers. According to Methodist preacher Freeborn Garrettson, Bailey's 'discourses were not adapted to awaken the sleepy sinners'; likewise, SPG missionary William Clark guffawed over Bailey's 'Rusticity and clownish manners'.<sup>38</sup> Clark also reported that Bailey was so superstitious about corpses that when he had to attend a funeral he 'never st[ood] within 20 yards of the Grave'. 'Instances have been known, when he was so frightened', Clark recounted, 'that he has called his

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<sup>37</sup> Bailey's poem was first published in Rivington's Gazette in Halifax on 4 October 1780. The quote is taken from a reprinted version in Winthrop Sargent, The Loyalist Poetry of the Revolution (Philadelphia, 1857), pp. 129-131. Perhaps Bailey's best poem is 'Jack Ramble, the Methodist Preacher' in which he focuses his satire on Methodist missionaries; however, a copy of this rare poem was not available to me.

John Hancock (1737-1793) served as president of the Continental Congress from 1775 until 1777 and was the first signatory to the Declaration of Independence.

<sup>38</sup> 'The Journal of Freeborn Garrettson', Arminian Magazine (September, 1794), p. 452; and Clark to Joseph Peters, 8 December 1786, Peters Papers, Vol. 2, no. 123. Quoted in Judith Fingard, The Anglican Design in Loyalist Nova Scotia, 1783-1816 (London, 1972), p. 72.



Servant to read the Service, and run off himself'.<sup>39</sup>

Like Bailey, Roger Viets came from America following persecution for his Loyalist convictions. In 1786 the SPG appointed Viets to the mission at Digby in Nova Scotia. Bishop Charles Inglis commended him for being a 'worthy, zealous, and faithful Minister' and praised him for his unstinting dedication to his long and arduous pastoral travels;<sup>40</sup> others, however, did not share the Bishop's view and Viets was often accused of mixing personal business with his spiritual duties. Clark wrote:

V---s is a mere Tool to any Body & anything, by which he can get money; I never knew his equal for a mercenary Disposition. . . . Last summer, he was gone on a trading Voyage ten Weeks, and brought w[ith] the money he gets by preaching on Sundays, and by Selling at extravagant prices, doubles or trebles his money.<sup>41</sup>

Clark's criticism of Viets appears at least in part to have been rooted in Clark's dislike of Americans. He describes Viets's former mission in Connecticut as 'all rural Simplicity', stating that 'here [in Nova Scotia] we

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<sup>39</sup> Clark to Joseph Peters, 24 May 1787, Peters Papers, Vol. 3, no. 25 (quoted in Fingard, The Anglican Design, p. 71).

<sup>40</sup> Charles Inglis to SPG, 18 December 1795, SPG Journal 27, p. 16 (quoted in Fingard, The Anglican Design, p. 57).

<sup>41</sup> Clark to Peters, 8 December 1789, Peters Papers, Vol. 4, no. 61 (quoted in Fingard, The Anglican Design, p. 64).

are a very polite people'.<sup>42</sup> According to another clergyman, Viets was 'a Strange Mortal: Whimsical, Quiddling, Stingy, Close-Shin'd, Strait-laced, [and] Iron bound'.<sup>43</sup>

Viets, however, is best remembered for his long topographical poem describing the settlement of Annapolis Royal. Published in 1778 Annapolis-Royal is written in the tradition of James Thomson's The Seasons or Oliver Goldsmith's The Deserted Village. Central to its form are its use of decasyllabic couplets and 'the addition of such embellishments as may be supplied by historical retrospection and incidental meditation'.<sup>44</sup> The emphasis on the landscape and the order to which God and Man have subjected it are evident in the following passage:

Amidst the rural Joys, the Town is seen,  
Enclos'd with Woods and Hills, forever green:  
The Streets, the Buildings, Gardens, all concert  
To please the Eye, to gratify the Heart.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Clark to Peters, 22 September 1787, Peters Papers, Vol. 3, no. 43 (quoted in Fingard, The Anglican Design, p. 73).

<sup>43</sup> Joseph Peters to Samuel Peters, 15 July 1788, Peters Papers, Vol. 3, no. 95 (quoted in Fingard, The Anglican Design, p. 71).

<sup>44</sup> Samuel Johnson, Lives of the English Poets, edited by George Birkbeck Hill, 3 vols (Oxford, 1905; rpt New York, 1967), Vol. I, p. 77.

<sup>45</sup> Annapolis-Royal (Halifax, 1778), ll. 32-35.

Like other eighteenth-century poets of the topographical tradition in North America, Viets's poem celebrates the Tory trinity of peace, order, and good government.<sup>46</sup> At the centre of the community stands 'a Spire majestic . . . / Where Praises, Pray'r and true Devotion reign' (ll. 62-63) and where 'the gen'rous Flock reward their Pastor's Care, / His Pray'rs, his Wants, his Happiness they share' (ll. 66-67).

By the mid-eighteenth century, there was a serious concern that neither the missionaries nor their achievements were as well-known among the public as the SPG hoped they might be. In 1741, Bishop Thomas Secker of Oxford worried that despite the SPG's work in the mission field for more than forty years, 'little notice may have been taken of it, by Persons inattentive to these things, or backward to acknowledge them'.<sup>47</sup> Prior to 1750, interest in the SPG's missionary activity had been largely confined to members and subscribers of the society. Circulation of missionary

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<sup>46</sup> For similar comparisons see Thomas Cary, Abram's Plains (1789), edited by D.M.R. Bentley (London, Ont., 1986) or J. Mackay, Quebec Hill (1797), edited by D.M.R. Bentley (London, Ont., 1987).

<sup>47</sup> From SPG Anniversary Sermon (1741), pp. 11-12; quoted in Pascoe, Two Hundred Years of the S.P.G., p. 8. Thomas Secker (1693-1768) was the son of a 'Protestant Dissenter'. He became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1758 and was the sixth President of the SPG from 1758 until 1768. Secker campaigned unsuccessfully for the establishment of bishops in America. See Beilby Porteus, The Works of Thomas Secker, 6 vols (London, 1825).

manuscripts and other documents, however, proved inefficient as a way of promoting missionary life among the public. Besides Keith's 1706 Journal and a historical account published in 1729, the SPG had done little to publicise its achievements or the experiences of its missionaries.<sup>48</sup> In 1819, Josiah Pratt, Secretary of the Church Missionary Society, turned from his work on the Missionary Register (first published in 1813) to publish Propaganda, a historical account of the SPG compiled largely from the Society's Anniversary Sermons. Pratt was a champion of the Protestant missionary movement in general, but he published the work anonymously so as not to hinder sales of the work by virtue of his membership in a rival missionary society.

Until 1833 the only channel of communication between the SPG and its subscribers was the Society's Annual Reports. Later, however, the Society made more of an effort to publish missionary journals and other narratives. In 1836, for example, it published Edward Wix's Six Months of

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<sup>48</sup> The SPG began printing its Annual Reports in 1704 a practice which it continued (omitting the years 1707-09) until 1900. It also included the Anniversary Sermons until 1853 (omitting 1703, 1843 and 1849). A list of missionaries was added to the Annual Reports in 1717. Copies of the Reports are scarce if not impossible to obtain. A Collection of the Society's Papers which included the SPG Charter, Qualifications of Missionaries, and the Missionaries Library, was first printed in 1706. The Historical Account of the Society to 1728 was published in 1729 by Rev. Dr D. Humphreys.



a Newfoundland Missionary's Journal, extracts from which were published in the SPG Annual Report for that year. In 1839 the SPG printed and distributed the Quarterly Papers, a broadsheet of missionary news and information. By the end of the century circulation had reached over one hundred and seventy-five thousand copies indicating that the public was indeed curious about the lives of the SPG missionaries and their activities in the colonies.<sup>49</sup> Another work, Ernest Hawkins' Historical Notices of the Missions of the Church of England in the North American Colonies (1845), was compiled largely from manuscript sources and is still considered to be one of the most important works of the SPG's missionary activity in British North America.<sup>50</sup>

Other important SPG publications included Missions to the Heathen (45 numbers, 1844-1863) and Church in the Colonies (37 numbers, 1843-1860), the latter featuring missionary narratives by Canadian Bishops John Strachan (Upper Canada), Charles Inglis (Nova Scotia), and George

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<sup>49</sup> See Pascoe, Two Hundred Years of the S.P.G., p. 814.

<sup>50</sup> After 1852 two separate journals, The Ecclesiastical Gazette and the Colonial Church Chronicle published SPG material and missionary information. In 1865 another publication, Work in the Colonies, was published.



Jehoshaphat Mountain (Lower Canada).<sup>51</sup> Mountain earned a minor reputation among Canada's early writers for his missionary journals and for his Songs of the Wilderness (1846), a collection of verse written during a visit to the settlement at Red River in the summer of 1843. Laurence Lande describes the work as 'a fusion of fine description and keen insight' with a 'depth of thought';<sup>52</sup> while Monica Marston finds the collection 'interesting for what it reveals of the character and personality of its author, but far from memorable from a literary standpoint'.<sup>53</sup> More interesting are Mountain's prose accounts of his many missionary journeys throughout the country. Carl Klinck argues that Mountain 'deserve[s] to be remembered . . . for his many published sermons, and his later unaffected account of his canoe trip in 1844 from Lachine to the church's mission at Red River, in

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<sup>51</sup> SPG publications printed after 1850 include the following: Annals of the Colonial Dioceses, 5 vols (Fredericton, New Zealand, Toronto, Quebec, Adelaide, 1847-1852); The Monthly Record (1852-1855); The Mission Field (1856-1900); and The Gospel Missionary (1852-1895).

<sup>52</sup> Laurence Lande, Old Lamps Aglow. An Appreciation of Early Canadian Poetry (Montreal, 1957), pp. 186 and 187.

<sup>53</sup> Monica Marston, 'George Jehoshaphat Mountain', Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Vol. IX (Toronto and Buffalo, 1976), p. 578.

Prince Rupert's Land' (now Manitoba).<sup>54</sup> Mountain kept journals since the early 1820s and was a regular contributor to the Christian Sentinel, the Church of England's organ in British North America in the 1820s and 30s.

Like Bailey and Viets, Mountain exhibited a poetic sensibility. He was also an admirer of Walter Scott and the Romantic poets, pointing out, in 1822, that 'the solemn soberness' of his profession could be moderated by the addition of a little poetry and romance. 'Many an untoward adventure, many a bleak and dreary way, many a circumstance which, to an ordinary traveller, carries unmixed discomfort and difficulty', wrote Mountain, 'borrows a charm from the sources of which I speak, which totally alters its nature and aspect'.<sup>55</sup> However, Mountain's attempts to pretend that he was some sort of Canadian Gothic hero were undermined by the reality of his circumstances. 'I am almost ashamed to confess', he confided in his journal, 'that I had rather wrap my cloak about me, in traversing these wild woods and mountains,

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<sup>54</sup> Carl F. Klinck, 'Literary Activity in the Canadas, 1812-1841', The Literary History of Canada, edited by Carl F. Klinck et al, second edition (Toronto and Buffalo, 1976), p. 143.

<sup>55</sup> Quoted in Armine W. Mountain, A Memoir of George Jehoshaphat Mountain (London and Montreal, 1866), pp. 66-67.

than button my great coat. But there is no romance in dirt . . .',<sup>56</sup> Soon however, Mountain found difficulty in knowing what sort of hero he should or could be and it was having an effect on his writing. In his journal of 1830, he stated that his writing had become 'stiff and constrained' due to 'a divided feeling between a natural backwardness, on the one hand, to all semblance of puffing, and a desire, on the other, to do justice to the cause which we support, and to meet the expectations of the Society'.<sup>57</sup> Knowing that he 'ought to make a good, or at least, decent figure, as the hero of [his] own tale', Mountain was caught between his own ego and his duty to his Church. How much of himself should be put into his accounts? 'A simple narrative of facts without a single touch of description or a single glow of feeling', he pondered, 'would be found cold and dry; yet how far to indulge in description, what subjects for description to select, how to carry the reader into the interest of the scene and to sustain his attention without making more of one's own part in it than it deserves, or more than one likes,----in short, without thinking one's self egotistical,----are points which it passes my skill to

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<sup>56</sup> Armine Mountain, Memoir, p. 67.

<sup>57</sup> Quoted in Armine Mountain, Memoir, p. 47.

manage to my satisfaction.<sup>58</sup> Yet judging from the number of journals published in the late 1830s and 1840s, Mountain's works were greatly appreciated by both the SPG and its readers.<sup>59</sup> Extracts from Mountain's 1838 journal were published in the SPG's Annual Reports and, in 1844, the SPG published his journal of the twenty-five hundred mile journey from Lachine to Red River mentioned above.<sup>60</sup> Another version of this work appeared in 1845 and a second, updated edition was printed in 1849.

Mountain prepared himself for the journey to Red River by reading George Simpson's Journal of his travels in western

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<sup>58</sup> Quoted in Armine Mountain, Memoir, pp. 132-133. For an interesting discussion of the problem of the self in missionary writing see Jack Warwick, 'Gabriel Sagard's "je" in the First Histoire du Canada', Reflections: Autobiography and Canadian Literature, edited by K.P. Stich (Ottawa, 1988), pp. 27-34.

<sup>59</sup> In 1833 Thomas Cary and Co. of Quebec published Mountain's Retrospect of the Summer and Autumn of 1832; being a Sermon delivered in the Cathedral Church of Quebec, on Sunday the 30th December, in that Year (Quebec, 1833).

<sup>60</sup> George Jehoshaphat Mountain, 'Journal of a Visitation', Church in the Colonies, no. 2 (London, 1844), no. 9 (London, 1845), no. 18 (London, 1847); Journal of the Bishop of Montreal during a Visit to the Church Missionary Society's North West America Mission (London, 1845; second edition, 1849). This latter edition was described as being a companion piece to a volume of poems written on the same trip and published in 1846. See Songs of the Wilderness. Being a Collection of Poems written in 1844 (London, 1846). In many ways, these lyrical pieces anticipate the nature poems of the Confederation poets, Wilfred Campbell, Charles G.D. Roberts, Archibald Lampman, and Bliss Carman.

Canada, but it could hardly have prepared him for the rigours which faced him in the days ahead.<sup>61</sup> Travelling by canoe, Mountain and his party of 'voyageurs' (including one who had accompanied Captain John Franklin into the Arctic) and Indian guides, began their day's journey at three in the morning and paddled until well after sunset.<sup>62</sup> As they got further from civilisation, Mountain was struck by the vastness of the land. Occasionally, he came upon evidence of others who had gone before him: Indian graves or burial crosses marked the graves of the natives and fur traders.<sup>63</sup> As was the custom of many European travellers, Mountain imposed his Romantic sensibility on the landscape. 'Scenes of romantic beauty' and picturesque prospects are described in plenty as are details of flora and fauna. Of the Indians he met, Mountain saw only a race of "heathen" to be converted. 'They are sometimes regarded with a sort of admiration', he wrote, '. . . [but] what kind of moral nurse is mother

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<sup>61</sup> See George Simpson, Journal of Occurrences in the Athabasca Department . . . in 1820 and 1821, edited by E.E. Rich (Toronto, 1938); Narrative of a Journey round the World, during the Years 1841 and 1842, 2 vols (London, 1847); and Fur Trade and Empire. George Simpson's Journal, edited by Frederick Merk (Cambridge, Mass, 1931).

<sup>62</sup> See George Jehoshaphat Mountain, The Journal of the Bishop of Montreal, During a Visit to the Church Missionary Society's North-West America Mission, second edition (London, 1849), p. 7.

<sup>63</sup> G.J. Mountain, Journal, p. 15.



nature, a Christian has no need to ask'.<sup>64</sup> He blamed contact with Europeans as the cause of their apparent downfall and saw the Church as the Indians' only hope for the future. They are 'perfectly susceptible of moral, and intellectual, and spiritual culture', he declared, 'but their actual condition presents a most degrading picture of humanity'.<sup>65</sup> Despite his sympathy for the natives, Mountain could not disguise his paternal and superior attitudes.

Mountain's patronising attitudes were shared by most missionaries and were often used to justify the missionary's "protection" of the Native from the European. James Beaven, another SPG missionary, remarked during a missionary tour of Indian missions in Upper Canada that the Indians had 'no spirit to bear up under the aggression of White people' nor 'sufficient intelligence or self-command to prevent them from being the victims of their [the whites'] cupidity and fraud'.<sup>66</sup> Beaven concluded, therefore, that the Government and the Church ought to protect the Indians and manage their affairs. And while Beaven expressed sympathy at the plight of the Native, he

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<sup>64</sup> G.J. Mountain, Journal, p. 31.

<sup>65</sup> G.J. Mountain, Journal, p. 32.

<sup>66</sup> James Beaven, Recreations of A Long Vacation; or, A Visit to Indian Missions in Upper Canada (London and Toronto, 1846), p. 31.

was just as guilty at appropriating their culture for his own purposes as any other European. The Native language, he suggested, was only worth saving in as much as it could enable the missionary to preach the Gospel and European civilisation more effectively.<sup>67</sup> An Indian-carved staff, given to him as a gift, became a 'kind of passport' used by Beaven to gain entrance into Native communities where, of course, he hoped to convert and baptise the Natives into Christianity.<sup>68</sup> While it could be said that Beaven's narrative focuses public attention on Native culture, such narratives as his revealed more about their authors than they did about their subjects.

While Mountain and Beaven helped to bring Canadian missionary life into the public imagination in the 1840s, they were not the first to do so. The colonial missionary experience in other parts of British North America--mainly Labrador, Newfoundland, and Nova Scotia--had been the subject of discourse since the late eighteenth century. The effort to make the colonial missionary life in these parts of British North America better-known was largely the responsibility of two other missionary societies: the United Brethren's Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Heathen and the Methodist Missionary

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<sup>67</sup> ibid., p. 49.

<sup>68</sup> ibid., p. 50.

Society.

II: The United Brethren Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel: The Moravians and the Periodical Accounts

In 1702, a year after the SPG was founded in London, August Hermann Franke founded a collegium orientale theologicum at the University of Halle in Germany to train missionaries for work in India. In 1706 the first Danish-Halle missionaries arrived in Tranquebar on the Indian coast. Four years later, Franke began publishing reports of their activities.<sup>69</sup> These accounts of the Indian missions had an influence on a certain nobleman, Nickolas von Zizendorf who, in 1722, encouraged the re-establishment of the Moravian Church. The Moravians, or United Brethren, were a German Protestant sect established in the fourteenth century but forced to disband after the death of their founder Jan Hus.<sup>70</sup> Reformed under Zizendorf's leadership, the pietist worship and simple

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<sup>69</sup> Der Königl. Dänischen Missionarien aus Ost-Indien eingesandte ausführliche Berichte (Halle, 1709). An English edition was published in four volumes between 1709 and 1720 with the title Propagation of the Gospel in the East.

<sup>70</sup> Jan Hus (1369?-1415) was born in Bohemia and became a 'protestant' by virtue of his criticisms of the established Church in Czechslovakia in the early fifteenth century. He was burned at the stake as a heretic on 6 July 1415, afterwhich his followers, the Moravians, dispersed and hid from persecution. See Letters of John Huss written during his Exile and Imprisonment (Edinburgh, 1846) and Matthew Spinka, John Hus: A Biography (Princeton, New Jersey, 1968).

form of Christian community which was characteristic of the Moravians was transformed into one of the most successful and esteemed missionary churches in Europe. By the 1730s the Moravians had taken their mission to Iceland and Greenland and it was these Arctic missions which caught the imagination of the public in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

### I: Labrador and literature

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, Labrador, as Glyndwr Williams reminds us, was one of the few places left in North America still to be explored by Europeans.<sup>71</sup> That Labrador was virtually unknown was largely due to its inhospitable climate and treacherous topography (at least by European standards) and to the belief that there was little of commercial value to be found there. Early explorers avoided Labrador because of the perceived paucity of riches or other advantages to induce them to venture or settle in the region. Consequently, little was known about Labrador and its inhabitants until the late eighteenth century. 'Many have sailed towards the North, on the coasts of Baccalaos and Labrador', wrote Antonio de Herrera in 1506, '[but] as in those regions there was no

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<sup>71</sup> The others were the Arctic archipelago and the area to the north of Great Slave Lake. See Glyndwr Williams, 'Introduction', Northern Quebec and Labrador Journals and Correspondence, 1819-35, edited by K.G. Davies and A.M. Johnson (London, 1963), p. xv.

appearance of riches, there is no more account of them than of others who went to Paria'.<sup>72</sup> In 1534, Jacques Cartier quashed optimism about Labrador being part of the "New World" when he said, 'The land should not be called the New Land, being composed of stones and horrible rugged rocks. . . . I am rather inclined to believe that this is the land God gave to Cain'.<sup>73</sup> Such beliefs and attitudes helped to explain the lack of literature about Labrador and its inhabitants.<sup>74</sup> In fact, it was not until the eighteenth century, when Moravian missionaries sought to extend their missions in Greenland to the North American mainland that Labrador became an object of public interest and the setting for a human drama that was to be played out in numerous narratives of missionary adventure well

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<sup>72</sup> Quoted in Henry Harrisse, The Discovery of North America (London, 1892), p. 700. In 1529 Roger Barlow remarked of the North in general that 'what commoditie is within this lande as yet is not knowen for it hath not ben labored, but it is to be presupposed that ther is no riches of gold, spyces nor precious stones' (quoted in E.G.R. Taylor, ed., A Briefe Summe of Geographie, by Roger Barlow, second series, Vol. LXIX (London, 1932), p. 180). 'Paria' referred to the Parahyba river in Brazil and was a term synonymous with both Brazil and Paraguay (see C. Blackie, A Dictionary of Place-Names Giving their Derivations (London, 1887), p. 153).

<sup>73</sup> Quoted in H.P. Biggar, ed., The Voyages of Jacques Cartier, (Ottawa, 1924), no. 11, p. 22. For an account of the 'land God gave to Cain' see Genesis 4.8-16.

<sup>74</sup> See Williams, 'Introduction', Northern Quebec and Labrador, pp. xv-xvi.



into the next century.<sup>75</sup>

The literary history of the Moravian mission to Labrador and its literature begins with the publication, in 1767, of David Crantz's History of Greenland.<sup>76</sup> In this work, Crantz described how on 17 May 1752 four Moravian missionaries set sail from London, carrying 'an house ready framed, a boat, all kinds of implements, and seeds, for the cultivation of the land'. On July 31 they entered 'a fine bay, on the coast of Terra Labrador' and erected the house, calling it Hoffenthal, or 'The valley of hope'.<sup>77</sup> Their 'hope', however, was shortlived. Unable to find any Inuit living in the immediate area, one of the missionaries, John Christian Erhardt, sailed northward in

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<sup>75</sup> The Greenland missions at New Herrnhuth and Lichtenfels were established in the 1730s. Missionaries there learned from the Inuit of the existence of other natives living across the Hudson's Straits in Labrador. For a succinct account of the Moravian missions in Labrador see W.G. Gosling, Labrador: Its Discovery, Exploration, and Development (Toronto, [1910]), pp. 251-316.

<sup>76</sup> David Crantz, The History of Greenland: containing a description of the country and its inhabitants: and particularly, a relation of the mission, carried on for above these thirty years by the Unitas Fratrum, at New Herrnhuth and Lichtenfels, in that country (London, 1767). Crantz also published The ancient and modern history of the Brethren: or, a succinct narrative of the Protestant Church of the United Brethren, or, Unitas Fratrum, in the remoter ages, and particularly in the present century, translated by Benjamin La Trobe (London, 1780).

<sup>77</sup> Crantz, History of Greenland, p. 404.

September to search for converts.<sup>78</sup> Erhardt never returned. According to the captain of the ship, Erhardt and five crew members sent to protect him disappeared shortly after making contact with a party of Inuit hunters. Despite efforts to search for them they were never found and were presumed dead. Upon his return the captain of the ship recommended that the Moravians abandon their plans for a mission and return with him to England.<sup>79</sup>

A second attempt to establish a mission in Labrador was made in 1764 when Jans Haven was granted permission to sail to Labrador in order to provide the governor of Newfoundland, Hugh Palliser, with a report on Inuit-white relations. Palliser hoped that Haven, with his knowledge of Inuktitut, might help to quell the violence which had prevented the development of the British fishery; the Moravians hoped that Haven's contacts would accelerate their attempts to establish a mission. Haven's expedition

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<sup>78</sup> Inuit is a recent English- and French-Canadian term. It means 'people' as opposed to 'Eskimo', a pejorative term meaning 'eaters of raw meat'.

<sup>79</sup> As a result of this tragedy the Moravians delayed their plans to establish the Labrador mission until the fate of Erhardt and the others had been ascertained. The following year, word was received that the bodies of several of the men had been discovered and that indications suggested that they and the others had been murdered by the Inuit although this was never substantiated.

was successful on both counts. The following year he returned to Labrador accompanied by three other Moravian missionaries including Christian Drachart who could also speak Inuktitut. While Haven sailed north along the coast preaching and sowing seeds of interest in the Moravian mission, Drachart was detained by Palliser to act as an interpreter on the Governor's treaty negotiations with the Inuit. On 21 August 1765 Drachart and Palliser were successful in getting the Inuit to recognise the British presence and to agree to leave the fishery in peace. However, neither Palliser nor the London Board of Trade and Plantations would grant the Moravians the land they required for a permanent mission despite their recognition that the SFG's object was a commendable one;<sup>80</sup> again the Moravians were forced to return to England.<sup>81</sup>

During their 1765 mission Haven and Drachart met a young Inuit woman named Mikak.<sup>82</sup> Two years later she, her son

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<sup>80</sup> See also William H. Whiteley, 'The establishment of the Moravian mission in Labrador and British policy, 1763-83', Canadian Historical Review (1964), Vol. XLV, pp. 29-50.

<sup>81</sup> Meanwhile, Haven spent the next few years at the Moravian settlements at Fulneck in West Yorkshire and Zeist in the Netherlands. Drachart also returned to live at Fulneck where he met and cared for a young Inuit boy, Karpik, captured by the English in November 1767.

<sup>82</sup> Mikak (c.1740-1795) was the daughter of Inuk chief Nerkingoak. William Whitely describes her as 'one of the first Inuit to emerge as a distinct individual in the history of the relations between the Europeans and the natives in Labrador' (see Dictionary of Canadian

Tootac, and a young boy named Karpik were captured by the British following a skirmish between Inuit hunters and British fishermen near Chateau Bay in southern Labrador. A number of fishermen were killed and Mikak and the others were imprisoned. During her imprisonment, Mikak came to the attention of Palliser, who devised a plan to send her to London with the hopes of "civilising" her so that she might assist him in making her countryfolk more amenable to the presence of the British fishery in southern Labrador. On her arrival in London she was re-acquainted with Haven and learned of the Moravians' desire to obtain a land grant for a mission in Labrador. Mikak, an object of some fashion among London's genteel classes, petitioned her well-placed "friends" on behalf of the Moravians and their cause. Partly as a result of her efforts they were successful in securing the land they required. On 8 May 1769 the Privy Council issued an order granting the SFG land at 'Esquimaux-Bay' in Labrador.

In the summer of 1769 Mikak and her son were returned to Labrador, followed the next year by Drachart and Haven who found Mikak--still wearing a dress presented to her by the Princess of Wales and a medal from the king--her son, and

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Biography, Vol. IV, pp. 536-537). See also 'Account of the Esquimaux Mikak', Periodical Accounts (London, 1798), Vol. II, pp. 170-171; and 'Reunion with Mikak', Canadian Geographical Journal (Ottawa, 1958), Vol. LVII, pp. 84-85.



her new husband, Tuglavina awaiting to assist them.<sup>83</sup> With their help the Moravians picked out a site for the first mission post, not at Esquimaux-Bay as outlined in the order from the Privy Council, but at Nain three hundred and fifty miles further north.<sup>84</sup> The Moravian

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<sup>83</sup> Augusta (c.1718-1772) was the daughter of Frederick, duke of Saxe-Gothe. She married Frederick the Prince of Wales (1707-1751) on 26 April 1736. They had eight children the eldest of whom became George III. The Prince of Wales died on 20 March 1751 of complications received from a blow by a tennis ball (see Dictionary of National Biography, edited by Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee, Vol. VII (Oxford, 1959-60), pp. 675-678). Augusta was made guardian of her eldest son on whom she was said to dote. Little is known of her life, although it is said that the rigour of her widowhood was marred by her intimacy with Lord Bute. She was known to have been benevolent and kind and was for a time liked by the public. Her fortunes took a turn, however, following the accession of her son, George III. One accounts states that 'popular clamour ran so exceedingly high against her, on account of the influence which she was supposed to possess over the young king's mind, that her residence was threatened with destruction, by a mob'. Her gift to Mikak may have been one of the last generous acts she performed for she died not long after on 8 February 1772 (see The Georgian Era: Memoirs of the Most Eminent Persons who have Flourished in Great Britain, 4 vols (London, 1832)).

Tuglavina (c.1738-1798) received first mention in 1770 by Moravian missionaries who described him as an 'angakok' or spiritual leader of the Labrador Inuit. He helped the missionaries navigate the coast and choose the site for the mission at Nain. Later he led missionaries into the interior of the country and acted as a middle man between the northern Inuit and the traders to the south around Chateau Bay. He was baptised in 1783 and was sometimes active in advocating religion, particularly after his illness in 1793. Tuglavina died from pleurisy in 1798 and was buried in the mission cemetery at Nain. See also Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Vol. IV, p. 740.

<sup>84</sup> Haven lived in Labrador for thirteen years. During this period he established missions at Okkak in 1776 and at Hopedale in 1781. Ill health forced him to retire in 1784 and he returned to Herrnhut until his death in 1796 [see 'Memoir of the life of Br. Jans Haven, the first missionary of the Brethren's Church to the



theocracy in Labrador that was to last until the twentieth century was now established.

Within ten years two other mission settlements were established: Okkak in 1776 and Hopedale in 1781. With these arose hopes of extending the Moravian mission further north to the Inuit in the region of Ungava and beyond. Yet any future attempts to extend the Moravian mission northwards would depend on being able to raise financial and public support necessary for its undertaking. For this, the Moravians would have to publicise their missions and propagate their need for assistance. The circulation of missionary journals among Society members had 'proved very inefficient', while sales of several pamphlet accounts of their activities in Labrador and elsewhere had been limited in their distribution. 'With some few exceptions', recalled the secretary of the SFG in 1793, the Moravians had 'refrained from presenting themselves before the eye of the public'.<sup>85</sup> Prior to 1790s information about the Moravian

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Esquimaux, on the coast of Labrador', Periodical Accounts (London, 1798), Vol. II, pp. 99-110]. Drachart continued to live at Nain until his death in 1778.

<sup>85</sup> Christian Ignatius Latrobe (1758-1836), secretary of the SFG and editor of the Periodical Accounts from 1787 until 1821, stated that misrepresentations by the press had, to some extent, led to the Moravians' unwillingness to portray their activities to the public. See Periodical Accounts (London, 1793), Vol. III, p. iv; and Periodical Accounts (London, 1823), Vol. IX, p. iii. Latrobe was born 12 February 1758 at Fulneck near Leeds. He was

missions in the Arctic had been gleaned from works like Crantz's History of Greenland (London, 1767) or the Moravians' A Brief Account of the Mission established among the Esquimaux Indians, on the Coast of Labrador by the Church of the Brethren, or Unitas Fratrum (London, 1784). Both works succeeded in raising public interest in the Moravian enterprise. Samuel Johnson, for example, was an ardent admirer of the Moravian work in the Arctic. Inspired by what he had read in works by Moravian authors like Crantz and Hans Egede, Johnson remarked, 'Learned curiosity is known to have found its way into those abodes of poverty and gloom. Lapland and Iceland have their historians, their criticks, and their poets'; and of their preaching, he wrote, 'Love, that extends his dominion wherever humanity can be found, perhaps exerts the same power in the Greenlander's hut as in the palaces of eastern monarchs'.<sup>86</sup> At a time when poets were

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educated at a Moravian school at Niesky in Upper Lusatia. He returned to England in 1784 and was ordained three years later. In 1795 he succeeded James Hutton as Secretary of the United Brethren in England. Latrobe travelled to South Africa in 1815-16 and his Journal of a Voyage to South Africa (London, 1818) recounts his visits to the Moravian missions there. In addition to translating numerous missionary letters and journals from German into English, Latrobe published a number of musical compositions, mostly hymns. Latrobe died at Fairfield near Liverpool on 6 May 1836.

<sup>86</sup> Samuel Johnson, The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson, edited by W.J. Bate and Albrecht B. Strauss, Vol. V, The Rambler (1751), no. 186 (New Haven and London, 1969), p. 212. According to Bate and Strauss, nos. 186 and 187 of the Rambler were based on material in Hans Egede's Description of Greenland (London, 1745) (see

fantasising about the mysteries of the Orient, Moravian missionaries were opening new doors to humankind's understanding of the Arctic and its effect on the spirit and the imagination. William Cowper's poem 'Hope' was written in 1782, at the same time the Moravians were establishing their third mission settlement in Labrador:

. . . . See Germany send forth  
 Her sons to pour it [Salvation] on the farthest north,  
 Fired with a zeal peculiar they defy  
 The rage and rigour of a polar sky,  
 And plant successfully sweet Sharon's<sup>87</sup> rose,  
 On icy plains, and in eternal snows.

As Thomas Curley reminds us, the Arctic environment was a moral as well as a physical 'testing ground' of the human spirit and body. 'The utterly barren Arctic landscape', writes Curley, 'barely nourished human nature in the rarest form but provided an excellent testing ground for isolating the elemental psychological drives of humanity and proving the moral uniformity of man. . . . To study the polar inhabitants was to discover the universal force of morality, the God-given distribution of basic human necessities to sustain life everywhere around the world, and the incomparable blessings of civilization for

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p. 212n.); however, according to Thomas Curley, Johnson made the remarks after reading Crantz's work. Johnson owned the 1767 edition of Crantz's work in two volumes (see Curley, Samuel Johnson and the Age of Travel (Athens, Georgia, 1976), p. 255n.).

<sup>87</sup> William Cowper: Poetical Works, 4th edition, edited by H.S. Milford (London, 1967), lines 459-464.

complete human fulfillment'.<sup>88</sup>

As public awareness of the Moravian missions in the Arctic increased, so did the demand for information regarding them. In August 1790, the SFG appealed to public interest by publishing the first of its Periodical Accounts, a collection of extracts compiled from letters, reports, journals, and other autobiographical narratives sent to the SFG from its missionaries around the world. 'These accounts are printed', explained editor Christian Ignatius Latrobe, 'not to emblazon their own deeds or to exhibit to the world a picture of their achievements . . . [but] with a view to give to all well-wishers . . . a more early account of the progress of the Missions, established by the Brethren, than could be done hitherto by the communication of the manuscript extracts of letters and diaries received from the Missionaries'.<sup>89</sup> By publishing the extracts and collecting them in volumes, Latrobe and the SFG were able to reach a much wider audience than had been previously possible. Readers could, in one publication, enjoy the accounts of missionary experience from all the Moravian missions rather than gathering information second-hand in a haphazard manner.

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<sup>88</sup> Thomas Curley, Samuel Johnson and the Age of Travel (Athens, Georgia, 1976), p. 18.

<sup>89</sup> Periodical Accounts (London, 1790), Vol. I, p. iii.



The Periodical Accounts also secured for the SFG a secular audience in addition to its audience of religious and missionary society readers.<sup>90</sup> As the Jesuits had discovered in the century before, and as other Protestant societies were in the process of finding, the publication of missionary accounts was an important part of a missionary society's financial business. The motivation for publishing missionary narratives was twofold: one, to provide, as Latrobe suggested, a record of the progress of the missions to inform their supporters (thereby satisfying the public's curiosity and interest in the enterprise which they were being asked to support); and secondly, to provide, as suggested above, a useful source of revenue.<sup>91</sup> Missionary societies seldom made a profit

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<sup>90</sup> 'Diaries and letters', writes Latrobe, 'have been read to all our congregations in more copious Extracts, and have greatly contributed to strengthen our faith' (Periodical Accounts, Vol. II, p. iii). A survey of subscription lists published in the Accounts reveals more than three hundred subscribers in the early years of the nineteenth century, many of them church and missionary societies who, presumably, read or distributed the Accounts among their congregations. At least a third of the subscribers were women.

<sup>91</sup> So eager were missionary societies to sell their works that one offered the subscriber seven copies for the price of six. See Periodical Accounts (1802), Vol. III, p. 239. According to the missionaries at Nain, the Accounts also provided a welcome relief to the alienation of mission life: 'We were very sorry not to receive the whole set of accounts and diaries from our congregations and Missions . . . as the reading of these accounts tends so much to our spiritual comfort and edification' (Periodical Accounts (1793), Vol. 1, pp. 216-217). In 1797 Kohlmeister also reported that he found the Accounts



and relied on their congregations and other supporters for financial assistance.

In one account the Moravians invited readers 'to get acquainted with' the Inuit of Labrador and to view the them not as animals, as many other writers did, but as fallen individuals potentially redeemable from their "heathen" state.<sup>92</sup> Again, in atypical fashion, they offered an ironic vision of themselves, one from a Native perspective. The Inuit were described as 'look[ing] upon the Europeans as dogs'; the Inuit name for the white man, 'Kablunets', was interpreted as meaning 'barbarians', an ironic reversal of the Eurocentric view of the "savage" usually found in travel literature of the day. The missionaries indicated how the Inuit 'know how to excuse themselves with all kind of subterfuges as well as the Europeans' [emphasis added] (pp. 10 and 23). Elsewhere, the authors portrayed the Inuit survival in a hostile environment as nothing short of heroic: 'The savages had been in such want . . . that they were obliged to dig up ice eight feet thick . . . to get muscles [sic] and sea-

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useful in helping him and his German-speaking brethren to learn English (Periodical Accounts, Vol. II, p. 126).

<sup>92</sup> See A Brief Account of the Mission established among the Esquimaux Indians, on the Coast of Labrador by the Church of the Brethren, or Unitas Fratrum (London, 1784), p. 4. Subsequent quotes are from this edition and are included parenthetically in the text.

weeds to stay their hunger and preserve life' (p. 12n.). They reminded readers that the Inuit 'le[d] a most difficult, inconvenient, and, to the flesh and blood, uncomfortable life in this rough and inhospitable climate'. Aware that there were men exploring the wilderness for less altruistic reasons, the Moravians concluded by asking, 'Is the acquiring of wealth and fortunes . . . to be sufficient motive for long voyages and the enduring great hardships? surely it is a more noble motive . . . if souls . . . are therefore saved from death . . . and obtain a well-grounded hope of a blessed immortality' (pp. 27 and 31).

Like the SPG, the Moravians collected these manuscript accounts both for their own use and for the 'personal information' of their subscribers and members. They were edited by the Secretary of the Society and issued monthly.<sup>93</sup> One such manuscript was Jans Haven's account of a missionary voyage to the northern parts of Labrador undertaken in August and September of 1773.<sup>94</sup> In it,

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<sup>93</sup> See Daniel Benham, Memoirs of James Hutton; comprising the Annals of His Life, and Connection with the United Brethren (London 1856), p. 547.

<sup>94</sup> Jans Haven, Extract of the Voyage of the Sloop George from Nain to reconnoitre the Northern parts of Labradore in the months of Aug[ust] and Sept[ember] 1773. I am indebted to Professor Jim Hiller of Memorial University (Newfoundland) for giving me a typescript of this work.

Haven described the SFG's plans to send missionaries 'on a Voyage to the Northern parts of Labradore in order to get acquainted with & begin a friendly intercourse with the Northern Eskimaux'.<sup>95</sup> Haven was familiar with the Inuit having met many of them on several earlier occasions. His familiarity with them was reflected in his descriptions of their homes and livelihood:

Their Houses stand on a Turfy [illegible] ground and the Walls are of Earth. We see here that wood is scarce as no wood is in their building but what is absolutely wanted. The ground about the House was cover'd with wasted Seal oil which serves as food for the Ravens and Foxes. One sees at once by the good care the Dogs here are in that the people are in no want of food. About a League above this Haven is a small brook where Salmon enter, and a little farther another such. By both of these are tents used when they fish for Salmon. . . . Near the place where they pitch their tents which are at the corner of the main Bay, there is a steep rock which has a very deep shore, to this place the Cod come in August and stay there till the very sharp cold sets in. During this Season, the women, widows, orphans, wives and all who are too young to go a Reindeer hunting are very busy in catching Cod for their present Food and for Winter Store. [pp. 1 and 2]

Such information was valuable to those interested in the Inuit culture and customs. Missionaries were like anthropologists in the field and their recording of Inuit life has greatly enriched our knowledge of these First Nations people. The gathering of this knowledge, however, addressed a more immediate need, since missionaries were very dependent on the Inuit for their survival. Knowing

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<sup>95</sup> Haven, Extract of the Voyage, p. [1]. Subsequent quotations are taken from this text and references are included parenthetically in the text of the thesis. Page references are from the typescript.

how the Inuit survived in a seemingly hostile environment was crucial to the success of the missions which were expected, to a great extent, to support themselves on the proceeds of trade with the Inuit.

For readers interested in more dramatic aspects of the missionary's journey, the missionary account provided exciting tales of sea voyages and struggles over difficult terrain in inhospitable weather. In his account, Haven created dramatic tension as he described how the missionary ship made its way north under precarious weather conditions:

The wind was good but the weather thick and foggy, we resolved therefore to go again out to Sea, but the weather was so thick we did not venture, for we had the Sea on one side and the Main on the other side with high steep rocks and no Shelter, we therefore turn'd back but it clearing up a little and learning from the Esk[imaux] that there was an Island with Shelter not far off we resolved to go on to Sea, but it soon became calm, but however as we were not far from the mouth of the Strait we were to go through, and as the Sailors got an additional Dram they went on till after night fall, and we drove till 12 at night when we found ground and anchored till day light in 30 fathom. But we were continually in danger of sticking in the Ice which drove upon us and was obliged to be staved off. I pray'd heartily to our Saviour to preserve us from all hurt and I felt He was near and his presence refresh'd me. [p. 3]

Haven's use of the long compound sentence creates a sense of breathlessness which is evocative of the experience itself; the conjunctive 'but' emphasises each turn of

events. It is as if he wished to reflect the arduous task of finding shelter within the discourse itself.

As is so often the case in missionary narrative, the action is accompanied by the author's turning to God for reassurance and deliverance. Prayer and Providential intervention were common features in the missionary narrative where they were used to remind the reader of a Christian's faith in an uncertain and sometimes hostile world. Among the landscape description and accounts of native life missionaries planted sermonic expositions, sometimes delivered directly to the reader, other times incorporated as part of the missionary's dialogue with the Native "Other". More often than not, however, these dialogues reveal only the patronising moralising of the missionary and advocate the superiority of the Christian religion over Native superstition. English and Christian words are planted in Native mouths to illustrate the inferiority of their own discourse. Sometimes, one or two converted Natives are introduced as examples of the missionaries' success at gaining converts. Such examples were intended to demonstrate the harmonious relationship which the Church endeavoured to prove could exist between the European and the North American Native. Rather than being an equal relationship, however, the Missionary-Native encounter was too often a one-sided hierarchical



affair dominated by the patriarchal missionary. The following description exemplifies the missionary perspective of the Native:

But as we were going down the Hill we saw to our great joy 4 Kajaks go on Shore in a small Bay to hunt reindeer. We made haste and called out a loud to them, but they were so frightened that they were a long while before they could take courage to come and meet us, but as soon as they heard my Name, they came to us and said our Eyes indeed have never see thee but our Ears have heard much about thee; we know well that Thou art our friend and therefore we are very glad to see thee. . . . They were like Children and stood on the Spot we directed them to. [p. 9]

For Haven, the Inuit were a 'simple', childish people; such attitudes allowed the missionary writer to "control" the Native "Others" within the parameters of Christian discourse and ideology. By simplifying the Natives' behaviour and interpreting it within a Christian context, the missionary could offer the reader a sense of moral superiority. By displacing Native speech with Biblical phrase and cadence, Haven enacted the linguistic colonisation of his "subjects". By instilling in the Native a sense of guilt and inferiority, he engaged in a form of discursive as well as cultural displacement:

They were much frightened when they saw us, . . . but when they could hear us and saw that we had 2 Kajaks on board they came back. Not one of them had ever seen a European before but they had all heard of my Name. I staid long with them and told them of our Saviour's Love to them and that the chief reason of our coming here was to tell them of it. But truly it is to them a strange and odd discourse. They known not what to say to it. They hate to hear that they are bad people and Sinners,

for they think that if they were to own that they were good for nothing, I should not love them, for that reason they give themselves the best Encomium possible. [p. 11]

Not every description of the Inuit, however, portrayed the Inuit as a simple and child-like people. During his voyage north, Haven passed the time usefully in 'a long discourse' with one of the Inuit: '[H]e gave me much light into the nature both of the Land and of his Nation' [p. 11]. Haven justifies his presence among the Inuit by remarking on how appreciative the Natives are over his arrival. Following a talk with the Inuit about Christianity, Haven states, 'They all said Thou art a good European and we all love thee and are glad that thou camest here to us. We will visit thee in Nain and will see thy wife and son and thy other Brn. [Brethren] and Srs. [Sisters]' [p. 12].<sup>96</sup>

Missionaries in Labrador were eager to be accepted by the Inuit. The SFG expected their missions to be self-sufficient and able to raise the necessary funds for their maintenance through trade with the Inuit. Thus, in their narratives, missionaries indicated to the SFG the natural resources to be exploited: furs, fish, minerals, whale oil, and ivory to name a few. It was important to demonstrate to the SFG and its members that the Labrador

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<sup>96</sup> The Moravians referred to each other as 'brother' and 'sister'.

missions were worthy of their support. Haven praised the land around the Bay of Nagvack for its abundance of herbs and its waters for their profusion of fish. He wrote: 'This place is famous also for a Whale fishery, Seal and White fish, as also sometimes for Aiwak or Sea Horse whose Tuskes are as valuable as Ivory' [p. 13].<sup>97</sup> Haven also made it clear that the Inuit could be dealt with as trading partners, and he credited the Inuit women with a certain degree of economical pragmatism: 'I call them it is true Simple but I do not mean stupid, for there were able to give me proper Answers, and when they came to Traffick, they knew very well what they were about, what they should buy and what buy first; for the first thing they dealt for was Tools and Cloaths for the Men; if they had where with all to buy something else, then they ventured to buy women's Knives and thimbles, and if after that they had anything left then and not before did they seek to purchase female Ornaments, Beads, Etc' [p. 14]. Trade was essential for the survival of the Moravian missions, thus it was important for the missionaries to ingratiate themselves with the Inuit community. By blending commerce with Christianity, Haven struck a balance in his narrative designed to convince his reader of the harmonious relationship which was and could be established between the Missionary and the Native. As

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<sup>97</sup> Aiwak is the Inuit name for the narwhal.

Haven and his accompanying crew returned to the aptly named 'Unity Harbour' he described how they were greeted 'not only by [their] Brn. and Srs. but by a heap of Esk[imaux]' who, together 'rejoiced . . . and cried out Aheila Kujeeitsukauk imakk. ah what Joy is this! look there! To him who has led us so graciously and preserved us on our Journey, be given for [illegible] and for all other Blessings and [illegible] upon Us, Praise and Thanks. Amen' [p. 17].

The circulation of Haven's narrative and the Brief Account, however, were 'necessarily of limited extent', possibly for fear of them being misrepresented by the press or because it was felt that few outside the Society would be interested in them.<sup>98</sup> The Secretary of the SFG, Christian Ignatius Latrobe, admitted, however, that the existing system of circulating missionary information had 'proved very inefficient';<sup>99</sup> consequently, he agreed that in the future the SFG would 'print extracts of [missionary] Diaries and Letters' for public consideration. In August 1790, the first issue of the

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<sup>98</sup> The Secretary of the SFG, Christian Ignatius Latrobe, explained that 'the Brethren had, with some few exceptions, refrained from presenting themselves before the eye of the public' due to their having been formerly misrepresented by the press (see Periodical Accounts (1823), Vol. IX, p. iii.

<sup>99</sup> Quoted in the Periodical Accounts (1793), Vol. III, p. iv.

Periodical Accounts, a journal of missionary news and narrative, was published.<sup>100</sup> Still cautious, however,

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<sup>100</sup> The usual motivation for publishing missionary narratives was twofold: one, to provide, as Latrobe suggested, a record of the progress of the missions to their supporters (thereby satisfying their curiosity and interest in the enterprise which they were being asked to support); and secondly, to provide, as suggested above, a useful source of revenue. So eager was the SFG to sell their works that they even offered the subscriber seven copies for the price of six (see Periodical Accounts (1802), Vol. III, p. 239). In 1797 Kohlmeister reported that he found the Accounts useful in helping him and his German-speaking brethren to learn English (see Periodical Accounts, Vol. II, p. 126). Missionary societies seldom made a profit and relied on their congregations and other supporters for financial assistance. Missions were an expensive undertaking especially when they were, as in the case with the Moravians, scattered around the world in remote and often nearly inaccessible places. The Society did not provide its missionaries with a salary, but it did provide them with food, transportation, and all the necessities they required to establish and administer their mission. The author of the History of the Mission of the Church of the United Brethren in Labrador for the Past Hundred Years stated that in 1811 the Labrador missions produced '100 barrels of seal oil, 2000 seal skins, and 2750 furs of foxes' (p. 34). In 1797 the Society reported that it cost them 'on an average, about 2600l. per ann.', to support its missions; and that was, as Latrobe indicated, 'in peaceful times'. At the time, the Society was supporting one hundred and forty missionaries and approximately eighty widows, children, and retired missionaries (see 'A Concise Account of the Present State of the Missions of the United Brethren' (January 1, 1797) in Periodical Accounts, Vol. IV, p. 14). During the early nineteenth century, war had 'a very considerable influence upon current expenses' and costs, naturally, increased. In 1801, for example, the Society reported that its costs had more than doubled. Costs are quoted at £5000 although the Society had added only ten more missionaries to its rolls. By 1811 their costs had only increased to £6000 per annum for the same number of missionaries, widows, children, and retired missionaries. Sales of the Periodical Accounts, other publications, and increasing contributions and donations also helped the Society meet its costs. War was not the only factor in the Society's economic woes. Some missions like the ones in the East Indies and Labrador were remote and difficult to keep in touch with; and, they were 'uncommonly



Latrobe printed only five hundred copies, explaining that number was 'quite sufficient' since 'the propagation of the Gospel among the heathen did not, at that time, generally engage the attentions and affections of the Religious Public'.<sup>101</sup> 'These accounts are printed', he explained, 'not to emblazon [the missionaries'] own deeds or to exhibit to the world a picture of their achievements . . . [but] with a view to give to all well-wishers . . . a more early account of the progress of the Missions, established by the Brethren, than could be done hitherto by the communication of the manuscript extracts of letters

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expensive' to maintain. The Labrador missions, for example, could only be provided for once a year and at considerable expense. Consequently, the missionaries traded with the Inuit as a way of contributing to their cost: 'The ship which sails annually to Labrador to convey provisions and keep up a communication with the Missionaries there, return with skins, bone and oil, the sale of which, it was hoped would have much lessened the expense of that Mission'. The Society also reported, 'This has not fully answered our expectations, partly on account of the barrenness of the coast, and partly because activity in trading with the natives, would interfere too much with the principal and proper business of a Missionary (see Periodical Accounts (1797), Vol. IV, p. 15). By 1811, however, the Society related that sales from the Labrador missions, 'had nearly covered the expences [sic] of the voyage' (see Periodical Accounts (1811), Vol. V, p. 26). It was because the Labrador missions were an 'expensive concern' and because communication with the missionaries there could be had only once a year, that it was decided in 1802 to give the Labrador missions more prominence by publishing their accounts in full (see Periodical Accounts (1802), Vol. III, p. iii).

<sup>101</sup> Periodical Accounts, Vol. III, p. v.

and diaries received from the Missionaries'.<sup>102</sup> These 'simple narratives', however, excited greater public interest than first anticipated, precipitating an increase in the size of subsequent volumes and the number of copies printed.<sup>103</sup>

The Periodical Accounts attracted attention from many quarters in the early nineteenth century. The poet James Montgomery memorialised the Moravian missionaries in his poem 'Greenland', and Robert Southey, who described one particular narrative in the Accounts as 'contain[ing] some of the most impressive description that [he] ever remembered to have read', was equally enthusiastic.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Quoted in the Periodical Accounts (1793), Vol. III, pp. iii-iv.

<sup>103</sup> Periodical Accounts, Vol. III, pp. v-vi. See also Periodical Accounts, Vol. III, p. viii. In addition to the Periodical Accounts, the Moravians also circulated the Weekly News, a handwritten weekly distributed to the brethren and the friends of the SFG between 1782 and 1859.

<sup>104</sup> James Montgomery, Greenland; and other poems, second edition (London, 1819). Montgomery grew up in a Moravian community in Antrim Co., Ireland and later at Irvine, Scotland. The family moved to the Moravian settlement at Fulneck near Leeds. Montgomery's parents went to Barbados as missionaries for the SFG. Robert Southey, Omniana; or horae otiosiores, with Samuel Taylor Coleridge (London, 1812), Vol. 1, p. 164. Southey's remarks about the Moravian narratives are quoted in Periodical Accounts (June 1850), Vol. XIX, p. 321. The work to which he referred was A Narrative of the Remarkable Preservation Experienced by the Brn Samuel Liebisch and W. Turner, Missionaries in Labrador. On their Journey from Nain to Okkak in March 1782, Periodical Accounts, Vol. III, pp. 225ff.; rpt in Periodical Accounts (June 1850), Vol. XIX, pp. 321ff. It was compiled from letters and journal accounts written by Liebisch and Turner, and edited by

The Scottish clergyman Thomas Chalmers sang the praises of the Moravian narratives in a lengthy review published in the Eclectic Review in 1813.<sup>105</sup> A friend wrote to Chalmers to thank him for drawing his attention to the Moravian Accounts: 'I have read with great interest the accounts of the Moravian Missionaries, which you were so kind as to lend me. These people seem to have more religion and knowledge of their Creator than any I have ever heard of. . . . From what I have met with in their journals, I see a very strong inducement to a religious life.'<sup>106</sup> Even among rival sects, the Moravians were praised by other missionaries for their propagation of the Gospel among the "heathen". The Moravians' 'interesting histories', wrote one Methodist missionary, 'shall earn them praise [that] shall last to many generations'.<sup>107</sup>

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Latrobe.

<sup>105</sup> See Chapter Three for a discussion of Chalmers' review.

<sup>106</sup> Thomas Smith to Chalmers, 15 November 1815, from A Selection From the Correspondence of the Late Thomas Chalmers, D.D. L.L.D., edited by William Hanna (Edinburgh, 1853), pp. 11-12.

<sup>107</sup> Joshua Marsden, Narrative of a Mission to Nova Scotia (Plymouth-Dock, 1816; rpt New York, 1966), p. 275. See Chapter 4 for a discussion of Marsden and his Narrative.

III: The Methodist Missionary Society: The "Lives" of Missionaries and the Arminian Magazine

Samuel Johnson found them a little too zealous, Samuel Taylor Coleridge found them instructive and entertaining, and Robert Southey found them indispensable.<sup>108</sup> Despite their differences of opinion, all three of these authors found Methodist missionary narratives stimulating and interesting. Yet the products of this literary subculture which sprung up in the late eighteenth century have been, as Isabel Rivers has recently reminded us, largely ignored by modern literary historians and critics.<sup>109</sup>

Yet as Rivers points out, the 'antecedents and assumptions' of Methodist literature and the narratives of itinerant experience can, thanks to John Wesley, be identified 'with unusual precision'.<sup>110</sup> Wesley's strict control over what his preachers read and wrote, his

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<sup>108</sup> See James Boswell, Life of Johnson, edited by George Birkbeck Hill, second edition, 6 vols (Oxford, 1964), Vol. V, p. 391 and p. 392n.; Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Collected Letters, edited by Earl Leslie Griggs, Vol. 1 (Oxford, 1956), p. 302; and Robert Southey, Life of Wesley; and the Rise and Progress of Methodism, second edition, 2 vols (London, 1820), Vol. 2, pp. 85-86.

<sup>109</sup> See Isabel Rivers, '"Strangers and Pilgrims": Sources and Patterns of Methodist Narrative', Augustan Worlds: Essays in honour of A.R. Humphreys, edited by J.C. Hilson, M.M.B. Jones and J.R. Watson (Leicester, 1978), p. 189.

<sup>110</sup> Isabel Rivers, '"Strangers and Pilgrims"', p. 189.



doctrinally-directed literary criticism, and the extensive organisation of his itinerancy led to the creation of 'a unique literary subculture' which extended from Britain to the colonies of North America.<sup>111</sup>

Writers like Laurence Coughlan, Freeborn Garrettson, Joshua Marsden, Charles Churchill, Robert Cooney, and Egerton Ryerson were just some of those who took an active part in the promotion and production of Methodist literature in the nineteenth century and who made the life of the colonial Methodist missionary more familiar to British readers.<sup>112</sup>

In 1816 Joshua Marsden, a Methodist missionary who had spent fourteen years in the mission fields of North America (eight of them in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick), published his Narrative of a Mission, a account of his nearly fourteen years travelling and preaching in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Bermuda, and New York. In it he lamented that a 'comprehensive history of the Methodist Missions' in British North America, 'their rise, progress,

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<sup>111</sup> See Rivers, '"Strangers and Pilgrims"', pp. 192-196 for a more comprehensive treatment of this material.

<sup>112</sup> Marsden is mentioned in two recent essays: Ian Pringle, 'The Concept of Dialect and the Study of Canadian English', Queen's Quarterly, 90 (1983), p. 112; and in U.F.S. Upton, 'Colonists and Micmacs', Journal of Canadian Studies, 10 (1975), p. 44.



economy, success and present state' has not been undertaken.<sup>113</sup> While it was true the Methodists had not written a 'comprehensive' account of missionary life in British North America before the publication of Marsden's Narrative, the Methodists had made a concerted effort \_\_\_\_\_ to make the life of the colonial missionary more widely-known in Britain. Through the printing of letters and journal extracts the Methodists, like the Anglicans and Moravians, promoted their missionary activity in British North America. It was John Wesley's Arminian Magazine which brought the Methodist missionary project to greater public attention. Like the Moravian Periodical Accounts, the Arminian Magazine focused on the experiences and lives of preachers and missionaries.

Early Methodist missionary literature, like that found in the SPG, consisted largely of letters, journals, and accounts of Christian experience. One of the first Methodist missionaries to write back to Wesley about British North America was Laurence Coughlan. In 1765, Coughlan, an English lay minister with Methodist leanings, arrived in Newfoundland.<sup>114</sup> Like other missionaries who

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<sup>113</sup> Marsden, Narrative of a Mission to Nova Scotia, p. ix.

<sup>114</sup> In 1767 the people of Harbour Grace and Carbonear petitioned the SPG to appoint Coughlan as their minister. Their request was granted although Coughlan remained faithful to Wesley and Methodism (see G.G. Findlay and W.W. Holdsworth, The History of the Wesleyan

had gone before him, he faced a difficult task. William Wilson, author of Newfoundland and its Missionaries and an early Methodist historian, described the scene as follows:

Men who came from England had never seen a Minister since they left their native shore; and those who had been born on the island had never seen one in their lives. The Sabbath was unknown; there was none to celebrate marriage, and the marriage-vow was little regarded. Oppression, violence, swearing, debauchery, licentiousness, and every crime that can degrade human nature, sink civilized man to a savage, or even degrade him below the brute, was practised without a check; in a word, the people were demoralized to an extent that could scarcely have been exceeded by the thunder-smitten inhabitants of Sodom's plain. Surely there was no place that stood more in need of a Missionary than did Newfoundland; and few men were better adapted for that work than the man now sent.<sup>115</sup>

The 'man now sent' was Laurence Coughlan. Coughlan was a missionary to the colonists for nearly six years before succumbing to poor health. In 1773 he returned to England where, three years later, he published his Account of the Work of God in Newfoundland (1776), an autobiographical treatise which also contained testimonials and death-bed confessions from some of his parishioners.<sup>116</sup> Coughlan's Account reveals the difficulty which he and other missionaries had in planting Methodism in the colony. He

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Methodist Missionary Society, 5 vols (London, 1921), Vol. I, pp. 260-261).

<sup>115</sup> William Wilson, Newfoundland and its Missionaries (Cambridge, 1866).

<sup>116</sup> Laurence Coughlan, Account of the Work of God in Newfoundland (London, 1776).

complained that his life 'was a continual martyrdom'.<sup>117</sup> Yet it was not until 1785 that the Methodists began to include such reports in their Minutes so that readers could gain some appreciation of the difficulties faced by the Newfoundland missionary.

During the 1780s the Methodists expressed a desire to extend their missions to the rest of British North America. Thomas Coke's 1784 'Plan of the Society for the Establishment of Missions among the Heathens' outlined Methodist aspirations for sending missionaries to Nova Scotia.<sup>118</sup> In September Coke sailed for New York to seek transportation for two of the Society's missionaries, Freeborn Garrettson and James Cromwell, to Halifax.<sup>119</sup> The following year, he returned to England and began the difficult task of raising money to sustain several missionary circuits in the province. Two years later Coke sailed for Nova Scotia, but storms forced his ship to detour to the West Indies. Ironically, despite all his

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<sup>117</sup> Quoted in Findlay and Holdsworth, History of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, p. 262.

<sup>118</sup> Between 1772 and 1775 a number of emigrants from Yorkshire arrived in Nova Scotia. Among them were a number of Methodists including William Black, Sr, father of William Jr and one of the earliest Methodist missionaries in the colony.

<sup>119</sup> See Wade Crawford Barclay, History of Methodist Missions. Part One: Early American Methodism, 1769-1844, 2 vols (New York, 1949), Vol. I, pp. 107 and 166ff.

effort to organise the Nova Scotia mission, Coke never set foot in the colony, but through his efforts three circuits--Halifax, Liverpool, and Cumberland--were established.

Soon, reports from Nova Scotia and New Brunswick did find their way to Wesley. So important did Wesley deem such accounts that he urged his missionaries to send their journals even if incomplete. 'It is far better to send your Journals as they are', he wrote to the Nova Scotian missionary Freeborn Garrettson in 1786, 'than not to send them at all'.<sup>120</sup> By 1790 missionary accounts from

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<sup>120</sup> John Wesley to Freeborn Garrettson (30 September 1786), Letters of John Wesley. A Selection of Important and New Letters, edited by George Eayrs (London, New York, Toronto, 1915), p. 270. Wesley's correspondence to Garrettson reveals an ongoing attempt by Wesley to get Garrettson to send in his journal. On 16 July 1787 Wesley wrote to Garrettson thanking him for having sent an account of missionary work being carried out in Halifax, but asked why the missionary had not sent his journal as requested two years earlier: '[Y]ou do not send me your Journal yet. Surely, you had time enough to write it over' (Letters, pp. 274-275). After two years the journal had not arrived. Wesley angrily wrote back (24 January 1789) threatening Garrettson: 'Whatever you do with regard to me you must do quickly, or you will do no more in this world' (Letters, p. 281). Garrettson wrote apologising for the delay to which Wesley replied, 'You are entirely right. There can be no manner of doubt, that it was the enemy of souls that hindered your sending me your experience', but warned Garrettson that '[he] had no time to lose' (15 July 1789, Letters, pp. 283-284). Finally, on 23 August, five years after Wesley's initial request, Garrettson sent his journal; by 3 February 1790, however, it had still not arrived, although Wesley was expecting it 'any day now' (Letters, p. 285). See also Ezra S. Tipple, Freeborn Garrettson (London, 1910).



Newfoundland and Nova Scotia were being printed in the Methodist Minutes.<sup>121</sup>

It was the appearance of the Arminian Magazine in 1778, however, that provided readers with a broader view of missionary life in North America.<sup>122</sup> Wesley sought to make the Arminian Magazine a forum for 'accounts and letters containing extracts from the "lives" of pious persons'.<sup>123</sup> He not only requested his preachers and missionaries to keep journals, but asked some to compose short autobiographies from which he could either print or edit for publication. Some missionaries composed their own "lives", but Wesley exerted editorial control over them and everything that appeared in the Arminian. 'Print nothing without my approbation', he commanded his preachers.<sup>124</sup>

When Robert Southey began work on his study of the life of John Wesley and the work of the Methodists, he relied to

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<sup>121</sup> Newfoundland missionary reports appeared as early as 1785; Nova Scotia reports in 1790.

<sup>122</sup> In 1797 the Arminian Magazine changed its name to the Methodist Magazine. In 1821 it became known as the Wesleyan Methodist Magazine in order to distinguish it from other Methodist publications.

<sup>123</sup> Arminian Magazine (January, 1778), p. i.

<sup>124</sup> Isabel Rivers, "Strangers and Pilgrims", p. 195.



a great extent on Wesley's own journals and memoirs. Yet as Southey was reminded, Wesley was not the only Methodist to have left behind a record of his life. 'Many of Wesley's early coadjutors', Southey wrote, 'have left memoirs of themselves, under the favourite title of their "Experience"'.<sup>125</sup> Southey used these 'experiences' or autobiographical narratives to illustrate 'the progress and nature of Methodism' in Britain and North America during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Samuel Taylor Coleridge advised that even the 'dullest author . . . might write an interesting book' if he took a lesson from the pages of a Methodist autobiography. 'Let him relate the events of his own life with honesty, not disguising the feelings that accompanied them', Coleridge wrote, adding, 'I never read a Methodist's "Experience" in the Gospel Magazine without receiving instruction and amusement'.<sup>126</sup>

The Methodist's "experience" was central to the Arminian Magazine. Wesley urged his missionaries to emphasise the veracity of their experience: everything reported, he advised, should be substantiated by factual evidence and

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<sup>125</sup> Robert Southey, The Life of Wesley; and the Rise and Progress of Methodism, second edition, 2 vols (London, 1820), Vol. II, pp. 85-86.

<sup>126</sup> Samuel Taylor Coleridge to Thomas Poole (February 1797), in the Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, edited by E.L. Griggs, 4 vols (Oxford).

personal testimony. In his Short History of the People Called Methodists (1781) he promised to 'confine [him]self to the things of which [he] was an eye- or ear-witness'.<sup>127</sup> For Wesley, the missionary was a witness of Christ's work on earth and of his presence in one's own life.<sup>128</sup> On 15 October 1784 he commissioned William Black for 'a more particular account of the societies in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland'.<sup>129</sup> Black responded by sending him a testimonial account of his religious life and missionary experience among the backwoods settlements of the colony.

Black's autobiographical narrative took the form of a personal and passionate testimony. During a prayer meeting, for example, he described how he was overcome with emotion ('tears began to gush out of my eyes, and my heart to throb within me') as he became aware of 'the burden of [his] sins'.<sup>130</sup> He also described how he had to

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<sup>127</sup> Wesley, Short History, p. 426. For Pauline and other Biblical echoes of this passage see Romans 15.18 and Luke 1.2.

<sup>128</sup> See also Acts 1.8: '[Y]e shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem . . . and unto the uttermost part of the earth' (Acts 1.8).

<sup>129</sup> Eayrs, Letters, p. 266.

<sup>130</sup> 'The Life of William Black. Written by Himself', The Lives of Early Methodist Preachers, third edition, edited by Thomas Jackson (London, 1866), Vol. V, pp. 245 and 246.

wrestle with various forms of 'temptation' before being converted to Methodism.

Following his conversion, Black took up itinerant preaching in the woods of Nova Scotia. His prosaic account of his early missionary travels is much more journalistic in its chronology and sequential structure than in the previous part of the narrative. In the following, Black's plain literary style is adorned by brief biblical phrases giving his mundane experience spiritual significance:

January 9th, 1782.--I set off for Petitcodiac river, and stopped the first night at a place where I found one whom I had left in great distress, now rejoicing in the Lord. The next morning I set forwards on snow-shoes, for the French settlement on the north side of the river, in company with one or two of our friends. We lay at a French house that night on a little straw, and had about two yards of a thin linen wrapper to cover us, though it was one of the coldest nights in all that winter. But  
 "Labour is rest, and pain is sweet,  
 If Thou, my God, art here!"

The next day we went forward, and walked about nineteen miles. I was much fatigued with the snow-shoes; yet I preached in the evening, but felt little life in my own soul. O Lord, what are we without Thy love?<sup>131</sup>

Clearly, the Canadian missionary's life was far from easy. Weather, harsh travelling conditions, sectarian hostility, and lack of money and the comforts of civilisation were

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<sup>131</sup> Jackson, ed., 'Life of William Black', p. 262.

just some of difficulties and privations which faced a missionary in British North America. In 1799 Black returned to England only to return a year later with four more missionaries. One of those who accompanied him was Joshua Marsden.

Marsden spent eight years on the missionary circuits of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick before poor health forced him to retire to the warmer climate of Bermuda. Here he not only began to build up a congregation, but managed to find time to contribute a number of descriptive accounts of religious life on the island for the Methodist Magazine (formerly the Arminian Magazine). In 1812 he moved to New York where, over the next two years, he published several works of poetry and prose, the most important being his Narrative of a Mission to Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and the Somers Islands.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Marsden's other works include the following: Leisure Hours; or, Poems, Moral, Religious & Descriptive (New York, 1812). The following year he published his autobiography, Grace Displayed: An Interesting Narrative of the Life, Conversion, Christian Experience, Ministry and Missionary Labours of Joshua Marsden (New York, 1813); second edition, 1814). Another autobiographical account, Sketches of an Early Life of a Sailor, Now a Preacher of the Gospel was published in Hull in 1820. Both autobiographies are typical of the eighteenth century conversion narrative: life before conversion is depicted as wickedly sinful until God's grace awakens the sinner to a new life and reveals to him the path to salvation through faith and good works.

The Narrative of a Mission is a journal-like narrative account of missionary life in British North America. Like Black's testimony, Marsden's prose is emotionally-charged with heart-felt language and Biblical cadences. 'In writing this narrative I shall often be disposed to advert to God as the blessed agent in my various deliverance and escapes', he explains, 'if this seem like enthusiasm, I must bear the stigma;--if like pride and arrogance, I believe I shall never be humble. One from above has taught me to "acknowledge him all my way, and he will direct my path"'.<sup>133</sup> Frequent outbursts of feeling, poetic interjections, and Scriptural phrases and passages are interspersed among details of travel, climate, and the pioneer settlements. The work sold more than a thousand copies and was distributed to all of the Methodist 'book rooms' around Britain. In 1827 a second revised edition of Marsden's Narrative was published, but by the 1840s the Methodists had made such an advance in British North America that the book was considered 'obsolete' by Marsden's successors. In 1845 Charles Churchill published his Memorials of a Missionary Life in Nova Scotia (London, 1845) containing a 'series of sketches' which provided the reader with 'statistical, historical, topographical, and general features of each district, including remarkable cases of conversion and death', stating that there were

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<sup>133</sup> Marsden, Narrative of a Mission, p. 63.



'numberless matters of interest, which c[a]me under the eye of the Missionary alone', and argued that his work should be 'received as an unbiased and authentic record'.<sup>134</sup>

Other Methodist missionaries to write of their experiences in British North America included Robert Cooney, Alvin Torry and George Copway.<sup>135</sup> Copway, also known by his Indian name Kah-ge-ga-ga-bowh, was celebrated by writers in both America and Britain. His Life, history, and travels of Kah-ge-ga-ga-bowh (1847) was the first publication by a native Canadian in English. His Recollections of a forest life, published in 1850, was well-received both in America and Britain where Copway delivered a series of lectures on Indian and missionary life. Other native missionaries to publish records of

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<sup>134</sup> Charles Churchill, Memorials of a Missionary Life in Nova Scotia (London, 1845), pp. v and vi and p. 21.

<sup>135</sup> Robert Cooney, The Autobiography of a Wesleyan Methodist Missionary (Montreal, 1856); William, Hosmer, ed., The Autobiography of Alvin Torry, First Missionary to the Six Nations and the North-western Tribes of British North America (Auburn, New York, 1861); George Copway, The Life, History, and Travels of Kah-Ge-Ga-Gah-Bowh (George Copway) . . . Chief of the Ojebwa Nation . . . and a Missionary to his People . . . written by himself (Philadelphia, 1847), The Life, Letters, and Speeches of Kah-ge-ga-gah-bowh (New York, 1850) and Recollections of a Forest Life (London, 1850).

their lives were Peter Jacobs and Peter Jones.<sup>136</sup>

The most significant collection of Methodist missionary autobiographies in the nineteenth century is Thomas Jackson's Lives of the Methodist Preachers (1838), a multi-volume compilation of the preacher and missionary lives most of which were published in the Arminian Magazine and Methodist Magazine. Each "life" reflected Wesley's belief in the power of religious biography and autobiography to convey the principles of Christian faith and behaviour. Morality and piety were given a basis in the "real-life" experience of the Methodist clergy. While novels were still considered profane by most clergymen, 'soul-stirring adventures' of travelling preachers and missionaries were sanctioned. 'In contrast to the novel', writes Samuel Pickering in his study of evangelical writing in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, 'critics of literature approved biography'.<sup>137</sup> Though Samuel Johnson thought the Methodists somewhat

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<sup>136</sup> Peter Jacobs, Journal of the Reverend Peter Jacobs . . . From Rice Lake to the Hudson's Bay Territory (Toronto, 1853; second edition, Boston, 1853; third edition, New York, 1858) and Peter Jones, Life and Journals of Kah-Ke-Wa-Quon-A-By (Rev. Peter Jones, Wesleyan Missionary (Toronto, 1860). See the Bibliography at the end of this thesis for the titles of other works by these authors.

<sup>137</sup> Samuel Pickering Jr, The Moral Tradition in English Fiction, 1785-1850 (Hanover, New Hampshire, 1976), p. 66.

overzealous in their descriptions, he praised the 'plain and familiar manner' of their writing and suggested that theirs was 'a practice for which they will be praised by men of sense'.<sup>138</sup>

Religious biography and autobiography were the staple of the evangelical magazines in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and the missionary "life" comprised a substantial portion of them. The Cheap Repository, the Evangelical Magazine, the Protestant Dissenter's Magazine, and the Methodist Magazine, for example, all published and defended their use of missionary and preacher autobiography and biography. The editors of the Methodist Magazine, for instance, argued that while the 'Biographer is busied in describing the heroic deeds of the hardy warrior, [and] the daring adventures of the restless mariner . . . it is ungenerous to pass by the good man'.<sup>139</sup> By 'good', of course, they meant religious and pious. Elsewhere they defended their use of pietist biography explaining that as the Scriptures 'exhibit[ed] . . . many excellent characters, and recommend[ed] them as worthy of our imitation . . . [o]ur design in publishing to the world, the holy lives and happy deaths of many of

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<sup>138</sup> James Boswell, Life of Johnson, Vol. I, pp. 458-459.

<sup>139</sup> Methodist Magazine, Vol. XXIII (February, 1800), p. 90.

our friends in the present age, is to induce others to take up their cross, and become followers of them'.<sup>140</sup> The use of the missionary's "life" as an exemplary illustration of Christian 'zeal and industry' was sanctioned and promoted in order to preach and teach the lessons of Christianity. As Isabel Rivers reminds us in her study of Methodist writing, '[P]rivation and suffering were less important than their spiritual interpretation, hardship was providentially ordained.'<sup>141</sup> Each step of the missionary's journey, painful though it might be, was intended to lead the reader on the path to salvation. Following a series of tribulations, one Methodist preacher wrote of how he neared his final destination:

As I looked up, the heavens seemed to open about a mile in length, and tapered away to a point at each end. The centre of this avenue was about twelve feet wide, wherein I thought I saw the Lord Jesus standing, holding both his hands up, from the palms of which the blood seemed to stream down. Floods of tears now gushed from my eyes, and trickled down my cheeks; and I said, 'Lord, it is enough!'<sup>142</sup>

Such narratives were a reminder of the missionary's continuing pilgrimage; readers, therefore, were denied the satisfaction of a conclusion.<sup>143</sup> Joshua Marsden's return

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<sup>140</sup> Methodist Magazine, Vol. XXIII (June, 1800), p. 259.

<sup>141</sup> Rivers, "'Pilgrims and Strangers"', p. 199.

<sup>142</sup> The Life of Silas Told (1790), pp. 88-89, quoted in Rivers, "'Strangers and Pilgrims"', p. 200.

<sup>143</sup> See Rivers, "'Strangers and Pilgrims"', p. 200.

to Europe draws his narrative to an end, but it hardly implies the end of his spiritual journey. As he nears his destination he senses that he is not returning to the same place that he had left fourteen years earlier ('My native country will appear as a foreign land, strange faces, and perhaps, strange manners');<sup>144</sup> nor does he believe that his journey is ending. This sense of strangeness and inconclusiveness strengthens Marsden's spiritual resolve to remain steadfast in his missionary duty:

I wish to be a stranger and pilgrim wherever I go; the Lord knows that I return home with no large expectations, but with pure desire to love and glorify God. . . . I am now 900 miles from my native shores; France, Ireland, Scotland, England, --- all extending their sea-beaten shores to the eye of my mind. Ah! how little is an individual compared to the kingdoms of the Globe; and yet worlds are not equal in value to an immortal soul. (p. 211)

Marsden's use of the journey or pilgrimage motif is common to all missionary narrative. 'This pattern of pilgrimage, of life as a spiritual journey through the world in search of the true country', explains Rivers,

underlies the narratives of the travelling preachers. The preacher's life is also literally a journey. He experiences conversion and the call to preach, gives up his trade, leaves behind his wife and children and takes to the road, is harassed by the justices and the clergy, attacked by mobs, sometimes imprisoned or threatened with impressment, and constantly faces the temptation to give up this arduous life and return to his home, his family, his trade. In resisting temptation he learns the symbolic nature of his experience: his sufferings are

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<sup>144</sup> Marsden, Narrative of a Mission, p. 210.



providential. In recording this experience, he encourages others to imitate him, just as he himself<sup>145</sup> is supported by a literary tradition.

But the literary tradition to which Marsden leans is not that of the typical eighteenth-century picaresque traveller. Rather, missionary narrative offers an alternative to the picaresque tradition. Whereas the picaresque hero makes a circuitous journey from his place of origin, uncertain as to his relationships and his position in life, only to return, as Rivers reminds us, 'his position now established' on a 'fixed point in the existing social order', the missionary's journey is centrifugal along a path which takes him from this world to the next. 'The only fixed point for him', Rivers writes, 'is eternal and otherworldly. He must remain a stranger.'<sup>146</sup> Despite the awareness that he would always be a stranger in his own land, however, Marsden could not prevent himself from enjoying the experience of returning home: '[A]fter an absence of 14 years, I kneeled down and kissed the shores of my dear native land, and thanked, from my soul, the God of all mercy, who has fulfilled one of the dearest wishes of my heart'.<sup>147</sup> Missionary

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145 Rivers, "Strangers and Pilgrims", p. 197.

146 Rivers, "Strangers and Pilgrims" pp. 200-201. Rivers identifies a number of Methodist writers to adapt this attitude.

147 Narrative of a Mission, p. 214.

narratives like Marsden's are a unique part of Canada's discursive fabric. They contribute another voice to Canada's early literary tradition, offering an alternative, more spiritual perspective on colonial life in contrast to the secular voices of the explorer and emigrant farmer or occasional traveller. The missionary's observations and descriptions provide a useful glimpse into Canada's religious past. Missionary writers attempted to transmute their own history into art by imposing a cultural and literary tradition on their personal experience of the New World. In doing so they hoped to create a "new world", an ideal community whose construction and presence would transform the "heathen" or "demonic" wilderness by bringing civilisation and Christianity to bear upon it. For some missionaries this often meant effacing themselves from the script, 'to drop the man in the account, and vote the master into majesty'.<sup>148</sup>

The following three chapters explore and examine the work of three missionary writers: Benjamin Kohlmeister (Moravian), Joshua Marsden (Methodist), and Joseph Abbott (Anglican). Each chapter provides a brief outline of the life and accomplishments of the author and examines one of

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<sup>148</sup> Joshua Marsden, Narrative of a Mission, second edition (London, 1827), p. vii.

his major works related to his missionary experience. The purpose of these chapters is to provide information about the authors and their work and to offer a critical analysis of their writings through a study of one of their major works of missionary experience.

It is a good thing often to set before us a Missionary's life, and to try to understand what it really is. This is not by any means so easy as it first appears at first sight. People say, 'The work of a Missionary is to preach the Gospel to the heathen', and they think little more about it; they do not enter into what is involved in these words, and the changes that time brings in the work.

The Mission Field (1861)

## CHAPTER THREE

### BENJAMIN KOHLMEISTER, GEORGE KMOCH, AND THE JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE FROM OKKAK, ON THE COAST OF LABRADOR, TO UNGAVA BAY (1814)

#### I: Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is twofold: firstly, to sketch the historical context in which Benjamin Kohlmeister's and George Kmoch's Journal of a Voyage from Okkak, on the coast of Labrador, to Ungava Bay (1814) was written and published; and secondly, to examine the Journal from a critical perspective in order to appreciate and understand the principles which animated Moravian missionary writing. In connection with this latter purpose I have used Thomas Chalmers' review of the Journal as a critical lens through which to view Kohlmeister's and Kmoch's mode of perception and narrative expression, particularly as it is related to their description of the Labrador landscape. In his review, Chalmers speaks of a 'Moravian style'; it is the purpose of this chapter to discuss the nature of that 'style' and to suggest that Kohlmeister's and Kmoch's Journal represents an important contribution by Moravian missionaries to our understanding and appreciation of the development of early Canadian discourse and the discursive vision of the Canadian landscape.

#### II: The Journey and the Journal

On 14 December 1814 the Society for the Furtherance of the



Gospel among the Heathen (SFG) announced the publication of the Journal of a Voyage from Okkak, on the Coast of Labrador, to Ungava Bay, an eighty-four page pamphlet narrative written by two Moravian missionaries, Benjamin Kohlmeister and George Kmoch.<sup>1</sup> The Journal described Kohlmeister's and Kmoch's missionary journey, undertaken in 1811, from Okkak, the most northern of the three mission settlements in Labrador, to the 'unknown regions' of Ungava Bay.<sup>2</sup>

Kohlmeister and Kmoch made the journey in order to explore the possibility of establishing a fourth mission settlement in northern Labrador. They were the first Europeans to venture into the Ungava area, sailing along a treacherous coastline and making their way into a

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<sup>1</sup> Benjamin Gottlieb Kohlmeister and George Kmoch, The Journal of a Voyage, from Okkak on the coast of Labrador, to Ungava Bay, Westward of Cape Chudleigh; undertaken to explore the Coast, and visit the Esquimaux in that unknown Region (London, 1814). All subsequent quotations are from this edition and are included parenthetically in the text of the thesis.

There is no evidence to suggest what part of the Journal should be attributed to Kohlmeister or to Kmoch. For the purposes of this thesis I will refer to Kohlmeister as the principal "author" of the text. For an autobiographical account of the life of George Kmoch see the Periodical Accounts (1856), Vol. 22, pp. 379-384 and pp. 433-440. This was also published as a pamphlet in London in 1858 by W. Inallalien and Co. who were Moravian Mission Agents acting on behalf of the Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel.

<sup>2</sup> See The Moravian Atlas, compiled by the Teachers of Fulneck Academy (Fulneck, 1853).

seemingly impenetrable interior which had previously discouraged exploration and settlement. Kohlmeister and Kmoch had been inspired by earlier Moravian attempts in the eighteenth century to take the Gospel to the Inuit of northern Labrador. As early as the 1750s, for example, Moravian missionaries had unsuccessfully attempted to extend their mission to the Inuit of northern Labrador (see Chapter 2). It was not until 1771 that the first permanent Moravian mission at Nain was established. Five years later, a second settlement was built at Okkak and a third, in 1781, at Hopedale. It was not until 1802 that the plan for a northern journey to Ungava Bay was seriously considered. The man behind the plan was Benjamin Gottlieb Kohlmeister.<sup>3</sup>

Kohlmeister had not been with the Moravians in Germany long when he answered a call to go to Labrador. A letter in the Periodical Accounts for August 1790 announces his arrival at Nain and imminent departure for Okkak and states that he was received 'with much joy' and that his fellow missionaries thought that he would 'prove a very

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<sup>3</sup> For a biographical sketch of Kohlmeister see Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Vol. VII, pp. 473-474. An memoir of Kohlmeister's life appears in the Periodical Accounts (1844), Vol. 17, pp. 65-77 and in pamphlet form as the Memoir of Br. Benj. Gottlieb Kohlmeister, Missionary among the Esquimaux in Labrador, who died this life at Neusaltz, in Silesia, June 3, 1844, in the 89th year of his age (London, 1845).

useful assistant'.<sup>4</sup> He took over the responsibilities of the mission school where he was able to learn the Inuktituk language from his pupils. His fluency in their language later enabled him to take part in trading transactions between the Inuit and the white traders.<sup>5</sup>

In 1802 Kohlmeister moved to Hopedale where he led an 'unprecedented' spiritual revival and began to formulate plans for extending the Moravian mission.<sup>6</sup> At Hopedale the Inuit informed Kohlmeister of a large native population which lived in the region of Ungava Bay and Baffin Island to the north. According to the Inuit, these northern Natives might be willing to trade with the Moravians and perhaps become Christians. Kohlmeister made

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<sup>4</sup> News of Kohlmeister's arrival in the Labrador missions came in a letter dated at Nain on 28 August 1790. It stated: 'Brother Kohlmeister stays in Okkak this year' (Letter from B<sup>r</sup> James Branagan and B<sup>r</sup> John Hastings, Nain, 28 August 1790 in Periodical Accounts, (1790), Vol. I, p. 46). See also letter from John Christopher Wolf and Theobald French written from Okkak on 14 August 1790 in Periodical Accounts (1790), Vol. I, p. 49. See also James K. Hiller, Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Vol. IV, p. 474.

<sup>5</sup> Kohlmeister later assumed the responsibilities of the school teacher and the mission's doctor at Hopedale (see Periodical Accounts [1803], Vol. III, p. 239).

<sup>6</sup> Jim Hiller describes how '[a] sermon preached at the end of December 1803 sparked a general awakening which spread to Nain and Okak' and remarks how it 'was a turning-point for the mission since it led to the firm establishment of a Moravian theocracy in northern Labrador' (see Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Vol. VII, p. 474).

a chart of the coast according to local description and 'mark[ed] all the dwelling places, rivers, bays and woods, also the best anchoring grounds and good harbours, as gathered from their accounts'.<sup>7</sup> Later in the year, Inuit hunters delivered 'a sort of map' to Kohlmeister of the coast and northern region of the country, giving the missionary fresh hope that a fruitful journey could be made to the area.<sup>8</sup>

Kohlmeister planned to return to Europe in 1803 in order to place his sons in a Moravian school at Herrnhut; while in London he hoped to seek permission to make the journey to Ungava. But it was not until 1806 that Kohlmeister and his family were finally able to sail for London.<sup>9</sup> After his arrival he discussed his plans with the SFG for 'a long reconnoitring voyage to the north'. On 25 May 1810, the SFG reviewed its costs and the potential hazards of such a journey and decided (by lot) to send Kohlmeister and his wife back to Okkak, 'to be ready on the first appearance of favourable weather to proceed on their

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<sup>7</sup> Periodical Accounts (1800), Vol. II, p. 468.

<sup>8</sup> Periodical Accounts (1802), Vol. III, p. 116.

<sup>9</sup> Mention of the plan is found in a letter from Okkak on August 18, 1806. See Periodical Accounts (1806), Vol. IV, p. 78.



voyage'.<sup>10</sup>

The SFG considered Kohlmeister not only a zealous missionary but a capable traveller: he was experienced, familiar with the use of a quadrant, and, reportedly, 'acquainted . . . with other branches of science' necessary for such a voyage (see Journal of a Voyage, p. 16). On whether Kohlmeister's wife Elizabeth should accompany her husband on the journey, the SFG simply stated that it was 'to be determined by circumstances'.<sup>11</sup> However, the SFG did recommend 'that a steady Eskimaux family' should accompany Kohlmeister and 'that he should be at liberty to engage a family [at Hopedale] possessing a large shallop' for the purposes of transporting them of their journey. Upon completion of the journey, Kohlmeister was told, he should prepare a report for the

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<sup>10</sup> See 'A General Meeting of the Society' (25 May 1810), SFG Minutes, Vol. IV, 1803-1813.

<sup>11</sup> Elizabeth Kohlmeister fell ill and was unable to make the voyage with her husband. See her Memoir in Periodical Accounts [1839], Vol. 15, pp. 401-406.

Elizabeth Kohlmeister was born in Germany on 17 June 1762. At the age of four she and her mother moved to the Moravian community at Herrnhut where she attended school and became acquainted with the Moravian religion. In March 1793 she joined the Labrador mission and set out for Okkak where she married her husband. Several of her friends worried 'that her delicate frame would never stand the climate of that country' (p. 403), but she took a full and active part in the mission for thirty years. In December 1824 she and her husband retired from Labrador and returned to Herrnhut. Elizabeth Kohlmeister died after a paralytic illness on 7 October 1838.



Society and recommend on the possibilities of establishing a fourth Moravian mission in the Ungava region.<sup>12</sup>

Kohlmeister returned to Okkak on 10 August 1810 and began making preparations for the voyage; but it was not until the following summer that he, George Kmoch (who replaced another missionary originally asked to accompany Kohlmeister), and a family of Inuit were ready to depart. On the morning of 24 June 1811, the missionaries and their native companions set sail in a shallop for the 'unknown' regions of northern Labrador.<sup>13</sup>

In early August the expedition rounded Cape Chudleigh (Chidley) and entered Ungava Bay. '[I]t seemed',

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<sup>12</sup> War and other circumstances prevented Kohlmeister from making an early departure for Labrador. War in Europe made travel difficult and perilous. Further delay was caused by one of the missionaries (B<sup>r</sup> Hoyer of Christiansfeld, Denmark) failing to accept his call to return with Kohlmeister to Labrador for the expressed purpose of accompanying him on the 'reconnoitring voyage to the North' (from 'A General Meeting of the Society' (25 May 1810) [prior to ship's departure for Labrador], SFG Minutes, Vol. IV, 1803-1813). Finally, on 22 July 1810 the brig *Jemima* sailed for Hopedale with the Kohlmeisters. They arrived in Okkak on August 10 to the welcome relief of their brethren. Their arrival was celebrated and Kohlmeister entertained his friends with stories of his European trip (see Periodical Accounts (1811), Vol. V, p. 132).

<sup>13</sup> Their departure was noted in a letter from Hopedale to the SFG on September 16, 1811, nearly three months after their departure. See Periodical Accounts (1811), Vol. V, p. 132. Interestingly, the date is the traditional anniversary of John Cabot's landing on Newfoundland.

Kohlmeister wrote, 'as if we were transported to a new world' (p. 46). For the next month he and the others made their way along the rocky coastline but they were unable to find the Inuit they had been led to believe they would meet, nor could they locate a suitable site for a mission. By early September they had ventured as far west as the Koaksoak River. With winter threatening, they turned inland and proceeded upriver. The Koaksoak reminded Kohlmeister of the English Thames or the German Elbe and his spirits were buoyed as he remarked at its potential navigability by larger ships. This was a promising sign for future trade and colonisation. After several days in the area Kohlmeister and Kmoch were warmly greeted by a small number of Inuit. 'The children', Kohlmeister remarked, 'expressed their joy by running to and fro . . . like wild creatures' (p. 71). But he also noted how he and Kmoch appeared to the Natives. The Inuit 'surveyed us narrowly', he observed, 'as if we were a new species of animal' (p. 72). Uncertain as to whether to continue or not, Kohlmeister decided that the surrounding slope was a 'good place for a Missionary settlement' and he named the place 'Pilgerruh' or Pilgrim's Rest (p. 73).

On 4 October 1811 Kohlmeister and Kmoch returned to Okkak after an absence of nearly four months. They had travelled more than twelve hundred miles of mostly

uncharted coastline and ventured further into the interior of Labrador than had any other European. Owing to the late arrival of a supply ship Kmoch was able to return to London with the account of the journey and Kohlmeister's recommendation that a permanent mission be established on the shores of the Koaksoak River.<sup>14</sup>

Kmoch arrived in London in early December and presented the Society with Kohlmeister's journal and drawings as well as his own record. At a general meeting of the Society on December 20 it was noted that Kohlmeister and Kmoch had 'made several interesting discoveries' and were 'detained by a number of unusual coincidences'. It was also announced that '[a]n account of [the journey] will, in Extract, be inserted into the Periodical Accounts'.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Five days after their return, Kohlmeister, eager to give his Society an account of the voyage, wrote to say that 'a particular narrative will be communicated, relating to this undertaking; and as Brother Kmoch accompanies the above-mentioned two boys [the sons of fellow missionaries] to England, he will be able to give you information concerning various interesting particulars' (see letter from Kohlmeister to SFG, 9 October 1811 in Periodical Accounts (1811), Vol. V, p. 133). Kmoch arrived on 2 December 1811 and returned the following summer on 15 July 1812 (see Periodical Accounts (1812), Vol. V, p. 250).

<sup>15</sup> A General Meeting of the Society, minute 6 (20 December 1811), SFG Minutes, Vol. IV, 1803-1813:

The reconnoitring voyage (to the North of Okkak, Labrador) determined upon and approved by \* [by lot], has at length this year been undertaken by the B<sup>th</sup> Kohlmeister and Kmoch, who with a boat and 2 Esquimaux families, Jonathan and Jonas, went round Cape Chidleigh and explored the coast on the west side of the Cape.

Publication, however, was delayed. The Secretary of the SFG and editor of the Periodical Accounts, Christian Ignatius Latrobe, decided that the SFG's interests might be better served by a full-length publication. Kohlmeister's and Kmoch's journals were translated into English and compiled into a single narrative, and on 18 February 1813, Latrobe presented a copy of the narrative, along with a map of Labrador, to the Board of Trade and Plantations (the Moravians still required the Board's permission to establish a mission in northern Labrador).<sup>16</sup>

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They did not see many Esquimaux, but made several interesting discoveries, were saved by the Lord's mercy in many perils, and having completed the whole of the voyage, returned safe to Okkak, October 4th, where they still found the Jemima [Society's ship], which had been detained by a number of unusual coincidences. They left Okkak on this expedition on the 24th of June. An account of it will, in Extract, be inserted into the Periodical Accounts.

<sup>16</sup> See SFG Minutes, Vol. IV, 1803-1813, minute 3, 18 February 1813:

Brother Latrobe produced a Copy of the narrative he had drawn up of the Reconnoitring Voyage, from Brothers Kohlmeister's Extract of his Diary sent, and Brother Kmoch's Journal of each Day's proceedings, translated by Brother Steinhauer [Henry], the latter has also made an accurate Map of the Coast, along which they sailed, tendered so by comparisons and calculations. [indecipherable mark in text]. A Copy with the accompanying Chart will be presented by Brother Latrobe to the Lords of Trade and Plantations.

Latrobe compiled the narrative from Kohlmeister's diary and Kmoch's 'Journal of each Day's proceedings'. These were translated from the German into English by B<sup>r</sup> Henry Steinhauer. Steinhauer (1782-1818), a Moravian teacher, scholar, and naturalist, also drew up a map of the journey based on the 'comparisons and calculations' which the missionaries had made enroute. There was, however, no mention of the drawings which Kohlmeister had reportedly



However, on May 9 the SFG abandoned its plans for the mission in Ungava, stating that 'it appear[ed] in Kohlmeister's Report, that ordinarily not many Esquimaux make that country their home'.<sup>17</sup>

Despite this setback, Latrobe decided to go ahead with the publication of the narrative of the journey to Ungava. A notice in the Eclectic Review for December 1814 announced its imminent publication and, on 14 December 1814, the SFG published news that the 'Reconnoitring Voyages' was on sale for '17s 3d' at its headquarters as well as at a number of other booksellers in Britain.<sup>18</sup>

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made (see Journal, p. 73). See 'Minute 3', SFG Minutes, Vol. IV, 1803-1813.

With few exceptions the Moravian missionaries in Labrador spoke German. English did not become the predominant language among the Moravian missionaries in Labrador until near the end of the nineteenth century.

<sup>17</sup> 'Minute 2' (9 May 1812), SFG Minutes, Vol. V, 1814-1831. Kmoch and others recommended a site north of Okkak near the place known as Saeglek as a better location for a future mission. In 1831, the missionary settlement of Hebron was established nearby.

<sup>18</sup> An announcement of the 'Voyage of the Moravian Missionaries to Ungewa [sic] Bay' appeared in the Eclectic Review (December 1814), new series, Vol. II, p. 652. News of the publication also appeared in the SFG Minutes, Vol. V, 1814-1831 on 14 December 1814. In another notice printed a year later it was noted that the Journal was being sold for '3 s[hillings]' (see Eclectic Review (December 1815), Vol. III, p. 112).

There is an ironic twist to the Moravian saga. Although Kohlmeister could not convince the SFG to finance a fourth mission in Ungava, his success in reaching the area and making contact with the natives, generated some unease in the Hudson's Bay Company. In 1820 the HBC sent James Coulson to the region to make his own assessment. Coulson had obviously read or heard about Kohlmeister's and



The publication of the Journal of a Voyage from Okkak, on the coast of Labrador, to Ungava Bay, despite the failure of the plans to establish a fourth mission in Labrador, may have been related to the SFG's desire to give the Labrador missions a greater profile in order to raise public interest and funds towards the cost of supporting them.<sup>19</sup> Missions were an expensive undertaking. Although

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Kmoch's Journal. On 8 July 1820 he reports in his journal: 'Instead of reaching Labrador as I expected when I left Caniapuscaw Lake, I find that I have gone towards Hudson's Straits, and I suppose this river is the same bay where the Moravians from Labrador turned in their survey of the coast in the year 1811.' See Glyndwr Williams, 'Introduction', Northern Quebec and Labrador Journals and Correspondence, 1819-35, edited by K.G. Davies and A.M. Johnson (London, 1963) p. 55. Even as late as 1830, the Hudson's Bay Company and Governor George Simpson were nervous about the Moravians' intentions to establish a mission in Ungava. Glyndwr Williams points out how, in a letter written in 1830 to Hudson's Bay Company employee Nicol Finlayson, Simpson 'requested a full report on the country and information about the operations of the Moravian missionaries. "A good understanding" was to be cultivated with those people "without however forming any particular intimacy or allowing the Honourable Company's servants [to] mix with those of the mission' (see Glyndwr Williams, 'Introduction', Northern Quebec and Labrador Journals and Correspondence, 1819-35, p. 177n. Ironically, as early as 4 August 1813, the Moravians had acknowledged that the Ungava project could not go ahead without the permission of the Hudson's Bay Company in whose jurisdiction the projected site lay: '[L]eave ought to be obtained . . . that we may not be treated as intruders, but as friends' (see Periodical Accounts (1814), Vol. V, p. 402). By 1831, however, Kohlmeister's intended 'Pilgerruh' (Pilgrim's Rest) had become the Hudson's Bay Company's Fort Chimo.

<sup>19</sup> This was in keeping with its policy, adopted in 1802, to give the Labrador missions more publicity by printing in full rather than in extract all correspondence and accounts from its missionaries stationed there.

the Society did not provide its missionaries with a salary, it did provide them with food, transportation, and all the necessities essential for them to establish and administer their mission. In 1797 the Society reported that it had cost them an average of twenty-six hundred pounds annually 'in peaceful times' to support their missions.<sup>20</sup> The impact of war on the Continent, however, had 'a very considerable influence upon current expenses' and by 1801 the Society reported that its costs had more than doubled, in spite of only adding ten missionaries to its roll.<sup>21</sup>

War also hampered communications and travel between the Society's headquarters in London and deprived the Society of important revenue from Europe as well as important administrative support. It was, therefore, necessary to increase the Society's profile in Britain in order to raise the necessary funds for its overseas missions. Remote missions like those in Labrador were difficult to keep in touch with and were 'uncommonly expensive' to maintain. Supply ships sailed to Labrador only once a

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<sup>20</sup> At the time, the Society was supporting one hundred and forty missionaries and approximately eighty widows, children, and retired missionaries. See 'A Concise Account of the Present State of the Missions of the United Brethren' (1 January 1797) in Periodical Accounts, Vol. IV, p. 14.

<sup>21</sup> Costs at this time are quoted at £5000.

year and at considerable expense. Consequently, the missionaries were expected to trade with the Inuit as a way of contributing to their cost.<sup>22</sup> By 1811, the Society reported that sales from the Labrador missions, 'ha[d] nearly covered the expences [sic] of the voyage'.<sup>23</sup> Yet due to the cost of the Labrador missions and because communication with the missionaries there could be had once a year, it was decided in 1802 to give the Labrador missions more prominence. Missionary letters and narratives from Labrador were published in the Periodical Accounts in full rather than in extract.<sup>24</sup> By 1811 the costs of the Labrador missions had only increased by £1000 per annum for the same number of missionaries, widows, children, and retired missionaries supported nearly ten years earlier. Sales of the Periodical Accounts, other publications, and increasing contributions and donations helped the Society meet its financial responsibilities. The appearance of Kohlmeister's and Kmoch's Journal of a

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22 'The ship which sails annually to Labrador to convey provisions and keep up a communication with the Missionaries there, return with skins, bone and oil, the sale of which, it was hoped would have much lessened the expense of that Mission'. The Society also reported, 'This has not fully answered our expectations, partly on account of the barrenness of the coast, and partly because activity in trading with the natives, would interfere too much with the principal and proper business of a Missionary' (see Periodical Accounts (1797), Vol. IV, p. 15).

23 Periodical Accounts (1811), Vol. V, p. 26.

24 See Periodical Accounts, Vol. III, p. iii.

Voyage from Okkak . . . to Ungava Bay in December 1814 'excited general interest' amongst the public.<sup>25</sup> Evidence of its curiosity came in the form of 'a very favourable and characteristic notice' in the Eclectic Review by Thomas Chalmers (1740-1847), one of the most powerful orators in the Scottish pulpit in the early nineteenth century.<sup>26</sup>

### III: Thomas Chalmers' review of the Journal

Chalmers' review of Journal of a Voyage, from Okkak appeared in the Eclectic Review in January 1815, less than a month after the Journal's publication.<sup>27</sup> The Eclectic

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<sup>25</sup> This report is somewhat biased as it comes from Kmoch's Memoir, published in Periodical Accounts (1856), Vol. XXII, p. 433n. [pp. 379-394, 433-440].

<sup>26</sup> For a bibliography of works by Chalmers see The Published Writings of Dr. Thomas Chalmers, a Descriptive List, compiled by Hugh Watt (Privately published, 1943) and The Works of Thomas Chalmers, D.D. and L.L.D., Vol. XII, 'Tracts and Essays on Religious and Economical Subjects' (Glasgow, n.d.). For an excellent study of Chalmers see Stewart J. Brown, Thomas Chalmers and the Godly Commonwealth in Scotland (Oxford, 1982).

<sup>27</sup> Chalmers' review was published in the Eclectic Review, January/February 1815, New Series, Vol. II, pp. 1-13 and pp. 156-173. A copy in the Edinburgh University Library suggests that the Moravian Journal from Labrador inspired Chalmers to do much more than simply comment on its contents. In what appears to be Chalmers' own hand, he has crossed out the editor's printed heading and written an alternative title at the top of the page. It reads: 'On the efficacy of missionaries as conducted by the Moravians being the substance of an Argument contributed to the Eclectic Review in 1815' (see also The Eclectic Review [January 1815], p. 1). Chalmers' transformation of the review to an "Argument" signalled the author's attachment of greater importance to the subject. That the editors would have appeared to have



Review was an evangelical and literary magazine dedicated 'to arous[ing] the Christian world to a perception of the important influence which Literature possesses in obstructing or accelerating the progress of religious truth and human happiness'.<sup>28</sup> In his review Chalmers sought to explain why the Moravians had become the recent objects of 'fashionable admiration'. 'That they should be loved and admired by the decided Christian, is not to be wondered at', Chalmers wrote,

but that they should be idols of a fashionable admiration, that they should be sought after and visited by secular men; that travellers of all kinds should give way to the ecstasy of sentiment, as they pass through their villages, and take a survey of their establishments and their doings; that the very sound of Moravian music, and the very sight of a Moravian burial-place, should so fill the hearts of these men with images of delight and peacefulness, as to inspire them with something like the kindlings of piety;--all this is surely something new and strange.<sup>29</sup>

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placed some importance of their own on the "review" is also suggested by their placing of it on the opening pages of the year's first issue, preceding a review of Wordsworth's recently-published The Excursion. The second half of the essay was published in February 1815 and although it was not given such a prominent position it is noticeable as one of the few travel accounts "reviewed" by the journal in that issue.

<sup>28</sup> Eclectic Review (July 1814), New Series, Vol. II, p. i.

The Eclectic Review was a Nonconformist periodical (see W.E. Houghton, ed., The Wellesley Index to Victorian periodicals, 1824-1900, 3 vols (Toronto, 1966, 1972, 1979)).

<sup>29</sup> Chalmers, Eclectic Review, p. 1.



Using the Journal to illustrate his argument Chalmers defended the 'style' of Moravian missionary discourse. By examining its language and narrative strategy he sought to explain its efficacy on the public imagination.

Chalmers was no stranger to the Moravians or to missionary societies in general. At a time when the missionary movement was coming under fierce attack from various quarters, he defended the cause. In April 1812 he helped raise more than £10,000 to replace missionary presses destroyed in a fire at Vellampore in India.<sup>30</sup> He joined William Wilberforce in his fight against the East India Company's attempt to keep missionaries out of India and delivered a number of sermons in support of the missionaries and their societies.<sup>31</sup>

Chalmers took particular interest in the Moravians and

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<sup>30</sup> The fire took place on 11 March 1812 and was widely reported in the British press. Chalmers took part in raising money from the Scottish congregations. More than £10,000 was raised in fifty days (see William Hanna, Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Thomas Chalmers, D.D., L.L.D., Vol. 1 (Edinburgh, 1849), p. 314).

<sup>31</sup> According to William Hanna (son-in-law of Chalmers), 'nine-tenths of the British population' were hostile to the missionary movement 'at that time' (1812) (see Hanna, Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Thomas Chalmers, Vol. 1, p. 314). For an example of some of the attacks on missionaries from the press see Sydney Smyth's articles in the Edinburgh Review (April, 1808), Vol. XII, no. xxiii, pp. 151-181 and 'Styles on Methodists and Missions' Edinburgh Review (April, 1809), Vol. XIV, no. xxviii, pp. 40-50.

their mission 'among the furred barbarians of the North'.<sup>32</sup> Inspired by his reading of the Periodical Accounts, he remarked that he '[was] quite delighted with the gentleness, unction, and simplicity which pervaded' them.<sup>33</sup> He shared his enthusiasm with others, lending them copies of Moravian literature and encouraging them to speak out on the Society's behalf. One grateful recipient told Chalmers, 'I have read with great interest the accounts of the Moravian Missionaries, which you were so kind to lend me. These people seem to have more religion and knowledge of their Creator than any I have heard of. . . . From what I have met with in these journals, I see a very strong inducement to a religious life'.<sup>34</sup>

Chalmers, however, was not convinced that all readers were being induced to the religious life from their reading of the Moravian accounts. He chastised those 'men of taste'

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<sup>32</sup> The sermon took place on 26 October 1812 before the Dundee Missionary Society. It was subsequently printed and published in January 1813. 'Its sale was so rapid', reported William Hanna, that a month or two afterwards it was republished' (four editions appeared between 1813 and 1817). See Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Thomas Chalmers, Vol. I, p. 314. The sermon is also reprinted in the Collected Works of Thomas Chalmers, D.D. & L.L.D., Vol. XII, Tracts and Essays on Religious Subjects (Glasgow, n.d.), p. 337.

<sup>33</sup> Chalmers to Rev. Dr Jones (17 January 1814), Hanna, ed., Correspondence, p. 62.

<sup>34</sup> Thomas Smith to Chalmers (15 November 1815), Hanna, ed., Correspondence, pp. 11 and 12.

who had made the Moravians such 'idols of a fashionable admiration', arguing that they had no concept of the 'actuating principle of a Moravian enterprise'.<sup>35</sup> According to Chalmers, readers did not share the Moravians' 'ardent anxiety . . . for the salvation of souls' nor did they 'attach . . . value to the principles of the Gospel' and its progress among the natives (ER, p. 2). Instead, they were more interested in descriptions of foreign lands and their inhabitants and in acquiring pseudo-scientific knowledge from the missionaries' accounts of their travels. Chalmers admitted that 'the missionary, to carry his desire into effect, must get near [his readers]',

[T]ravelling a lengthened line on the surface of the globe, he will supply his additions or his corrections to the science of geography. When [Natives] speak in an unknown tongue, the missionary must be understood by them; and giving his patient labour to the acquirement of a new language, he furnishes another document to the student of philology. When they are signalized by habits or observations of their own, the missionary records them for the information and benefit of his successors; and our knowledge of human nature, with all its various and wonderful peculiarities, is extended. When they live in a country, the scenery and productions of which have been yet unrecorded by the pen of travellers, the missionary, not unmindful of the sanction given by our Saviour himself to an admiration of the appearances of nature, will describe them, and give a wider range to the science of

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<sup>35</sup> Eclectic Review, January/February 1815, New Series, Vol. II, pp. 1 and 2. Subsequent references to Chalmers' review are from this journal and will be included parenthetically in the text and indicated by the abbreviation ER followed by a page reference.

natural history. If they are in the infancy of civilization, the mighty power of Christian truth will soften and reclaim them. (ER, p. 2)

Kohlmeister's and Kmoch's Journal also provided readers with numerous details of topography and climate; it offered examples of native speech, recorded information about local flora and fauna (Kohlmeister was an amateur botanist), and described and commented upon the customs and habits of the Inuit people. Yet while Chalmers admitted that such contributions to knowledge were valuable, he insisted that they detracted from the real meaning and significance of the missionary's work. Readers were apt to put more stock in 'how the interesting spectacle of Esquimaux villages and Indian schools . . . br[ought] out strains of tenderest [sic] admiration from tuneful poets and weeping sentimentalists', rather than focus on the real business of religion: the saving of souls and the propagation of the Gospel (ER, pp. 2-3). While impressed with 'the finished spectacle of their orderly and peaceful establishments', Chalmers wrote, such readers 'kno[w] not how to relish or to appreciate the principle which gives life and perpetuity to the whole exhibition' (ER, p. 3).

Chalmers was irked by those who believed Moravian missions owed more to the 'civilizing arts' of education than to preaching and evangelising of the Natives and he resolved

'to manifest the [public's] total ignorance of the means which had been actually pursued by the Moravians' with a study of his own which would examine Moravian missionary discourse to illustrate the efficacy of their preaching.<sup>36</sup> Chalmers' Review suggests that Kohlmeister and Kmoch used

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<sup>36</sup> In April 1813 Chalmers published the first of a number of articles in the Eclectic Review in which he countered the popular belief that the success of the Moravians was due to their 'educating and instructing [the heathen] in the useful arts' rather than preaching and propagating the Gospel message. After visiting Moravian missionaries in South Africa in 1806, explorer John Barrow wrote, 'Their labours are crowned with great success [because they] fix [the natives] to one spot . . . [and instruct them] in useful and industrious habits' (see An Account of a Journey in Africa, made in the years 1801 and 1802, to the Residence of the Booshuana Nation [London, 1806], p. 380). One reviewer of Barrow's book applied the author's assessment to the Moravian missions in Labrador and concluded, 'Thus the Moravian Society has been the means of converting the inhabitants of Labrador into useful citizens, as well as good Christians' (see Edinburgh Review [July, 1806], Vol. VIII, no. xvi, p. 436). Chalmers was reacting to similar views held by the reviewer of Henry Lichtenstein's Travels in Southern Africa in the Years 1803, 1804, 1805, and 1806 (London, 1812) in which the writer claimed that the Moravians had preached by 'practical instruction alone' (see Edinburgh Review [February, 1813], Vol. XXI, p. 66). Chalmers' article was published in the Eclectic Review (April, 1813), Vol. IX, pp. 369-385. See also Hanna, Memoirs, p. 390.

On 20 October 1813 Chalmers wrote to the Fife and Kinross Bible Societies to explain how the Moravians had at first tried to convey the Word of God to the 'Greenlanders' and the 'Esquimaux of Labrador' by 'expatiate[ing] on the existence, and unity, and the attributes, and the love of God'. According to Chalmers, 'the Greenlanders did not comprehend them' and the Moravians 'resolved to change their measures. . . . [They] made one great and immediate step to the peculiar doctrine of Christianity, bringing them forward in the language of the Bible'. 'The effect', he pronounced, 'was instantaneous' (see Hanna, ed., Correspondence, p. 268).



language and the power of their personal testimony to communicate a spiritual vision of the Labrador landscape. Their vision was framed within an aesthetic language and Biblical rhetoric which was part of what Chalmers termed the 'Moravian style'.<sup>37</sup>

#### IV: The 'Moravian style'

The 'Moravian style' consisted of three major characteristics: firstly, it was 'lucid and perspicuous', utilising a language which was simple and concise and which complemented the accompanying Scriptural phraseology. Chalmers described it as possessing 'a certain air of sweetness and gentleness about it which harmonizes with all our other associations which regard this interesting people' (ER, p. 172). Secondly, Kohlmeister and Kmoch combined spirituality with an interest in the mundane: yet their aim was 'to be faithful' and to give 'a clear and impressive definition of the object which they wish to impress upon the imagination of the reader'. Their descriptions are unostentatious and, as Chalmers points out, 'singularly appropriate to the subject of which they are treating' (ER, p. 172). The Moravians like many other Protestant missionary writers adhered to the tenets of St Paul with

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<sup>37</sup> Chalmers, The Eclectic Review (February 1815), new series, Vol. II, p. 172.

regard to their literary style. 'Ministers of God', Paul advised, should avoid highly rhetorical language in their writing. 'Christ sent me . . . to preach the gospel', he wrote, 'not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect' (I Corinthians 1.17).<sup>38</sup> Eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century clerics urged their charges to adopt the plain style which his Epistles exemplified.<sup>39</sup> It was this simplicity and lack of rhetorical pretension that Chalmers admired in the Journal. '[I]f the public attention were more strongly directed to . . . the simplicity of their faithful and accurate descriptions', he argued, ' . . . we should not think it strange that their manner should become more fashionable, and that something like a classical homage should at length be rendered to the purity of the Moravian style' (ER, p. 172).

The efficacy of personal testimony was also another feature of the Moravian narrative to inspire Chalmers' admiration. The 'peace, and order, and industry' which one finds in a Moravian mission he argued were not the

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<sup>38</sup> Elsewhere Paul writes, 'And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God (1 Corinthians 2.4-5).

<sup>39</sup> See for example Melville Horne, Letters on Missions (London, 1794).

'antecedents of . . . business', but the 'consequents' of 'the mighty influence which attends the word of their testimony' (ER, p. 4). The Journal was more authoritative than 'the rapid description of a traveller' because the authors were able to preach and give credence to the 'peculiar tenets of the New Testament' and in doing so, able to ascribe meaning and significance to both their experience and to the world around them, something which Chalmers believed the ordinary traveller could not accomplish (ER, p. 4).

The Journal also differed from its secular counterparts in the nature of its ideological and aesthetic framework. The narrative of the voyage was efficacious because it preached the 'simple word' of the Gospel (see Review, pp. 4-7). 'This is something more than a matter of faith', Chalmers explained, 'it is a matter of experience. . . . The efficacy of the Bible alone, upon simple and unfurnished minds, is a fact; and the finest examples of it are to be found in almost every page of the annals of Moravianism' (ER, p. 7).<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Chalmers was impressed by the Moravian leader Augustus Gottlieb Spangenberg, a former professor of divinity at Halle and one of the most influential elders of the Moravian Church in the eighteenth century. For further discussion of Spangenberg see Gillian Lindt Gollin, Moravians in Two Worlds: A Study of Changing Communities (New York and London, 1967); Helmuth Erbe, Bethlehem, Pa.: Eine Herrhuter-Kolonie des 18. Jahrhunderts (Herrnhut, 1929); and Gerhard Reichel, Augustus Gottlieb Spangenberg, Bischof der Brùderkirchen (Tùbingen, 1906).

Spangenberg was largely responsible for establishing the Moravian communities in Georgia and Pennsylvania in America in the 1730s. In 1736 John Wesley met Spangenberg in Georgia and was greatly impressed with the latter's theology. Following Zinzendorf's death in 1760, Spangenberg returned to Europe where he assumed the reins of power. A former assistant to the Moravian leader, Spangenberg was commissioned to write Zinzendorf's biography as well as translate the leader's ideas into missionary practice. Spangenberg's Idea Fidei Fratrum did not stray far from Zinzendorf's doctrines although, as Gollin emphasises, '[the] complex and at times contradictory terminology, was simply de-emphasised, the language became less flowery, and the sexual and sanguinary imagery was toned down' (Gollin, Moravians in Two Worlds, p. 16).

It was while Spangenberg was at Halle in the early 1730s that he came into contact with the first Moravian missionaries enroute to Greenland, and it is to this meeting that Chalmers refers in his review when he reports how Spangenberg, following 'a certain divine', gave the missionaries 'the method to convince and to bring the heathen to Christ' (Chalmers, Eclectic Review, part I, p. 5):

They proved to the heathen that there is a God, and spoke to them of his attributes and perfections. In the next place, they spoke upon the creation; -- how God had made man after his own image, which, however, was soon lost by the fall. Then they made the heathen acquainted with the laws which God gave by his servant Moses. Hence they proved to them that they were sinners, and had deserved temporal and eternal punishment. And from this they drew the consequence, that there must be one who reconciled them to God, &c. (Chalmers, Eclectic Review, part I, pp. 4-5)

Yet as Spangenberg admits, 'This method of teaching they continued for a long time, but without any success, for the heathen became tired of such discourses' (Chalmers, Eclectic Review, part I, p. 5). Later, the Moravians discovered that only the preaching of the 'sufferings and death of Jesus' had any effect on the Esquimaux. It was not God (in whom they already believed) that interested them, but the life and death of God-in-man, Jesus Christ, who made them attend to the missionaries' preaching of the Gospel. Chalmers illustrates this with another extract taken from Spangenberg's account of his life in America among the native Indians. In this account, Spangenberg lets the native voice testify to the efficacy both of the personal testimony of a Moravian missionary ("I could not get rid of his words: they continually recurred to me"[p. 6]) and of 'the marrow and substance' of the Bible: Jesus



Chalmers worried that 'men of literature' were more interested in the civilising process and not in the discursive means of preaching that resulted in the 'commanding spectacle' of 'neat and interesting villages' in the wilderness.<sup>41</sup> 'To be an admirer of the result is a very different thing from being an admirer of the operation', Chalmers argued, adding,

To be the one, all that is necessary is a taste for what is wonderful, or what is pleasing. . . . But that person may become an admirer of the operation, he must approve the faith, he must be influenced by a love of the Lord Jesus Christ; he must have a belief in the efficacy of prayer; he must have a relish

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Christ ("preach to the heathen Christ and his blood, and his death, if ye wish to produce a blessing among [the natives]" [Chalmers, Eclectic Review, part I, p. 6]). From this Chalmers declares the 'synthetic' or 'rationalising' process ineffective; instead he praises 'the efficacy of the simple word' and 'of the Bible' as the best method of preaching. '[T]he finest examples of it', he writes, 'are to be found in almost every page of the annals of Moravianism' (Chalmers, Eclectic Review, part I, p. 7). In Labrador, as in Greenland and the American colonies, the 'word of testimony' was found to be the most effective. 'The Greenland experiment', Chalmers concludes, 'has furnished them with a principle which they carry along with them in all their enterprises. It has seldom failed them in any quarter of the globe; and they can now appeal to thousands and thousands of their converts, as so many distinct testimonies of the efficacy of the Bible' (Chalmers, Eclectic Review, part I, p. 8).

<sup>41</sup> There seems to be some evidence to support Chalmers' contention. It is known, for example, that the Moravians disapproved of bringing Inuit to England where they would come under the influence of Western culture. And although the missionaries were required to trade with the natives, it was felt that any increase in this activity 'would interfere too much with the principal and proper business of a Missionary' (see Periodical Accounts (1797), Vol. IV, p. 15).



for that which a majority we fear of professing Christians would stem with the brand of enthusiasm; in a word, his natural enmity to the things of God must be beginning to give way, and he be an admirer of the truth in all its unction and in all its simplicity. (ER, p. 12)

While struck by 'the activity and perseverance of the missionaries' (ER, p. 156), Chalmers cautioned readers that to confine themselves 'to a mere record of the visible events' in their lives was to do 'injustice' to the narrative 'and to the uniform spirit of piety and dependence which pervades it' (ER, p. 157). This was not to say that Kohlmeister and Kmoch were not interested in the mundane world around them. On the contrary, they carefully documented their experiences and observations of the natural world. Kohlmeister was an amateur botanist and is frequently described as disappearing from the scene on a plant-gathering foray into the countryside. Chalmers also reminds us that the missionaries 'often met with very wild and singular exhibitions of scenery', and that they '[did] not fail to gratify the reader by their description of them' (ER, p. 161):

These observant men neglect nothing in their power that can be turned to useful information for future travellers. They make minutes of the bays, points, and islands, with which they are made acquainted by the natives. They record the face of the country, and the appearance of its mineralogical productions. They take great interest in relating the manners and peculiar practices of the people. They make collections of plants, and are amused with the examination of them. In a word, they notice all and record all, which can give interest to the narrative of an

accomplished traveller; and the only additions which they graft upon all this, are a constant recognition of God, and an eye steadily fixed on his glory. (ER, pp. 162-163)

Chalmers' Review also suggests the discursive strategies which underline Kohlmeister's and Kmoch's narrative and which contribute to their construction of their experience in the Labrador wilderness. By interpreting their experience within a spiritual and aesthetic framework, the Journal's discourse is differentiated from that of the secular traveller. Unlike these travellers, missionaries inscribe their experience with the ideology of their faith. This difference is reflected in their mode of perception, in the way they perceive themselves and those they come into contact with, as well the manner in which they perceive and project the landscape against which their mission is depicted.

To demonstrate graphically the difference between the missionary's mode of perception and that of the explorer's is to compare two descriptive passages of the same region of Ungava in northern Labrador. In each the authors describe an identical area of land, but their descriptions vary in the way in which each wishes to see the landscape. The first passage was written by John McLean, a Hudson's Bay Company fur-trader who has been sent to the area to assess the possibility of establishing trade with the Inuit. In his account, McLean states that the surrounding

countryside 'presents as complete a picture of desolation as can be imagined. . . . [A] cheerless landscape . . . greets the eye in every direction'.<sup>42</sup> Disappointed at the shortage of fur-bearing animals in the area and seeming absence Inuit with whom to trade, he continues:

I have neither seen, read nor heard of any locality under heaven that can offer a more cheerless abode to civilized man than Ungava. The rumbling created by the ice, when driven to and fro by the force of the tide, continually stuns the ear; while the light of heaven is hidden by the fog that hangs in the air, shrouding<sup>43</sup> everything in the gloom of a dark twilight.

Kohlmeister and Kmoch, on the other hand, have encountered a small number of Inuit whom they were eager to convert. Since they had been commissioned to find a suitable site for a mission, they settle on their meeting place with the natives as their future mission settlement. They write:

A fine slope extends for about half an English mile, bounded on each extremity by a hill, on each of which we erected high signals. The land is even and dry. Juniper, currants, and other berries, grow here in abundance, and rivulets run out of the wood at a distance of a few hundred paces from each other. The slope faces S.S.E. and we named it Pilgerruh (Pilgrim's Rest). (p. 73)

It is interesting to note that both descriptions were written at approximately the same time of year (mid-September). That the writers' attitudes to the

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<sup>42</sup> W.S. Wallace, ed., John McLean's Notes of a Twenty-five Year's Service in the Hudson's Bay Territory (Toronto, 1932), p. 201.

<sup>43</sup> ibid., p. 201.

surrounding country differ so widely says much about their purpose for coming to the area and the ideology which informs their language.

In reading Kohlmeister's and Kmoch's description one cannot help but be struck with the seemingly self-conscious manner in which the scene is rendered. The pastoral, almost Edenic, scene suggests a place of plenty (remember that the 'good place' upon which they stand will have to support a community of missionaries and natives) and augurs well for the mission's future completion (thus bringing the missionaries' religious quest to a successful end). Kohlmeister and Kmoch impose their spiritual and aesthetic ideology on the Labrador landscape. Under their pens, the landscape becomes a setting for the future salvation of souls. By rendering the landscape in such a fashion, the missionaries enact the "building of Jerusalem" in the wilderness to which they are committed. Their art of landscape is, to quote landscape theorist J.B. Jackson, 'the last and most grandiose attempt to create an earthly order in harmony with a cosmic order'.<sup>44</sup> McLean, on the other hand, is in under no such obligation. He simply describes what he "sees": a miserable landscape

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<sup>44</sup> J.B. Jackson, 'The Order of a Landscape: Reason and Religion in Newtonian America', The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes, edited by D.W. Meinig (New York and Oxford, 1979), p. 154.



and an unlikely place for a trading post.

V: To 'soften and reclaim' Nature: The aesthetic strategy of the Journal

The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Isaiah 40.3

Kohlmeister's and Kmoch's attitudes to their surroundings and to the Inuit provide us with an understanding of their attitudes and aesthetic values and reveal how they are inherent in the construction of their vision of the Labrador wilderness and its people. It was the wilderness with its symbolic attachment to darkness, chaos, and heathenism that attracted the early Christian Church to send its missionaries to the New World and it is this symbolism which transforms the Labrador landscape into a spiritual stage upon which the missionaries enact their pastoral roles. Several examples from Kohlmeister's and Kmoch's text illustrate how the missionaries interpreted and constructed their vision of the Labrador landscape, its people, and their role in the North. These examples reflect the authors' relationship to the environment and attempt to justify their work to the Journal's readers and, hopefully, gain their support to continue it. They also construct a spiritual and narrative vision which readers were expected to interpret in such a way as would



spiritually edify them. Descriptions of 'very wild and singular exhibitions of scenery', are written with an eye for accuracy, so that they might 'give a wider range to the science of natural history'; but they were also intended to 'soften and reclaim' the scenes of nature through 'the mighty power of Christian truth' (ER, p. 2).

'Soften[ing] and reclaim[ing]' the scenes of nature suggests a mode of perception which transforms the natural environment into a pleasing and familiar landscape by means of an aesthetic language.

As travellers in a relatively "unknown" world (at least to Europeans), Kohlmeister and Kmoch were not unmindful of *the need to familiarise* the landscape for their readers. They did this first by recording as many details about its topography as possible and secondly by transforming it into an aesthetically-pleasing form of landscape. '[T]hese observant men neglect nothing in their power', Chalmers observed upon reading the Journal, 'that can be turned to useful information for future travellers':

They make minutes of the bays, points, and islands, with which they are made acquainted by the natives. They record the face of the country, and the appearance of its mineralogical productions. They take great interest in relating the manners and peculiar practices of the people. They make collections of plants, and are amused with the examination of them. In a word, they notice all and record all, which can give interest to the narrative of an accomplished traveller; and the only additions which they graft upon all this, are a constant recognition of God,

and an eye steadily fixed on his glory. (ER, p. 163)

It is the nature of these 'additions' which distinguishes the Kohlmeister's and Kmoch's narrative from that of other travellers. The commingling of 'the business of piety, with the business of the ordinary traveller' is what differentiates missionary writers from their literary cousins such as the explorer, the soldier, the sailor, the tourist, and the emigrant farmer.<sup>45</sup>

In the early nineteenth century there was really only one way of perceiving the landscape: through the aesthetic frame of the picturesque. The picturesque mode of perception developed from the eighteenth-century landscape arts and was applied as an aesthetic principle in gardening, painting, and literature.<sup>46</sup> It incorporated the neo-classical propensity for harmony and symmetry of form (the beautiful) with a Romantic enthusiasm for Nature. The picturesque depicted Nature as landscape

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<sup>45</sup> Ian MacLaren's and Barbara Belyea's work on the discourse of early exploration in Canada is a useful contrast to the present study. See, for example, Ian MacLaren, 'Retaining Captaincy of the Soul: Response to Nature in the First Franklin Expedition', Essays on Canadian Writing, 28 (1984), pp. 39-57 and 'Samuel Hearne and the Landscape of Discovery', Canadian Literature, 103 (1984), pp. 27-40; or Barbara Belyea, 'Captain Franklin in Search of the Picturesque', Essays on Canadian Writing, 40 (1990), pp. 1-24.

<sup>46</sup> For one of the definitive books on the subject of the picturesque see Christopher Hussey, The Picturesque: Studies in a Point of View (London, 1927; rpt 1967).

characterised by forms which emphasised intricacy and variation. By the early nineteenth century it included a sense of the "sublime", an emotive response to Nature's more 'grand and terrible' aspects.<sup>47</sup>

The use of the picturesque and the sublime transformed the North American continent into a New World of picturesque beauty punctuated by scenes of sublime grandeur or terror. Poets, painters, and travel writers imposed the aesthetic on the country around them, creating "scenes" and "landscapes" all utilising forms and features which made the foreign seem familiar to the European reader or observer. In the case of the Journal, Kohlmeister and Kmoch transform the sub-Arctic wilderness of northern Labrador into a picturesque landscape of Gothic sublimity.<sup>48</sup> They "converted" or 'soften[ed] and reclaim[ed]' the wilderness from its natural (and "heathen") state into an artificial and morally "improved" one. In Kohlmeister's and Kmoch's Journal the landscape of Labrador is reconstructed in such a way as to reflect European and Christian sensibilities. 'It refreshes our hearts', said Chalmers of the Journal's scenic

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<sup>47</sup> In painting, exemplified by the work of Salvator Rosa and Claude Lorrain.

<sup>48</sup> Labrador is more properly known today as a sub-Arctic region; I have, however, adopted the more widely-known description used in the early nineteenth century.

description, 'to hear, that the wilds of a savage country exhibit a scene so soothing as that which these worthy men realized upon this occasion' (ER, p. 162).

To the eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century writer the picturesque landscape was evidence of 'the spreading of . . . moral cultivation over the vast and dreary extent of that Pagan wilderness' (ER, p. 162). Art, as understood by Chalmers and others, was deemed morally superior to Nature. As an instrument of 'moral cultivation', the picturesque mode of perception became an inherent part of the missionary's ideological baggage brought to the New World in order "to convert" the 'pagan' wilderness into a moral and civilised landscape upon which a Christian community could be imagined or constructed.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> The spiritual implications of the picturesque were discussed by early landscape theorists. Uvedale Price argued that the picturesque, especially when combined with images of ruins, could be made to inspire the reader with a 'veneration of high antiquity [and] the solemnity of religious awe'. 'Splendid confusion and irregularity', he wrote, could be best portrayed in nature by analogies to the buttresses, turrets, and pinnacles commonly associated with Gothic structures'. '[T]he picturesque, as in earthly objects', he states, 'only shews itself when they are in a state of ruin; when shadows have obscured their original brightness, and that uniform, though angelic expression of pure love and joy, has been destroyed by a variety of warring passions' (see Uvedale Price, Essays on the Picturesque, as Compared with the Sublime and the Beautiful; and, on the Use of Studying Pictures, for the Purpose of Improving Real Landscape, 3 vols (London, 1810), Vol. I, p. 53 and pp. 63-64).

Mountains and other rock formations (particularly 'holes, openings, and intricacies of every kind' in broken rock) such as found along the coast of Labrador were thought to be particularly conducive to creating a picturesque landscape.<sup>50</sup> '[A] perpendicular rock of vast bulk and height, though bare and unbroken; or a deep chasm', argued the landscape theorist Uvedale Price in 1810, '. . . are objects which produce awful sensations; but without some variety and intricacy, either in themselves or their accompaniments, they will not be picturesque'.<sup>51</sup> In the following passage Kohlmeister reconstructs the coastline within a picturesque frame. The result is a more "scenic" and spiritually significant landscape:

June 25. -- We rose soon after two o'clock, and rowed out of the Ikkerasak with a fair wind. The sea was perfectly calm and smooth. Brother Kmock [sic] rowed in the small boat along the foot of the mountains of Kanmayok, sometimes going on shore while the large boat was making but little way, keeping out as some distance to avoid the rocks. The outline of this chain of mountains exhibits the most fanciful figures. At the various points the rocks descend abruptly into the air, presenting horrid precipices. The strand is covered with a black sand. At the height of about fifty feet from the sea the rocks have veins of red, yellow, and green stone, running horizontally and parallel, and sometimes in an undulated form. Above these they present the appearance of a magnificent colonnade, or rather of buttresses, supporting a gothic building varying in height and thickness, and

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<sup>50</sup> Uvedale Price, *Essays*, p. 208. Price argued that such an arrangement suggested a Gothic, and therefore picturesque, structure.

<sup>51</sup> *ibid.*, p. 86.



here and there intersected by wide and deep chasms and glens running far inland between the mountains. Loose stones above have in some places the appearance of statues, and the superior region exhibits various kinds of grotesque shapes. It is by far the most singular and picturesque chain of mountains on this coast. To the highest part of it we gave the name of St. Paul's, as it is not unlike that cathedral, when viewed at a distance, with its dome and two towers. (p. 14)

That the wilderness is linked to 'pagan' elements is evident from the use of such words and phrases as 'fanciful figures', 'horrid precipices', 'black sand', and 'grotesque shapes'. The conversion of this 'pagan' scene into a picturesque and, therefore, more benign landscape, begins with its re-ordering into a foreground, middle ground, and background typically found in Augustan and Georgian landscape painting. The 'calm and smooth' appearance of the sea in the foreground is contrasted with the picturesque qualities of the land in the middle and background. The cliff 'abruptly descends' into the sea. Its phlegmatic colour ('veins of red, yellow, and green') and the fact that it 'descends' rather than rises suggests its hellish, and hence pagan, appearance. From the 'wide and deep chasms and glens' which 'run far inland' (and which invite the eye to wander into the background) the reader's eye is then led upwards, by a series of 'above' directives, to a 'gothic building' or structure supported by 'a magnificent colonnade' and 'buttresses', and ornamented with 'statues'. The shape of these 'loose

stones' and other natural formations is described in characteristic picturesque terms as 'varying in height and thickness'. In the background lie a 'singular and most picturesque chain of mountains'. The imposition of the name and image of 'St Paul's' on the 'highest part' of these mountains is a symbolic and spiritual gesture which focuses the reader's attention on the narrator's religious purpose: to improve or convert the 'pagan' wilderness into a 'moral' and cultivated landscape. The use of the architectural image in a picturesque landscape provided what Price called a 'resting place to the eye'.<sup>52</sup> Similarly, the image of the church, with its spire or 'dome and two towers' (as described by Kohlmeister and Kmoch) was considered to be a most picturesque image for such a purpose. 'The abbey, built in some sequestered spot, and surrounded by woods', argued Price, 'would be the preferred image for it was one which 'announce[d] religious calm and security'.<sup>53</sup>

The assignment of European place-names to native landmarks further underlines Kohlmeister's and Kmoch's spiritual transformation of the land. A mountain at Tuppertalik, for example, is renamed 'Table Mountain' after a mission settlement of the same name on the Cape of Good Hope in

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<sup>52</sup> Uvedale Price, Essays, Vol. II, p. 254.

<sup>53</sup> ibid., Vol. II, p. 263.

South Africa (p. 15). The use of gothic architecture also familiarises and spiritualises the strange but natural rock and ice formations found along the coast and situates them in a familiar European and Christian context. As suggested above, images of gothic architecture, especially when related to ruins or churches, lend themselves to a more picturesque and spiritually-meaningful landscape. When used in connection with the sublime, gothic images and forms create a sense of heightened passion thus allowing the missionaries words and images to gain access to their readers' souls. '[T]he passion caused by the great and sublime in nature', suggested Price, '. . . is astonishment; and astonishment is that state of soul, in which all its motions are suspended with some degree of horror: the sublime also, being founded on ideas of pain and terror, like them operates by stretching the fibres beyond their natural tone'.<sup>54</sup> In this extended state of awareness, Kohlmeister and Kmoch lead the reader through the landscape. The variegated order and beauty of the picturesque counterbalances the 'degree of horror' invoked by the sublime, yet invites the curious mind's eye to wander in the landscape alert to its forms and their potential meanings.<sup>55</sup> 'Those who have felt the excitement produced by the intricacies of wild romantic mountainous

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<sup>54</sup> ibid., Vol. II, p. 87.

<sup>55</sup> ibid., Vol. II, p. 88.

scenes, can tell how curiosity, while it prompts us to scale every rocky promontory, to explore every new recess, by its active agency keeps the fibres to their full tone. . . . [It] corrects the languor of beauty, or the tension of sublimity'.<sup>56</sup> The various windings in the rock, the passages, the holes, and chasms described by Kohlmeister and Kmoch invite the reader to enter into the landscape and wander amongst its 'ruins' deemed conducive to contemplation. In another scene, Kohlmeister and Kmoch seek shelter in a fiord in order to escape shifting sea-ice. While exploring the inlet further they are suddenly engulfed by a vaporous cloud of sulphurous gas extruding from the nearby rock. The scene invokes the sublime. 'It was so powerful', the missionaries claim, 'that if a drop fell on a piece of tinned iron, it removed the tin in a few minutes' (p. 21). In a moment of sublime anxiety, Kohlmeister disappears from the margins of the scene (presumably to satisfy his botanical curiosity) thereby heightening the reader's sense of foreboding. The tension is resolved, however, upon learning that he has discovered a valley 'green and full of flowers', with a nearby river abundant with salmon (p. 21). The creation of an "Edenic" landscape invokes a sense of spiritual harmony. The reader is invited to '[rest] upon a carpet of potentilla aurea, in full bloom', the scene here reminding

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<sup>56</sup> ibid., Vol. II, pp. 88-89.

Kohlmeister of 'European meadows, full of buttercups' (p. 21). The discovery of several rare and medicinal species of plant further enhances the beneficent nature of the "garden" scene and renders the landscape yet more beautiful to the reader. Lest the reader be lulled into thinking that this is paradise, however, Kohlmeister and Kmoch describe how they were plagued by 'mosquitos [who] teased [sic] us unmercifully' (p. 25).<sup>57</sup>

The use of the picturesque and sublime in their narrative arises out of a spiritual mandate: to direct the reader to the contemplation of the soul. As Kohlmeister and Kmoch venture further into the 'unknown Regions' of Ungava Bay their descriptions of the surrounding countryside becomes more sublime. As they proceeded along the icy and treacherous coast, gulls, disturbed by their presence, squawk 'as if to warn off such unwelcome visitors' (p. 26). A tone of foreboding and danger looms over them: '[A] narrow chasm opens into the mountain, widening into a lagoon, the surrounding rocks resembling the ruins of a large Gothic building, with the green ocean for its pavement, and the sky for its dome' (p. 26). "Within" this edifice, the missionaries speak of 'acquir[ing] new vigour by the contemplation of the grand features of

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<sup>57</sup> These 'winged tormentors', as another Canadian missionary would remark, were 'mementoes of the fall' (see G.J. Mountain, Songs of the Wilderness (1846)).



nature around us' (p. 26). In this harsh and unforgiving landscape the discovery of the remains of a stranded whale assumes a symbolic significance, a reminder of the frailty of life in the natural world and of the power of Providence.

Such use of language is an obvious distortion of reality. A lack of knowledge about Native reality and the need to transform it into something familiar and spiritual has had serious consequences for our understanding and appreciation of the Northern environment. In his book, Canadian Nordicity (1978), Louis-Edmond Hamelin writes that 'an inadequacy of accurate knowledge' of the North, 'has tended to develop images full of distortions. . . . A North that was poorly known at the outset could not avoid becoming the target of illusions and prejudices'.<sup>58</sup> Yet even as the North became better known to the missionaries, they continued to distort its appearance by applying the language of their faith and spiritual ideology to the reality which confronted them.

To the European imagination of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, missionaries presented northern Labrador, and indeed the Arctic in general, as a

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<sup>58</sup> Louis-Edmond Hamelin, Canadian Nordicity: It's Your North, Too, translated by William Barr (Montreal, 1978), p. 8.

disturbing and disordered wilderness. Under the missionary pen, a vast, unbounded desert of snow, ice, and rock, bounded by a menacing and frigid ocean was transformed into a picturesque and sometimes sublime landscape. Prior to its 'cultivation' by missionaries, Labrador was deemed a chaotic wilderness. Such notions, of course, had been around since early European travellers began exploring Arctic waters in search of the elusive North-West Passage. Seventeenth-century readers, for example, were familiar with the icy 'waste' which lay between Paradise and Hell. In Paradise Lost, for example, Milton described how, flying from the Gates of Hell, Sin and Death hovered above a 'raging [Arctic-like] sea' upon which 'Polar winds . . . / . . . dr[o]ve / Mountains of Ice, that stop[ped] th'imagin'd way'.<sup>59</sup>

The perception of the Arctic as a hellish wasteland had changed little by the beginning of the nineteenth century. Inspired by paintings by eighteenth-century artists such as Salvator Rosa and John Webber, travel writers continued to depict the Arctic and sub-Arctic landscape in

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<sup>59</sup> The 'Cronian Sea' to which Milton refers is the Arctic Ocean. '[T]h'imagin'd way' situates Sin and Death somewhere over the coast of northern Labrador or at least above the adjacent northeast strait into which Hudson sailed in 1608. See John Milton, Paradise Lost, Book X, lines 282-293 in John Milton: Paradise Lost: A Poem in Twelve Books, new edition, edited by Merritt Y. Hughes (New York, 1962).

all its picturesque variation and sublime terror. To the nineteenth-century imagination, 'Arctic Nature was', as one critic has recently stated, 'somehow vaster, more mysterious, and more terrible than elsewhere on the globe -- a region in which natural phenomena could take strange, almost supernatural, forms, sometimes stunningly beautiful, sometimes terrifying, often both'.<sup>60</sup> For Canadian poets the North gripped the colonial literary imagination with frosty tenacity. The 'northern winds' of winter were the subject of J. Mackay's poem, Quebec Hill (1797):

Out from the arctic pole the potent blasts . . .

Swift wing their flight, and o'er the dreary wastes,  
Both land and sea, that form the utmost north. (lines 81,  
85-87).<sup>61</sup>

In his 'descriptive poem', Canada (1805), Cornwall Bayley speaks of the 'biting North' and the 'tractless scene . . . / . . . of unending snow' where,

The mountain torrents by the frost's control  
Arrested pause, -- and freezing as they roll,  
In gothic shapes and broken structures rise,

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<sup>60</sup> Chauncey C. Loomis, 'Arctic Sublime', Nature and the Victorian Imagination, edited by U.C. Knoepfelmacher and G.B. Tennyson (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, 1977), p. 96. One only has to think of Mary Shelley's Frankenstein or Samuel Taylor Coleridge's The Ancient Mariner to appreciate the fascination which such scenes had for the Romantic imagination.

<sup>61</sup> J. Mackay, Quebec Hill (1797), edited by D.M.R. Bentley (London, Ont., 1987).

Which playful Fancy oft may realize! (lines 301, 305-310)<sup>62</sup>

To these and other colonial poets living in Canada, the North was not only a place of sublime terror but a wasteland of degenerate and primitive people. In Abram's Plain's (1789), Thomas Cary speaks of 'bleak Labradore':

Where dwarfish Esquimaux, with small pig's eyes,  
At cookery sick, raw seal and rank oil prise. (lines 163-165).<sup>63</sup>

Cary, who probably never saw an 'Esquimaux', was simply echoing the prevailing perceptions of the North and its inhabitants.

Through the use of the picturesque and Christian symbol, then, the missionaries 'reclaim' the land and its inhabitants according to their own use. Kohlmeister and Kmoch use the picturesque and the sublime in addition to Christian symbolism in order to project a spiritual and ordered vista, as the following passage reveals:

The situation of this place is remarkably beautiful. The strait is about an English mile broad, and four or five in length. Both shores are lined with precipitous rocks, which in many places rise to a tremendous height, particularly on the Kaumayok side, from whence several waterfalls rush into the sea, with a roar, which quite fills the air. The singular appearance of these cataracts is greatly increased when illuminated by the rising sun, the spray exhibiting the most beautiful

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<sup>62</sup> Cornwall Bayley, Canada: A Descriptive Poem (1801), edited by D.M.R. Bentley (London, Ont., 1990).

<sup>63</sup> Thomas Cary, Abram's Plains (1789), edited by D.M.R. Bentley (London, Ont., 1986).

prismatic colours. Below them huge masses of ice are formed, which seem to lean against the sides of the rocks, and to be continually increasing during the winter, but when melted by the power of a summer's sun, and disengaged by their weight, are carried off by the tides, and help to form floating ice-mountains' (p. 12).

Here, the wilderness is discursively appropriated by its observers. Natural space is enclosed within an artificial frame of English dimensions ('an English mile broad, and four or five in length') [emphasis mine]. Features such as 'precipitous rocks', rushing 'waterfalls', roaring 'cataracts', and 'huge masses of ice' invoke a foreground of sublime proportions yet they are contained within the overall picturesque framework. Two Christian symbols -- the light of 'the rising sun' and a rainbow -- allude to the presence of Christ and to God's covenant with his chosen people. Hence, the land incorporates a sign of the promise of redemption. When they enter Ungava Bay they describe the experience as a revelation: 'It seemed as if were transported to a new world' (p. 46). The illusory tone is self-conscious as if to make the reader wary: the country is soon transformed into something 'extremely wild and terrible' (p. 48):

[Uttakiyok] showed us here a wide and deep cavern, in shape like the gable end of an house, situated at the top of a precipice, in a black mountain, of a very horrid and dark appearance. This, he informed us, was the dwelling place of Torngak, the evil spirit. The scenery was, indeed, extremely wild and terrible, and the beforementioned [sic] prospect of the rocks and islands at low water gave to the whole country a most singularly



gloomy character. . . . [W]e called [it] the  
Dragon's dwelling. (p. 50)

The missionary journey, as suggested in the previous chapter, becomes a metaphorical quest: through a hellish landscape where Nature is conspiratorial. Gulls become 'birds of prey'; rocks '[present] to the imagination the ruins of a destroyed town'; and a 'great storm' rages against them in a sublime conjuration of the landscape's "demonic" characteristics. These forces are presented as obstacles to be overcome by perseverance and faith in God. After laying stone cairns in a gesture of claiming the land for their king, the missionaries face the grave prospect of the oncoming storm. For a moment their journey seems in peril. Kohlmeister confesses, 'We felt quite at a loss what to do in this dilemma, and our path seemed enveloped in obscurity' (p. 63). The raging snowstorm symbolises their outward confusion. Kohlmeister and Kmoch seek reassurance in the words of Scripture and their faith is restored through the meaning which God's words hold for them. Once again, they are reminded of the purpose of their mission: 'In His name we had entered upon this voyage, the only ultimate object of which was, the conversion of a benighted, neglected nation, in one of the remotest corners of the earth' (p. 63).

Later, when the missionaries resume their journey and draw nearer their goal, the storms clear and the sun is said

'to r[i]se beautifully, and announc[e] a delightful day' (p. 70). Their faith is finally rewarded by the discovery of a small party of Inuit (potential converts) and a potential site for a mission settlement. The shore of the Koaksoak River, they proclaim, is a 'good place for a Missionary settlement' (p. 73). In this pastoral setting, Kohlmeister makes some drawings of the place emphasising again his aesthetic conversion of the wilderness. The landscape is 'reclaim[ed]', the 'word of God' is planted, and the missionaries can now return home. Their mission, and their narrative, has achieved its purpose: to demonstrate the redeemability or reclaimability of the land. The Journal has succeeded in illustrating the courage and "good work" of the missionaries, and has testified to the renewed presence of God in the New World.

The Moravian 'style' suggested by Chalmers was seemingly echoed in other missionary-inspired writers. In the following passage published in 1831, for example, the author uses the landscape in a spiritually-suggestive manner. Note, for example, the way in which he uses symbols whose effect is to instill in the reader a sense of Providential beneficence and omnipresence in the natural world:

The snow sets in as early as August, and the ground is covered, to the depth of two or three feet, before the month of October. Along the shores and the bays, the fresh water poured from rivulets, or drained from the

thawing of former collections of snow, becomes quickly converted into solid ice; a dense fog covers the land; the hoar frost settles profusely, in fantastic clusters, on every prominence; the whole surface on the sea steams like a lime-kiln; a sheet of ice spreads quickly over the smooth expanse, and often gains the thickness of an inch in a single night.

The darkness of a prolonged winter now broods over the frozen continent, unless the moon chances at times to obtrude her faint rays, which only discover the horrors and wide desolation of the scene. The wretched inhabitants, covered with a load of bear-skins, remain crowded and immured in their huts, every chink of which they carefully stop against the piercing cold; and cowering about the lamp of train oil, they seek to doze away the tedious night. . . . As the frost continues to penetrate deeper, the rocks are heard, at a distance, to split with loud explosions. The sound of voices . . . serves now and then to break the silence which reigns in those dreary regions, -- a silence far different from that peaceful composure which characterizes the landscape of a cultivated country -- it is the death-like silence of the most dreary desolation, and the total absence of animal existence.

At length the sun re-appears above the horizon, but his languid beams rather betray the wide waste, than brighten the prospect. . . . The power of the sun gradually increases, . . . snow wastes away; the ice dissolves. . . . The ocean is now unbound. . . . We may easily conceive with what lively demonstrations of joy the arrival of this cheering season is hailed by the inhabitants; and, in the gladsome transition, the pious mind will discover a striking illustration of the goodness of God, in causing the warm and lightsome beams of the Sun of Righteousness to visit a people who had long pined in the darkness and coldness of ignorance and unbelief.<sup>64</sup>

I have quoted this passage at length in order to show how

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<sup>64</sup> Missions in Labrador from their Commencement to the Present Time (Dublin, 1831), pp. 1-4.

the author moves toward a climactic moment of revelation. As in Kohlmeister's and Kmoch's narrative, the physical qualities of the environment are transformed into a landscape resonant with spiritual meaning. The scene opens amid images of the land's seasonal "death" followed by the invocation of regeneration and rebirth: snow, ice, and fog cast a death-like pall over the land; the 'darkness of a prolonged winter now broods over the frozen continent' as if the land itself were under some evil spell; the wretched inhabitants huddle together like animals to keep warm; the 'explosions' of splitting rocks echo the annihilation of life. Even the sound of human voices cannot breach the ominous 'death-like silence' of the place. This pall is transformed by a redemptive account of the sun's appearance. The prospect brightens under the light of the sun (symbolically, the enlightened gaze of the Son, Jesus Christ): 'The power of the sun gradually increases . . . snow wastes away; the ice dissolves. . . . The ocean is now unbound'. In this moment of release, the author suggests, the 'pious mind' should find 'a striking illustration of the goodness of God'. This is exemplified by the reference to the coming of the missionaries to Labrador. The 'lightsome beams of the Sun of Righteousness' refer to the Moravian missionaries themselves, while the Inuit are the 'people who had longed pined in the darkness and coldness of

ignorance and unbelief'. In short, the description of the environment is intended to function at a metaphorical level, as an allusion to the coming of the Moravian missionaries (suggesting the coming of Christ) to Labrador. In his preface to the above work, the author stated, 'The history of the Labrador Mission . . . [is] an illustration of the truth contained in those words of Scripture -- "As many as received Him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God"'.<sup>65</sup> For the missionary writer, then, art transforms mundane experience into a personal history contained within a spiritual or religious framework.

#### VI: Conclusion

This chapter has argued that Kohlmeister's and Kmoch's mental impressions of their surroundings were largely the result of a particular ideological and aesthetic modes of perception, proving J. Wreford Watson's assertion that the 'geography of any place results from how we see it as *much as* from what may be seen there'.<sup>66</sup> 'A mental image of a place is built up', Watson explains in his book Mental

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<sup>65</sup> Missions in Labrador (1831), p. iii.

<sup>66</sup> J. Wreford Watson, Mental Images and Geographical Reality: A Note on the geography of North American settlement (Nottingham, 1967), p. 3. For a related discussion see also J. Wreford Watson, 'The Role of Illusion in North American Geography: a Note on the Geography of North American Settlement', The Canadian Geographer, 13:1 (Spring 1969).



Images and Geographical Reality (1967), 'compounded of what men hope to find, what they look to find, how they set about finding, how findings are fitted into their existing framework of thought, and how those findings are then expressed'.<sup>67</sup> Watson's analysis of how a geography of a place is created underlines the notion of the missionaries' world as a linguistic construct. Kohlmeister's and Kmoch's "Labrador" is not only constructed from what they perceive, but is a result of how they perceive and express their impressions of it. Within this model, then, we can discuss the creation of a geography as a kind of linguistic and mental "mapping" of the environment. When we discuss this kind of activity, we are essentially talking about a relationship between a particular environment and the language (and the conventions which govern its use) which writers use to express their experience of it. Texts such as the Journal of a Voyage, from Okkak which describe or attempt to describe that dimension where mind, time and space intersect are, in effect, discursive "maps". They chart not only a 'geography of a place', as Watson suggests, but also a geography of the mind (to borrow a phrase from Margaret Atwood).<sup>68</sup> To read the Journal as a linguistic

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<sup>67</sup> J.W. Watson, Mental Images, p. 3.

<sup>68</sup> See Margaret Atwood, Second Words: Selected Critical Prose (Toronto, 1982).

and mental map, then, is to understand and appreciate their importance as guides to the evolution of early Canadian literature and its projection of the Canadian environment.

In the concluding remarks of his review, Thomas Chalmers could not have been more flattering nor more alert to Kohlmeister's and Kmoch's narrative strategy and style. Their 'language', he wrote,

is unclouded by ostentation, and is singularly appropriate to the subject of which they are treating. There is not the most distant attempt at fine writing. But if the public attention were more strongly directed to the productions of the United Brethren, and if the effect which lies in the simplicity of their faithful and accurate descriptions were to become the subject of more frequent observation, we should not think it strange that their manner should become fashionable, and that something like a classical homage should at length be rendered to the purity of the Moravian style. (ER, p. 172)

While many of Chalmers' nineteenth-century readers appreciated the unadorned style of the Moravian narrative, the modern student of literature rarely reads missionary narrative for its 'purity of . . . style' or its spiritual content. For the modern reader, then, there must be other reasons. This chapter has suggested that the Journal not only provides valuable historical information about the Moravian community in Labrador and its encounter with Native peoples, but that it also shows how the missionaries imaginatively perceived their environment and

shaped it according to their ideological and aesthetic modes of perception. Finally, Kohlmeister's and Kmoch's Journal is also part of a literary source of narratives and information from which later Canadian writers have borrowed. Hugh Brody's short story 'Eva' and Harold Horwood's novel White Eskimo (1972) are two well-known examples of Canadian writers confronting the Moravian saga in Labrador.<sup>69</sup> As Louis-Edmond Hamelin reminds us, 'Northern themes have fed part of Canada's literature'.<sup>70</sup> He also demonstrates that the spiritual journey through a Northern landscape has become a recognised feature of Canadian writing. In the works of authors as different as Hiram Alfred Cody and Gabrielle Roy the Northern landscape is inherent in the novel's spiritual and dramatic conflict. The shape and character of this conflict was presaged, to a great extent, by the early encounter between the missionary, the native, and the Northern environment. For the Moravian contribution, we might echo the sentiments of the subject of our next chapter, Joshua Marsden, who predicted that the Moravians' 'interesting histories' would earn them 'praise [that] shall last to many

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<sup>69</sup> Hugh Brody, Means of Escape (Vancouver and London, 1991) and Harold Horwood, White Eskimo: a story of Labrador (Toronto, 1972).

<sup>70</sup> Louis-Edmond Hamelin, Canadian Nordicity: It's Your North, Too, translated by William Barr (Montreal, 1978), p. 9.

generations'.<sup>71</sup> Although not everyone would agree, Moravian missionary literature has made a profound impact on the development of the Canadian literary imagination.

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<sup>71</sup> Joshua Marsden, Narrative of a Mission to Nova Scotia (Plymouth-Dock, 1816), p. 275. See Chapter 4 for a discussion of Marsden's Narrative.

It is the glory of the Methodists to have new authors.

John Wesley



## CHAPTER FOUR

### JOSHUA MARSDEN AND THE NARRATIVE OF A MISSION TO NOVA SCOTIA, NEW BRUNSWICK, AND THE SOMERS ISLANDS (1816)

#### I: Introduction

Less than two years after the Moravian Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel among the Heathen had published Benjamin Kohlmeister's and George Kmoch's Journal of a Voyage, from Okkak on the Coast of Labrador, to Ungava Bay (1814), a Methodist missionary, Joshua Marsden, published his own account of his travels in British North America. Entitled The Narrative of a Mission to Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and the Somers Islands (1816), it told the story of Marsden's fourteen years' missionary experience among the settlements of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Bermuda, and New York. Marsden's Narrative, however, was more ambitious than the Moravian Journal of a Voyage, from Okkak for it not only extended to the reader a record of missionary experience in the wilderness, but it also offered poetry, and 'copious notes' related to the Methodist missionary cause in North America. Yet like the Moravian account, it too succeeded in transforming experience into art through an aesthetic and ideological language rooted in Scripture and in the literary and artistic conventions of the late eighteenth century. The missionary's experience, the encounter with the landscape, and the religious experience of encountering Providence in the wilderness are all reconstructed in the Narrative's

language and literary style. By examining the Narrative in detail it is possible to understand and appreciate better the missionary's discursive struggle to articulate his perception and experience of the Canadian environment in the early nineteenth century.

Marsden has been called 'the major literary figure among Maritime missionaries' of the nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> His 'literate and scholarly' writings have impressed critics with their psychological and moral insights into the missionary's 'daily routine, his moods, and his inner spiritual life'; while at the same time, they exhibit 'striking' and 'skilful' examples of poetic achievement.<sup>2</sup> Yet Marsden's 'considerable talent' has not been fully appreciated and understood: a lack of critical study of his work has consigned his life and literary achievement to the more shadowy world of early Canadian literature.<sup>3</sup>

The aim of this chapter is to bring Marsden's literary achievement to light through a biographical and critical

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<sup>1</sup> Fred Cogswell, 'The Maritime Provinces, 1720-1815', The Literary History of Canada, second edition, edited by Carl F. Klinck, 3 vols (Toronto and Buffalo, 1976), Vol. 1, p. 95.

<sup>2</sup> G.B. French, Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Vol. VII, pp. 586 and 588; and Fred Cogswell, Literary History, Vol. 1, p. 96.

<sup>3</sup> Fred Cogswell, Literary History of Canada, Vol. 1, p. 95.

assessment of one of his most important works, The Narrative of a Mission to Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and the Somers Islands (1816).<sup>4</sup> Its purpose, therefore, is fourfold: firstly, to identify the author and the provenance of his work; secondly, to explore the reasons behind the work's creation: its purposes, its aims, and its intended audience; thirdly, to examine the literary and ideological codes which inform Marsden's narrative; and fourthly, to identify the work's "message" and examine its contribution to our understanding and appreciation of Methodist missionary experience and its related literature.

## II: A biographical sketch of Joshua Marsden

While little is known of Joshua Marsden's life, autobiographical works and other sources make it possible to sketch the details of his life and of the publication of his Narrative of a Mission. Marsden was born on 21 December 1777 in Warrington (England) and, by his own account, was 'an exceptionally dissolute youth' and 'shockingly disobedient' to his mother; he also admitted that he frequently 'got intoxicated with spirituous liquors' and 'was proficient in singing profane

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<sup>4</sup> The Narrative of a Mission to Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and the Somers Islands (Plymouth-Dock, 1816; rpt New York, 1966; second edition, London, 1827). All references are to the reprinted first edition and are included parenthetically in the text of the thesis.

songs'.<sup>5</sup> At the age of nineteen he joined the Navy--that 'shocking seminary of vice'--but abandoned the nautical life after twice being shipwrecked. Seeking to escape the press-gangs, he fled into the English countryside. Near Manchester Marsden encountered the evangelical revival. Methodist outdoor sermons and camp meetings attracted thousands to hear the enthusiastic preaching of Methodist clergymen. On Whit Sunday 1799 Marsden attended one such event, an open-air meeting where the preacher filled Marsden with 'an ardent love for souls'.<sup>6</sup> He was soon converted to Methodism and the propagation of the faith.

During his ensuing itinerancy Marsden met William Black, a missionary who had recently returned from Nova Scotia to seek recruits for the Methodist ministry in the New World. Marsden offered his services, and on 23 August 1800 joined Black and three other missionaries aboard the Snow Sparrow, a 'leaky vessel' bound for Halifax with a cargo of salt. The journey was mostly uneventful though a narrow escape from both French privateers and sharks

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<sup>5</sup> See G.B. French's biographical sketch in the Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Vol. VII (Toronto, 1988), pp. 586-588. Quotes from Marsden's autobiography Grace Displayed (New York, 1813) were taken from Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Vol. VII, p. 586. A copy of Grace Displayed was not available to me during the writing of this thesis.

<sup>6</sup> On Whit Sunday 1798 Marsden attended the preaching of George Marsden (no relation) and was converted. He was soon travelling and preaching on the Bolton circuit.

reminded Marsden of the importance of Providence in his life.<sup>7</sup>

For the next eight years Marsden travelled extensively in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. By 1807, however, 'the region of sea-fog and frost' had sapped his health and he wrote asking for permission to return to England.<sup>8</sup> Instead, the Secretary of the Missionary Committee, Joseph Benson, transferred Marsden (at his own suggestion) to Bermuda in the belief that a more salubrious climate would

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<sup>7</sup> On 23 August 1800 Marsden and three other missionaries accompanied William Black on the Snow Sparrow bound, with another ship, for Halifax. Six weeks later, on October 4, they arrived in Halifax where they began their missionary careers. The other missionaries were William Bennet, William Lowery, and Thomas Oliphant.

<sup>8</sup> See Marsden, 'Farewell to Nova Scotia', Narrative of a Mission to Nova Scotia, pp. 111-114 (ll. 72).



restore the missionary's health.<sup>9</sup> In contrast to Nova Scotia, Bermuda was a 'verdant' island of 'sunny rocks where bloom and beauty reign';<sup>10</sup> yet despite the warmer weather, Marsden received a frosty welcome in Bermuda: the white slave-owners who made up the island's ruling community were antagonistic to his plans 'for preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ to the poor negroes' and sought to thwart his mission.<sup>11</sup> '[A]s a tumbler, buffoon, dancing master, or conjurer, I might have been welcome', he wrote, 'but to preach the gospel, yea, and to preach the gospel to negroes: this shut up every avenue of civility, and rendered my person as forbidding, as my

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<sup>9</sup> Marsden included copies of letters from Benson and Thomas Coke in his Narrative (see pp. 110-111). Benson's letter (dated 5 October 1807) states:

I can easily believe you, my brother, when you speak of the hardships you have endured, and that the extreme cold winters effect [sic] your breast. I am sure the life of a Missionary, as you observe, must be very difficult and dangerous, in such a climate as Nova Scotia: but the Lord has already recompensed you, by giving you to see such blessed fruit of your labours, and will recompense you more at the resurrection of the just.

The Conference would willingly have consented to your coming home next year, but as you signified that you were willing to spend some time at Bermuda. . . they have appointed you for that island for the present. . . . (Narrative of a Mission, p. 111).

Marsden wrote that his appointment 'was as unwelcome to flesh and blood as "smoke to the eyes, or vinegar to the teeth"' (p. 129).

<sup>10</sup> 'A Descriptive Epistle from Bermuda', in Narrative of a Mission, pp. 163-170 (lines 157-158).

<sup>11</sup> Marsden offer an account of his and earlier attempts to establish Methodism in Bermuda in Narrative of a Mission, p. 127.

errand was disagreeable.<sup>12</sup> However, Marsden persevered and within four years succeeded in building up a mixed congregation of more than one hundred and thirty members.<sup>13</sup>

Despite his success, Marsden was anxious to return to England. In November 1812 he sent his wife and two children to New York in anticipation of the journey home. Three months later he joined them, but not before reflecting on his mission and experiencing an emotional send-off from his parishioners: 'Bermuda was a little world to me; I had gone there a despised and unindeared [sic] man; God had given me friends, respect, a chapel, a society, a love for the place, and all that could render parting and separation painful in the extreme. Many, of both the blacks and whites, manifested the most poignant

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<sup>12</sup> Narrative of a Mission, pp. 132-133.

<sup>13</sup> By the beginning of the nineteenth century the Methodists had not had much success in Bermuda due largely to fierce opposition from the colonial administration and its white slave-owning supporters. In 1798 Thomas Coke appointed John Stephenson to the island, but shortly after his arrival he was brought before the local magistrate who, with Governor Beckwith's approval, prevented the missionary from preaching to the blacks. According to the governor, Stephenson 'had not studied greek and latin in the British universities, in order to qualify himself to teach the slaves of Bermuda how to serve God and save their souls' (see Marsden, Narrative of a Mission, p. 122). A law was passed prohibiting Stephenson or any other Methodist missionary from preaching in Bermuda. Stephenson ignored the law, was subsequently jailed, and then banished.

grief. . . . Greatly was my own mind affected; but I had, amidst weeping, cries, and lamentations, to tear myself away and get into the boat'.<sup>14</sup>

Marsden's plans to return to England, however, were disrupted when war between Britain and the United States imposed an embargo on travel between the two nations. For the next two years Marsden and his family were detained in America although the intervention of Bishop Francis Asbury allowed Marsden to take up a post on the Methodist circuit in New York, a post which allowed him to travel freely within the state. During the course of his stay in America Marsden wrote and published two works: Leisure Hours (1812), a volume of 'Moral, Religious, & Descriptive' verse (some of which may have been written while travelling in Nova Scotia) and Grace Displayed (1813; second edition 1814), a Bunyanesque autobiography which transformed the experience of his youth into a personal testimony of religious conversion and missionary endeavour.<sup>15</sup> An attempt to continue this literary and

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<sup>14</sup> Joshua Marsden, Narrative of a Mission to Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and the Somers Islands (Plymouth-Dock, 1816), pp. 162-163. Subsequent references are from this edition and are included parenthetically in the text.

<sup>15</sup> Leisure Hours; Poems Moral, Religious, & Descriptive (New York, 1812) and Grace Displayed. An Interesting Narrative of the Life, Conversion, Christian Experience, Ministry, and Missionary Labours of Joshua Marsden (New York, 1813; second edition, 1814).

spiritual exercise was undertaken after the war, during Marsden's voyage home to England in October 1814. While at sea he began to compose a journal 'for the satisfaction of [his] friends in New York' (p. 203).<sup>16</sup> Once back in England he sent the editors of the Methodist Magazine an extract from the journal for publication, while continuing to expand it from a simple journal account of his voyage home into a more comprehensive moral and testimonial narrative of missionary experience in British North America. It was to be replete with anecdotal detail and reflection as well as 'copious notes' related to the history and administration of the Methodist and other missionary societies in the colonies.<sup>17</sup> While working on the journal, Marsden also published two other works of poetry, The Backslider and The Mission, a long poem dedicated to 'all Foreign Missionaries' who 'lift the

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<sup>16</sup> Thanks to a diplomatic friend in Washington (a 'Mr. Foxal' [Hoxal?]) Marsden was able to arrange passage on a truce ship (the Fingal) bound for Europe. On 23 October 1814 Marsden and his family left New York harbour after another emotional farewell from friends and colleagues.

<sup>17</sup> Marsden left New York on 23 October 1814 arriving in England approximately six weeks later. On 12 January 1815 he wrote to the editors of the Methodist Magazine stating, 'It was the wish and request of many of my friends in America, that I would keep a Journal of my voyage home, and send them a copy, for their profit and satisfaction' (see Methodist Magazine, Vol. XXXVIII (April 1815), pp. 302-309 (p. 302)).



banners of Almighty truth'.<sup>18</sup>

Finally, in March 1816 Marsden sent a completed manuscript of his new 'narrative of a mission', along with an engraved portrait of himself, to J. Johns of Plymouth-Dock (modern-day Plymouth) for publication. The following month the Narrative of a Mission to Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and the Somers Island was ready and available at booksellers in London and Liverpool and at all the Methodist reading rooms throughout the country.<sup>19</sup>

Not surprisingly, the evangelical press responded warmly to Marsden's work. The Methodist Magazine praised the Narrative of a Mission as a 'highly pleasing and instructive' work and commended its author's 'clear and scriptural' beliefs and religious convictions.<sup>20</sup> The Eclectic Review, always sympathetic to the missionary endeavour, proclaimed the Narrative 'a useful manual of missionary information' and described its author as a man of 'good sense and warm piety'; but the editors overlooked the work's stylistic shortcomings, arguing that a lack of

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<sup>18</sup> The Backslider. A Descriptive Moral Poem in Four Books (Plymouth-Dock, 1815) and The Mission. A Poem (Plymouth-Dock, 1816).

<sup>19</sup> See title page of Marsden, The Narrative of a Mission.

<sup>20</sup> The Methodist Magazine (July 1816), p.516 and (August 1816), p. 589.



'glowing description' was due to the 'repulsive' conditions under which Marsden had laboured. After all, the editors claimed, 'the scenes of his labours w[ere] not . . . a paradise'.<sup>21</sup> Despite its literary shortcomings, Marsden's Narrative of a Mission eventually went out of print, selling more than a thousand copies, which if true would make it one of the most successful accounts by a missionary from British North America in the early nineteenth century.

Two years later, Marsden published another volume of verse entitled Amusements of a Mission, a collection of 'Moral, Religious, and Descriptive' poems written while in North America;<sup>22</sup> and in 1820 he published a third autobiographical work, Sketches of the Early Life of a Sailor, an account of his conversion to Methodism and his subsequent ministry overseas. Despite his literary output, Marsden was first and foremost a preacher. He despised the 'beau-priest', that minister of 'varied literary accomplishment' whom he believed to be ill-suited to missionary work (p. 63). Marsden's Narrative and his other publications were intended to be read as a testimony

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<sup>21</sup> The Eclectic Review (June 1818), p. 570.

<sup>22</sup> Amusements of a Mission; or, Poems, Moral, Religious, and Descriptive, Interspersed with Anecdotes. Written during a residence Abroad, second edition (London, 1818).

of a missionary's faith and religious ideology and not solely as an entertaining travel narrative or literary amusement. 'The Narrative of a Mission', Marsden believed, should inspire the reader 'with subjects of a much higher order; even the prosperity of the ineffable Redeemer's kingdom in Heathen lands' (p. iii). In 1827 he printed a 'new' and 'cheaper' edition of the Narrative of a Mission, although a lack of reviews would suggest that it was not as well received as the original edition.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, Marsden's motive for writing remained unchanged: to show the 'christian reader . . . some of the travels and trials, the perils of missionaries in foreign lands'.<sup>24</sup>

Marsden continued to preach on the circuits of northern and western England but by 1837 poor health had forced him to retire to London where, after thirty-eight years in the ministry, he died on 11 August 1837.<sup>25</sup> With his death,

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<sup>23</sup> In the preface to his second edition Marsden reports that the first edition was out of print and that a thousand copies had been either sold or distributed. The work sold for '8s[hillings]' (see Marsden, Narrative of a Mission, second edition (London, 1827), p. v).

<sup>24</sup> Marsden, Narrative of a Mission, second edition, p. vii.

<sup>25</sup> Marsden's itinerant career was as follows: Nova Scotia and New Brunswick: 1800-1808; Bermuda: 1808-1812; New York: 1812-14; Plymouth-Dock: 1815; Blackburn: 1816-17; Darlington: 1818-19; Hull: 1820-21; Newark: 1822-23; Shrewsbury: 1824-26. See also William Hill, An Alphabetical Arrangement of all the Wesleyan-Methodist Preachers and Missionaries, who are now travelling, or are

Marsden's Narrative of a Mission quietly slipped into obscurity. His missionary experience in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick was soon superseded by that of other missionary writers like Charles Churchill who urged readers not to accept Marsden's narrative 'for the present situation of things' in the province.<sup>26</sup> Still, Marsden was remembered fondly by those who had worked for and supported his cause. One obituarist wrote: 'He possessed a respectable degree of various and useful knowledge; nor was his poetical talent unworthy to be mentioned in this brief notice of his character. As a Preacher, he was distinguished by the variety of his topics, his evangelical sentiments, and, not unfrequently [sic], by his earnest and moving appeals to the heart.'<sup>27</sup>

### III: History or Narrative: a search for form

It is the glory of the Methodists to have new authors.  
 . . . [A] young man can hardly be too slow in this matter.

John Wesley<sup>28</sup>

Joshua Marsden's Narrative of a Mission to Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and the Somers Islands belongs to the

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located, in Great Britain, and in Distant Parts of the Globe (London 1827), p. 93.

<sup>26</sup> Charles Churchill, Memorials of Missionary Life (London, 1845), p. 21.

<sup>27</sup> Minutes of the Methodist Conference, Vol. VIII (London, 1841), pp. 269-270.

<sup>28</sup> John Wesley, Letters, Vol. VI, p. 324.

Methodist tradition of testimonial and ministerial literature which evolved in the eighteenth century under John Wesley. Wesley created this tradition by encouraging his followers to articulate their religious experience and by exerting dictatorial control over what and how they expressed themselves in print. Not only did he exhort his ministers to subject all of their writings to his scrutiny, but he also reminded his clergy to adopt a prose which was clear and concise so that it could be understood by 'people of the lowest understanding'. 'We should constantly use the most common, little, easy words (so they are pure and proper), which our language affords', Wesley urged, recommending that his preachers read the memoirs and experiences of holy men like St Augustine and Thomas à Kempis, and missionaries like Gregory Lopez and David Brainerd.<sup>29</sup> If his preachers followed their

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<sup>29</sup> See Robert Southey, Life of Wesley, Vol. 1, p. 79. Between 1749 and 1755 Wesley published his Christian Library, 50 vols (Bristol, 1749-1755) an extensive catalogue of works devoted to subjects of practical divinity and religious biography and autobiography. He boasted that anyone who followed his four-year course in reading would 'be a better scholar than nine or ten of the graduates at Oxford or Cambridge' (see Wesley, A Short Account of the School in Kingswood in The Works of the Rev. John Wesley, edited by Thomas Jackson, third edition (London, 1831), Vol. XIII, p. 289). For a description of the contents of the Christian Library see Richard Green, The Works of John and Charles Wesley: A Bibliography (London, 1896). The Methodists maintained strict control over the publication of their ministers after Wesley's death. '[L]et none print anything of his own', preachers were told in 1812, 'till it has been approved of by the Conference' (see Methodist Minutes (1812), Vol. I, pp. 40-41).

example, Wesley reasoned, 'the world and the devil must fall under [their] feet'. Thomas Taylor, one of Wesley's preachers, praised Brainerd as 'a man of deep understanding, and piety' and proclaimed that '[he] saw that the agony of that dear man was for the whole image of God'.<sup>30</sup> At Wesley's urging he too published an account 'of [his] own unworthy Life' with the hope that it 'might be of as great use to some simple souls, as things of a like nature ha[d] been to [him]'.<sup>31</sup>

Wesley urged his preachers and missionaries to keep journals so that they might have the material at hand to compose accounts of their lives. 'I wonder every Preacher does not keep something of a daily journal', Wesley wrote, 'more especially of what passes in his own mind. This I have found to be useful, that I repent that I did not adopt it sooner'.<sup>32</sup> Once adopted, however, Wesley used missionary and preacher journals to compile autobiographical and biographical testimonies and accounts many of which he published in the Arminian Magazine.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Arminian Magazine (1781), Vol. IV, p. 588.

<sup>31</sup> Arminian Magazine (1780), Vol. III, p. 367.

<sup>32</sup> Arminian Magazine (1780), Vol. III, p. 440. As early as 1744 Wesley had noted that the keeping of journals was both 'for our satisfaction' and 'for the profit of their [the preachers'] own souls'.

<sup>33</sup> In Volume III of the Arminian Magazine (1790) Wesley published four autobiographical narratives written by Methodist preachers. Two of them were later published



However, not every missionary or preacher found keeping a journal an easy task. Joshua Marsden informed his readers that '[a missionary] rarely keeps a journal, his time being spent in preaching, praying, and visiting from house to house; and hence, though he might write a solitary letter now and again, he does not keep that minute account of facts which might be both profitable and interesting'.<sup>34</sup> But it was during his voyage home that he found time to read the travels of others, notably works by Cook and Chateaubriand.<sup>35</sup> Perhaps inspired by their example, he began to compose a journal of his own travels. In it he displayed the incidental reflection and meditation that marked so much of his literary style: '[W]e have sailed at least 1600 miles, without sickness, without accident, without discord; and yet we have

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separately: Thomas Mitchell, A Short Account of the Life of Mr. Thomas Mitchell (London, 1781) and John Haime, A Short Account of God's Dealings with Mr. John Haime (London, 1785).

<sup>34</sup> Marsden, Narrative of a Mission, pp. vii-viii.

<sup>35</sup> See John Rickman, ed., Journal of Captain Cook's last voyage to the Pacific Ocean, on Discovery, performed in the years 1776, 1777, 1778, 1779 (London, 1781). See also François August René Chateaubriand, Travels in Greece, Palestine, Egypt, and Barbary, during the years 1806 and 1807, translated by Frederic Shobel, 2 vols (London, 1811). More recent editions of Chateaubriand's travels include Voyage en Amérique, edited by Richard Switzer (Paris, 1964) and Ouvres romanesques et voyages (Paris, 1969). For a study of Chateaubriand's influence see Meta Helena Miller, Chateaubriand and English Literature (Baltimore, 1925) and Thomas Capell Walker, Chateaubriand's natural scenery: a study of his descriptive art (Baltimore, 1946).

Methodists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Roman Catholics, Quakers, Lutherans, Seceders, Nothingarians and Deists, on board' (p. 209). Such harmony must have seemed a far cry from his early days at sea in that 'seminary of vice'. As he neared home Marsden grew apprehensive about his future: 'Little did I think when leaving England for Nova Scotia, that I should continue an exile from my native land for 14 years and 4 months. . . . My native country will appear as a foreign land; strange faces, and perhaps, strange manners' (p. 210). Marsden's feelings were in keeping with a missionary's experience and true to Wesley's notion of presenting 'a continuing pattern of a life lived out as a pilgrimage with no fixed resting place on earth'.<sup>36</sup> 'I wish to be a stranger and pilgrim wherever I go', announced Marsden, 'the Lord knows that I return home with no large expectations, but with a pure desire to love and glorify God' (p. 211).

With such a 'desire' in mind, Marsden offered his journal for publication. The resulting Narrative of a Mission was part travel narrative, and part natural history; it was also a propagandistic piece on missions, and a religious tract on the influence of Providence in human affairs. Yet it was a generically-indeterminate work, a fragmented

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<sup>36</sup> See Isabel Rivers, 'Strangers and Pilgrims', p. 194.

narrative which explored the possibilities of form. Even its attempt to define itself revealed its hybrid nature:

The Narrative of a Mission should possess peculiar claims to public notice; it should be entertaining as a book of travels, and instructive as a natural history. It is supposed to combine some of the excellencies of both these kinds of writing, together with subjects of a much higher order; even the prosperity of the ineffable Redeemer's kingdom in Heathen lands, and the diffusion of truth, righteousness and felicity amongst the most forlorn and miserable portion of the human family. (p. iii)

Marsden's attempt to 'combine some of the excellencies of both these kinds of writing' presented him with certain stylistic problems: how to balance entertainment and instruction, how to portray himself and his mission in light of more heroic missionary figures and their works, and how to avoid criticism of his enthusiastic language to name a few. In addition to these, he was also faced with depicting a country with which few of his readers were familiar and an experience which even fewer fully appreciated or completely understood. Marsden 'did not believe that any of [his] brethren would assume [his work] was perfect', but he believed that his experience 'in subjects of this nature' qualified him as both an author and an authority (p. xi). Yet despite his self-confidence Marsden suffered from an anxiety which stemmed from the looming influence of earlier missionaries and their writing. In contrast to the likes of men such as John Eliot and David Brainerd, Marsden worried that his own

missionary experience would not interest or inspire readers. 'A Christian missionary', he confessed, 'is supposed to hazard his life by associating with Savages and Pagans' (p. iii). His activities seemed to pale by comparison with those the past. By contrast to the missions of Eliot and Brainerd, Marsden describes his mission in Nova Scotia as being of an 'inferior order' (p. iv). Unlike Eliot and Brainerd, Marsden finds himself sent to 'a friendly colony, among those of his own nation and colour' where 'there [was] no strange language to learn---no fabric of Idolatry and Paganism to demolish---no exposure of life among treacherous Barbarians---no relinquishment of civilized manners, in order to symbolize with Savages' (pp. iv-v). Had he not completed his Narrative before reading the works of David Crantz and George Henry Loskiel, he admits, he might not have published it. 'If he thought himself a giant before', Marsden confesses, 'he now deems himself a mere dwarf in Missionary stature, and his book rather the History of a fourteen years Absence in a foreign land, than the Narrative of a Mission' (p. v).

Marsden's anxiety over the influence of previous missionary writers caused him to adopt a different narrative strategy, one which attempted to atone for his perceived shortcomings, and instead, offered readers 'much

information on the subject of Missions'. Marsden hoped that his work might be viewed as 'a useful manual' (p. v). Using a variety of sources as well as relying on his own experience, he compiled an 'account of facts' which he believed could be 'both profitable and interesting' both to the general reader and to the Methodists themselves (p. viii). Other than 'a few solitary letters, and nine or ten annual reports', he points out, 'the Methodist connexion . . . ha[s] no regular and condensed history of the Missions' (p. viii). He defended the inclusion of facts and figures by pointing to similar projects at other missionary societies:

The London Missionary society abounds in documents; the Moravians have minute and interesting histories of their Missions; the Baptists both astonish and edify the world with the just and yet splendid accounts of their translations and success; the Church Missionary society is gathering up even the crumbs and fragments of their Missions, to form an entertainment for the public. (p. viii)

Marsden praised the utility of his Narrative and stated with confidence that 'such a work would meet with both a rapid sale and extensive reading' (p. ix).

There were other more practical reasons for publishing his Narrative and in doing so Marsden defended the form of his work. By providing 'copious notes' related to the Methodist and other missions in British North America he reflected his preponderance for facts-as-opposed-to-



theories attitude toward literature (p. ix). His Narrative was meant to be of practical use to other missionaries as well as an inspirational treatise. Marsden illustrates this through an anecdotal story of how upon arriving in Nova Scotia he had come across a copy of Melville Horne's Letters on Missions (1794), a collection of pragmatic wisdom from another missionary writer. Marsden relates how he 'read [it] with avidity, profit, and delight' (p. x) and states that had he been able to acquire other such works, 'my Mission would have been the better for them' (p. x).

In approaching his narrative task, Marsden claimed no literary pretensions. Instead, he adopted the self-conscious pose of an inept writer. Despite exhibiting a wide range of literary influences from the Bible to Wordsworth, he wished his reader to believe that his work was not 'well written'. '[A] good writing', he maintained, 'implies a good writer---a character which the subject of the following pages does not assume' (p. x). Marsden's Narrative was meant less to impress the imagination with literary accomplishment than to inspire it with its author's heart-felt language and enthusiasm for God. Marsden explained that 'he . . . had few opportunities of qualifying himself, as he went to sea as a boy, and did not return till about four years before

Providence mysteriously opened his way to go as a Missionary to a foreign land, where active and laborious travelling and preaching allowed him but few opportunities of improvement' (p. x). He apologised for the absence of scientific subjects--like natural history and botany--so often found in travel narratives of the early nineteenth century. Their inclusion, he admitted, 'might have pleasingly and profitably adorned its pages', but his purpose in writing was not to impress the reader with rhetorical flourish and learned allusions, but to promote 'the cause of Missions' and advance Methodism in British North America (p. x).

Marsden's Narrative of a Mission was both a manual of missionary information and an autobiographical account of the author's life in British North America. The Narrative strikes a balance between instruction and entertainment. It provides what some critics of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries referred to as utile dulce or "pleasurable instruction".<sup>37</sup> Marsden's 'copious notes' on the "customs and manners", climate, history, and

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<sup>37</sup> For a discussion of the utile dulce convention in eighteenth-century travel writing see Charles L. Batten, Jr., Pleasurable Instruction: Form and Convention in Eighteenth-Century Travel Literature (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1978), especially pp. 25-31. Batten notes that by the nineteenth century there was a greater tendency to the separation of the two in travel literature (see Batten, Pleasurable Instruction, pp. 80-81).

topography of the country were an attempt to balance instruction with the more entertaining and moral account of his missionary experience.

Initially intended 'for the profit and satisfaction of [his] friends in New York', the Narrative ultimately addressed a wider audience: other missionaries, potential emigrants, and readers interested in the history and administration of Protestant missionary work in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Marsden set out to document and promote the work of the Methodists in British North America in a comprehensive manner. '[A] few Reports, the Minutes of the Conference, and forty or fifty volumes of Divinity', Marsden believed, 'which, though good in themselves, have no direct bearing upon [the missionary's] main work' (p. ix). As these works tended to be more theoretical than practical they were ill-suited for advising a Missionary how to survive in the Canadian wilderness. Works of practical advice based on personal experience, argued Marsden provide 'the best means necessary to prosecute and establish Missions, . . . [and] greatly assist the young Missionary in his noble career' (p. ix).

As he sought to defend his narrative form and strategy, Marsden also defended his work on the grounds that it

provided psychological encouragement to other missionaries. 'If ever a man needed comfort', he wrote, 'it is a foreign Missionary; solitary and insulated his mind is liable to be deeply depressed!' (p. 83). By sharing his experiences and feelings in the Narrative, Marsden hoped to alleviate the isolation experienced by the colonial missionary. He emphasised the importance of the shared experience particularly when related to the building of community. However, he did not disguise the difficulties which missionaries encountered in their attempt to realise their vision in the wilderness. '[A] Missionary to this country', he reminded his readers, 'has to bear hardships from the weather, from travelling, from the great changes in the accommodations, and from various natural causes' (p. 26). Intelligence, a resilient character, and a willingness to adapt, Marsden suggested, were the main requirements of the itinerant preacher who decided to make Nova Scotia or New Brunswick their destination and future mission. '[T]he Methodist Missionary', Marsden wrote, 'assimilates himself to his converts, by visiting in their families, eating at their tables, and sleeping in their cottages; he is familiar as a brother, compassionate as a pastor, but authoritative and vehement as a preacher: he has neither the stiffness of learning, the pride of office, nor the haughtiness of a man of fortune; his Mission forms his business, and he

attends to it as his proper work' (p. vii). Marsden does not say what the settlers thought of this rather parasitic behaviour, but he does warn missionaries that 'if [they] be very timorous, and afraid of death, [they] had better not go upon this errand' (p. 28).

Marsden also directs his Narrative to the attention of emigrant readers. As someone who had gained some experience in British North America, Marsden felt qualified to recommend, for example, that emigrants not buy land before arriving lest they fall victim to unscrupulous land agents who are more than often all too eager to dupe the ignorant emigrant. 'This land', he cautioned, 'may be forty, fifty, or sixty miles in the interior, where there is no road, nor river, nor communication with any other place, but through a waste, howling wilderness' (p. 44n.). Details of climate, topography, and local customs are provided along with factual information on geography, history, politics, and religion of the colonies. Thus, Marsden's Narrative helped to acquaint the emigrant with his new home. Such knowledge, Marsden reasoned, not only made for better-informed emigrants, but made it more likely to establish emigrants successfully in the wilderness settlements of British North America.



Finally, Marsden's Narrative addressed itself to the more general reader who was interested in the history and administration of the missionary societies. Marsden hoped that the work would prove, if not entertaining, at least 'useful' in its purpose 'to promote the good cause of Missions' (p. xi). His facts are organised and presented within an entertaining autobiographical narrative: the story of his life provides a principle of narrative order and becomes a vehicle for entertaining anecdotes and didactic moralising.<sup>38</sup> While using the autobiographical elements of his experience to organise the details of his work, Marsden frequently digresses with an anecdote to allow his reader a respite from a constant gathering of facts and figures. On more than one occasion he resorts to sermonising, begging his reader to allow him 'the freedom' to digress as he ruminates on the reasons why more preachers do not go on the missionary 'errand' (p. 27). On another occasion he contemplates a religious experience incurred during a fever, and despite claiming that it was 'beyond human language to describe' he uses the experience 'to meditate upon the blessed truths of the gospel' and to reveal the growing strength of his faith (p. 34):

[D]uring my affliction, I had such a display of the power of religion as is beyond human language to describe; -- such an overflowing peace---such an inward and unshaken reliance

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<sup>38</sup> See Batten, Pleasurable Instruction, p. 76.

upon the friend of sinners---such sweet communion with Jesus---and such soul ravishing manifestations of his love, as exceeded all my ideas of spiritual enjoyment;---my room was an Eden, and my bed appeared to be the very vestibule of heaven!' (pp. 31-32).

Even the inclusion of a long poem, The Mission, is defended not on literary grounds, but on the basis of its moral and didactic importance. Marsden explains that by putting into verse 'what was suggested to his own mind, from reading, experience, and observation', he could provide the reader with 'a faithful and true picture of a Mission' (p. vi).

Elsewhere, the use of missionary-related works supplies information related to the history and administration of the Methodist missions.<sup>39</sup> Minutes taken from the various Methodist conferences supply further historical and statistical details; while works by missionary authors such as Melville Horne and Josiah Pratt serve as useful sources of information, as did similar Methodist works like Thomas Coke's History of the West Indies, an account

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<sup>39</sup> In particular, Melville Horne's Letters on Missions (London, 1794), William Brown's The History of the Propagation of Christianity (London, 1812), and Josiah Pratt's Missionary Register (London, 1813). Brown's History, for example, offers historical information on the United Brethren's missions while Pratt's Register is the basis for a short historical sketch of the Edinburgh Missionary Society (see pp. 278 and 281).

of the progress of Methodism in the Caribbean Isles.<sup>40</sup> Marsden's Narrative was intended not only to promote the work of the Methodist missionary committee, but also to provide practical information about 'Missions in general' (p. v).<sup>41</sup> Marsden acknowledges that the publication of missionary literature could be a key factor in promoting

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<sup>40</sup> Thomas Coke, A History of the West Indies, containing the natural, civil, and ecclesiastical history of each island: with an account of the Missions instituted in those islands, 3 vols (Liverpool, 1808-11).

<sup>41</sup> In 1804 Joseph Benson, Secretary of the Methodist Missionary Committee, wrote to Marsden and the other Methodist missionaries in North America requesting them 'to keep a regular journal of [their] proceedings, and all particulars of [their] mission[s]; together with accounts of all remarkable conversions, with the experience and death of any individuals, from which, extracts might be made for publication' (pp. 80-81). After consulting with 'the various circuits' in Britain, Benson had discovered that it was 'the general desire of the people, to have some accounts of the missions regularly published', there being a connection between a better understanding of the missions and the public's willingness to support them. Journals, written and submitted twice yearly by the missionaries, were the main source of this understanding; once collected, Benson and the members of the missionary committee would compare them and compile 'a more comprehensive view . . . of the whole' than that suggested by any one perspective. This system, however, had one serious drawback: it was dependent upon the missionary who, as Marsden indicates, did not necessarily give journal writing due priority. According to Marsden, a missionary 'rarely keeps a journal, his time being spent in preaching, praying, and visiting from house to house; and hence, though he may write a solitary letter now and then, he does not keep that minute account of facts which might be both profitable and interesting' (pp. vii-viii). This information was contained in a letter (10 February 1804) from Joseph Benson and the missionary committee to all Methodist missionaries and is reprinted in Marsden's Narrative on pp. 79-83. I have not been able to locate Marsden's journal if it indeed does still exist.

'the good cause of Missions' in British North America (p. vii and xi) and concludes that 'a diligent man may glean much rare and profitable knowledge while in the prosecution of his duty'. Every missionary, he suggests, is a potential journalist (and propagandist). He writes, 'I would have him not to let anything interesting escape his observation, but make minutes in his pocket memorandum book of all useful and lively incidents' (p. 76). He concedes that in the course of his travels the opportunity to gather useful information frequently presents itself: 'I have often in a log-cottage heard the most singular and striking occurrences; fragments of such conversations as I have noticed in the solitary wilderness; details of curious adventures and experiences from many who live in the bosom of the forest, would agreeably and beautifully adorn the pages of a narrative, or the numbers of a magazine' (pp. 75-76). Citing the Moravian Periodical Accounts and other works as examples, Marsden insists that missionaries can provide 'many simple, beautiful, and interesting details' in their journals, and he recommends Moravian journals as 'an excellent model to all who go upon this blessed errand' (p. 76).<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> In particular, Marsden notes David Crantz's 'interesting and heart-touching' histories of the missions in Greenland. Marsden's first descriptive accounts of life in North America were sent home in 1807 from St John, New Brunswick. Joseph Benson, Secretary of the Methodist Missionary Society, deemed them to be 'so important' that he had them immediately inserted in the Methodist Magazine. He told Marsden, 'I doubt not, [it] will be

Yet Marsden clearly seeks to create a more ambitious work. His Narrative was not to be a simple journal, but a narrative interweaving personal experience with historical record and religious information. 'Were this only a diary of my own experience', writes Marsden, 'I might say many things respecting the workings and exercises of my own heart, its pride, its discontent, its mournings, its opposition to duty, its lusting after ease, popularity, and learning; its being elated with praise, honour, and reproach, and obscurity' (p. 48). But Marsden's Narrative chooses to look outside the private musings of its author and instead celebrate the public figure of the missionary and the missionary cause.

Marsden's language is highly emotive and yearns more toward Romanticism than the neo-classicism of the Augustan age. As the work's epigraph suggests, Marsden's language was more closely related to Wordsworth than it is to Thomson or to Pope.<sup>43</sup> Though he makes no other overt

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highly pleasing to all that are concerned for the progress of the gospel' (Narrative, p. 110).

<sup>43</sup> The epigraph is taken from Wordsworth's The Excursion (London, 1814):

O let thy word prevail, to take away  
The sting of human nature. Spread the law  
As it is written in thy holy book,  
Throughout all the lands. Let every nation hear  
The high behest, and every heart obey.

See Thomas Hutchinson, ed., Wordsworth: Poetical Works, revised by Ernest de Selincourt (Oxford and New York,



reference to Wordsworth beyond the epigraph, parallels between Wordsworth's 'Pastor' in Book Five of The Excursion and Marsden's missionary narrator are more than suggestive of Marsden's interest in the Romantic writer. Wordsworth's Pastor is said to have 'withdr[awn] / From academic bowers' and was known for his love of his 'native soil' and the 'ancient rural character' of his parishioners (The Excursion, Book V, lines 115-116). He was also said to possess 'simple manners, feelings unsupprest / And undisguised, and strong and serious thought' (The Excursion, Book V, lines 118-119). Likewise, Marsden's Narrative celebrates the rural simplicity of the missionary's parishioners and the unpretentious character of its narrator. Marsden imitates Wordsworth's narrative construction. Like Wordsworth's Pastor Marsden's missionary narrator is devoted to both his mission and the colonists; in time, he earns their respect. 'The people treated me with great kindness and affection', Marsden states, 'they bore with my weakness and inability' (pp. 21-22). Marsden rejects the 'academic bower' as a suitable abode for the missionary, finding it ill-equipped to prepare him for the task of preaching the gospel in the wilderness. He also rejects the comforts of civilisation for the simple but difficult life of the

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1985), p. 696, Book IX, lines 638-642. Subsequent quotations are from this edition and are included parenthetically in the text.

colonial missionary. 'There is something so truly pleasant to a heart warmed with zeal for God's glory', he writes, 'to forego the gratifications of elegant chapels and large congregations, and almost every domestic comfort, and preach to a handful of people in the wilderness' (p. 27). Unlike Coleridge and Southey who only imagined living in the wilds of America, Marsden knew the wilderness from first-hand experience; this experience lends his language authenticity as well as emotive power expressed in a 'simple' and 'unsupresst' manner:

[T]he stillness of this sylvan theatre; the lofty pine and birch trees waving over head; the table covered with the elements; the surrounding and often weeping congregation left impressions upon my mind, that neither time nor place will be able to remove. . . .

Here all was spontaneous, affectionate, and sincere. . . . [T]he emotions of God's spirit in the heart, were not shaped and modelled to the formal decorum of a large and splendid congregation, where a sob, a tear, or a sigh, would break in upon the unvarying monotony of religious propriety, and attract the attention of half-a-thousand orderly demure and unaffected worshippers. I am under no restraint, in saying, that in the forests of Nova Scotia, I have seen as much pure genuine devotion and holy excitement, as ever solemnized the finest temple made with hands, or ascended to heaven from the sincerest heart. (p. 53)

Both Wordsworth's Pastor and Marsden's missionary narrator illustrate the virtues of moral living and religious faith that can be drawn from mundane experience. Like Wordsworth's Pastor, Marsden transforms the mundane experience of his parishioners into examples of Christian

virtue or (as the case may be) vice. A rescue in the woods, for example, calls to Marsden's mind the story of the Good Samaritan; while tales of drunkenness and debauchery reveal to him the disruptive influence of sin and vice on communal and ecclesiastical order. The order of religion is put forward as the antidote to disorder and chaos; the missionary represents progress and morality. He symbolises a benign and communal order around which others are encouraged to gather. Early nineteenth-century colonial life in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick was harsh and unforgiving and in contrast to the American belief in individualism, few British settlers could expect to survive alone or independent of their fellows in the colonies of British North America. Throughout his narrative, Marsden emphasises the importance of the missionary in creating and maintaining the community.

#### IV: 'The Renovating Plan': Providence and the Narrative

Savage no more, the renovating plan  
Moulds into love th'uncultivated man.

Joshua Marsden, Narrative of a Mission

One way of invoking a sense of order is through language. Unlike many other missionary writers Marsden demonstrates a skilful and poetic use of language, turning the most mundane event into a series of spiritual and inspiring

moments: an illness leads to revelation, a journey on the river becomes a life-and-death adventure: 'Passing through the gut of Annapolis, a rough and dangerous place, I was standing on the quarter deck, observing the agitation of the waves and the velocity of the vessel, [when] a gust of wind struck the packe, and shifting the main boom, the sheet knocked me over the tafferel. . . . God gave me presence of mind, and I catched [sic] hold of a rope, by which, . . . I was saved from a watery grave' (p. 95). Accidents, though common in these conditions, are intended as illustrations of Providential intervention and protection. 'O ye holy, faithful young men, who go as Missionaries to foreign lands', states Marsden, '. . . ye have the promise, the providence, and the power of Jehovah for your protection' (p. 95.)

Marsden was also alert to the foibles and follies of human nature as well as its examples of courage and determination and his works provide a fascinating look at early religious life in Canada and the United States. An examination of the Narrative's language, metaphors and other figurative devices, reveals an exploration, not only of generic form, but also of the physical and emotional landscape through which Marsden travelled.

The invocation of Providence in the missionary experience emphasised the influence of God in human affairs and is intended to inspire the reader's faith in the Church and in Christ. In his description of his journey to Nova Scotia, for example, Marsden describes little of the daily events on the Snow Sparrow nor of the sea voyage itself, but rather chooses to focus on several "Providential" occurrences. 'Nothing material occurred', he writes, until they neared the 'banks of Newfoundland' (p. 12). At this point in the journey, the narrative turns to three successive occurrences, unremarkable in themselves, but made noteworthy by the religious significance which Marsden attributes to each one. The first regards the unfortunate death of Captain Blunt, an elderly man who has accompanied Marsden to Halifax in order to be reunited with his family. Blunt's seemingly untimely death is interpreted by Marsden as proof of God's control over human destiny. 'Alas! how often do our prospects and our graves lie in the same direction!', Marsden preaches. Continuing with his sermon he eulogises Blunt, stating that though, as his name might suggest, he was a 'rough' man, he was a 'servant of God': '[I]t is not the polish of the courtier, but the piety of the Christian that will fit us for the kingdom of heaven' (p. 12).



The second occurrence relates the attack on the Snow Sparrow by French privateers. Marsden uses the incident to demonstrate the willingness of the missionaries to defend themselves against the enemy. He describes how their show of force was responsible for driving off the attackers. His subsequent allusion to the story of David and Goliath imposes further religious significance on the incident. The third occurrence is perhaps the most providential of all. It tells of how an afternoon's swimming alongside the ship nearly ended in tragedy when 'two large sharks' came into the vicinity. If it had not been for the watchful eye of one of the sailors Marsden and several others would certainly have been killed: 'Thus, were we, by the good providence of Jehovah, and a singular coincidence of circumstances saved from a terrible and untimely death' (p. 13). Each of these occurrences reinforces Marsden's case for the influence of Providence in human affairs: 'He that has no eyes to behold the particular providence of God in such an event, no heart to feel grateful for such a deliverance; no wisdom to record the divine interposition; is blind as a mole; stupid as a statue; and utterly devoid of Christian perception and gratitude' (p. 13). Marsden urges his reader to inscribe these lessons 'upon [his] memory, and grave them upon the table of [his] heart' (p. 13). Each of these examples illustrates Marsden's narrative strategy

to use experience in a spiritually significant manner. The 'renovating plan', to use Marsden's phrase, reveals his belief in Providential intervention in human life. Part of his narrative strategy, then, is to renovate the reader's faith and belief in Providence. By doing so, Marsden inscribes the reader's own life with religious meaning and spiritual significance through the example of his own.

Given this strategy, Marsden's "plot" could be said to consist of nothing more than a 'tissue of wonders', a series of accidents and near-death experiences on which religious meaning and significance are imposed.<sup>44</sup> The book's Table of Contents, for example, confirms Marsden's preoccupation with such events and their relationship to Providence. Here, the reader is alerted to a host of providential experiences including a fall from a horse, a narrow escape on an icy river, a severe illness, the losing of the way in a snow storm, being blown off course at sea, and a near drowning. Each experience is interpreted by the missionary within a providential context. Accidents and deliverances add drama to the narrative and inform its readers with the missionary's ideological "message". 'My spiritual pilgrimage has been

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<sup>44</sup> The phrase comes from Pierre Machery, A Theory of Literary Production, translated by Geoffrey Wall (London, Henley, and Boston, 1978), p. 241.

checkered with not a few [dangers], both by sea and land', Marsden preaches, 'but I have always found the promises either a source of consolation, an antidote to fear, or a sheet anchor of confident hope' (p. 95). An escape from drowning confirms his belief that prayer and faith are responsible for God's 'divine veracity, faithfulness, and power' (p. 70).<sup>45</sup> In contrast to the age's sceptical poets and philosophers, Marsden purports to be a believer in Providence: 'Some may call it superstition, cant, folly, presumption, to suppose that the great God would arrest the course of the elements at the request of a poor worm, . . . but, shall we, in compliment either to Pope, Hume, Middleton, or any other sceptical poet and philosopher, give up and deny a particular providence?-- we might as safely give up the whole of religion altogether, and go back to the chance, atom, and fate systems. . . . Providence is the glory of a Missionary!' (pp. 71-72).

**V: 'From the woods of Nova Scotia . . . there is a road to God': The image of the road and other thoroughfares**

This holy path the bleeding martyrs trod  
This tribulated thoroughfare to God.

Joshua Marsden, The Mission

In his fourteen years as a colonial missionary, Joshua Marsden travelled more than 8000 miles by land, river, and

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<sup>45</sup> This is a paraphrase of Paul's remarks in Romans 15.4.

sea; it should not be surprising, therefore, to find a network of images using the road and other thoroughfares in his Narrative which are employed to convey Marsden's message of salvation. The road or thoroughfare appears as both a literal as well as metaphorical passage. It offers a physical means of passing through the wilderness and a metaphorical pathway through a moral wasteland toward a place of salvation. For Marsden his mission to North America enacts a journey along a 'holy path . . . / This tribulated thoroughfare to God' (p. 216). Upon leaving Halifax, he announces that he is setting out on a 'road [which] lies through a vast wilderness' (p. 17). Like a shepherd seeking "lost lambs" his journey is as much a metaphorical quest as it is a literal one. In his Preface he equates his journey with that of 'the christian's voyage to the peaceful shores of calm eternity' (p. 14). Along the way, he states, 'the vortex of despair whirls its boiling and tumultuous waves . . . the boisterous storms of affliction blow with terrible fury'; yet, the missionary (and here Marsden quotes the poet Isaac Watts) 'expands his wings' and 'sails . . . / . . . los[ing] by degrees the sight of mortal things' (p. 14). Marsden reminds his readers to accept the Narrative as both a literal account of a missionary's travel and an allegorical voyage toward redemption and salvation.

The use of the road or thoroughfare in Christian literature is commonplace and is intended to signify humanity's journey toward redemption.<sup>46</sup> The prophet Isaiah speaks of 'the way of holiness', a highway through the wilderness over which the 'wayfaring men' shall pass on their way to 'joy and gladness' (Isaiah 35.8-10). John the Baptist is said to prepare 'the way of the Lord' (Matthew 3.3); and Christ makes his 'way' across the Sea of Galilee to begin his ministry. In the parable of the marriage dinner, servants are sent out 'into the highways' to gather as many as can be found to attend the wedding (Luke 14.23); and at his resurrection Christ asks his disciples to take his ministry to 'the uttermost part of the earth' (Acts 1.8). The idea of missionaries blazing trails through the "heathen darkness" is central to Christianity and its literary tradition. Marsden moves through the Canadian landscape toward an ethereal destination on a 'road [which] lies through a vast wilderness', on 'a road to God' (pp. 17 and 27).

Marsden's literal and metaphorical journey can be divided roughly into four constituent parts: the ocean crossing,

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<sup>46</sup> The Bible is resonant with images of paths, roads, and other byways leading to God and spiritual salvation. Biblical road: road in the wilderness (Isaiah); prepare the way (John and Jesus); road to Damascus (Paul); the missionary's road; road to New Jerusalem (Revelation).



the arrival, the journey in the wilderness, and the return home to England. Like John Bunyan, Marsden allegorizes his voyage for the spiritual 'satisfaction and profit' of his readers. His journey into the unknown is a journey into a wilderness of danger and despair where one's faith is routinely tested. Allegorical codes are inscribed in the name of the ship (the Snow Sparrow) and its captain ('Captain Humble'). The ship symbolises the world; its crew are described as 'a mixture of all nations': some of its passengers were Christians, while others are said not to 'fear God' (pp. 10-11). The sea and the elements represent the forces against which the soul does battle. 'Sometimes the rolling of the ship', Marsden notes, 'prevented us from either kneeling or standing. . . . [T]he noise of navigation--the shouting of the sailors--the roaring of the wind--the waves dashing--and the ship tossing all conspire to forbid the stated return of prayer'. Yet 'in the midst of torment', he pronounces, his 'soul was happy in God' (p. 11). Thus alerted to Marsden's narrative (and religious) strategy, the reader is in a position to interpret the Narrative as the story of a Soul's voyage through a hostile world. The itinerant experience invokes instances of what Marsden calls the 'usual trials of . . . faith' (p. 12). A 'leaky vessel, foul winds, dark hazy weather, and darker nights' represent a series of trials, close encounters with death

(pp. 12-13) which the reader must, according to Marsden, ascribe spiritual significance and meaning. He explains:

He that has no eyes to behold the particular providence of God in such an event; no heart to feel grateful for such a deliverance; no wisdom to record the divine interposition; is blind as a mole; stupid as a statue; and unworthy to be called a Christian, or persecuted and justified by so.

In his own travels Marsden depends on being able to travel on roads or rivers and he frequently comments on their condition or on the best means of travelling them. Roads of a metaphorical nature which lead 'from the woods of Nova Scotia . . . to God'. The pilgrim travels the 'path[s] of duty lead[ing] to God's abode'; 'virtue, truth, and reason', writes Marsden, 'point the road' (p. 27 and p. 225). Roads are also symbolic of man's intrusion into and imposition upon the unbounded space of Nature. Roads provide a setting or place from which the traveller views the surrounding countryside. From the middle of the 'remarkably good' road Marsden surveys the 'sylvan barrenness' of the countryside around Halifax; 'yet', he writes, 'the prospects are romantic' (p. 16n.). Even the crudest man-made roads redeem the barrenness of the natural surroundings. '[T]he neighbourhood of St. John looks best', Marsden insists, 'when a veil [sic] of

snow has covered its nakedness and concealed its sterility; however, to recompense these defects, all the blessings of life are brought in the greatest abundance down the river, in the summer by boats, and in the winter by sleds' (p. 88). Roads and rivers provide communal links between towns and villages. They are the arteries of communication and the life-blood of commerce in the political body of the colony. Arriving at one settlement, Marsden reports that '[he] found a loving, well-informed, and hospitable people; and a chain of settlements connected together, stretching from the river Napan to the river Pedecodiack; and from St. Lawrence; including Napan, Amherst, Fort-Lawrence, Fort Cumberland, Pont de Bute, Sackville, Dorchester, or Membrancook; in all of which I had to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ' (p. 20). The lack of religion in these areas is explained by 'dismally bad' roads (p. 21). When roads become blocked by snow, men lose their way and die (p. 23). It was on one such 'miserable road' that Marsden falls from his horse and suffers minor injury. Yet in interpreting the experience for the reader, he draws a parallel with the Biblical story of the Good Samaritan and the 'miserable' road becomes a scene of salvation and renewed hope: 'In this situation Providence sent to my aid two men, who were coming through the woods in an opposite direction: they kindly assisted me to catch my horse, which I re-mounted,

and rode to my appointment. . . . Thus kindly does the Lord bring us through our trials, and proportion them to our circumstances' (p. 24). Thus, the event is inscribed with spiritual meaning. The travelling missionary shows the reader a way to God, a pathway to salvation.

Other thoroughfares in Marsden's Narrative include rivers, creeks, and lakes. As well as providing a natural medium for transportation between one village and the next, rivers sometimes posed hazardous barriers. Marsden describes, for example, how he often crossed a 'deep and wide river' by canoe, or how he was forced to traverse 'a broken bridge, sometimes a floating bridge' (p. 28) on his frequent travels to distant settlements. Such tasks required strength and faith. Marsden explains, 'Such a mode of crossing a deep creek is certainly calculated to dash a fear in the face of weak faith, and compel a man to a dastardly wish that he had stayed at home; but then he must cross it; he has to preach the gospel a few miles on the opposite side, and if he be very timorous, and afraid of death, he had better not go upon this errand' (p. 28). Such warnings reminded the intending itinerant of the difficulties which the Canadian wilderness posed and of the importance of thoroughfares. 'Hereabout, the country is much cut up, and intersected with rivers, bays, and creeks', he told his readers, 'so that travelling is

always difficult, and sometimes dangerous' (p. 51). Such obstacles are meant to test a missionary's resolve and they provide Marsden with an opportunity to sermonise further on the topic of the missionary's character:

[A] Missionary who labours faithfully in this vineyard had need of courage of mind. . . . [A] fear of the water would be a painful impediment to his usefulness; and a sedentary disposition would disqualify him altogether for being useful on a mission, where long rides, wild woods, and rapid rivers require activity and expose to hardship. . . . Alas! the good man must often ride twelve miles through a snow storm to preach in a log hut, and cross a dangerous and rapid river in a small canoe to speak to half a dozen settlers on the opposite shore. (p. 51)

The faithful, he suggests, are 'wafted along by divine influence, and freighted with humble love and holy zeal' (p. 75).

Good roads, of course, were scarce in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick in the early nineteenth century and, as Marsden discovered, many settlers lived 'far remote from towns and regular roads, and [were] almost cut off from all the rest of the world' (p. 30). Nevertheless, he reminds the reader that 'these children of nature's solitudes have immortal souls' and that it is the Methodist missionary's duty to 'carry them the bread of life' and to bring 'the light of salvation into the heart of these desolate and umbrageous woods' (p. 30). Marsden points out how the missionary must travel along a path fifty or sixty miles



in length marking it by a series of 'blazed trees' (p. 35) in order that the settlers can come 'in great numbers from different settlements, to hear the word' (p. 37).<sup>47</sup>

The road is a metaphor for religious pilgrimage in Marsden's Narrative. Reflecting on his travels in the Canadian wilderness, Marsden is reminded of yet another religious (and discursive) traveller:

Good John Bunyan's Pilgrim, when passing through the valley of the shadow of death, did not know there was another in similar circumstances, until he heard the voice of Faithful, and then he took courage; so in my own trials, when trudging through the deep snow with my saddle bags upon my back, riding across broken bridges, traversing the solitary wilderness, preaching in a smoky log hut to a dozen people, or groping my way by night in the dark and swampy woods, I had sometimes been ready to conclude that of all others, mine were the greatest hardships. (p. 54)

Marsden's allusion is not only meant to remind the reader of a Christian's difficult spiritual task but of the arduous nature which confronts him in realising it. Marsden explains: 'Sometimes a circuit is from one to two hundred miles in extent, through bad roads and a wilderness country' (p. 54n). Yet it is on such roads that Marsden witnesses acts of Providence. Throughout the narrative and in his notes Marsden reminds his readers the

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<sup>47</sup> Marsden explained how trees were notched by the axe of a traveller, a method used by John Wesley during his journey from Savannah to Charleston in Georgia in 1738 (Narrative, p. 35n.).

spiritual significance of his journey and of God's role in it:

A Missionary's life is a life of peril; dangers and afflictions are scattered on every path. My spiritual pilgrimage has been checkered with not a few, both by sea and land; but I have always found the promises either a source of consolation, an antidote to fear, or a sheet anchor of confident hope. . . . I have rode [sic] hundreds of miles upon the ice; have been lost in snow storms; have been benighted and bewildered in the woods, benumbed with cold and sun struck with burning heat; in perils on the sea; in perils in the wilderness; in perils on the ice; but I call heaven and earth to witness I never found one promise to fail. (p. 95)

To illustrate further, Marsden describes how one day his horse-drawn wagon was overturned, throwing Marsden and his companion to the ground. An otherwise common occurrence in the Nova Scotian woods offers Marsden the opportunity to illustrate the power of prayer and thanksgiving:

The powerful drift had erased all the road, and was so thick and furious that it prevented our seeing further than the horses' heads. . . . We knew not which way to take; the storm increased, and blocked up our path before and behind. . . . But in this extremity God did not reject our supplications; just as the night shut in with all its horrors, we arrived on the opposite shore, not far from a house, thus divine providence (the infidel would say chance) interposed for our perseveration. (pp. 62-63)

Marsden's use of the road in both its literal and metaphorical sense calls attention to his use of language and to the moral ideology that informs his narrative. Marsden defends his language and narrative strategy: 'In writing this narrative I shall often be disposed to advert

to God as the blessed agent in my various deliverances and escapes; if this seem like enthusiasm, I must bear the stigma' (p. 63).

#### **VI: Shaping the landscape with a language of the soul**

Marsden chose and shaped his language to serve God and Church. For the missionary writer, language was more effective when it rendered an inner landscape of the soul. A 'comprehensive view' of the wilderness of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick becomes secondary in Marsden's work compared to the evocative and spiritual testimony of the his faith and religious 'enthusiasm'. 'Pleasant scenery and delightful landscapes may please the mere traveller', Marsden argues, 'but the Christian Missionary has a nobler object than the beauties of a flower, the genus of a plant, or the altitude of a mountain. He is sent to save lost men' (p. 18). Marsden's language is the language of salvation. He apologises for the 'destitution of natural history, botany, and many other scientific subjects, which might have pleasingly and profitably adorned its pages' (p. x), and instead, turns to more religious subjects. Marsden combines what he calls 'some of the excellencies' of the travel and natural history genres with 'subjects of a much higher order' (p. iii). He encodes his narrative with spiritual meaning. His arrival in Nova Scotia, for example, is likened to an entry into a 'new world' (p.

15); but, as in Kohlmeister's and Kmoch's Journal, this 'new world' could be both illusory and revealing. The landscape was both the product of the traveller's expectations and of his own mode of perception. Upon his arrival in Halifax, for example, Marsden is taken aback by the 'elegant, clean, and neat' appearance of the colonial settlement. Its ordered appearance undermines his preconceived notion of a chaotic wilderness. The inhabitants whom he expects to be hostile or brutish are affectionate and amiable. Marsden rationalises this perceived paradox by explaining that Christianity has recently transformed the chaos of the wilderness into a civilised religious and social order.

Narrative digressions serve to map and expand the territory of Marsden's mission. His discourse imposes the missionary's presence in the landscape. Marsden's preoccupation with distances between towns and descriptions of the intervening countryside inform readers that roads are bad and chapels few and far between; but they are also encouraged by the missionary's overall positive picture of the colony:

Forests that were formerly vocal only with the growling of the bear, the croaking of the bull-frog, and the yell of the savage indian [sic], were now consecrated with the voice of praise, and saw the sylvan chapel raise its head amidst dark pines, towering birch, and spreading maple trees. (pp. 22-23)

Such optimism looks forward to the utopian visions of later Canadian poets like Oliver Goldsmith or Joseph Howe.<sup>48</sup> Indeed, Marsden's poetic prose echoes that of many early nineteenth century topographical poets in their commonly-held belief of Man's superiority over Nature. Like J. Mackay's Quebec Hill (1797) or Adam Hood Burwell's Talbot Road (1818), Marsden's Narrative of a Mission offers a poetic vision of a wilderness settlement and of Man's triumph over Nature. Civilisation is brought to bear on the natural world and the difficulties facing the emigrant settler or the itinerant preacher become symbolic of Man's triumph over hardship.

Marsden encodes his Narrative of a Mission with numerous references to sacred and secular texts, revealing an extensive intertextual relationship between his work and its underlying body of religious and secular knowledge and a system of social representation to which it is indebted. To understand these particular features is to understand how Marsden's Narrative was made and how it was expected to function. The Bible forms the basis for most of Marsden's language and provides him with a context within which to shape and interpret his experience. If Scripture

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<sup>48</sup> See Oliver Goldsmith, The Rising Village (1825; 1834), edited by Gerald Lynch (London, Ont., 1989) and Joseph Howe, Acadia (1874), edited by Malcolm Parks (London, Ont., 1988).



is the source and inspiration for Marsden's work, the missionary is the vehicle upon which the work's message is conveyed. Marsden emphasises the central place of the missionary in his work: not only is he the subject and author of the work, but he is also its object. Marsden's Narrative seeks to promote the missionary and propagate the missionary cause. He commends the 'activity, simplicity, and zeal' of the Methodist missionary and applauds his ability to 'assimilat[e] himself to his converts, by visiting their families, eating at their tables, and sleeping in their cottages' (p. vii). The definition of his Narrative, the emphasis on the missionary's character, and his use of language emphasises the central theme in the work, that of Christian struggle in a moral wilderness while journeying toward salvation and perfection in God.

Marsden's Narrative is a discursive instrument of religious meditation and spiritual inquiry. It is, to use Machery's words, 'a complete representation, the visible body on which a theory can be inscribed'.<sup>49</sup> Marsden's narrative strategy and language situate the Narrative within a particular ideological system of discourse which is rooted in Christianity and the Methodist or evangelical

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<sup>49</sup> Pierre Machery, A Theory of Literary Production, p. 241.

literary tradition. In this vision the natural world is seen as impoverished, hostile, and immoral; Man works to subdue it, to convert it to his use; the missionary calls upon his knowledge of Scripture and his belief in Providence to elevate his mundane experience into a spiritual and didactic work of art. Plot, again to quote Macheray, 'is built on a sequence of "miracles"'; content, as suggested earlier, is little more than a 'tissue of wonders'. The "truth" or "authority" of Marsden's work is 'materialised on the surface of the discourse'.<sup>50</sup> Here the reader finds the threads of Marsden's faith and religious ideology woven together into evangelical patterns of thought and belief. Experience in a missionary narrative is always interpreted within such a religious and ideological context. Accidents, as we have already seen, become moral lessons: the sudden death of a drunk reforms a whole settlement (p. 39); the 'providential hand of God' prevents the deaths of thirty people after their sleds overturn on a frozen lake and are dragged across the ice. 'The divine influence', proclaimed Marsden, 'was most powerfully present, and a great and gracious quickening rested upon the people. . . . [A]nd some were powerfully awakened to a just sense of their fallen state, and the need of a saviour as the only remedy' (p. 41). Whether the incident occurred exactly as

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<sup>50</sup> ibid., p. 58.

Marsden reported it is immaterial; what is important is how Marsden uses these events. Each chapter of his Narrative offers readers a sermon, a moral lesson which is intended to remind them that the missionary's "experience" was both a literal and allegorical account, both a story of actual life in the wilderness and an account of Christian faith, conversion, and salvation which could be understood and taken to heart by any Christian reader. Such an interpretation rejects the intellect and the rationality of scientific scepticism. Marsden criticises, for example, the establishment of King's College at Windsor, Nova Scotia (though his attack was probably a veiled condemnation of its founder, Charles Inglis, the Bishop of the Church of England in Nova Scotia), blaming the College for the decline of religion in the area (pp. 19-20). 'The fact is', he states, 'we should never go beyond nature in our calculations: a land of woods may, for these forty years to come, dispense with such an institution. The few lawyers, doctors, and clergymen required by the comparative improvement of an infant colony, can never furnish students for a large university' (p. 19).<sup>51</sup> According to Marsden, University-trained preachers were undesirable for Canadian missionary work. The very nature of the work, he argues, demanded 'both

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<sup>51</sup> King's College (now located in Halifax) was founded in 1789 by Bishop Charles Inglis and is the oldest university in Canada.

strength of body, fortitude, and courage of mind'. A missionary, therefore, 'must not think to lay his head in the flowery lap of ease; the refinement of study are out of the question' (p. 51). Though an avid reader himself, Marsden disdained the 'beau priest' explaining that 'the man of a finely cultivated taste and varied literary accomplishments, was not the most suitable' candidate for missionary work, seemingly because such men would not be tempted to endure the rigours of an itinerant life in the wilderness. By not sharing the poverty of the 'Indian', the 'Negro', or the 'fisherman', Marsden contended, the educated missionary would fail to witness the faith and sincere virtue of humanity that was so often the product of human suffering (pp. 68-69).

Throughout his narrative, Marsden makes frequent references to a host of Augustan and Romantic poets including Pope, Thomson, Cowper, Young, Moore, Byron, and Wordsworth. But Marsden was wary of preachers using their learning for anything less than the advancement of Christian truth. 'A Missionary to a foreign land should rather be a diligent than a contemplative man', he believed, 'his object should be more to save souls than gain knowledge. Activity is the soul of a mission! I would rather see a Missionary travel ten miles to preach to a dozen solitary souls in a thicket of trees, than

descant never so beautifully on polite learning' (p. 75). The apparent paradox between Marsden's attitudes to learning and his own literary background suggests that he may have experienced a certain ambiguity about his own character. While on the one hand he explains that he had received little opportunity to improve himself in the literary arts, he admits, on the other hand, that 'not unfrequently [he had] a desire for curious and pleasing studies'. He confesses, however, that such desire 'would slacken [his] ardour, and restrain the spirit of holy diligent exertion' (p. 75). In addition to studying the Bible and preaching among the settlers of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, Marsden claims that he also found time to 'dictat[e] a scrap of poetry' (p. 68). 'In the[ir] huts', he writes, 'I have often forgot both the busy, the splendid, and the learned world; and retiring into myself, have tasted the joys of Eden, in the midst of a wilderness' (p. 68). Marsden, following Wesley's recommendation, 'divided the day into regular parts' for 'reading, writing, and meditation', leaving himself time for 'visiting from house to house, and visiting the sick, as well as providing for the wants of my family. . . . My labour demanded all my time, but it was delightful; even the fragments were gathered up and preserved for use' (pp. 74-75). By gathering up the 'fragments' of his experience, Marsden transformed a personal and mundane



history into a literary and religious art. In the end he subjugated his literary style to his religious duty and sensibility.

#### VII: Conclusion

Joshua Marsden's Narrative of a Mission is an inherent part of the fabric of Canada's colonial literary history. It contributes yet another strand to the rich tapestry of the Canadian literary tradition. Unlike its literary cousins the explorer or emigrant narrative, Marsden's missionary narrative offers readers an alternative, and more spiritual, vision of colonial life in British North America, one which can be set against other more secular perspectives. Marsden's narrative style reflects the Methodist's use of language in the early nineteenth century and testifies to the extent of Wesley's literary influence on his preachers long after his death. Marsden's descriptions of the Maritime landscape are revealing and emotive, inscribing that landscape with spiritual meaning and significance. Finally, Marsden's use of the journey or spiritual pilgrimage exemplifies how the Methodist missionary writer perceived and interpreted the New World and demonstrated the way in which experience could be interpreted for the evangelical imagination.

Harsh and unforgiving though it might be, the frigid climate of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick was the perfect foil to Marsden's heated enthusiasm and emotive language. Although it was not conducive to his constitution, the rigours of the wilderness provided Marsden with valuable literary material for his religious imagination. Yet in the end the land defeated him; it might be argued that it succeeded in undermining the power of his language to convey a faithful picture of the Maritime environment. Certainly, Marsden's inability to cope with the climate of Nova Scotia prevented him from firmly rooting his poetic imagination in the soils of the colonial experience. Still, his Narrative accomplished its limited objectives: it provided valuable information about missionary activity in British North America to its author's missionary society and its supporters and it converted history into art by imposing a cultural, religious, and literary aesthetic on the author's experience of the New World. In doing so Marsden created a discursive world which reflected 'the strictures of life' in the wilderness, but at the same time which demonstrated to his readers the benefits of civilisation and the blessings of the Methodist Church and its clergy on the colonial landscape.<sup>52</sup> Despite the fact that Marsden never returned

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<sup>52</sup> See Don Conway, Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature (1983), p. 509.

to Canada, he and his Narrative of a Mission to Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and the Somers Islands remain an integral part of Canadian literary history, and despite his attempts to efface himself from the second edition of the Narrative of a Mission (1827) ('to drop the man in the account and vote the master into majesty'), Marsden has emerged as a major figure in the field of early missionary writing in Canada during the early nineteenth century.

I have a true and plain tale to tell;  
and I tell it in simplicity.

Philip Musgrave

## CHAPTER FIVE

### JOSEPH ABBOTT AND PHILIP MUSGRAVE; OR, THE MEMOIRS OF A CHURCH OF ENGLAND MISSIONARY IN THE NORTH AMERICAN COLONIES (1846)

#### I: Introduction

Joseph Abbott's Philip Musgrave (1846) represents one of the first attempts by a writer to fictionalise the life of a Protestant missionary in Lower Canada. Written in the form of a memoir, the novel tells the story of Philip Musgrave an Anglican missionary who comes to Lower Canada in 1818 and who, over the course of twenty-five years, preaches the Gospel and helps establish the Church of England in the wilderness of Lower Canada.<sup>1</sup> The novel's title page credits Abbott as the work's editor; this, however, is a conventional ploy used to disguise Abbott's real role as author and subject of the book. Research, however, reveals the similarities between Abbott and Musgrave and leaves no doubt that the work is autobiographical. Philip Musgrave is a fictional recreation of the life of Joseph Abbott.

Philip Musgrave represents an important step in the evolution of Protestant missionary narrative in Canada. No longer confined to the pages of the missionary journal

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph Abbott, Philip Musgrave; or, the Memoirs of a Church of England Missionary in the North American Colonies (London, 1846). Publication of the work was announced in the Literary Garland in October 1846 (p. 59).



or used simply as missionary society propaganda, Abbott's missionary experience assumes a more autonomous and complex role than its literary predecessors. Though its purpose was to acquaint the reader with the work of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts and with the 'exertions' of a colonial missionary in particular, it was the first missionary work from the Canadas to be published by a secular and not a religious or sectarian publisher. Its publisher, John Murray of London, listed the novel in the Home and Colonial Library series along with 'popular' and 'original' works by such writers like Matthew 'Monk' Lewis and Herman Melville.<sup>2</sup> Philip Musgrave was the latest in a fictional breed of nineteenth-century explorer and colonial adventurer. He was a character who combined both the age's intrepid love for travel with a high moral.

In many ways, Philip Musgrave can be viewed as the

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<sup>2</sup> These are the titles listed in Murray's 'Home and Colonial Library' advertisement; they refer to the following: Matthew Gregory Lewis, Journal of a West Indian proprietor, kept during a residence in the island of Jamaica (London, 1834) and Herman Melville, Narrative of a four months' residence among the natives of a valley of the Marquesas Islands, or, a peep at Polynesian life (London, 1846). Through his 'Home and Colonial Library', Murray promised 'to furnish the highest Literature of the day . . . at the lowest possible price . . . to all CLASSES OF READERS' (see advertisement for Murray's Home and Colonial Library in Mary Schweidler, The Amber Witch, edited by W. Meinhold, translated by Lady Duff Gordon (London, 1846). Abbott's Philip Musgrave is listed as number 22 in the list of titles.

paradigm for later Canadian missionary heroes such as 'Mr Craig' of Ralph Connor's Black Rock (1898) or the missionary narrator of Robert Knowles's St Cuthbert's (1905). Even Philip Bentley of Sinclair Ross's As For Me and My House (1940) is drawn from a literary tradition of missionary figures, despite the work's "anti-missionary" attitude. This tradition links Abbott's novel to the more recent history of missionary and missionary-inspired writing.

Through Musgrave's experience Abbott portrays and probes the identity of the colonial missionary character. Through his presentation of Musgrave, Abbott reveals, perhaps unwittingly, how the missionary's sense of self is shaped by his experience of the Canadian environment. Musgrave's contention that 'who or what' he was before coming to Lower Canada (and before the novel properly begins) establishes the novel's central concern with identity. It prepares readers for a journey of discovery. The novel is as much about coming to understand and appreciate the character of the missionary as it is about propagandising on behalf of the Anglican Church and its missionary society.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Philip Musgrave; or, the Memoirs of a Church of England Missionary to the North American Colonies (London, 1846), p. 4. This and subsequent citations are from this edition and will be given parenthetically in the text of the thesis.

Despite its interest for students of Canadian literature, Abbott's novel has received little critical attention.<sup>4</sup> Those few scholars who have brought the work to light have tended to overlook or underestimate its importance. Carl Klinck's comments that the book is a 'kind of novel' are ambiguous and confusing; while Mary Lu MacDonald's tendency to read too much of Musgrave's contentious qualities into Abbott's personality does not encourage readers to give the work a second look.<sup>5</sup> Part of the purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to suggest that Abbott's novel deserves reappraisal if its place in Canadian literary history is to be fully understood and appreciated. Before examining the work in detail,

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<sup>4</sup> Although Abbott's novel reportedly sold more than a thousand copies, few remain in existence. Whether this indicates that they were worn out with use or simply discarded is uncertain. R.E. Watters, in A Checklist of Canadian Literature and Background Materials, 1628-1960, cites four locations: The British Library, University of British Columbia Library, Acadia University Library, and the Metropolitan Toronto Library. Further copies can be found in the Edinburgh University Library and the National Library of Scotland.

<sup>5</sup> Carl F. Klinck, The Literary History of Canada, Vol. I, p. 146; and Mary Lu MacDonald, 'The Natural World in Early 19th-Century Canadian Literature', Canadian Literature, 111 (1986), p. 60 [pp. 48-65]. MacDonald writes: '[T]here is Joseph Abbott's snobbish, bad-tempered Philip Musgrave, a thinly-disguised autobiographical book which elicited vigorous replies in letters-to-the-editor columns, and in at least one pamphlet, from Methodists and Presbyterians who resented his portrayal of them' (p. 60). She does not provide sources for her comments about Abbott and his work.

however, it may be useful to shed some light on Abbott's identity and life in order to appreciate his relationship with his literary counterpart, Philip Musgrave.

## II: A Biographical Sketch of Joseph Abbott

At the beginning of the novel, Philip Musgrave states that the circumstances of his birth, parentage, and education--the keystones to his identity--are irrelevant to the reader.<sup>6</sup> To understand 'who or what' Musgrave is, it is first necessary to know more about Abbott. Carman Millar's biographical sketch in the Dictionary of Canadian Biography and Stanley Frost's article 'The Abbotts of McGill' in the McGill Journal of Education provide useful information.<sup>7</sup> Yet neither of these sources recognises a number of letters in the USPG archives at the Rhodes House Library in Oxford. From these it is possible to sketch a more detailed picture of Abbott's life and character.

Joseph Abbott was baptised on 10 June 1790 at Little Strickland (Westmorland), England. He received his education at the Free Grammar School in nearby Bampton

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<sup>6</sup> See Philip Musgrave, p. 1. Subsequent quotations from the novel are included parenthetically within the text.

<sup>7</sup> Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Vol. VIII, pp. 3-4; and Stanley B. Frost, 'The Abbotts of McGill', McGill Journal of Education, Vol. XIII, No. 3 (Fall, 1978), pp. 253-270.

where, under headmaster and poet, John Bowstead, he may have first acquired a love for literature.<sup>8</sup> In 1808 Abbott entered Marischal College (Aberdeen) where he studied theology; following graduation in 1812 he entered holy orders in the Church of England. He was ordained the following year and served at Chester near Liverpool before being assigned to a 'large and populous parish' at Long Stratton in Norfolk where he learned 'something of the life of a hard-working curate' (p. 5).<sup>9</sup> In addition to his pastoral duties, Abbott also served at the Blue Coat Hospital in Liverpool where, among other things, he studied Madras education, a form of religious teaching pioneered by missionaries in India.<sup>10</sup>

In 1818 Abbott petitioned the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts for a clerical post in the Canadas. His wish was granted and in the spring of that

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<sup>8</sup> The school was founded in 1623 by Dr Thomas Sutton. It was known for its four libraries, one of which had been donated by Thomas Bray, the founder of the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (1698) and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (1701). One ~~nineteenth-century~~ historian described the headmaster of the school, John Bowstead (1771-1811), as 'the author of several poems' (see Rev. John Hodgson, The History of Westmorland (1811) for an account of the school).

<sup>9</sup> USPG Letters (Rhodes House Library), 1818-1819, C/CAN/LC 197-98, folio 363.

<sup>10</sup> USPG Letters, Abbott to A. Hamilton, 20 October 1818, C/CAN/LC 197. The Madras system of education was pioneered by Andrew Bell (1753-1832) in India and first introduced in England at St Botolph's, Aldgate in 1798 (see Bell, 'An Experiment in Education made at the Male Asylum of Madras' (London, 1798)). It was based on a system of mutual instruction and was similar to Joseph Lancaster's undenominational British and Foreign Schools Society (see Lancaster, Sketch of a National Institution (London, 1808)).



year he and his brother William left Liverpool to begin their missionary careers in Lower Canada.<sup>11</sup> Upon arrival they travelled westward along the St Lawrence River before going their separate ways: William to Yamaska Mountain, Joseph to St Andrew's (St André-Est) near the Ottawa River. In St Andrew's Abbott found little semblance of an organised Anglican community, despite the efforts of his predecessor, Richard Bradford to establish one.<sup>12</sup> Of the approximately one hundred and fifty families who lived in the area only twenty-one professed to belong to the Church of England.<sup>13</sup> More than half of the rest claimed to belong to a variety of dissenting sects, while the others professed no particular religious allegiance at all. As a Tory and High-Churchman, Abbott was particularly dismayed at the general lack of religious and patriotic sentiments among the settlers. He described many of them as 'American deserters' who wanted to be 'free and

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<sup>11</sup> The Abbotts left England in late May or early June, arriving in Lower Canada by mid-July of 1818.

<sup>12</sup> Richard Bradford (1752-1817) was reputed to have been a midshipman under Captain James Cook (see C.F. Pascoe, Two Hundred Years of the S.P.G., p. 869). In 1793 he emigrated to New York and by 1805 he had opened a mission in Chatham Township in Lower Canada under the auspices of the SPG. See Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Vol. 5, pp. 106-107 and G.D. McGibbon, Glimpses of the life and work of the Reverend Richard Bradford as scholar, school principal, chaplain, priest of the Church of England and S.P.G. missionary (Calgary, 1970).

<sup>13</sup> USPG Letters, Abbott to SPG, 26 April 1819, C/CAN/QUE/b, folio 363, item 98.

independent' of the Church; he objected to their refusal to pray for the Royal Family; and he castigated them for their dislike of his use of the Liturgy.<sup>14</sup> What irked him more, however, was the fact that they had neither built a church nor a parsonage house; perhaps more disconcerting was the revelation that they were unwilling to contribute to their construction.

For the next two years Abbott constructed both at his own expense.<sup>15</sup> He was determined that his church 'would be the handsomest as well as the most complete country Church in the Canadas', insisting that it should be built in the Gothic style and that it should boast an eighty-five foot steeple.<sup>16</sup> He asked the SPG to send him money so that he could purchase a bell, arguing that it would lend itself to giving his church 'as imposing an appearance [and sound] as possible'.<sup>17</sup> Work on the Church progressed slowly, however, hampered by both a lack of manpower and money. But after nearly three years of work, the church

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14 ibid.

15 In 1820 Abbott reported to the SPG that he 'ha[d] been obliged to finish [the Parsonage House] at [his] own expense'. He managed, however, to supplement his income of £150 per annum from the SPG by serving as a chaplain to the garrison stationed at nearby Grenville (USPG Letters, Abbott to A. Hamilton, 27 October 1820, C/CAN/LC 199).

16 See USPG Letters, Abbott to SPG, 27 October 1821, C/CAN/LC1, 101.

was finally completed: on 30 November 1821 (St Andrew's Day) Abbott conducted his first communion.<sup>18</sup> Since most of the settlers were 'thinly scattered over an extensive country', attendance was modest.<sup>19</sup> Yet despite numerous discouragements Abbott demonstrated the characteristic determination that would help him become one of the colonial Church's most valued clergy and that would later inspire one of the earliest fictional figures in Canadian missionary fiction.

Having achieved some measure of success at St Andrew's Abbott began to feel a desire 'to break up fallow ground'.<sup>20</sup> In 1825 he sought permission to exchange missions with his brother; the request was granted and in the following year he moved to Yamaska Mountain. Again, the poverty of his congregation forced him to assume most of the financial responsibility for the Church's maintenance. In February 1829 a grateful Bishop George Jehoshaphat Mountain visited the mission though Abbott was embarrassed at having to accommodate him in the servant's

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<sup>18</sup> Letters, Abbott to A. Hamilton, 27 April 1821, LC1 100.

<sup>19</sup> See Letters, Abbott to A. Hamilton, 1 July 1827, LC1 107.

<sup>20</sup> The new church was still without its steeple. It would take another three years and much of Abbott's own money before the church was completed. See USPG Letters, Abbott to SPG, 27 April 1824, C/CAN/QUE/b, folio 363, item 106.

bedroom. Mountain, however, was nonplussed and displayed his gratitude by suggesting that Yamaska Mountain be renamed 'Abbotsford'.<sup>21</sup> Despite his success at 'Abbotsford', however, Abbott decided to move further westward, to Grenville where, he noted, a settlement had only recently emerged from the 'untrodden wilderness'. According to Abbott, Grenville boasted some 160 families, more than half of them Episcopalians. Because of a lack of clergymen in the area, Abbott also conducted religious services at the nearby settlements of Chatham, L'Original, and Hawkesbury.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> There is some uncertainty as to whether Mountain meant the name to honour Abbott or whether it reflected Mountain's admiration for Walter Scott. 'As there is a formidable river running through [it]', Mountain explained some years later, '. . . it [should] . . . be called after a highly classical spot at home, and Abbotsford had in consequence actually become its name, and will probably belong to it for ever' (see George Jehoshaphat Mountain, SPG Report of 1830, p. 128). Opinion, however, varies. Mountain's son and biographer suggests that the Bishop chose the title to reflect Abbott's surname (see Armine W. Mountain, A Memoir of George Jehoshaphat Mountain [London, 1866]); but Stanley Frost's account suggests that on Mountain's insistence, Abbott chose the name in honour of Sir Walter Scott's home at Abbotsford in Scotland. 'The reference to [Abbott]', Frost writes, 'is only a play on words' (see Frost, 'The Abbots of McGill', p. 254). That Abbott was an admirer of Scott is evident in his choice of a literary pseudonym, 'The Monk of Grenville Abbey', and in his emulation of Scott's romantic style in such works as The Halls of the North, published in the Literary Garland in 1844. Today the town is known as St Paul d'Abbotsford.

<sup>22</sup> Abbott moved to Grenville in 1830. For a brief account of his reactions to the settlement see USPG Letters, Abbott to SPG, 27 June 1831, C/CAN/QUE 1b, folio 363, item 109.

In Grenville Abbott began work on the foundation of a 'very respectable little church'.<sup>23</sup> But by 1834 there were some dark shadows being cast on his future. He became aware of rumours suggesting that the SPG was considering reducing its financial obligations in British North America, a decision which would affect the missionary's salary. With a wife and six children to support he could hardly afford a decrease in his income. He reminded the SPG of his accomplishments and his own financial obligations. He pointed out how he had 'built a parsonage House and two Churches, contributing largely towards their erection out of [his] own pocket'.<sup>24</sup> If his salary of £160 per annum was reduced, Abbott argued, he would certainly face 'debt and starvation'.<sup>25</sup> '[I]n a country, where living is decidedly more expensive than in England', he claimed, '[life] . . . is absolutely impossible!'.<sup>26</sup> He hoped that the SPG would honour his service of seventeen years and save him from 'misery and utter ruin'; if not, he warned, he would have no choice

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<sup>23</sup> USPG Letters, Abbott to SPG, 1 August 1832, C/CAN/QUE 1b, 111.

<sup>24</sup> USPG Letters, Abbott to A. Hamilton, 2 June 1832, C/CAN/LC1, 112.

<sup>25</sup> USPG Letters, Abbott to SPG, 2 June 1834, C/CAN/QUE 1b, 112.

<sup>26</sup> USPG Letters, Abbott to A. Hamilton, 3 September 1834, C/CAN/LC1, 115.



but to retire.<sup>27</sup> Abbott's letters to the SPG are a reminder of the difficulties which faced colonial missionaries in Lower Canada, difficulties which were exacerbated by the vast distances between the missionaries and London where the key decisions surrounding their missions were being made.

The SPG did not respond to Abbott's requests. Fearing that he might have overstepped the bounds of propriety, he wrote again in August 1835, this time asking only for a small increase in his salary and adding that the 'rigorous climate' had badly affected his health.<sup>28</sup> Nearly two years later, however, he had still not received a response from the SPG. 'Alarmed' at its silence Abbott wrote again describing his deteriorating health and the problems with which he was having feeding and clothing his growing family.<sup>29</sup> In desperation he suggested that he be transferred to a warmer climate: 'Perhaps the Society would send me, with my full salary, to some other place,

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<sup>27</sup> See USPG Letters, Abbott to SPG, 3 September 1834, C/CAN/QUE 1b, folio 363, item 115. Abbott later apologised for this veiled threat (see USPG Letters, Abbott to SPG, 28 August 1835, C/CAN/QUE 1b, folio 363, item 116).

<sup>28</sup> USPG Letters, Abbott to A. Hamilton, 28 August 1835, C/CAN/LC1, 116.

<sup>29</sup> In 1835 Abbott reported that had eight children. The Dictionary of Canadian Biography erroneously reports that Abbott and his wife, Harriet, had only seven children (Vol. VIII, p. 4).

Australia for instance. I am willing to go almost anywhere, if I can but support my family'.<sup>30</sup> Abbott was not transferred and by 1844 was still living in Grenville and working for the SPG. He pursued his work with vigour, organising the Ottawa District Association of the Quebec Church Society of which he was the first chairman. He also took part in the work of the Royal Institution for the Advancement of Learning and assisted with its efforts to establish parish schools in Lower Canada. He became a commissioner for the Institute and travelled extensively throughout Argenteuil county visiting its schools. Abbott's health, however, continued to deteriorate. In 1844 his doctor, John Pyke, informed the SPG that the missionary was suffering from a hernia and was no longer fit to make the rigorous rounds required of an itinerant clergyman.<sup>31</sup> Two years later Abbott notified the SPG that he was taking a year off from his missionary duties because of poor health 'and for other urgent reasons'.<sup>32</sup> Following this Abbott vacated the parsonage house at Grenville and move to Montreal where he had taken up a teaching post at McGill College. Irked at his decision to

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<sup>30</sup> USPG Letters, Abbott to A. Hamilton, 20 February 1837, LC1 117.

<sup>31</sup> USPG Letters, John Pyke, M.D. to Abbott, 17 April 1844, C/CAN/LC1, 119.

<sup>32</sup> USPG Letters, Abbott to A. Hamilton, 28 January 1846, C/CAN/LC1, 120.

abandon his mission, the SPG began an investigation into reports which stated that Abbott had allowed the parsonage-house to fall into a state of disrepair.<sup>33</sup> Abbott threatened to leave the SPG; but, in March 1847, he applied to the Society for his pension, asking that his 'labour and exertions' be taken into account.<sup>34</sup> Later, he even offered to accept a less laborious mission, suggesting that he exchange missions with the Rev. Mr Browne of La Prairie.<sup>35</sup> The SPG refused Abbott's offer, but in a rather confusing transaction, they accepted his proposition and purchased the 'Parsonage House', the church, and the surrounding sixty acres of land from him as a form of payment for the money that he had spent on them. What is clear is that by 1848 Abbott was no longer the missionary at Grenville. He was by then pursuing an academic career at McGill.

Abbott's first association with McGill College began in 1829 when he and his brother attended inauguration

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<sup>33</sup> USPG Letters, Abbott to A. Hamilton, 28 January 1846, C/CAN/LC1, 120.

<sup>34</sup> USPG Letters, Abbott to SPG, 17 March 1847, C/CAN/LC1, 121.

<sup>35</sup> Abbott suggested that the move would be better for his health (see USPG Letters, Abbott to SPG, n.d, 1847, C/CAN/LC1, 122).

ceremonies for the institution.<sup>36</sup> It was not until 1843, however, when Abbott joined McGill as a member of staff. He became a close friend of the College's Principal, James Bethune who, like Abbott, was a staunch Tory and Anglican. Both men believed that McGill should become an exclusively ecclesiastical and Anglican establishment. Their views, however, were not widely shared by the Board of Governors and in 1846 Bethune was dismissed from the College because of them. Abbott attempted to defend Bethune on the grounds that the founder of the college, James McGill, had stipulated that the university reflect Anglican principles; yet to Abbott's disappointment the governors (with the Bishop's support) implemented a non-sectarian policy which allowed both Protestants and Roman Catholics to study at the College.<sup>37</sup> Stanley Frost remarks that Abbott must have possessed a remarkable astuteness for academic survival. His ability to attract teaching and administrative posts at McGill reflected 'a facility reminiscent of Pooh-Bah in The Mikado' for during his career, he held no fewer than seven administrative and

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<sup>36</sup> According to Stanley Frost, Abbott and his brother attended the inauguration of McGill College on 24 June 1829. However, Abbott did not join the college until 1843 when he was appointed to the conjoint offices of Bursar, Registrar, and Secretary (see Frost, 'The Abbotts of McGill', p. 254).

<sup>37</sup> Abbott protested the decision asking that his name not appear in any correspondence connected with the institution (see USPG Letters, Abbott to SPG, 27 February 1848, C/CAN/LC1, folio 363, item 128).

teaching posts: registrar and bursar (1843-1852), librarian (1845-1852), chaplain (1845-46), vice-principal (1845-1846), lecturer in geography and history (1846-1852), and secretary to the board of governors (1843-1852).<sup>38</sup> In 1849 Abbott also taught logic although his methods left at least one student less than satisfied. 'Logic is in itself mighty dry and uninteresting', the student wrote, 'and with Mr. Abbott for Lecturer it is doubly so'.<sup>39</sup>

Abbott's managerial ability also came under scrutiny and criticism. While acting as Bursar for the College Abbott 'managed to run up debts representing approximately three years' income from the McGill Funds'.<sup>40</sup> A report submitted to the Governor General in 1845 stated in no uncertain terms that Abbott 'd[id] not . . . understand accounts; nor d[id] those of his Deputy appear to be regularly and correctly kept'.<sup>41</sup> Only the support of

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<sup>38</sup> See Frost, 'The Abbotts of McGill', pp. 254-255. For a history of McGill University see John Hugh MacLennan, The Story of a University (London, 1960).

<sup>39</sup> Quoted in Frost, 'The Abbotts of McGill', p. 255.

<sup>40</sup> Frost, 'The Abbotts of McGill', p. 255.

<sup>41</sup> Frost, 'Abbotts of McGill', p. 256. Abbott's 'Deputy' was his eldest son, John Joseph Caldwell Abbott. After a short career in business, John Abbott became a lawyer and taught at McGill. He later assisted Sir John A. Macdonald in his negotiations with the CPR during the building of the transcontinental railway. Abbott eventually succeeded Macdonald as Canada's fourth Prime Minister. See also Frederick W. Howay, 'Governor Musgrave



Bethune prevented Abbott's immediate dismissal. After Bethune's removal in 1846, however, the Board again reviewed its financial situation; and again they found Abbott's book-keeping in disarray. They reacted by recommending that 'the College accounts . . . be placed in the hands of a Professional Accountant'.<sup>42</sup> However, the Board resolved to 'absolve' Abbott from any wrong-doing, stating that the 'evils which seem[ed] to have arisen wholly from his unacquaintance with the true nature and correct practice of accounts'.<sup>43</sup> Still, not wishing to repeat this performance, the Board finally forced Abbott, now sixty-two years of age, to resign.<sup>44</sup> Poor health continued to plague him over the next ten years although he did attempt to resurrect his missionary career. Abbott died in Montreal on 10 January 1862.

### III: Abbott's literary reputation

During his lifetime Abbott achieved a minor literary reputation and was praised as 'a gentleman experienced in the art of moving the passions of the human heart'.<sup>45</sup>

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and Confederation', TRSC, third series, 15 (1921), section II, pp. 15-32.

<sup>42</sup> See Frost, 'Abbotts of McGill', p. 256.

<sup>43</sup> See Frost, 'Abbotts of McGill', p. 257.

<sup>44</sup> Abbott resigned on 30 August 1852.

<sup>45</sup> Literary Garland (March, 1844), p. 144.

Between 1840 and 1846 he was a regular contributor to the Literary Garland where he was known as the 'Monk of G[renville] Abbey', a name which both identified his residence at the time and reflected his admiration for Walter Scott. Like Scott, Abbott wrote historical romances. Titles such as the 'Three Gibbets', 'Border Legends', and 'The Battle of Metmerby' situate Abbott's literary imagination in his home county of Westmorland in northern England.<sup>46</sup> Halls of the North (1844), a historical tale set in the Fells region of the Borders, and serialised in the Garland, was Abbott's most ambitious work in this genre. It tells the story of the inhabitants of Hell-Beck Hall in Westmorland and uses local accents and history. The narrator also reveals his association with Lower Canada by his revelation that a bell which once belonged to Alexander Pope '[was] now hanging in the steeple of a Protestant Episcopal Church, not a hundred

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<sup>46</sup> Between 1840 and 1846 Abbott published at least five stories in the Literary Garland: 'Three Gibbets' (September, 1840), pp. 450-455; 'Border Legends' (November, 1845), pp. 501-510; 'The Bloody Scour' (December, 1845), pp. 552-560; 'the Battle of Metmerby' (July, 1846), pp. 289-297; 'The Squatter' (November, 1846), pp. 481-489 and (December, 1846), pp. 529-539. See Mary Markham Brown, An Index to the Literary Garland (Toronto, 1962), p. 25. See also [Joseph Abbott], The Halls of the North, in The Literary Garland, Vol. II, No. 2 (February, 1844), pp. 49-60; Vol. II, No. 3 (March, 1844), pp. 97-109; Vol. II, No. 4 (April, 1844), pp. 145-152; Vol. II, No. 5 (May, 1844), pp. 193-203; Vol. II, No. 6 (June, 1844), pp. 267-278; Vol. II, No. 7 (July, 1844), pp. 289-298.

miles from Montreal'.<sup>47</sup> Though plans to publish the work in Edinburgh did not materialise, Halls of the North earned the praise of the Garland's editor who called it a 'most exciting' work.<sup>48</sup>

Indication of Abbott's talents first appeared in 1828 when he was awarded a silver medal for an essay on farming and

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<sup>47</sup> Joseph Abbott, Halls of the North (1844) in the Literary Garland, Vol. II, no. 2 (February, 1844), p. 55.

<sup>48</sup> Literary Garland (March, 1844), p. 144. The editor noted that the accompanying engraving of a summer scene from the novel would be 'doubly pleasing' for Canadian readers as their countryside was presently 'invested with the drapery of winter'. The Halls of the North was published in six instalments beginning in February 1844. See Literary Garland, Vol. II, New Series (February 1844), pp. 49-60; (March 1844), pp. 97-109; (April 1844), pp. 145-152; (May 1844), pp. 193-203; (June 1844), pp. 267-278; and (July 1844), pp. 289-298. In his account of Abbott for the Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Carman Millar mistakenly reports that 'a 400 page manuscript' of this work 'was reputedly lost in transmission to the publisher' (see Carman Millar, Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Vol. VIII, p. 4). A letter in the Blackwood's records in the National Library of Scotland suggests that Abbott considered sending the Edinburgh publisher a manuscript for publication; however, there is no evidence that it ever arrived. Meanwhile, the editors of the Garland described Abbott's the work as a 'spirited tale . . . the production of a gentleman experienced in the art of moving the passions of the human heart. . . . [I]t is well deserving a place in the pages of our CANADIAN MAGAZINE' (see Literary Garland, Vol. II, New Series (March 1844), p. 144). Abbott also introduced his readers to the Musgraves and the Stricklands, two well-known Westmorland families with Canadian connections: 'Musgrave', the name of Abbott's narrator in his autobiographical novel Philip Musgrave (1846) and 'Strickland', the name of the family to which Susanna Moodie and Catherine Parr Traill were related.

animal husbandry.<sup>49</sup> With increasing numbers of emigrants arriving in Lower Canada, works such as Abbott's essay were valuable for the information they provided on such topics as the best methods for farming and raising livestock.<sup>50</sup> Abbott's first-hand knowledge about

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<sup>49</sup> In 1828 the Society for the Encouragement of Arts and Science in Canada awarded Abbott a silver medal for his essay, 'A brief view of the advantages and defects of the present system of agriculture in Canada, and the means of improving it in all its departments', a treatise on agrarian methods and the arts of husbandry'. For an account of this essay, see R.G. Boulianne, 'The Royal Institution for the Advancement of Learning; the correspondence, 1820-1829, a historical and analytical study' (unpublished PhD thesis, McGill University, Montreal, 1970).

<sup>50</sup> Two years after the publication of Abbott's essay, English emigrant farmer Joseph Pickering published his Emigration or no emigration, being the narrative of the author, an English farmer, from the year 1824-1830 during which time he traversed the United States of America, and the British Provinces of Canada with a view to settle as an emigrant containing observations on the manners and customs . . . the soil and climate (London, 1830). A third edition was published in 1832 under the title Inquiries of an emigrant. Other 'emigrant' literature from the period 1830 and 1846 include the following: William Cattermole, Emigration: the advantages of emigration to Canada (London, 1831); Martin Doyle [William Hickey], Hints on emigration to Upper Canada, especially addressed to the lower classes in Great Britain and Ireland (Dublin, London, Edinburgh, 1831); William Dunlop, Statistical sketches of Upper Canada (London, 1832); Joseph Bouchette, The British Dominions in North America; or a topographical and statistical description of the provinces of Lower and Upper Canada, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, the islands of Newfoundland, Prince Edward and Cape Breton (London, 1832); George Henry Hume, Canada as it is: comprising details relating to domestic policy, commerce and agriculture of the Upper and Lower provinces, especially intended for the use of settlers and emigrants (New York, 1832); Andrew Picken, The Canadas as they at present commend themselves to the enterprise of emigrants, colonists and capitalists. Compiled and condensed from documents furnished by John Galt and other authentic sources (London, 1832); Francis A. Evans, The emigrant's



agriculture and husbandry would later be put to profitable use when, in 1842, he wrote a series of letters for the Quebec Mercury. These appeared under the pseudonym 'immigrant farmer' and explained, among other things,

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directory and guide to obtain lands and effect a settlement in the Canadas (Dublin, Edinburgh, and London, 1832); Isaac Fidler, Observations on professions, literature, manners and emigration in the United States and Canada (New York, 1833); An Ex-Settler, Canada in the years 1832, 1833, 1834 (Dublin and London, 1835); Patrick Shirreff, A tour through North America; together with a comprehensive view of the Canadas and United States, as adapted for agricultural emigration (Edinburgh, London, and Glasgow, 1835); Catherine Parr Traill, The backwoods of Canada, being letters from the wife of an emigrant officer, illustrative of the domestic economy of British America (London, 1836); W.G. Mack, A letter from the Eastern Townships of Lower Canada, containing hints to intending emigrants (Glasgow, 1837); Anna Brownell Jameson, Winter studies and summer rambles in Canada (London, 1838); Charles Rubidge, A plain statement of the advantages attending emigration to Upper Canada (London, 1838); Samuel Butler, The emigrant's handbook of facts, concerning Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Cape of Good Hope &c; with the relative advantages each of the colonies offers for emigration, and practical advice to intending emigrants (Glasgow and London, 1843); James Bryce Brown, Views of Canada and the colonists, embracing the experience of a residence; views of the present state, progress and prospects of the colony; with detailed and practical information for intending emigrants, second edition (Edinburgh, 1844); Thomas Rolph, Emigration and colonization, embodying the results of a mission to Great Britain and Ireland during the years 1839, 1840, 1841 and 1842 (London, 1844); Frances Beaven, Sketches and tales, illustrative of life in the backwoods of New Brunswick, North America (London, 1845); Francis Bond Head, The emigrant (London, 1846). Poets, too, took emigration as their theme: see Standish O'Grady's The Emigrant (1841) and Alexander MacLachlan's similarly-titled poem published in 1861. See Standish O'Grady, The Emigrant (1841), edited by Brian Trehearne (London, Ont., 1989) and Alexander MacLachlan, The Emigrant (1861), edited by D.M.R. Bentley (London, Ont., 1991).



means of clearing and cultivating the land.<sup>51</sup> Such practical advice was eagerly sought by newly-arrived emigrants eager to adjust and adapt to their adopted home. Abbott explained that most books on emigration had 'fail[ed] to convey . . . the every day circumstances, occurring in life and occupations of a settler in this new country, without which no adequate idea can be formed of the difficulties to be encountered, of the varieties to be met with, nor even of the advantages to be expected'.<sup>52</sup> He blamed unscrupulous land agents for exaggerating the advantages of life in British North America 'beyond measure'.<sup>53</sup> Emigrants, he believed, should be told the "truth" and given a realistic picture of Canadian life.

So popular were his letters that they were subsequently published in pamphlet form and, later, as a book entitled The Emigrant to North America.<sup>54</sup>

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51 These appeared in the Mercury in January 1842.

52 Joseph Abbott, The Emigrant to North America, third edition (Edinburgh and London, 1844), p. 7.

53 ibid., p. 7.

54 Joseph Abbott, The Emigrant to North America. Being a compendium of useful practical hints to emigrants, selected from an unpublished Narrative of the adventures of a large family from the North of England, which emigrated to America in 1818, and settled in various parts of the Canadas, and the Western States, as farmers, etc. Together with an account of every day's doings upon a farm for a year. By an immigrant farmer, Of twenty years experience (Montreal, 1842). A second edition of the Memorandum was published in 1843.

Reportedly, this 'compendium of useful practical hints' enjoyed 'a most extensive circulation' in the Canadas, and Abbott was forced to revise and enlarge the work.<sup>55</sup> Copies of the work were then sent to Britain in the hope of finding a British publisher. In 1844 Blackwood and Sons of Edinburgh printed an edition under the title The Emigrant to North America and, despite the local nature of the work, they were immediately besieged by 'orders for more than a thousand copies'.<sup>56</sup> In addition, a number of British and American journals, including the Emigration Gazette, republished extracts from the work. An advertisement for the third edition boasted that Abbott had 'received . . . flattering and substantial proofs of public favour, in the shape of orders for more than a thousand copies of his work'.<sup>57</sup> Abbott's reputation as an authority on emigrant life was further enhanced when two governors-general, Charles Bagot and Charles Metcalfe, 'ordered several hundred copies for gratuitous distribution' among emigrants both in Canada and Britain.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> See 'Advertisement' in The Emigrant to North America, third edition (Edinburgh and London, 1844), p. v.

<sup>56</sup> ibid., p. vi.

<sup>57</sup> The Emigrant to North America, third edition, p. vi.

<sup>58</sup> ibid., p. vii. See also the entry on Abbott in Modern English Biography, edited by Frederic Boase, Vol. I (Truro, 1892) and Henry J. Morgan, Bibliotecha

The Emigrant to North America provided its readers with 'plain and practical information'.<sup>59</sup> Abbott claimed that his only purpose in writing the book was 'to convey to the mind of the emigrant . . . some idea of the nature and importance of the step he is about to take, with such hints and information as he will find useful for his guidance afterwards'.<sup>60</sup> According to his British publisher the success of Abbott's work was due to 'its strict adherence to truth' and to its willingness to look at both the advantages and disadvantages of emigration to British North America.<sup>61</sup> Unlike some writers, Abbott did not portray Lower Canada as an Edenic paradise. He criticised writers who gave 'no adequate idea . . . of the difficulties to be encountered' by the emigrant 'nor even of the advantages to be expected'.<sup>62</sup>

Abbott's emigration tract also contained what one critic has called 'a more subtle moral message': the superiority

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Canadensis (Ottawa, 1867), pp. 3-4.

<sup>59</sup> The Emigrant to North America, third edition, p. v. The work was also cheap, reportedly being sold for '1s 6d'.

<sup>60</sup> ibid., p. v.

<sup>61</sup> ibid., p. viii.

<sup>62</sup> ibid., p. 7.

of British North America to the United States.<sup>63</sup> Abbott was a Tory and a High-Churchman. He rejected the American ideas of republicanism and democracy and strenuously advocated loyalty to the Church and Crown, seeing them as the foundation upon which the society of British North America should be founded. It was because of such views that Abbott earned the title, 'the first enthusiastic advertiser of British North America'.<sup>64</sup> Abbott's enthusiasm, however, was tempered by experience in contrast to many other writers whose ignorance or eagerness to sell the benefits of the colonies to unsuspecting readers resulted in what Susanna Moodie referred to as exaggerated stories of 'the sheep and oxen . . . [which] ran about the streets, ready roasted, and with knives and forks upon their backs'.<sup>65</sup> Abbott, however, believed in telling readers the "truth" by giving them a factual account based on experience gained in the fields and forests of Lower Canada. As Musgrave states in the Preface to the novel, he had spent more than twenty-five years 'in the backwoods of this wild country' and believed himself well-qualified to speak authoritatively

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<sup>63</sup> ibid., p. v. See also Carman Millar, Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Vol. VIII, p. 4.

<sup>64</sup> Adam Shortt and Arthur G. Doughty, eds, Canada and Its Provinces, 22 vols (Toronto, 1914), Vol. XII, p. 542.

<sup>65</sup> Susanna Moodie, Roughing it in the Bush (1852) (Toronto, 1989), p. 14.

on the emigrant experience.<sup>66</sup>

As stated earlier, the subtitle of Abbott's Emigrant to North America suggests that the work was derived from an 'unpublished Narrative' related to the 'adventures' of members of Abbott's family who had emigrated to North America some years earlier. It is likely, if not probable, that this 'narrative' was the basis for Abbott's last major publication, his autobiographical novel, Philip Musgrave; or, the Memoirs of a Church of England Missionary in the North American Colonies (1846). The following section examines the novel and evaluates its author's narrative strategies and underlying intentions.

**IV: Memories, Intentions, and Ideology: Philip Musgrave; or the Memoirs of a Church of England Missionary in the North American Colonies (1846)**

Philip Musgrave was published in London in 1846. In it Abbott turned again to the theme of the emigrant experience. However, instead of writing another emigrant handbook, he combined his practical and literary skills to produce an entertaining autobiographical novel. Its chief protagonist Philip Musgrave was an Anglican missionary who like Abbott had emigrated to Lower Canada in the early

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<sup>66</sup> See Abbott, Philip Musgrave, p. 3.



nineteenth century.<sup>67</sup> According to the novel's title page, Abbott assumed the role of editor of Musgrave's 'memoirs', thus situating his narrative on the border between factual and fictive writing, for in "editing" Musgrave's memoirs Abbott purported to represent reality through the conventions of fictionality, while grafting onto his fictional pact with the reader some kind of additional claim to empirical validity.<sup>68</sup> Philip Musgrave

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<sup>67</sup> 'Musgrave' was a name of a family who resided at Eden-Hall near Carlisle in Westmorland. Sir Philip Musgrave (1607-1678) was a former governor of Carlisle. He distinguished himself in battle against the Scots at Dumfries in 1644. Following the surrender of Carlisle on 1 October 1648 Musgrave fled to France. Following the Restoration he returned to Carlisle where he resumed an active role in the politics of Westmorland and Cumberland until his death. Interestingly, there is a curious connection between the Abbotts and the Musgraves. A portrait of Sir Thomas Musgrave, grandson of Philip, was painted in 1786 by a 'J. Abbott'. An illustration of it appeared in the British Military Panorama in 1813 (see Notes and Queries, eighth series, Vol. V, p. 148). See also Gilbert Burton, Life of Sir Philip Musgrave, Bart. of Hartley Castle, Co. Westmorland, and of Edenhall, Co. Cumberland (Carlisle, 1840); Percy Musgrave, Notes on the Ancient Family of Musgrave of Musgrave, Westmorland (Leeds, 1911); and Joseph Nicolson and Richard Burn, The History and Antiquities of the Counties of Westmorland and Cumberland (London 1777; republished in London, 1976), p. 587. In his journal Walter Scott notes that he was visited by a 'Captain [George] Musgrave' (1799-1879) of Edenhall on 13 November 1814 (see Journal of Sir Walter Scott, 2 vols (Edinburgh, 1890)). A 'Sir Miles [or Giles] Musgrave' is also featured in Scott's A Legend of Montrose in Vol. 4 of Tales of my landlord, collected and arranged by Jedediah Cliesbotham, third series, 4 vols (Edinburgh, 1819).

<sup>68</sup> See Barbara Foley, Telling the Truth: The Theory and Practice of Documentary Fiction (Ithaca and London, 1986). Foley argues that the border between fact and fiction is a blurred one and cites among others Robert Scholes' claim that 'all writing, all composition, is construction. There is no mimesis, only poesis. No

is autobiographical (thus "factual") inasmuch as there is a factual link between the work's content and material contained in the author's letters and reports to the SPG; but the novel represents a pseudo-factual reality which merely imitates the authentic testimony of a "real life" person.<sup>69</sup>

By fictionalising his life experience, Abbott allowed himself greater freedom to express his opinions at a time when he was in the process of disengaging himself from his responsibilities to the SPG; although his narrative was not critical of the missionary society it was not simply a propagandistic tract (although it does promote the missionary society). It is unlikely that the SPG would have sanctioned Abbott's fictional recreation of his life preferring instead a factual narrative. Nevertheless, the narrator claims that he has written 'a true and plain tale'. 'Although much which may seem extraordinary or romantic will be found in my narrative', Musgrave states, 'I can assure the reader that a similar tale of toil, suffering, and strange adventure could be told by a great many other missionaries in this country' (p. 3). By choosing a fictional form and a role which distanced

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recording. Only constructing' (see Robert Scholes, Structural Fabulation: An Essay on the Fiction of the Future (Notre Dame, 1975), p. 7).

<sup>69</sup> See Foley, Telling the Truth, p. 25.

himself from the authorship of the novel, Abbott adopts a narrative strategy which allows him the freedom to explore his experience outside the restrictions of his missionary society's literary codes. By creating an alter-ego in Philip Musgrave, Abbott also avoids the difficulty, experienced by George Jehoshaphat Mountain some fifteen years earlier, of egotism. Abbott's choice of the novel form, therefore, was one way of circumventing that problem and advancing the writing of Protestant missionary experience in the nineteenth century.

Philip Musgrave is notable in that it is the first missionary narrative in Canada to blur the border between fact and fiction. Prior missionary writing consisted largely of factual, eye-witness accounts contained in missionary reports, diaries, and journals. Kohlmeister's and Marsden's works, for instance, consist largely of statistical information related to numbers of births, baptisms, conversions, marriages, and burials. While Marsden's work advances the narrative form beyond a simple travel narrative, Abbott's novel constitutes a departure from documentary work altogether. Philip Musgrave represents an important transition between the chronicles of earlier missionaries in Canada and the missionary and missionary-inspired fictions of the post-Confederation period.

Like Kohlmeister's and Marsden's narrative, Abbott's novel is a personal testimony of Providence in the Canadian wilderness. The work's history is rooted in the first-hand experience of the missionary; however, it would be, as one critic reminds us, 'naive to assume a direct homology between text and history'. 'The discourse of a witness', argues Elzbieta Sklodowska, 'cannot be a reflection of his or her experience, but rather a refraction determined by the vicissitudes of memory, intention, ideology'.<sup>70</sup> In the case of Abbott's novel, these are superimposed on both the author's experience and the text as part of the process of selecting and editing the material for the novel, creating what Sklodowska refers to as 'more ambiguities, silences, and absences' that already exist in the author's memory. Thus while Abbott uses the first-person narrator to achieve a sense of authenticity and veracity, 'the play between fiction and history reappears inexorably as a problem' in testimonial narrative.<sup>71</sup> By examining the author's

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<sup>70</sup> Elzbieta Sklodowska, 'La forma testimonial y la novelística de Miguel Barnet', Revista/Review Interamericana, 12:3 (1982), p. 379, quoted in John Beverley, 'The Margin at the Centre: On Testimonio (Testimonial Narrative)', Modern Fiction Studies 35:1 (1989), p. 22.

<sup>71</sup> Elzbieta Sklodowska, 'La forma testimonial y la novelística de Miguel Barnet', p. 379, quoted in Beverley, 'The Margin at the Centre', p. 22.

selective memories, his intentions for writing the novel, and the ideology which governs his writing, modern readers can begin to understand and appreciate Abbott's novel and its narrative function. The remainder of this chapter will consider Abbott's intentions in writing the book and evaluate the ideology which informs and underpins it. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the author's/editor's selection of "remembered" material and how this material might be related to the (re)construction of the missionary's identity.<sup>72</sup>

#### a. Intentions

In his 'Introduction' to the 'memoirs' Musgrave outlines the main reasons for writing his 'true and plain tale', first among them being the lack of knowledge about British North America in England. 'It has ever been a matter of astonishment to me', he writes, 'that, . . . [as] constant and unintermitting as our intercourse now is with the mother country, so little should be known there of our social, political, or religious condition' (p. 1). Before going to Lower Canada Musgrave admits that he had received only some 'romantic ideas concerning America' from relations who had earlier emigrated to that country.

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<sup>72</sup> 'Construction' in the sense that Abbott is constructing the identity of his fictional hero in the novel, but 'reconstruction' in the sense that, as an autobiography, he is reconstructing his own identity from the memory of his colonial experience.



These 'romantic ideas' led him to believe that he was about to travel to an 'earthly paradise'. Upon his arrival in Lower Canada, however, he was awakened to 'all the sad realities of life' (p. 4). Part of Abbott's intention in writing his novel, then, was to inform the emigrant reader of the true circumstances of Canadian life. Even the 'best-informed immigrant', Musgrave states, '. . . finds [Canada] totally different from what he had been led to expect' (p. 1).

Through Musgrave, Abbott sets out to correct the public's 'mistaken and erroneous ideas' concerning the Church's missionary activity in the colonies. 'I am quite aware that at home, as well as here in the colonies', Musgrave writes, 'there is an impression upon the public mind that we missionaries are only so in name, not in reality' (p. 2).<sup>73</sup> Musgrave's goal is 'to disabuse the mind of the English reader on this point' for without the public's support the missionary cause is doomed to failure. In this context, Abbott's book can be seen as a work of missionary propaganda aimed at acquainting readers with what Musgrave calls the 'labours and perils, . . . toils,

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<sup>73</sup> Writing in 1836 the Bishop of Nova Scotia stated that '[i]t is an unhappy mistake, but prevalent in England, and one which doubtless has diminished the resources of the Society, to suppose that the labours of our clergy are not of a missionary character' (Philip Musgrave, p. 2). See also Report of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (London, 1836).

and difficulties, and privations' of the SPG's colonial missionaries (p. 2). Musgrave defends the missionaries, stating that many in the colony would 'have never heard the sounds of salvation' had the missionaries not been prepared 'to endure all the toils and privations' which their itinerant life in the colony demanded. By presenting 'a simple memoir of missionary life in these colonies', Musgrave seeks to succeed 'in exciting in the minds of [his] readers . . . interest in missionary exertions' (pp. 2-3).

Philip Musgrave is not a great work of literature, nor does its author pretend to be a great writer. Like Marsden's narrator, Musgrave disclaims any literary pretension. He acknowledges his work's many 'literary errors' stating that they are the consequence of having lived 'in the backwoods of this wild country, shut out from the world' for the better part of twenty-five years.

He tells his 'true and plain tale . . . in simplicity' (p. 3) as he shares his experiences and feelings of loneliness and isolation in the new land with potential emigrant readers. He also demonstrates how those feelings pass in time. The longer he lives in Lower Canada the more Musgrave identifies with his adopted country. The missionary who upon arrival felt 'a hopeless and lonely exile in a strange land' achieved over the course of twenty-five years a sense of belonging and an affinity with his adopted home.

Abbott's book was widely circulated in Britain and even became part of the government's propaganda aimed at inducing emigrants to the Canadas. In order to acquaint them with the country's climate and customs, hundreds of copies were distributed among British emigrants who sought information about the Canadas and among newly-arrived settlers, especially seeking advice about where and how to locate themselves. Like later, Philip Musgrave too was an emigrant: like them he shared their feelings of loneliness and isolation in the new land.

#### **b. Ideology**

Abbott's novel is not only informed by its author's pragmatic and religious intentions, but its narrative is also framed within an ideological language and religious beliefs which are reflected in the narrator's discourse and actions. Abbott encodes in his narrative the ideological and aesthetic values of his Church and missionary society. Musgrave's mission to establish ecclesiastical order in the Lower Canadian wilderness is

enacted in the building of churches and assembling of congregations, and his writing reflects all aspects of that mission. Unlike Marsden who dwells more on his personal experience of Providence, Abbott focuses on the more mundane establishment of communal order. Whereas Marsden celebrates his perception and ability to experience God, Musgrave measures his success in terms of building churches and congregations, not a personal "road" to God. Unlike Marsden's Narrative, Abbott's novel is dominated by the image (or its absence) of the church. When he arrives at his intended mission Musgrave discovers, to his disappointment and confusion, 'that there was neither a church nor a parsonage-house' (p. 14). He immediately organises a community meeting and sets the terms for their construction. When his parishioners tell him that they will first build him a house Musgrave responds, 'No . . . I must have my church first' (p. 14). As a High-Anglican, Musgrave places great importance in the holy edifice. Its construction becomes his raison d'être, his congregation's poverty the bane of his existence. When several of his congregation attack the idea of building a steeple because of the cost Musgrave replies vigorously, 'I could not bear the idea of a church without a tower'. During the course of its building he exhausts his personal funds and only a 'munificent grant' from the SPG staves off despair (p. 19).

Musgrave is a staunch Anglican, a Royalist, and a Tory. He is thoroughly committed to the Church and Crown. He despises the Dissenters and regularly berates any who compete with him for souls. His contempt for the Methodists, for example, is evident in the following description of one of their circuit riders:

He was tall and thin, almost to deformity. His countenance, that index of the inner man, was so warped and twisted, that I could not read it. His forehead I could not see, for his broad-brimmed hat was pulled tightly over it, down even to his rough and shaggy eyebrows. His eyes, the only good feature in his face, were bright, but deeply set; and, except for a certain cunning sinister expression, they might have been called handsome. His nose was long and straight and pointed. His ears were large and thick, high up in his head, and bent out underneath his hat. His mouth was pursed up and drawn down at the corners, and had an expression of inordinate self-esteem; and his chin was so diminutive as hardly to deserve the name. (p. 43)

Musgrave draws a caricature. The preacher's satanic features leave no doubt as to Musgrave's contemptuous attitude toward the circuit rider and his kind. Musgrave's ensuing conversation with the Methodist missionary becomes an ideological contest over the Church and the nature of faith. Musgrave concludes that a 'resident clergyman' is needed 'in every settlement' in order to defend society from the unsettling forces of 'fanatical' preachers (p. 50).



A similar attitude underlines Musgrave's decision to organise a 'Clerical Association', a religious organisation consisting of a small group of like-minded Anglican clergymen as himself. Dissenters, however, worm their way into the group and it soon degenerates 'into a theological debating society' (p. 57). During one of their debates Musgrave is told that he is 'a hundred years behind the age' (p. 59). Nevertheless, he continues to battle ~~with the~~ Dissenters, remarking that an Anglican missionary's 'sphere of duty is almost unlimited . . . and the demand for his services always more than he can meet' (p. 69). Though humorous to modern readers, such exchanges remind us of the sectarian nature of Canadian religious life in the early nineteenth century. For Abbott's audience, however, such conflicts were intended to alert them to the dangers of religious factionalism and to encourage them to support the SPG in its attempt to establish a predominant Anglican order in the colonies.

As a staunch Royalist and Tory, Musgrave despises the neighbouring republicans to the south, whose democracy and individualism, he believes, will lead to chaos. Only allegiance to the Crown and the ecclesiastical order of the Church of England, he believes, will maintain the stability of colonial society in British North America. Had the British Government supported the Church during the

American Revolution, he contends, 'that brightest gem in England's crown [the American colonies] would never have been torn from it' (pp. 124-125). The 'contest', he argues, '[was] between the Church and loyalty on the one side, and treason, and dissent, and infidelity, on the other' (p. 124). Canadian resistance to American invasions, Musgrave points out, is proof of Canada's desire to remain part of the British Empire. 'The people at home may believe it or not', he says, 'the fact is no less certain, that the principal if not the only bond of union between these North American colonies and the mother-country is the Church; and although trampled upon, robbed and despoiled, and all but proscribed, as she is at the present moment, she will always continue to be so. Indeed her whole constitution and polity are intrinsically monarchical, and therefore conservative' (p. 125). It is with pride that Musgrave later describes how Canadians set aside their religious differences during the rebellion of 1837-1838 and 'rose en masse as one man' to put down the rebels (p. 140). In a description of his settlement's response to a planned rebel attack, Musgrave is pictured leading some of the young men into battle. 'Although I may not presume to class myself with those heroic and warlike Churchmen of old', he explains, 'I considered it no less my imperative duty to share with my people the imminent peril which I had induced them to encounter' (p.

141). Musgrave is Abbott's religious and political mouthpiece; the novel is a forum for advancing the author's views on colonial society and its obligations to the parent Church and State.

The Church assumes a significant, if not central, position in Musgrave's vision of community. 'I caught a glimpse of that glorious spire, with its metal covering glistening like burnished gold in the bright sunshine', he remarks during his encounter with the Methodist circuit rider, 'At the sight my feelings, which had been slightly ruffled by the rude remark of my fanatical companion, were instantly soothed. "Yes!" I said to myself, "there is indeed that

"Tapering spire,            That

points to heaven and leads the way." (p. 45)

Musgrave's poetic and religious sentiments echo that of another Canadian poet and Anglican clergyman, Adam Hood Burwell, whose vision of community was likewise marked by the central position of the church in the pioneer settlement.<sup>74</sup> For these writers, the church steeple stands as a fixed and unwavering point in the chaotic and unpredictable wilderness.

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<sup>74</sup> See Adam Hood Burwell, Talbot Road: a Poem (1818), edited by Michael Williams (London, Ont., 1991) and Michael Williams, 'A Critical Edition of Adam Hood Burwell's Talbot Road: a Poem (1818)' (unpublished MA thesis, University of Western Ontario, 1988).

Following the British Government's decision to withdraw their grant to the SPG Musgrave's role in the community is threatened, resulting in the following outburst:

The opposers of every administration, even Mr. Hume himself, admitted, when the subject was brought before the House of Commons, that the grant, strongly as they disapproved of it, ought to be continued during the lives of the present incumbents, whose salaries, to a certain extent, depended upon it. Yet, notwithstanding all parties in Parliament were perfectly willing that it should be continued during a limited period, that economical administration, disregarded the high-minded, generous, and truly Christian principles which had shed such a lustre upon the British name, and exalted it to the very highest pinnacle of glory in the eyes of all the nations of the earth, did at once withhold it; thereby reducing a hundred and sixty poor missionaries to want and degradation--and for what? . . .

. . . . Had such a saving been really expedient, it surely would have been felt, and certainly never objected to: instead of which, a few poor missionaries, many of them with large families, were thus, with cold and heartless cruelty, singled out to be the only sufferers. (pp. 123-124)

Incensed at its 'heartless' actions, Musgrave remonstrates with the government. He despairs over the lack of missionaries in the Canadas and warns that the decline of ecclesiastical order will lead to political disaster. A government-funded missionary society, he argues, could have been more successful in 'secur[ing] an influence over the great body of people, sufficient to have prevented the rebellions of 1837 and 1838, and thereby saved the Government a million of money' (p. 124). On a more personal level, however, Musgrave notes the effect of the

loss of the Government's grant to the SPG in terms of his own personal income. 'The loss of half my income', he cries, 'produced . . . a sad revolution in my little establishment' (p. 125). With only an annual salary of a hundred pounds upon which to live he is forced to take drastic action: 'I sold one of my horses, shot two of my dogs, discharged my servants, took my boys away from school' (p. 125). The SPG, however, manages to provide Musgrave with some assistance and, with some difficulty, he is able to resume building his house.

Much of Musgrave's narrative echoes Abbott's letters to the SPG. Like the church, the work on Musgrave's house takes some considerable time to complete. His pastoral duties keep him from its construction most of the time and help was not always readily obtainable. Cholera and poverty keep Musgrave's neighbours from assisting him with its construction. But he is a persistent man. He promises his helpers that they will be blessed by God for their charity. Nevertheless, work progresses slowly. 'Finishing two or three more rooms in my house, building a barn, stables, an ice-house, and a dog-kennel', Musgrave explains, 'occupied the whole of the summer' (p. 127). Yet he utilises the event to convey information deemed essential to emigrant experience. An 'ice-house', he points out, is 'indispensable to the comfort of a family'



in Lower Canada where summers can be quite hot. As for a dog-kennel Musgrave shows how his keeping of 'powerful and courageous' dogs has been beneficial to the community 'in consequence of the great benefit the people derive from their active and unwearied exertions in killing or driving away . . . obnoxious animals' (p. 128).

The importance of community is again reflected in Musgrave's efforts to complete the building of the church. Much of his time is spent inspiring and coercing his congregation to subscribe funds towards its completion. When enough money has been collected the settlers approach him asking 'When do you think we should begin with it?'. Musgrave replies: '"WE," I said to myself: the word was music to me, for hitherto I had seemed to stand alone in my arduous undertaking, but now, at once, it became a common cause' (pp. 130-131). Making most of the 'common cause', Musgrave boasts how people overcame their sectarian biases to help raise the church. Its completion is a matter of great pride to him: 'One can hardly find its equal, as a new settlement church, throughout the whole length and breadth of the land. There it stands--and long may it do so--a monument of the zeal of my poor people for the establishment of the Redeemer's kingdom upon earth' (p. 133). The completion of the church vindicates Musgrave's ideology and he announces to the

reader that he can now 'dismiss the subject' and move on to other matters of interest (p. 133).

Like the missionary narrator in Marsden's account, Musgrave dwells on incidents which suggest the importance of Providence in mortal affairs. When he first arrives in the settlement he describes how everything was 'in confusion' and how he imposed order by establishing a Church, a Sunday-school, and a small library. The library, however, was burned by a drunkard. The drunkard later has his eyes gouged out by his wife and is further "punished" by the loss of one of his children. According to Musgrave, the man was 'rightly punished' by the 'hand of Providence' (pp. 133-135). He goes on to narrate several accounts of drunkards who met a similar fate in which 'the hand of Providence was so conspicuously manifested' (p. 135) and tells the story of a 'Solitary' who having shunned society was later discovered to have been murdered. In all of these instances, Musgrave affirms the presence of the 'hand of Providence' and speaks of the 'deep impression' which such accounts made on his parishioners: 'They looked upon it as an additional link in the long chain of evidence which proves the perpetual existence and the unvarying influence of an unseen and overruling power that "ordereth all things both in heaven and earth", and which proves also the eternal

truth of His word, who saith "Whosoever sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed" (p. 138). Musgrave's narrative not only conveys its author's religious beliefs (particularly that of the role of Providence in the settlers' lives), it also advocates a strong ecclesiastical and communal order (the important place of the Church in the organisation and functioning of the pioneer community). Perhaps more importantly, however, Musgrave's narrative also reveals a more personal concern, an anxiety found in much emigrant writing and brought on by the displacement of the emigration experience itself.

**V: 'Who or what I am': Displacement and the Reconstruction of Identity**

Viewed from a post-colonial critical perspective, Abbott's novel may be seen as an example of a writer "rewriting" the myths of imperial discourse. In their book The Empire Writes Back (1989) Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin argue how some colonial and post-colonial writers used western and imperial motifs of destruction and salvation in order to suppress and/or annihilate forms of "Otherness" thereby valorising their own identity and authority.<sup>75</sup> They describe, for example, how Timothy

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<sup>75</sup> Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures (London and New York, 1989), p. 98ff.

Findley's novel Not Wanted on the Voyage (1984) "rewrites" the myth of the Flood so that the focus is on its destructive rather than redemptive features. 'The great myth of salvation becomes a saga of destruction in the name of minority righteousness and the extension of petty power'.<sup>76</sup> Findley's protagonist Noah Noyes marginalises the "Other" or anyone who does not hold to his beliefs in order to maintain his authority over them. By delineating the "Other" as radically different, the imperial "self" 'maintain[s] authority over the Other in a colonial situation'. Yet 'imperial discourse', Ashcroft and his colleagues argue, ' . . . must maintain sufficient identity with the Other to valorize control over it'. Such practice, it is argued, reveals inherent anxieties and phobias within the imperial "self" concerning the "Other" and produces a degree of ambivalence over the authority of the imperial discourse. '[T]here is a kind of built-in resistance in the construction of any dominant discourse', Ashcroft concludes, 'and opposition is an almost inevitable effect of its construction of cultural difference'. When the "Other" reminds the imperial "self" of this ambivalence a threat is perceived. The imperial "self" responds by either further attacking the "Other" or, it is exposed in the process of becoming a colonial

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<sup>76</sup> Timothy Findley, Not Wanted on the Voyage (Markham, Ont., 1984). See also The Empire Writes Back, p. 98.

hybrid or mimic.<sup>77</sup>

In emigrant writing it is often the case that the author's preoccupation with the impact of physical displacement from mother country to colonial environment on his or her sense of self exposes the work's other preoccupation with the process of becoming 'a colonial hybrid or mimic'. D.E.S. Maxwell identifies settler colonies like Australia and Canada as typical places where the displaced emigrant undergoes a change or transformation of identity.<sup>78</sup> The emergence of a "double vision" in emigrant writing suggests a dual perspective, one which reflects both the author's looking both back to where he or she has come from and forward to the "now" of the present and the "tomorrow" of the future. Caught between these two temporal "worlds", the emigrant's identity is perceived to be undergoing enormous pressure to change. Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin argue that (post)colonial identity 'is constituted by the difference' between the subject's inherent values and expectations brought from the mother country and those that are engendered in the new environment. The transformation from colonising to colonised identity can produce new modes of articulation

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<sup>77</sup> See The Empire Writes Back, p. 103.

<sup>78</sup> See D.E.S. Maxwell, 'Landscape and Theme', Commonwealth: Unity and Diversity within a Common Culture, edited by John Press (London, 1965).



and perception. Invariably, the impact of displacement on the reconstruction of identity in emigrant literature is characterised by themes of 'exile', what has been described as 'the problem of finding and defining "home", physical and emotional confrontations with the "new" land and its ancient and established meanings'.<sup>79</sup>

From the beginning of the novel, Musgrave calls into question the validity of his Old World identity: 'Who or what I am--my birth, my parentage, and education--are questions of little or no interest to the general reader' (p. 4). As soon as he arrives in Lower Canada, Musgrave's imperial identity begins to change under the pressures of his new experience. Other than knowing that he was a 'curate of a large and populous parish' in England, the main focus of Musgrave's narrative is on the development of this new colonial or at least 'hybrid' identity. In his confrontation with the "otherness" of the new land, Musgrave and the reader are forced to reconsider the notion of the colonial self. From the moment he steps ashore in Lower Canada Musgrave's Old World identity is subjected to change. Although he identifies himself as 'a hopeless and lonely exile in a strange land' (p. 10), the transformation has begun. The reader is told, for instance, how the labels on his baggage have become

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<sup>79</sup> The Empire Writes Back, pp. 26 and 27.

'partially defaced', an action which shakes Musgrave's self-confidence and further renders his identity ambiguous to himself and those around him. Is he who he states he is, or, is he who he is perceived to be by the colonists? As Musgrave travels further into the countryside, his ability to recognise the identities of the colonists also becomes less certain as he soon discovers during a voyage upriver to his mission:

I had for fellow-passengers a country judge of the Court of Requests, a magistrate, and a colonel and major of militia, all belonging to and residing in my intended mission. . . .

I thought at first, that, as far as good society was concerned, I had "fallen on my feet;" but, alas! my judge turned out to be a petty shopkeeper, a dole out of drams to the drunken raftsmen; the magistrate, an old rebel soldier of the United States, living upon a pension of 20l. a year from that government, as the reward of his treason, and, at the same time, holding a commission of the peace under the one against which he had successfully fought. The colonel, the most respectable of my dignified companions, had been a serjeant in the -- regiment, and was now living upon his pension of a shilling a day. And, to complete my catalogue, the major was the jolly landlord of a paltry village tavern. (p. 8)

In his confrontation with the colonial "others", Musgrave comes to the self-deprecating realisation that nothing is as he once knew it. To simply marginalise them would be to further alienate himself from the company. 'These circumstances may appear as trifling to my readers', he states, '. . . but they made a very different impression upon my mind at the time' (p. 9). Such an 'impression' undermines any notions of continuity with the Old World.

When, for example, Musgrave realises that his 'expectations' of finding his mission to be 'in regular order--the same . . . as in a parish in England' are 'doomed' to disappointment (pp. 5-6), he is forced to contend with the new "reality" which confronts him. It is he who must adapt. From the difference which lies between his Old World expectations and his New World experience, Musgrave's colonial identity begins to take form.

While walking through the Lower Canadian woods on his way to his intended mission, Musgrave further experiences the psychic effects of his displacement:

I knew not how far I had walked, when I came to an old pine-tree, beneath whose shade I laid me down, and wept and prayed as if my heart would break. And soon I thought I felt a strange calm come creeping over me, but I knew not whether it was real or imaginary. I thought too that I heard the sound of friendly voices which had once been familiar to my ear. I raised my head and looked around, but I could not see nothing except the dwellings of the dead. . . .

Many a nameless grave was there, besides the one which had unconsciously made my pillow. I was in fact, in the midst of a burying ground. . . .

It was, in truth, a dreary and a solitary spot, far from the haunts of men, in which they bury their dead out of their sight, and out of their remembrance too, it seemed, from the careless negligence with which this lonely cemetery must have been regarded, or it would at least have had a fence, however crude, around it. (pp. 9-10)

In this passage the cemetery becomes a symbolic representation of Musgrave's psychic state. His

uncertainty and ambivalence as to where he is and what is going on around him are manifested in the ghostly and ironic sounds of the 'friendly voices' and the dreariness of the 'nameless grave[s]' which surround and haunt him (pp. 9-10). Within this unconfined space--which is antithetical to Musgrave's idea of a fenced-in European graveyard--the extent of his disorientation reveals itself. His sense of time comes to a standstill and he is later amazed to discover that 'several hours' have passed, without his awareness. He remarks that the passing of time in the colony is not measured 'by days and years, but by events and circumstances' (p. 68). Within the cemetery the history which surrounds him is entombed in the 'nameless grave[s]' of the dead; it is a history which he can neither read (the graves are unnamed) nor comprehend ('I knew not whether it was real or imaginary'). There seems to be no obvious connection between the past and the present in this backwoods burying ground and, as yet, no real comprehension of 'who or what' he is to become.

In his first meeting with the settlers to whom he has been sent Musgrave's sense of 'who or what' he is challenged over a case of mistaken identity. Confused with another minister named 'Johnstone' whom the settlers have been expecting, Musgrave declares that is not the man. "'Then you're not the minister appointed to this place'", respond

the settlers. Musgrave assures them that he is to which the settlers reply, "'Then your name is Johnstone--must be Johnstone"'. A rather bemused and confused Musgrave answers, "'Well, . . . my name was Musgrave before I left England"' (p. 12). The encounter is humorous, but its consequences are serious for the missionary, as he soon discovers in the inn: "'Well, well," I heard my quondam friendly guide exclaim, as if deprecating his own want of penetration, "that I, so long a ruling elder in the church, should have mistaken a prelatical and papistical - - -" something, but I did not hear what, as the door was just then closed behind me' (p. 12). The closing door symbolises the separation between Musgrave and the strange new world of the settlers. As the flow of information from the one side to the other is suppressed, Musgrave is symbolically denied access to the colonial world of perception. It is only by "opening" this door that he can begin the process of reaching "his" people and becoming one of them. Musgrave must create a new space, a shared "room" in which colonist and missionary can relate to one another. For Musgrave the creation of this space is enacted in the building of a church. Not only does it allow him to bring the community together under one roof, symbolically uniting them in their differences, but also permits him to reconstruct and adapt his identity within a sanctioned colonial space.



The Church's priority not only signals its importance in Musgrave's life, but indicates his urgency to construct a communal rather than private space. Work on the church progresses slowly due to the poverty of the inhabitants and Musgrave must resort to using another public space, the school house, for his religious services. As for a home, he pitches a tent 'close by the door of a little cottage belonging to a labouring farmer' (p. 15). This location emphasises his extreme impoverishment and underlines his reliance on the community for his well-being and support. He is fed by the farmer's wife, and during inclement weather is given a bedroom in the farmer's 'unfinished' house (p. 15). In another symbolic gesture of his indigenous adaptation to colonial life, Musgrave describes the native construction of his dwelling:

While the summer lasted, my tent did very well, especially after I had contrived to get rid of the pole in the centre, which was very much in my way, and to ward off the burning rays of the hot sun, which made the interior almost like a heated oven. The former I managed by putting up three poles in the form of a triangle; and the latter by covering the outside with maple and basswood branches; and as their thick and luxuriant foliage withered and dried up, I replaced them with other fresh and green. (p. 15)

Here the reader finds an example of Musgrave's adaptation to colonial life. The replacing of the centre pole with a triangular frame, for example, symbolises the de-

centring within Musgrave's own psychic space as his "Old World" values are replaced with "New World" modes of adaptation. This process, however, is not without its emotional strain nor upset. During the Bishop's visit to his mission Musgrave must continue to conduct religious services within the school house, a fact which he finds 'so humiliating . . . that [he] do[es] not like to dwell upon it' (p. 17).<sup>80</sup> This is only one of many experiences in which he must repress his anger as he learns to adapt to the wilderness situation and its constrictions on social conduct and religious ritual. Such experiences serve to reveal Musgrave's ongoing conflict between his experience of place and his sense of self.

We can and should view the building of the colonial church with Musgrave's attempts to construct a new identity for himself in Canada. In the beginning, the absence of a church is deemed reason for distress and self-anxiety. 'All my disappointments, all my privations, and, what were worse than both, all my feelings of utter loneliness, were as nothing when compared with the trouble and anxiety, the positive and absolute distress, with which the building of this church overwhelmed me', explains Musgrave (p. 18). However, the missionary cannot undertake the building of

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<sup>80</sup> Compare this to Abbott's embarrassment at having to accommodate Bishop Mountain in the bedroom of his servant. See p. 209 above.

the church (nor his identity) upon his own. He must rely on the good will of the community and the beneficence of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. The colonial community and the missionary society are the other two sides of the "triangular framework" upon which he must construct his hybrid identity. Cooperation between the missionary, his parishioners, and the missionary society, eventually enable him to accomplish his task. With the completion of the church his identity is united with that of the colonists: '[O]ur bare walls, with their sheltering roof . . . were our own, and we felt ourselves at home' (p. 21). The emphasis on 'our' and 'ourselves' reflects the importance of this unification and is given further credence and import in a letter from one of the colonists to potential emigrants in Britain. Buoyed by Musgrave's presence in the community and by the completion of the church, the recently-arrived settler reassures his reader that Lower Canada contains

"as many of those favourable features in the home he has left as can possibly be found. .

. . . . No one brought up in a country like England, where such order and regularity prevail, can form any idea of the dreadful state of society in many portions of these provinces, as well as in the United States; whereas this part of the country, where I have located myself, might challenge the world for its superiority in orderliness and morality."  
(p. 22)

Less than half way through his book, Musgrave's attitude to his new home has now changed. Like Odysseus returning

from the underworld, Musgrave emerges from a 'fearful journey' through the dark woods of Lower Canada with a new sense of belonging:

On my reaching home the next day, the joyous welcome from my dear wife, if it did not repay me for all my sufferings, made me certainly forget them. Indeed I hardly knew, till now, what it really was to have a home. It is true that for a year or two I had a house of my own, and this I called my home. But I could not associate with the term any of those domestic enjoyments which had formerly been so inseparably connected with the warmest affections of my heart. It seemed, indeed, a desecration of the term to call it home, when all about it was so cold and solitary. Now, however, the scene was changed, and all was bright and beautiful; in short, I was no longer a stranger in a strange land. My adopted country had in every sense of the word become my home. (p. 41)

Only by experiencing the dreaded ambivalence of displacement to which his journey into the woods had subjected him can Musgrave allow himself to experience the awakening joy of finding himself 'no longer a stranger'. The joy increases a few months later when his wife gives birth to a son and the chapter ends on a note of renewed familial identity which bodes well for Musgrave's future in the colony.

As I have already suggested, Musgrave's encounter with the Canadian "otherness" is not without its tensions and ambivalent feelings. The presence of dissenting ministers, the recurrence of strange dreams, visions, and other disorienting experiences further dismantle the

missionary's sense of who and where he is and challenge his sense of purpose. They also contest his sense of authority and identity. The consequence of moving or being moved from familiar ground to foreign territory engenders a discourse of displacement. 'It is here', argues Ashcroft, 'that the special post-colonial crisis of identity comes into being; the concern with the development or recovery of an effective identifying relationship between self and place'.<sup>81</sup> The emigrant writer often loses his or her identity in the process of dislocation. Thus, by writing an autobiographical work, he or she attempts to recover what has been lost or seeks to develop a new relationship between self and place, thereby generating a new, or, at least, a hybrid identity. Hybrid identities are generated within 'the first generation of settlement' as dislocation produces alienation, ambivalence, and, finally, 'a tendency to seek an alternative, differentiated identity?' In the colonial space, the European sense of history and the past 'run . . . aground in a new and overwhelming space which annihilates time and imperial purpose' and results in

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81 The Empire Writes Back, p. 8. Ashcroft emphasises the post-colonial writer's role as victim in these examples and ignore those situations where the writer emigrated of his own free will, either to better his lot or to carry out his ideological mission. Would Ashcroft argue that such writers belong to the imperial centre or is 'victimisation' a prerequisite for post-colonial writing?



feelings associated with disorientation and displacement.<sup>82</sup>

Disorientation and displacement produce anxiety and phobic fears. Throughout his narrative Musgrave describes many unusual, often unexplainable, occurrences. Each reveals Musgrave's inability to penetrate the mysteries of nature in this alien world. On one occasion he and his fellow colonists are 'astonished and alarmed by a most extraordinary meteorological phenomenon' (p. 26). The eclipse of the sun is followed by a 'yellow smoky fog' which leaves the land in near-darkness. By noon the landscape was 'totally dark' and both animals and people were beginning to behave strangely:

I was out that morning, two or three miles from home. On my return, just before the darkness was the deepest, on passing some of the farm-houses, I saw the women milking their cows. They had no clocks or watches, and so they thought that by some strange accident or other, the night had overtaken them unawares, before they had deemed the day half done. And what was more extraordinary still, the fowls went to roost--a proof that the instinct of animals is not quite so perfect as it is sometimes represented to be. (p. 26)

This suspension of human reason and animal instinct in the wake of the forces of nature leads Musgrave to posit a spiritual interpretation: the darkness is a prelude to the apocalypse. He describes how he found a number of

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<sup>82</sup> The Empire Writes Back, pp. 9 and 34.

colonists 'busily engaged in their devotions, under the fearful impression that the world was coming to an end' (p. 26). Later, he discovers just how widespread this idea was in the country. In fact, he admits to believing it himself. This in itself is an important admission for after making it the description shifts in perspective from an objective narrator who identifies himself apart from the colonial "Other" (I-them), to a subjective one who identifies himself as being part of the "Other" (we). In the following description, then, the reader can note the change from Musgrave's exclusive 'I' to his inclusive use of the first-person plural 'we':

About two hours after noon, when our minds were wrought up to the most intense excitement, and we trembled under the apprehension of some coming evil--some dreadful catastrophe that was to befall us, but of what nature none could tell, we were terrified and confounded by the most startling peal of thunder I ever heard, and it was as singular as it was appalling; so singular, indeed, that I hardly know how to describe it.  
(p. 26)

A torrential downpour follows and the next morning a 'yellow dust' is found to have settled over the land. Subsequent analysis of the dust suggests that it is of 'volcanic origin' (p. 27), but Musgrave never receives confirmation of the fact nor any further reasonable explanation of the phenomenon. And though he claims that he 'ha[s] not attached any undue importance to this fearful visitation', one cannot help but mark its

spiritual significance. For as he points out, the event was marked 'in our provincial Almanacs, as "THE DARK DAY"' (p. 27) [emphasis mine]. In a land which seemed to lack a history, the missionary creates one; events are quickly appropriated to religious use and given moral or spiritual significance.

Ironically, the apocalyptic-sounding 'Dark Day' heralds the arrival of the Bishop, the father-figure to whom Musgrave and the others look for spiritual sustenance. For 'three or four days' they participate together in divine communion 'during which', Musgrave writes, 'we were all "with one accord in one place," taking sweet counsel together' (p. 28). Taken together with the previous scene the reader can detect an allusion to the Book of Revelations where a cataclysmic event is followed by the redemptive arrival of Christ. Abbott/Musgrave rewrites the myth as a means of illustrating the emergence of his reborn identity in the colonial community.

As if further to enhance his new-found status, Musgrave demonstrates his willingness to adapt to his colonial surroundings rather than impose his imperial precepts upon them. In the woods, a 'rude log-hut' substitutes for a church; services are performed in the open air 'under the shade of the lofty and majestic trees of the forest' (p.

31). In the following description Musgrave resorts to the enthusiastic language more commonly associated with the enthusiasm of Methodist writers than the order-loving Anglicans:

It was a wild and moving scene. The most gorgeous temple, with its Gothic arches, its grained and fretted roof, its marble pavement and its high altar, all faded into insignificance before the dignity of such a shrine as this. From my elevated position, in the trunk of a huge elm-tree, some five or six feet in diameter, and which had been recently felled, I cast my eye over the dense crowd of those sincere simple-minded worshippers of Him "who dwelleth not in temples made with hands." They were kneeling before me on the cold damp earth, amid the rank weeds of the wilderness, with the everlasting forest over their heads  
 . . . . (p. 31)

Within this highly-charged atmosphere, the "architecture" of the Old World fades away, the 'felled' tree reminding the reader that Man has begun creating new forms from the New World's natural resources. In a spiritual light, the relationship between Man and Nature seems a much more harmonious one and suggests Musgrave's own growing adaptation to the wilderness. His increasing confidence and adeptness in the woods is further illustrated by his ability to adapt to the materials at hand. Lacking the proper instruments for baptism, for example, he boasts, 'I had . . . been too long a missionary to be at a loss for an expedient in such an exigency'. A nearby pool becomes his 'primitive baptismal font', while a stump serves as a communion altar (p. 32).

Musgrave carries a renewed sense of self-confidence further afield. Like a New-World Moses he leads '[his] own people' into the wilderness and founds a new settlement (like Abbott seeking 'fallow ground' at Grenville). Before assigning them their property, he assesses each of his settlers on moral grounds, making sure that they are 'sober, steady, and industrious men' (p. 33). The missionary assumes the role of patriarch in the community; his farm becomes a model of good management for local farmers, while his 'knowledge of agriculture' is reported to be much sought after by them.

Up until this point in the novel (Chapter VI), Musgrave describes only his relationships with other emigrant colonists. In Chapter VII, however, he relates an experience involving the Native peoples. With overtones of the 'Dark Day' incident still fresh in mind, Musgrave relates another experience equally marked with mystery. It occurs during a canoe trip when the Indians who are guiding him home deny the missionary both food and shelter. For three days and nights the missionary must fend for himself, much to the Native<sup>s</sup>' amusement. No explanation is given for their treatment of him. As in the cemetery, he is disoriented by their unusual and seemingly un-Christian behaviour. Upon awakening on the



first morning he cannot 'conceive where [he] could be' (p. 37). His haughty attitude towards the Natives only invokes a 'scornful laugh' from them (p. 38). Unable to speak or comprehend their language, he is denied the satisfaction of using his language or otherwise asserting his imperial authority. Musgrave the coloniser experiences alienation and loss of authority by the refusal of the colonised "Other" to revere or otherwise show deference to him. As with the phenomenon of the 'Dark Day', Musgrave attempts to explain the strange behaviour; but his explanation is based on a suggestion that his ill-treatment may have been the result of having not offered the Natives the "gift" of alcohol. Yet even that explanation proves ultimately unsatisfactory and Musgrave is left to ponder the mystery of the "Other", a situation which creates a further degree of anxiety and uncertainty about 'who or what he is'. Any temptation to dismiss the behaviour as indicative of Native inferiority is immediately undermined when Musgrave also experiences similar un-Christian manners from a family of white settlers:

The family were just sitting down to dinner as I entered. They expected me down that evening, but in a very different plight, and after waiting dinner for me for a long time, had only just given me up. I thought myself most fortunate in arriving at so propitious a moment. But, no! my host was as bad as the Indians; he would not let me touch a morsel. (p. 40)

Unlike the previous occasion, however, the settlers eventually allow Musgrave to eat, but not before the episode has made a disturbing impact on Musgrave's imagination. Such experiences become a kind of "initiation" into the life of the Native and Colonial community. It is only at this point in the narrative that the previous two incidents of "inhumanity" begin to make sense within the context of the story. The former reminds readers of the 'cold and solitary' environment which surrounds Musgrave; while the latter introduces them to the peculiarities and practicalities of frontier life. Musgrave's return to the domestic hearth is a symbolic return to the centre of Christian benevolence and love. To reach it, however, he has had to make a 'fearful journey' through the foreign wilderness. That journey, with all its mythical overtones, transforms his outlook and ultimately his sense of 'who or what' he is.

Now, no longer feeling a stranger in a strange land, Musgrave displays a clearer sense of 'who and what' he is. 'My parish duties' he states in the opening of the next

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<sup>83</sup> The transformation receives further significance with the announcement of the birth of his first child, the beginning of a "Canadian" generation of Musgraves.

chapter, 'had by this time been brought into a uniform and satisfactory state, well defined and clearly understood, both by my flock and myself' (p. 42). His success at imposing his identity and role on others is measured in numbers of conversions, an ironic reflection of Musgrave's own "conversion" to a colonial identity. Among his congregation, for example, are a number of 'waverers', hovering precariously between the doctrines of the High and Low Church. Musgrave takes pride in relating examples of the 'plain, simple, well-meaning m[e]n' whom he has converted to his beliefs and who have joined his congregation (p. 43). Yet he attempts to balance these religious accounts of his 'regular routine of duties' with other interesting incidents which demonstrate his own colonial sensibility. Too much of the former, he confesses, would lead to an 'uninteresting. . . tedious and superfluous' narrative (p. 51); too much of the latter, might lead the reader to suspect the religious purpose of his account. In a manner typical of the missionary writer, Musgrave strikes a balance by relating moral anecdotes and details of unusual natural phenomenon. Like Marsden's Providential "miracles", these examples serve to illustrate Providence's intervention in the lives and affairs of humans. A summer hailstorm, for example, not only reminds readers of the extremes of weather which are to be found in the Canadas, but also demonstrates the

power and mystery of Providential benevolence. Like a Biblical plague, the storm is said to have devastated the countryside but miraculously leaves the missionary's house and village untouched. Rushing home expecting to find his greenhouse smashed by the storm, Musgrave finds that 'not a single pane was broken' (p. 53). The spiritual inference is clear: Christians will be protected by God; heathens will be punished.

In a similar story the outcome seems more coincidental than Providential. Musgrave tells the 'melancholy tale', of a tragedy which happens to befall one particular family in the settlement. The husband, a saw-mill owner, receives a bank notice threatening foreclosure. The next day, he is informed of his brother's death. Despite his despair, the man demonstrates an almost Job-like fortitude and faith in the face of tragedy. In the spring, however, circumstances conspire to rob the man of his livelihood. A flood destroys thousands of dollars worth of logs and several nights later the man's house burns to the ground. Without insurance the poor man is left 'a homeless bankrupt and a beggar' (p. 61). Forced to move to the nearby town to settle his affairs with his principle creditors, the man arranges to transport his wife and family down the river. During their trip the canoe overturns in the rapids. Three of the man's children are

drowned, although he and his wife are 'miraculously saved' (p. 63). While such tragedies no doubt occurred with great frequency in the wilderness, this melodrama has a predictable interpretation. Musgrave emphasises how the pain of the disaster was shared by the whole community. In proverbial fashion he offers consolation. God's 'dealings', he says, are 'dark and mysterious' (p. 63). With hindsight, however, he adds a more positive though no less moralistic postscript to the anecdote. The reader is informed that the man and wife survived to raise a new family and become once again profitable in their business. Their recovery and eventual success are given as evidence of the blessings of Divine Providence. The missionary moralizes: "'All things shall work together for good to them that love God"' (p. 63).

Other episodes in Musgrave's narrative are not so much tragic as they are just plain unusual. A strange dog arrives in the middle of the night to protect a woman and her family from robbers only to disappear the next day like some divine guardian. In some cases Musgrave's religious interpretations are juxtaposed against the supernatural. Following the accidental death of one of the settlers, a story begins to circulate in the community telling of the family's experiencing a disturbing presence around their home about a week before the settler's death.



The house is said to have been shaken by an unseen entity. The night prior to her husband's death, the man's wife dreams of a 'grave and serious' man who is accompanied by two men bearing a 'newly-made coffin in their hands' (p. 83). The next morning the family cabin is struck by a bolt of lightning. In the resulting flash members of the family testify that they saw a 'wicked man' riding on the road past their home. This man had, according to Musgrave, disappeared 'several weeks before' and was not expected to return. Nevertheless, the family insists on the man's presence. They believe his "reappearance" to be a bad omen. The night after the fatal accident 'the loud and rapid clattering of horse's hoofs' signals the return of the 'wicked man'. Musgrave is astonished at such superstition and ventures a more scientific, though seemingly implausible, explanation of the phenomenon, attributing the shaking of the house and the storm to an earthquake. Of the woman's dream and the strange rider, however, he remains decidedly mute.

Musgrave's reluctance to dismiss the woman's dream as nonsense might be explained by the fact that he himself has also experienced mysterious dreams. His arrival on the shores of the St Lawrence River, for example, was marked by a strange and unsettling dream; while on another occasion he experiences a haunting. The story begins

during a trip to a distant town where Musgrave has been summoned to preside over a funeral:

About half an hour before I reached my destination I passed a strange-looking object by the roadside, at which my horse shied so suddenly as very nearly to unseat me. All I could make out was an old camlet cloak of faded blue, with here and there a tattered rent in it, covering something or other, I could not tell what. . . . One corner of the cloak was partially lifted and turned aside by a thin and shrivelled hand, nearly of the same colour with the cloak, as if to see who or what was passing. In that bony hand I noticed that a bottle was firmly clutched. I saw neither form nor face, and, but for that hand, I could not have known what living thing was there. The scene made a deep impression on my mind, I could not forget it. (p. 103)

Musgrave is haunted by the strange figure throughout the day and night, partly, he says, because of 'the horror . . . excited in my mind at the revolting and beastly vice of drunkenness so generally prevalent in this country' (p. 103). He invokes a Gothic mood in his description of repeated dreams of an 'old and faded camlet cloak, and the mysterious being hid beneath its folds' (p. 105). The dream is encoded with a message which the reader (and dreamer) is left to unravel. Musgrave's attempt to see or "read" beneath the surface of the dream reveals the face of the man, a drunkard, whom he has recently buried. Sure that he has interpreted the nightmare, Musgrave awakes feeling 'youthful and robust' (p. 105) and begins his homeward journey. Passing the spot where he had earlier seen the mysterious figure, he 'naturally and

instinctively look[s] again with some vague and undefined expectation of seeing it again' (p. 105). He discovers a cloak and finds it similar to the one in his dream. 'My dream of the night before recurred to my mind', he exclaims, 'and I half thought, as the object first caught my eye, that I was dreaming still' (p. 106). Upon closer examination, however, he uncovers a dreadful reality: the owner of the cloak, a woman, has died, apparently the victim of alcohol poisoning:

[A]gain I saw the clutched bottle in the long bony fingers. I dropped the cloak in horror and disgust, and turned to go away; but it then occurred to me that the poor wretched being might have been there all night, and was now, perhaps, in a dying state; so I turned again and once more lifted the covering a little higher than I had done before, till I could see the face, which I recognised at once as that of a drunken, ill-conducted woman in the neighbourhood. The lustreless eyes were dreadfully bloodshot, and seemed starting from their sockets, and the pallid and ghastly hue of the countenance was just as I had seen it in my dream. I was much shocked, and dropped the cloak instantly. I saw that she was dead. (p. 106)

Musgrave informs the unfortunate woman's family, rides for assistance, and remains to assist with the inquest; but despite these humanitarian gestures he refuses to have anything to do with the funeral -- the woman, he notes, did not belong to his church. Despite the psychic resonances, Musgrave's literary fascination with the Gothic remains subservient to his religious imperative to dictate a morally didactic lesson on the evils of

alcoholism.

Throughout his narrative, Musgrave turns the mundane events of pioneer life into tales of morality. One episode relates the story of the 'messenger with evil tidings' (p. 115) who appears during Musgrave's Sunday evening meditation. The appearance of this stranger is presaged by 'a sensation of oppressive melancholy' followed by the sight of 'a man riding furiously along the road' (pp. 114 and 115). The man brings news that cholera has struck a neighbouring community.<sup>84</sup> Musgrave confronts the terrifying news with a medical opinion: 'Physicians, in their wisdom, may say what they like about its not being epidemic: my experience leads me to believe most firmly that it is. . . . [I]t must be by contagion that it is conveyed from place to place, from country to country, widely separated as those are, and with the broad Atlantic betwixt them. After its first introduction, it may so extend its ravages, and spread its poison, as to infect the air we breathe, and thus become endemic too'

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84 Cholera was a devastating disease among emigrants. Many died during the Atlantic crossing; many shortly after their arrival. Emigrants were routinely inspected for the disease and those suspected were held in quarantine on Grosse Isle where they either died or, if they proved healthy, were eventually allowed to leave.

(p. 116).<sup>85</sup> Yet reason is no defence against the deadly disease and Musgrave himself is soon taken ill, but, unlike thousands of others, however, he is spared from death. Others in his community are not so fortunate: in one family ten out of the eleven members are said to have become victims of the disease, and the survivor, a ninety year old man, is reported to have disappeared shortly after the demise of his family, only to reappear later as a "ghost". Musgrave attempts to explain: 'It was said that a spectre haunted his deserted dwelling; but I suspected from the first that the poor broken-hearted old man was the real spirit so often seen, and who doubtless came out from his hiding-place, wherever that was (most likely in the wild woods), to visit and weep over the graves of his children' (p. 120). But like other figures in his narrative, Musgrave's 'spectre' continues to haunt his imagination. The missionary seeks to discover something of the man's past: he discovers that the 'ghost' once fought with General Burgoyne against the Americans and had made a remarkable and heroic escape following his capture by the rebels. But over time, the details of this man's 'stirring and active life' are 'forgotten, or', as Musgrave says, 'like a thrice-told tale, they had ceased to interest any one' (p. 121). As

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<sup>85</sup> It should be remembered that Abbott had gained some medical experience at the Blue Coat Hospital in Liverpool before coming to Lower Canada.



in the cemetery, Musgrave learns that the past is soon forgotten unless revived. By committing the story to paper, he resurrects a fragment of Canada's history; narrative becomes chronicle, history once more is appropriated by the missionary for didactic and moral entertainment and instruction. As if to illustrate the importance of his record, Musgrave emphasises how easily history can be lost. Recounting the old man's death, he tells of how stories about the man's death in the jaws of an 'American panther' were received with scepticism and almost forgotten until an Indian discovered 'relics' of the man in the beast's lair. 'In its den', he reports, 'were found some relics of a human being, some broken bones several buttons, and some decayed fragments of clothes; enough, in short, to remove all doubt as to what the fate of the poor old man had been' (p. 121). More than a simple anecdote, Musgrave's story assumes a symbolic significance which the reader cannot ignore. From such human and narrative relics, Musgrave reconstructs the past and in the process his own and his community's identity.

It goes without saying that history as interpreted and presented in Musgrave's narrative is always within a Christian context. Musgrave acquaints a neighbour with the 'particular imposition of Divine Providence in the

common affairs of life' (p. 108). The death of a man who recently committed perjury, he explains to his neighbour, was the work of Providence. What seemed like a tragic "accident" is explained as an example of Divine retribution. Similar illustrations of Divine "justice" emphasise the missionary's belief in the importance of law and order in the wilderness. While ecclesiastical and civil institutions endeavoured to impose such on the colony, Musgrave infuses the events in his community with spiritual significance in order to illustrate that a more Divine form of law and order was at work. '[S]inful propensities of our nature', he warns, '. . . lead to infamy, to misfortune, and death' (p. 109). Musgrave turns a casual meeting with a neighbour into a sermon and when asked to explain the deaths of a neighbour's cows, he suggests that Providential retribution has been in response to the man having worked on the Sabbath. 'I hoped and wished that it might be a good and useful lesson to him . . .', states a pious Musgrave, 'And so indeed it proved--he became an altered man. . . . Divine Providence, led to its accomplishment' (p. 111). In Musgrave's mind, such "lessons" emphasise the perceived importance of Providential design on the community and give him a stronger sense of his own identity within that community. Such beliefs were concomitant with what one Canadian poet has called 'an age and a faith moving into

transition', a transition between an extraneous or emigrant consciousness and an intrinsic or native sensibility.<sup>86</sup>

Musgrave's attempt to contextualise the Canadian landscape within a Christian framework is not without some ambiguity. As indicated earlier, his narrative reveals a number of troubling and seemingly unexplainable hauntings (thus contesting Earle Birney's contention that Canada is haunted by a 'lack of ghosts').<sup>87</sup> The tale of a 'squatter' killed during a drunken quarrel leads to the belief that the squatter's house is haunted by its owner's spirit. The influence of such beliefs were persuasive in the backwoods and even Musgrave, a reasonable man, admits to his being affected by the tale:

With all my philosophy I must acknowledge, although not without some degree of shame, that, although I would not go out of my way to avoid it, yet I have never since passed the burnt and blackened remains of that old ruined hut in the night without uncomfortable feelings. The wild and desolate spot, associated as it is with a recollection of these dreadful and mysterious events . . . brought back to my memory, despite my better judgment, all the horrors of ghost and barghaist, of fairy, wraith and goblin, so

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<sup>86</sup> Al Purdy, 'Wilderness Gothic', The New Oxford Book of Canadian Verse, chosen by Margaret Atwood (Toronto, London, and New York, 1982), p. 214. Purdy's poem seems to me to be an apt comment on the colonial missionary writer's imagination.

<sup>87</sup> Earle Birney, 'Can. Lit.', The New Oxford Book of Canadian Verse in English (Toronto, London, and New York, 1982), p. 116.

deeply imprinted upon my mind in early childhood. (p. 138)

This Gothic, haunting tale dramatises a mundane piece of local history and reveals Abbott's imaginative use of local events to create a uniquely Canadian narrative, though one which still exists within an overarching metanarrative of Christian morality. Despite their local nature, such tales were looked upon by the people 'as an additional link in the long chain of evidence which proves the perpetual existence and the unvarying influence of an unseen and overruling power that "ordereth all things in both heaven and earth"' (p. 138).

Superstition emerges again at the end of the novel in Musgrave's account of raging forest fires. At first, he explains, the people thought that they were about to witness the apocalypse; later they were convinced that the conflagration was a 'portentous forerunner of some dire calamity--the cholera, . . . or another rebellion, or a war with the United States' (p. 155). The narrative concludes, however, on a mournful and personal note with the sad revelation of the recent and tragic deaths of three of Musgrave's nine children. Like the deaths of others in the mission community, theirs is also seen in the context of Providence: 'It was a hard trial, but "we mourn not like those who have no hope"--"we shall go to them, but they will not return to us"' (p. 157). As with

their birth, the death of his children firmly roots Musgrave's experience and life in Canadian soil. There is no desire on the part of the narrator, as in Marsden's narrative, to return to the parent country. The reader is informed how in the years to follow, Musgrave's family, like seeds, were 'scattered far and wide over this all but boundless country' (p. 157). With his colonial identity firmly established, Musgrave draws his narrative to a close. 'Were I to prolong it', he concludes, 'I fear that it would consist only of a wearisome detail of afflicting and distressing incidents' (pp. 157-158).

#### VI: Conclusion

Philip Musgrave was one of the first Canadian writings to achieve a considerable circulation in Britain. Its publication conferred upon Abbott the distinction of being the first academic writer to achieve an international reputation as an author.<sup>88</sup> Abbott's primary concerns in writing the novel were to provide emigrant readers with practical information regarding settlement and to vindicate the colonial missionary by offering 'a simple memoir' of missionary life in Lower Canada. Yet a closer examination of the novel's narrative reveals the tensions and ambiguities brought on by the emigrant experience. This chapter has demonstrated how these tensions and

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<sup>88</sup> See Frost, 'The Abbotts of McGill', p. 255.



ambiguities are symptomatic of an identity crisis in the narrator and has shown, in giving an account of the narrative "life", how the narrator articulates his efforts to come to terms with his new environment and the demands which it has placed upon him. Abbott's narrative, like other colonial narratives, generates a discursive site of conflict in which 'the backward-looking impotence of exile and the forward-looking impetus to indigeneity collide'.<sup>89</sup> Out of this collision emerged the distinctive figure and identity of the Protestant-Canadian colonial missionary. If for nothing else Abbott's novel must be regarded as an important moment in the literary history of Protestant missionary writing in Canada.

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<sup>89</sup> Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, The Empire Writes Back, p. 136.

There are more clergymen per book in Canadian literature than in the literature of any other country.

Ronald Sutherland

## CHAPTER SIX

### CONCLUSION

This thesis has explored the history and literary contribution of three Protestant missionary societies and their writers. By examining the lives and writings of Benjamin Kohlmeister, Joshua Marsden, and Joseph Abbott, this thesis has endeavoured to establish that Protestant missionaries and their respective societies can offer students and scholars of Canadian literature yet another glimpse into the way in which early Europeans perceived and imagined the Canadian environment and its peoples.

Like the explorer, the emigrant, and other travellers to Canada in the early nineteenth century, Protestant missionaries brought their cultural "baggage" along with them, and from this "baggage" they took a language, aesthetic values, and an ideology and constructed a discursive lens through which they filtered their "experience". Through their writings early Protestant missionary writers created what one historian has referred to as 'a salvific metaphysical-moral vision', a model of perception reflecting the writers' aesthetic and ideological values.<sup>1</sup> Missionaries and their respective agencies imposed this moral and metaphysical 'vision' on

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<sup>1</sup> Eric J. Sharpe, Comparative Religion: A History, Vol. 9 (London, 1975), p. 563.

the colonial world as part of their bringing Christianity to Canada and planting it in the soils of the country and in the imaginations of the people. By publishing accounts of their experience Kohlmeister, Marsden, and Abbott introduced readers on both sides of the Atlantic to their moral and metaphysical vision of the wilderness in British North America. Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and the Canadas became metaphors for the wilderness of sin, allegorical stages upon which the missionary imagination enacted its interpretation of the New World.

Kohlmeister, Marsden, and Abbott stand in a long line of missionary writers stretching back to St Paul. But it was the formation of Protestant missionary societies in the early eighteenth century which formalised and systematised the writing and publication of missionary literature, and which eventually led to it becoming a literary phenomenon in the nineteenth century. Under the direction of their societies missionaries were encouraged to keep regular journals and other accounts of their experience and to send them to London where they could be circulated among their supporters. While circulation of missionary letters and journals among society members supplied valuable information about the missions, they were an ineffective means of generating wider public interest. Without this interest and public financial support, missionary

societies faced the difficult task of supporting an increasingly expensive operation. The great distances which separated the missionaries from their parent bodies created numerous logistic and financial problems. Constant and regular communication was, therefore, essential to the success of the missions.

In addition to their pragmatic utility as a source of information, missionary narratives also offered readers an opportunity to enjoy entertaining and inspiring adventures. Gilbert Burnet's observation in 1704 that 'a [missionary's] long voyage, a strange Countrey and very small Encouragement . . . [were] things that will always make great Impressions on the Flesh and Blood', took on a prophetic nature when, after 1750, missionary societies recognised that the publication of missionary "experiences" could generate wider public support for their missions.<sup>2</sup> But, the publication of missionary experiences was not only good advertising for the missionary societies, it was also a form of entertainment which attracted readers to the missionary endeavour. Public interest in travel writing during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries extended to missionary journals and other forms of writing which articulated the

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<sup>2</sup> Gilbert Burnet, A Sermon Preach'd at St.-Mary-le-Bow, Feb. 18, 170[4]. Before the Society Incorporated for that Purpose (London, 1704), pp. 20-21.



missionary experience in the New World. The publication of missionary periodicals and other missionary-related material from the 1790s onwards responded to that interest. Joshua Marsden's definition of the 'narrative of a mission' as a form of writing which 'combine[d] some of the excellencies' of both travel writing and natural history indicated to what extent missionary societies and their writers recognised the need to adapt and cater to public taste. The potential reward from such publications was too great for missionary societies to remain dogmatically opposed to adventurous and entertaining forms of writing. By 1800 nearly every missionary society in London was publishing some form of missionary periodical and actively encouraging its missionaries to contribute their "experiences" for literary use. Though few missionaries harboured literary pretensions, the proliferation of missionary literature--poetry as well as prose--succeeded in bringing colonial missionaries and their experience closer to those upon whom they depended upon for their support.

In addition to being pragmatic, missionaries also adopted a didactic attitude to their writing. To echo Jonathan Edwards and several others, a missionary's life was a sermon in itself. While some early commentators saw the missionary as an enigma and were puzzled as to why any

minister would leave a comfortable parish for the rough life of the wilderness, most acknowledged that the missionary was an exemplary figure. The figure of the Christian in the wilderness was an appealing one and one which could be used to carry a moral message. In its charter, for example, the SPG vowed to use only missionaries that were 'of a sober and exemplary Life';<sup>3</sup> missionaries were 'instructed' to make their 'ordinary Discourse . . . grave and edifying . . . and that in their whole Conversation they be Instances and Patterns of the Christian Life'.<sup>4</sup> John Wesley, too, found patterns 'of all holiness' in the lives and experiences of Methodists and other Christians and urged his preachers and missionaries to contribute to this end.<sup>5</sup> Emphasis on the experience of the missionary grew as it became increasingly clear that the story of itinerant could be entertaining, informative, as well as morally inspiring. The didactic use of a missionary's experience reflected an earlier churchman's view 'that the mass of people could be led and taught more quickly by sermons disguised under

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<sup>3</sup> An Abstract of the Charter granted to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, with a Short Account of what hath been, and what is designed to be done by it (London, 1702), p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Instructions for the Missionaries (London, 170[4]?). Cited in Thompson, Into All Lands, p. 27.

<sup>5</sup> Comment on Jane Cooper's Letters (see Wesley, Journal, Vol. IV, p. 539).

ingenious plots of love and adventure'.<sup>6</sup> A novel like Philip Musgrave, for example, could not only provide readers with details about the missionary's attempts to build a church and congregation, offer information about farming and animal husbandry, and entertain with descriptions of scenery and native life, but also sustain a spiritual lesson within a narrative encoded with examples and illustrations of Christian faith and morality in the wilderness.

As suggested earlier, Moravian, Methodist and Anglican missionaries who came to Canada in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries arrived with cultural and religious "baggage" in tow which contained a set of aesthetic and spiritual values with which to judge and interpret the world. The language which underpinned these values was Biblical, its description and metaphors rooted in a Mediterranean and Middle Eastern environment. When applied to British North America, this language assumed a more metaphorical significance. 'Deserts' could refer to a vast tract of forest, a plain of snow, a stretch of sand or shield of rock. Drawing upon Scripture missionaries appropriated a metaphorical language with which to realise and legitimise their spiritual vision: as more than one

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<sup>6</sup> See Percy Adams, Travel Literature and the Evolution of the Novel (Lexington, Kentucky, 1983), p. 14.

missionary preached, the Canadian wilderness, or 'desert', would 'be glad for them' and 'rejoice and blossom as the rose'.<sup>7</sup> Using the 'rose of Sharon' metaphor, missionaries imaginatively planted the idea of the colonial Church in the minds and souls of their readers; but by 1854 the 'rose of Sharon', at least in one missionary's imagination, was taking its place and "growing" alongside the wild Cana(dian) rose. David Anderson, writing in his Net in the Bay; or, a Journal of a Visit to Moose and Albany (1854), described how he named his canoe 'the Rose' both in honour of the 'rose of Sharon' and in recognition of the wild roses found in the Canadian wilderness. Nevertheless, it remained his object to domesticate the wild rose (also symbolising the Indian) within the "enclosed garden" of the mission church.<sup>8</sup> The urge to domesticate or socialise Nature and the Native was the driving force behind the missionary's salvific "vision".

Missionaries, like other travellers, who came to Canada confronted an environment as different from Europe as Europe was from the Middle East. Consequently, they were faced with either adapting their language, and hence their vision, to the Canadian environment and their experience

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<sup>7</sup> See Isaiah 35.1.

<sup>8</sup> David Anderson, The Net in the Bay; or, the Journal of a Visit to Moose and Albany (London, 1854), p. 17.

of it or the other way around, adapt the Canadian environment and one's experience of it to the religious "vision" and its related terms. The defacement of the labels on Philip Musgrave's trunks shortly after his arrival in Lower Canada, for example, is a symbolic and revealing illustration of the subjection of Old World "baggage" to the abrasion and friction of the Canadian experience. Out of this engagement emerges the colonial missionary identity, the first growth toward the eventual flowering of a distinct Canadian archetype, what one critic has identified as a recurring 'redemptive' figure on the Canadian literary landscape.<sup>9</sup>

Kohlmeister, Marsden, and Abbott all inscribe their narratives with a sense of community and place themselves or their missionary protagonists at the centre of that community. They stress the importance of bringing nomadic natives and scattered settlers together, though not necessarily with each other. Their imperative generates a binary view of the world which distinguishes Nature as a fallen wilderness and its inhabitants as demonic creatures living in a chaotic and heathen world; the mission, on the other hand, offers Christian order and salvation. The missionary "redeems" the wilderness and

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<sup>9</sup> Dick Harrison, 'The American Adam, The Canadian Christ', Twentieth-Century Literature, 16 (1970), pp. 161-167.



its inhabitants from the "sin" of the Fall. Images of ruin in Kohlmeister's Journal and in Abbott's novel suggest humankind's fallen state. The building of settlements, villages, and towns around a central Church becomes a metaphor for redemption. If the establishment of the Church in the wilderness of Labrador, Nova Scotia, or Lower Canada is what underpins the missionary's purpose to his narrative journey, it is a firm belief and unshakeable faith in God and the Bible that is their foundation upon which to begin its construction. The strength of their spiritual resolve and commitment permeates their narratives. Even in the case of Marsden, where the actual building of a Church was not central to his mission, faith in Providence colours every description and characterises his interpretations of the Maritime landscape. The word 'landscape' itself reminds us of the aesthetic and discursive transformation of Nature. Faced with a desert of rock and snow, for example, Kohlmeister uses the picturesque to transform the coast of Labrador into a familiar landscape which British readers could understand and appreciate. This ritualising and contextualising of space creates a geography of the mind creating a mental map. In Christian terms, this map distinguishes between Christian and "heathen". Using appropriate descriptions and metaphors, the discursive "maps" drawn by missionary writers polarise "Native" and

"European" into "light" and "dark", "good" and "evil", "cultivated" and "uncultivated", "civilised" and "uncivilized". By ritualising and contextualising the landscape they furthered their construction and imposition of their moral vision of Christian society on their readers and on the very idea of what British North America should and ought to be. David Anderson concluded his account of his missionary journey from Hudson's Bay to the Red River by looking westward and claiming, '[I] sought to review the past, and to encourage myself and others to stretch into the future---to arise and possess the land'.<sup>10</sup> Anderson's vision of a nation stretching 'from Labrador to the Rocky Mountains' (p. 276) predates Confederation but was indicative of a growing sense of impending nationhood in the country. Yet it was not a railway that Anderson saw as the national link, but a string of missions and churches from coast to coast. As Dick Harrison has recently written, missionary writing comprises 'some of the most revealing writing in the early West'.<sup>11</sup> 'The narratives of the missionaries', he states, 'are in many ways the most instructive. . . . [T]hey offer the purest evidence of how Europeanized culture

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<sup>10</sup> David Anderson, The Net in the Bay; or, Journal of a Visit to Moose and Albany (London, 1854; rpt New York, 1967), p. 276.

<sup>11</sup> Dick Harrison, Unnamed Country: The Struggle for a Canadian Prairie Fiction (Edmonton, 1977), p. 48.

shaped and limited men's response to the new land'.<sup>12</sup>

In psychological terms, the ritualising and contextualising of space through the use of religious language and aesthetic values assisted missionary writers familiarise their readers with the landscapes they attempted to project. They attempted to make them less frightening and more palpable to their readers' aesthetic taste. They also imposed meaning on the landscape and coded their descriptions in a way that would encourage contemplation and spiritual edification. But Scriptural language and the imposition of aesthetic values could not disguise the impact of displacement from familiar surroundings in Europe and alienation had profound effects on the missionary. While the rituals of prayer and the familiar evocation of Biblical passages offered missionary writers two ways of coping with their anxiety, their survival was more dependent upon being able to adapt to the Canadian environment. It is in their various responses to the Canadian environment--some confrontational, some adaptive--which makes the reading of these Protestant missionary narratives a critical challenge.

The publication of Anderson's account of missionary

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<sup>12</sup> ibid., p. 48.

travels in Rupert's Land in 1854 came less than ten years after the appearance of Abbott's autobiographical missionary novel. These ten years, however, were marked by the appearance of numerous other missionary works: James Beaven's Recreations of a Long Vacation (1846), Philip Tocque's Wandering Thoughts; or, Solitary Hours (1846), George Copway's The Life, History, and Travels of Kah-ge-ga-gah-bowh (1847) and his Recollections of a Forest Life (1850), William Stewart Darling's Sketches of Canadian Life (1849), Peter Jacobs' Journal (1852), William Bartlet's edition of Jacob Bailey's memoirs entitled The Frontier Missionary (1853), John Jenkins' The Faithful Minister (1853), and, coming a year after Anderson's Net in the Bay, Thaddeus Lewis' Autobiography (1855) and John Ryerson's Hudson's Bay; or, a Missionary Tour (1855). These and other works not only signalled the Church's expansion into the Canadian West and North, but they also announced a new impetus in Protestant missionary writing which was to result in the Protestant missionary writer becoming something of a literary icon in Canada during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Yet as stories of missionary life grew in number and in popularity their purpose remained as pragmatic and didactic as before: to inform, to entertain, and 'to

kindle in some minds an enthusiasm for missions'.<sup>13</sup> E.D. Moore, author of Life Scenes from Mission Fields (1857), reiterated earlier beliefs that missionary literature was to be didactic: according to Moore it should 'exhibit interesting and instructive specimens of the fruits of the Gospel, in its effects upon the character and condition of men' and 'convince readers and confirm believers, in respect to the divine origin and the benign efficacy of the Gospel.'<sup>14</sup>

The Canadian Protestant missionary writer did not underestimate the power of his experience, even if in fictional form, to carry a didactic and moral message. Nor were others blind to the fact that the clerical experience could be used to promote a national literature. In 1871 the editor of the Canadian Magazine called for 'Canadian preachers and teachers' to take up their pens and produce a 'native literature' and to contribute to its 'production and growth'. 'Many characteristic features of human life come under your observation', he stated, 'which if graphically portrayed, would be valuable lessons for

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<sup>13</sup> John C. Lambert, The Romance of Missionary Heroism (London, 1909), p. 8.

<sup>14</sup> E.D. Moore, Life Scenes from Mission Fields: Book of Facts, Incidents, and Results, the Most Material and Remarkable in Missionary Experience (London, 1857), pp. vii-viii.



the thousands of our readers'.<sup>15</sup> He went on to recommend that novelists imitate the great missionary writers of the past by inculcating 'the great practical duties of life' in their work and by infusing them with the 'manly, as well as Christian virtues'. 'If you succeed in producing a sketch equal to [David] Brainerd's', the editor promised, 'we shall be happy in its perusal; if superior, we shall be happier to place it as a literary gem upon the pages of our CANADIAN MAGAZINE.'<sup>16</sup>

Between 1880 and 1920 there were, according to one literary historian, more than thirty Canadian ministers publishing fiction in Canada.<sup>17</sup> As Gordon Roper reminds us, ministers and missionaries were encouraged to write about their experiences by religious-minded publishers like Briggs, Westminster, Copp Clark, and Hunter Rose, and by

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<sup>15</sup> The Canadian Magazine, Vol. 1 (Toronto, 1871), p. iii.

<sup>16</sup> Canadian Magazine (1871), pp. 2 and 6.

<sup>17</sup> Gordon Roper, Rupert Schieder and S. Ross Beharriell, 'The Kinds of Fiction, 1880-1920' in Carl F. Klinck, ed. The Literary History of Canada, second edition (Toronto and Buffalo, 1976), Vol. 1, p. 317. Writers from this period whose works are based on missionary activities in Canada include William Carpenter Bompas, Hiram Alfred Cody, Norman Duncan, William Alexander Fraser, Charles William Gordon ('Ralph Connor'), Wilfred Thomason Grenfell, R.E. Knowles, Mary Esther MacGregor ('Marion Keith'), Robert Norwood, Ernest Thompson Seton, William Henry Withrow, and Egerton Ryerson Young. See also Mary Vipond, 'Best Sellers in English Canada, 1899-1918', Journal of Canadian Fiction, 24 (1979), pp. 96-119.

overseas religious and missionary societies whose supporters remained interested in the Canadian missionary endeavour well into the twentieth century.<sup>18</sup> Novels of missionary and missionary-inspired activity flowed forth from the pens of such writers as R.E. Knowles, Marion Keith, William Withrow, Robina and Kathleen Lizars, Alfred Cody, Ernest Thompson Seton, and Charles William Gordon.<sup>19</sup> Gordon, or Ralph Connor as he was known to his readers, was not only a missionary, but also Canada's first best-selling author. The story of Ralph Connor's success bears retelling for it illustrates the dramatic impact of the Canadian missionary experience on the public imagination.

Black Rock (1898), Connor's first novel, began as a series of sketches written two years earlier when he had accompanied his superintendent on a summer tour of Presbyterian missions in British Columbia.<sup>20</sup> The sketches were intended 'to awaken [Connor's] church in Eastern

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<sup>18</sup> ibid., p. 317.

<sup>19</sup> One critic has suggested that 'the Canadian tradition of literary ministers and sons of ministers was a major conservative influence in Maritimes writing' (see Don Conway, 'Writing in the Maritimes', Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature, edited by William Toye (Toronto, Oxford, New York, 1983), p. 512). Examples of the works of the authors listed above can be found in the bibliography at the end of this thesis.

<sup>20</sup> See Charles Gordon, Postscript to Adventure: The Autobiography of Ralph Connor (Toronto, 1975), particularly chapters XV and XVI.

Canada to the splendour of the mighty religious adventure being attempted by the missionary pioneers in the Canada beyond the Great Lakes'.<sup>21</sup> Like Abbott, Connor wrote what he 'had come to know by personal experience'.<sup>22</sup> He had seen successive crop failures and economic hardship bring 'discouragement and apathy' upon the people. The purpose of the tour was 'to hearten and encourage the missionaries and their tiny congregations, to investigate their needs, to advise, stimulate their church boards and officials in the support of their work'.<sup>23</sup> At the end of the tour Connor was sent back east to Toronto to impress upon the General Assembly's Committee the plight of the missions and to seek financial assistance; the Committee, however, told the missionary that money for 'expansion work' had been used up and they advised him that all missionary work should be brought to a halt. After the meeting a disappointed Connor went to visit an 'old college friend' who was the editor of the Westminster Magazine, the journal of the Presbyterian Church.<sup>24</sup> In his office Connor vented his frustration, but the editor had an idea: he asked the missionary to write about his experiences. "Me write?", Connor replied, "What good would that do?"

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21 Gordon, Postscript to Adventure, p. 148.

22 ibid., p. 148.

23 ibid., p. 143.

24 ibid., p. 146.

Isn't the superintendent writing all the time?"'. "No--no--", explained the editor, "write me a little personal thing. A story out of your own experience--put it in the form of a yarn! Yes, sir!"'.<sup>25</sup> Connor returned home but found himself so overwhelmed with work that any attempt to write his sketch was impossible. Still, the editor persisted with his request until one night after a prayer meeting Connor took up his pencil and notebook and began to write: at three o'clock the next morning he had finished a piece entitled 'Christmas Eve in a Lumber Camp'. It was, however, too long for publication in the Westminster; the editor suggested that it be rewritten into three separate articles. The missionary 'went at the thing with more care and deliberation' and in ten days time he 'had a story in three chapters'.<sup>26</sup>

Public reaction to the publication of these 'sketches' in the Westminster convinced the editor, J.E. Macdonald, to publish them in book form. Three chapters were revised and expanded into nine and the novel Black Rock was born. Following an unsuccessful attempt to find a New York publisher, Macdonald decided to publish it himself, an almost unheard of venture in Canada at that time. Although he was advised to print less than a thousand

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<sup>25</sup> ibid., p. 147.

<sup>26</sup> ibid., p. 147.

copies, Macdonald was so confident in Connor's work that he published a first edition of five thousand copies. Even then, he had underestimated the power and popularity of Connor's writing. Within three years Black Rock and two other novels--Sky Pilot and The Man from Glengarry--had sold 'over five million copies'.<sup>27</sup> Connor gave six reasons for the success of his novels: they were authentic, 'rich in colour', 'alive with movement', they used Canadian characters and settings, they transformed the pioneer and missionary experience into art, and, most importantly for Gordon, they employed a religious motif, for like earlier missionary writing, Connor's novels carried a didactic and moral message.<sup>28</sup>

This story of how Ralph Connor came to write his novel and the reasons he gave for its success illustrates again the importance of the relationship between the missionary and his Church in order to make more widely-known the Canadian missionary experience. Black Rock is set in the foothills of the Selkirk Mountains in British Columbia. The story begins, symbolically, on Christmas Eve 1882, a period during which the West is undergoing dramatic changes:

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<sup>27</sup> Ralph Connor, Black Rock: A Tale of the Selkirks (Toronto, 1898); The Sky Pilot: A Tale of the Foothills (Chicago, 1899); The Man From Glengarry: A Tale of the Ottawa (Toronto, 1901). See also Gordon, Postscript for Adventure, p. 150.

<sup>28</sup> ibid., pp. 150 and 148.



increased immigration and settlement, and the construction of the transcontinental railway were part of a national effort to link the country from coast to coast.<sup>29</sup> The novel's hero, Mr Craig, is a missionary who has come to a lumber camp in the Selkirks in an attempt to bring the disparate temperaments of the men under control and to unite them in a kindred God-fearing community. Craig belongs to that school of men described by Victorians as 'muscular Christians': they were athletic, manly, moral, loyal and patriotic. Craig is depicted as having 'good eyes that looked straight out at you, a clean-cut, strong face well set on his shoulders, and altogether an upstanding, manly bearing' (p. 7). Craig is physically strong, self-reliant, athletic, loyal, and a patriotic clergyman. He stands at the centre of a motley group of ethnically-diverse lumbermen: English- and French-Canadians, English, Irish, Scots, and East Europeans. Craig's challenge is to assimilate this diverse group of characters together into a Christian (and Canadian) community.<sup>30</sup> Threats to his mission come in the form of an American 'Opera Company' whose performance of a

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<sup>29</sup> Page references to this work are from the edition cited above and are included parenthetically in the body of the text.

<sup>30</sup> In his novel, The Foreigner (Toronto, 1909), Gordon has his religious hero state that his 'main line is . . . [to] make [the kiddies] good Christians and good Canadians, which is the same thing' (p. 255).

'"screaming farce"' and offer of '"two free drinks to every man"' (p. 26) jeopardize Craig's (and the Church's) authority and mission. The men from the nearby mining camp (perhaps made more demonic by the fact that they work underground) support the show and attempt to cajole the lumberers into enjoying it with them. In this we detect echoes of Philip Musgrave's conflicts with American Methodist circuit riders and their propagation of republican and democratic ideas. Despite some initial disappointment, Craig wins the day after challenging the miners to a 'four-horse race' during a community sports day. The gathering provides Connor with an opportunity to draw his multi-ethnic crowd:

There were miners in dark clothes and peak caps; citizens in ordinary garb; ranchmen in wide cowboy hats and buckskin shirts and leggings, some with cartridge-belts and pistols; a few half-breeds and Indians in half-native, half-civilised dress; and scattering through the crowd the lumbermen with gay scarlet and blue blanket coats, and some with knitted tuques of the same colours.  
(p. 43)

At the centre of this colourful group stands the missionary reminding readers of the central place of the Church in the community. The lumbermen win the race, due largely to their not having become inebriated, and Craig claims a moral victory. The narrator states piously, 'Slavin [the saloon-keeper] could not understand the new order of things' (p. 49). The novel's 'new order', however, differs little from that of Musgrave's community

building in the Lower Canadian wilderness in the early nineteenth century. Like Musgrave, Craig fights against the "evils" which threaten his mission: drink, Americans, animosity, and sectarianism. Throughout the story he emphasises community spirit: 'Will the strong men help? Shall we all join hands in this? What do you say? In this town we have often seen hell, and just a moment ago we were all looking into heaven, "the sweet and blessed country". . . . O men! . . . which shall be ours? For Heaven's dear sake, let us help one another! Who will?' (p. 70). Commenting on Craig's rhetorical performance, the narrator testifies: 'I have witnessed some thrilling scenes in my life, but never anything to equal that: the one man on the platform standing at full height, with his hand thrown up to heaven, and the hundred men below standing straight, with arms up at full length, silent, and almost motionless' (p. 70). Predictably, the story ends in a moral victory; Canadian community triumphs over American individualism and the missionary is virtually transformed into a national and near-mythic hero, another example of the way in which missionary writers appropriate their history for ideological purposes. Connor writes: 'Those old wild days are long since gone into the dim distance of the past. They will not come again, for we have fallen into quiet times; but often in my quietest hours I feel my heart pause in its beat to hear again that

strong, clear voice, like the sound of a trumpet, bidding us to be men; and I think of them all . . . and I bless the Lord for all His benefits, but chiefly for the day I met the missionary of Black Rock in the lumber-camp among the Selkirks' (pp. 326-327).<sup>31</sup>

Connor's novels were part of a much wider articulation of the Protestant missionary spirit flexing its muscles on the Canadian landscape. Yet though his novels remained popular up until his death in 1936, the twentieth century brought new challenges to the Church's attempt to establish its identity and authority in the Canadian imagination. Immigration, urbanisation, and industrialisation between 1880 and 1914 brought with them profit and poverty, class stratification and labour unrest. All threatened social order. While the Church responded to these challenges in the form of the 'Social Gospel' movement and other activities, a growing secularisation in Canadian society began to undermine the Church's influence. The experience of the First World War

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<sup>31</sup> In Gordon's second novel, The Sky Pilot, the presence of the missionary in the Foothills country likewise assumes a near-mythological status: 'He was the first missionary ever seen in the country, and it was the Old Timer who named him. The Old Timer's advent to the Foothill country was prehistoric, and his influence was, in consequence, immense. . . . So it was as "The Sky Pilot" . . . that the missionary went for many a day in the Swan Creek Country' (see Ralph Connor, The Sky Pilot: a Tale of the Foothills, tenth edition (London, 1902), p. 35).

also caused many to question their faith in the validity of God and of Providence's central place in the life of society. Increasingly, writers portrayed the clergyman in the context of failure. Father Dowling in Morley Callaghan's Such is My Beloved (1934) and Philip Bentley in Sinclair Ross's As For Me and My House (1941) are two such examples where the failed minister or 'imperfect priest' (or what Ronald Sutherland describes as 'the would-be clergyman and the clergyman who for some reason cannot fit into the established ecclesiastical pattern') is the object of failure.<sup>32</sup> In As For Me and My House, for example, Ross inverts the missionary genre of the nineteenth century.<sup>33</sup> In an ironic use of the diary, he has the preacher's wife, and not the preacher himself, keep a record of his activities. Mrs Bentley describes her husband, a small-town Prairie preacher, as a 'strong virile man, right in his prime' (p. 10) but observes with increasing frequency how 'tired . . . gaunt and haggard' he is beginning to look. Her portrait of him is a study of deterioration and inadequacy: 'He's a failure now, a preacher instead of a painter, and every minute of the day

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<sup>32</sup> Ronald Sutherland, Second Image: Comparative Studies in Québec/Canadian Literature (Don Mills, Ont., 1971), p. 73.

<sup>33</sup> Sinclair Ross, As For Me and My House (1941; Toronto, 1982). Subsequent quotations are from this New Canadian Library edition and included parenthetically in the text.



he's mindful of it' (p. 16). Such figures stand in marked contrast to Connor's missionary "heroes".<sup>34</sup> Yet ironically, the decline of the Canadian missionary novel could perhaps be attributed to its refusal to adapt to the society it was trying to describe and for which it was attempting to prescribe. Didactic and overly moralistic, the missionary novel was too self-serving. Though they may have borrowed the novel's form and features, missionary writers never embraced the imaginative possibilities nor tapped the creative potential which fiction offered. Moral didacticism, enthusiastic sectarianism, and a dogmatic deferring of meaning to Scripture appealed to fewer readers, many who were beginning to dispute and question the proselytizing role of the Church in a colonial and post-colonial Canada. Yet this does not answer a fundamental question: why has the clerical figure remained such a dominant presence in the

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<sup>34</sup> For a discussion of this idea in American literature see the following studies: Richard H. Gamble, 'The Figure of the Protestant Clergyman in American Fiction' (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1972); Walter Mueller, 'Protestant Ministers in Modern American Novels, 1927-1958: The Search for a Role' (unpublished dissertation, University of Nebraska, 1960); Emerson Clayton Shuck, 'Clergymen in Representative American Fiction, 1830-1930: A Study in Attitudes Toward Religion' (unpublished dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1943); and Lannom F. Smith, 'Man and Minister in Recent American Fiction' (unpublished dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1969). I am not aware of a similar study which examines the figure of the clergymen in Canadian literature.

Canadian imagination?<sup>7</sup> The answer to that question is beyond the scope of the present study, but the question suggests one direction for future research into missionary and missionary-inspired writing in Canada. This thesis has suggested some thematic links between missionary writing in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and the past.

Interestingly, Canadian writers have continued to discover a "usable past" in the history of missionary discourse. According to critic Ronald Sutherland 'there are more clergymen per book in Canadian literature than in the literature of any other country'.<sup>35</sup> In addition to earlier writers like Morley Callaghan and Sinclair Ross, contemporary writers like Harold Horwood, Hugh Brody, and Eric McCormack have all been inspired, or provoked, by the presence of the missionary or clerical figure in the Canadian consciousness. Horwood's White Eskimo (1972) is a vicious indictment of Moravian missionary involvement with the Inuit of Labrador; while Brody's short story 'Eva', in his recent collection entitled Means of Escape (1991), is a more psychological exposé of a Moravian missionary's conflict between his religious piety and his

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<sup>35</sup> Sutherland, Second Image: Comparative Studies in Quebec/Canadian Literature, p. 72.

sexual urges for a Native woman.<sup>36</sup> In another story which examines the missionary figure in Canada, Eric McCormack takes poetic license with history and returns the reader to a fictive beginning of Protestant missionary activity in Canada by placing the founder of Presbyterianism, John Knox, among a tribe of Indians in New France.<sup>37</sup> Though 'Knox Abroad' takes a dark and ironic view of Knox's missionary zeal, it also reveals how McCormack, like Sinclair Ross, inverts the traditional missionary genre. Knox is a demonic missionary in a grotesque landscape of death and decay: 'No ears could endure the monstrous words (predestination! election! reprobation!) he would hurl against them' (p. 66). Like Kohlmeister, Marsden, and Abbott, McCormack's Knox sees the landscape as something waiting to be redeemed. 'Churches could make this obscene river a lovely thing' (p. 67), he states, adding later, 'If we burnt down the whole forest on the peninsula and ripped up the weeds and the flowers, and anything else alive, we could build a whole set of churches, one for every day of the week' (p. 73). Knox's brief presence in their world leaves an indelible mark on the Indians' imagination and is a reminder to the reader

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<sup>36</sup> Harold Horwood, White Eskimo; a story of Labrador (Toronto and New York, 1972) and Hugh Brody, Means of Escape (Vancouver and London, 1991).

<sup>37</sup> Eric McCormack, Inspecting the Vaults (London, 1989). Subsequent quotations are from this edition and are given parenthetically in the text of the thesis.

of the impact which generations of missionaries have had on Native life and on the Canadian landscape. Before returning to Europe Knox leaves behind his cat, Clootie, to 'terrif[y] man and beast' and as a symbol of the white man's inevitable return to the New World. Clootie, he thinks, will 'remin[d] them of something they [will] not easily destroy. . . . The New World was child's play. Now the battle will be amongst professionals, like himself' (p. 78).

In his study of kailyard literature, Ian Campbell reminds us of the central though puzzling place of the minister in Scottish writing. The minister or clerical figure, he suggests, 'is a symbol of something very hard to articulate in the Scottish experience, yet something sufficiently basic to the Scottish mind'.<sup>38</sup> I would also like to suggest that the Protestant missionary is also a symbol of something inherent and basic to the Canadian experience and imagination. As one Canadian critic has written, 'Whether favourably or unfavourably portrayed . . . the dominant presence of the clergyman in Canadian creative works is a clear indication of the special impact of the church on Canadian consciousness'.<sup>39</sup> This thesis

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<sup>38</sup> Ian Campbell, Kailyard (Edinburgh, 1981), p. 81.

<sup>39</sup> Sutherland, Second Image, p. 73. Sutherland's essay, 'The Calvinist-Jansenist Pantomime' in Second Image: Comparative Studies in Québec/Canadian Literature (Don Mills, 1971) is a fascinating explication of the

has endeavoured to shed some light on that impact by exploring how three Protestant missionary societies and their missionaries contributed to and have continued to influence the development of the Canadian literary imagination.

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influence of Puritanism on the Canadian literary consciousness.



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